

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

Parish including Birchley Heath, Ansley Common,
Ansley Village, Church End

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JANUARY 2002 NEWSLETTER

Are you facing the engine or the guard's van ?

Dear Friends,

Which way do you like to face when you go on a train ? The ancient Greeks used to argue about the nature of life. Some saw it like a man travelling in a carriage. The question was, which way was he looking. They decided he was looking backwards at the past, because of course we can all see where we have been, and none of us can see the future. The question is, is that how we live our lives—looking back at the past ?

New year is a good time to look both back and forwards. As we look back as a nation we remember the foot and mouth crisis, the atrocity in New York, the war in Afghanistan. In our family we can look back on a wedding and a graduation this year. I hope you too can look back on happy events in your family in 2001.

However I hope we are also looking forward. We all have hopes for this new year, and some of us are already making plans for holidays, for redecorating, for what we will do in the garden. In our family, Juliet is planning to go to Uganda to work. Robin is planning to go to University.

What about the church ? Which way is the church looking ? Of course in one way the church always looks back to the past, because its faith is built on the mighty works of God in Jesus, especially his death and resurrection which we celebrate each spring. But we also look forward to the coming of Jesus again in glory to gather his people into his kingdom.

And here in Ansley, do we look forwards or backwards—backwards to what the church was like, or forwards to what God is going to make it in the future. The job of a farmer is always to be planning for the future. Last year's harvest is gone. He is looking and planning for next year's.

And churches have to be like farmers—looking to the future. This week I received a form for us as a church to fill in. It asks us what our hopes and plans for the future are. I look forward to hearing some answers. What are your prayers for the church of the future ? Have you got some hopes and plans—or are you just facing the guard's van ?

In PCC we shall be asking ourselves these questions: not just asking 'what do we want ?' but the much more important question, 'what does God want for our church ?'

Please pray that we will know the guidance of his Holy Spirit as we consider these things.

In His love,

Gill and Geoff.

SERVICES IN JANUARY Theme: Joshua

ST. JOHN'S HALL: Services at 10.30 a.m.
January 13 and 27.

ST. LAURENCE'S CHURCH: Services at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

January 6: am All Age Worship,
pm Holy Communion.

January 13: am Holy Communion,
pm Evensong.

January 20: am All Ages,
pm Holy Communion (Common Worship).

January 27: am Holy Communion (The Lord is Here).
pm Evensong.

Senior Citizens Morning Prayer 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday.
Followed by Home Communion.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 7 January: 7.30 p.m. Links leaders meet at Rectory.

Tuesday 8 January: 7.30-9.00 p.m. Coffee evening at Rectory in aid of Building Fund for the new Church Annexe. Bring and Buy. All welcome.

Thursday 3.00 p.m. at Rectory: St. John's planning meeting.

Wednesday Fellowship meets 16th and 30th.

January 21: Ansley Common Fellowship meets at 7.30 p.m.

January 24: PCC 7.45 p.m. in Village Hall.

Senior Citizens' Morning Prayer: 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday 15 January.

Home Communion: TUESDAY 22 JANUARY.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Our sympathy and prayers go to the families of the following who have died recently:

Sylvia Richardson on 11th November, aged 73.

Tom Parker on 19th November, aged 87.

Tom Norwood on 29th November, aged 81.

Francis (Dixie) Edwards on 7th December, aged 79.

CHURCH ANNEXE NEWS: We are very glad to have received a Faculty from Coventry Diocese, which means we have church legal permission for the building to go ahead. We are still, however, awaiting building regulations from the Council. We also still welcome ANY AND ALL IDEAS for fundraising — to M. Antill please.

ALPHA

Some of you have expressed an interest in doing an Alpha course. These courses now take place all over the country and some of you have seen them on TV. They are for anyone who wants to find out more about the Christian faith, and would like to ask all sorts of questions. They are fun and informal (and usually involve a lot of cake and coffee). Those who do Alpha may be confirmed if they are ready—but it's not compulsory!

OUR NEXT ALPHA STARTS IN ST. JOHN'S HALL ON TUESDAY, 22nd JANUARY AT 7.30 p.m. ALL ARE WELCOME! PLEASE LET GILL OR GEOFF KNOW IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

THANK YOU

- to the social committee and all those who helped or supported in any way our Christmas Evening. It was an enjoyable occasion for those who came, and to date has raised £1046—a wonderful total;
- to all those who sold times for the 'When the clock stopped' competition. Winning time: 2.33. Thanks also to Johnson's Jewellers for their generosity;
- to D. Oliver for the delightful teddies with St. Laurence labels, sold in aid of the Building Fund. So far they have made £50. Also for the lovely invitations for Jesus' Birthday Party!
- to Michelle, Lisa and the St. John's Sunday School for their hard work getting their play ready for Jesus' Birthday Party, and to Mandy for the cake!
- to all those who have been involved in the production of the new Common Worship services;
- to all those who decorated the church to make it festive for Christmas;
- and to you all for another year of generosity, support and fellowship. May God bless us and our efforts and lead us forward into new pastures for Him!

Gill

BLUE PETER BRING AND BUY: This will take place on Saturday, 19th January, 2.00-3.00 p.m., in Ansley Village Church Hall. This is organised by The Links Children's Club for the appeal this year by Blue Peter called 'Wheel Help.' This appeal is in conjunction with 'Help the Aged' to raise money to provide transport for older people in this country. Everyone is welcome and if anyone has any items to donate please contact either D. Keeley on 024 7639 5089 or M. Oliver on 024 7639 5674. Your support for this worthy appeal would be appreciated.

EDITORIAL

1st January, 2002

As we welcome another New Year—the year 2002, we look forward to new things, unique experiences, but it's a time when everyone looks back over the year just past. I remember years ago at New Year one of our relatives always said 'Let's hope that next year will be better than the last.' At that time I thought 'Well, last year was good for us so let's have another year the same.' However, as the year 2001 sped by everyone's lasting memory will be watching the horror of September 11th unfold in America, I now have the same hope that 2002 would be better, so let us hope and pray that 2002 will be a year to remember for people, fellowship and love.

There are some extracts in an old book I recently found called 'Evergreen' and some are very amusing. This one I thought was really good. It was called 'An assortment of Groups' — 'A dribble of babies,' 'A shower of weather forecasters,' 'A waffle of politicians' and 'A peck of sweethearts.' I don't know how people think these things up.

Also there was a letter from a reader who said her granddaughter had started Sunday School and when the teacher asked her what she would like to be when she grew up she said she wanted to be an angel. The Sunday School teacher thought this was really great and asked her why, the reply was 'Then I can fly above everyone and drop water bombs.' Some angel!

Have you ever read the names of streets when you are in a bus or car and wondered where the names come from. Lots of street names are from fiction, poets, writers, artists, politicians or local famous people or nature, but some are inexplicable. 'Robinsons End'—who was Robinson? Surely not Robinson Crusoe! 'Pipers Lane' was there a famous Mr. or even Mrs. Piper or is it named after a profession connected with pipes? Then there is 'Izons Croft'—where did that name come from. We can sort out most street names but some are puzzling. Can anyone help?

Wishing you all a peaceful New Year filled with lovely memories and moments to cherish and a prayer for 2002: Lord help us to remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and look to the future with confidence, Amen.

Marie Cove.