

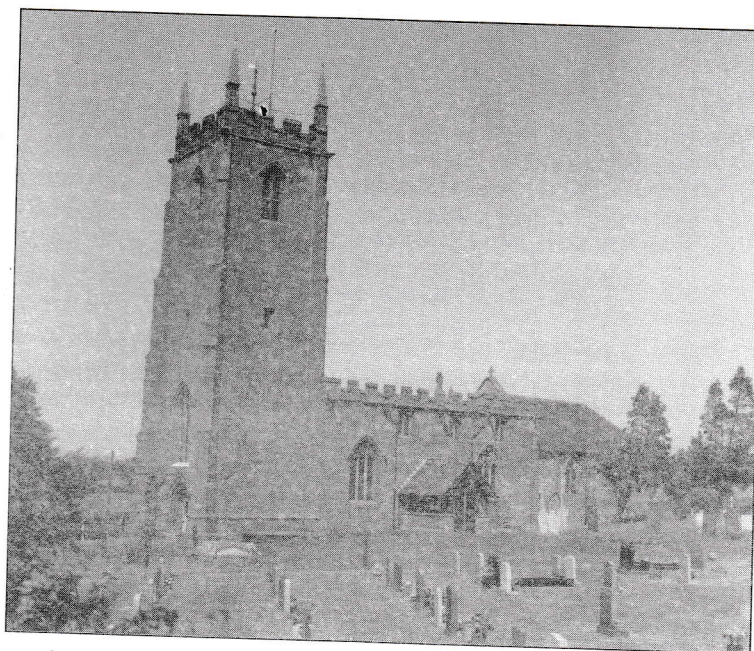
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

It's so simple. January 1 marks the start of the New Year. Nothing could be more straight forward! Or could it? Strange to say, until we standardised our calendar with the rest of Europe, the year used to begin on March 25 (Lady Day). The school year begins around September 1 at the start of the autumn term. The financial year begins on April 6 (can someone explain that please!) and the Church's Year begins on Advent Sunday, four Sundays before Christmas.

I always feel that we should celebrate more. The Church's year gives us many opportunities to praise God for revealing his wonderful love to us in so many different ways. Christmas and Easter are splendid occasions, but there is so much more. This year I am hoping to make more of five very special occasions. I hope we will do even more in 2005!

First, Candlemas or the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (see Luke's Gospel chapter 2 verses 22-29). At this festival on the Sunday nearest February 2nd (40 days after Christmas Day) we remember how Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem. There two faithful 'senior citizens' Anna and Simeon welcomed Jesus. Simeon foretold that Jesus must suffer. So as we take a final glance at Christmas, we also start to prepare ourselves for Lent and Holy Week. Simeon also spoke of Jesus as the light to all nations. So we light candles to mark the occasion. We shall be celebrating Candlemas at St. Laurence at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday February 1st.

Palm Sunday (see Luke 20: verse 28-40). This year Palm Sunday falls on April 6. Our morning service at St. Laurence will begin with a procession through the churchyard. Having arrived in the church, we shall listen not to a sermon but to a Dramatic Reading of the events of Holy Week as recorded by Luke (chapters 22 and 23).

Easter we always celebrate in style. This year there will be a new service as well. While it is dark (see John 20: verse 1) on Easter Eve (April 12) we shall gather at St. Michael's Arley to re-enact an ancient tradition of the church. With a bonfire, a candlelit procession and readings from the Bible we shall celebrate the resurrection, renew our baptism promises and receive communion.

Finally we shall I hope do something special on May 30 for Pentecost - Whit Sunday - and on August 8 for St. Laurence Day. Watch this space!

Now for St. John's News. I am delighted to report that the weekday worship on alternate Sundays at St. John's is well attended and greatly appreciated. You are most welcome whether you live on the Common or not.

As a result of much hard work by many, St. John's will soon be open on Wednesday nights from 6-9 p.m. for activities and games for young people from the Common aged 11 to 16. This is intended to complement the Thursday youth club that mainly works with younger children. I feel most privileged to be asked to chair the committee. It will provide me with another opportunity to get to know you. I am immensely looking forward to this work and hope that the gain will be mutual.

From 9 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. and 6.30 to 9p.m. on Wednesday January 21, I shall again be visiting on the Common. Offers of tea, coffee or lunch or simply requests for a visit would again be greatly appreciated!

Finally may I take this opportunity to wish you all a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR.
Your Friend and Vicar,

Peter.

St John's Hall Ansley Common.

Wednesday 7th 9.00a.m. Christmas 2. Holy Communion.

Sunday 11th 10.30a.m. Epiphany 1. Family service.

Wednesday 20th 9.00a.m. Epiphany 2. Morning Prayer.

Sunday 25th 10.30a.m. Epiphany 3. Holy Communion.

St. Laurence's Church services 10.30 a.m. & 6.30. p.m.

Jan. 4th Epiphany a.m. All Age Worship.
p.m. BCP Holy Communion.

Jan 11th Epiphany 1 a.m. Holy Communion.
p.m. Evensong.

Jan 18th Epiphany 2 a.m. All Age Worship.
p.m. Holy Communion.

Jan 25th Epiphany 3 a.m. The Lord Is Here Communion.
p.m. Evensong.

Monday 5th Links planning meeting.

Monday 12th 19th & 26th Links group meet.

Tuesday 20th 9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer in the Village Church Hall. Followed by Senior Citizens.

Tuesday 6th & 20th Prayer group meets at 10 Nuthurst Cres. at 2.p.m.

Tuesdays Alpha Course St. Wilfrids upper room 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 14th & 28th Wednesday Fellowship meets. At 7. 30 at Mandy's house.

Thursday 8th & 22nd Ansley Common Fellowship. At. 7.30 at Hettys's house.

Thursday 22nd P.C.C. 7.45p.m. in Village Church Hall.

From the Registers

Baptisms:

Ava Manton and George Brayne were baptised on November 30th They both behaved impeccably as did all the children present, there was not a tear. Both babies looked and smiled at the congregation as they were introduced.

Funerals:

The Funeral of Bill Bennett (82years) took place on 4th December in Church followed by Cremation. He will be sadly missed by his wife Joyce, his children and grandchildren, and in the village where he spent many hours walking the fields and lanes. Bill lived in the village all his life, attending the village school; he worked at Jaguar until he retired, except when he was in the air force during the war. Bill was a very keen gardener and always worked an allotment.

The funeral of Myles Milligan (48) took place at St. Laurence's on 4th December. Myles was a quite remarkable blend of quiet courage and tender love. For many years running his explosives business in South Africa, he faced danger with fortitude and resolution. His move to Ansley, with his wife Sarah and children Rowena and Robert, just over two years ago brought him both joy and peace. He quickly found work and took up new interests including curing ham in true South African style and selling it at a local farm market. Sadly his life was not long, but he packed more into it than many who live to a ripe old age. Myles died as he had lived with a quiet courage based on a firm faith and his loving concern for his family at the forefront of this mind.

A special thank you to the Milligan family for their generous gift of glasses for the new annexe.

The funeral of Joan Tooth (aged 75) took place in Church on 5th December followed by burial in the Churchyard. A Coventry girl, Joan enriched the life of all who met her. People always found it a real joy to be in her company. That gift came to the fore in her work as head of the Reception Team at Walsgrave Hospital, and in her unstinting support for Sid in his work as County and District Councillor. Much loved by her many friends and by all her family, especially her husband Sid and their daughters Christine and Hilary.

The new annexe was used by both the Milligan and Tooth families to meet their families and friends after the respective funerals. It was good to see the room being used as it was intended, but we all wish it could have been in happier circumstances for the families.

St. John's

The line dance at St John's on 14th November was very enjoyable and made £42.50 towards the new kitchen floor. There were some who knew what to do, but our thanks must go to Joanne for trying to teach those with two left feet, how to dance. It was however great fun.

On 13th December a Christmas evening was held when we sang carols and other Christmas songs and enjoyed home made refreshments. There was a small stall and the evening raised £40, also towards the floor. Thank you to all who helped and supported in any way.

The work on the kitchen floor commenced on 1st December, which was about time as the boards had totally broken in places under the lino. A new concrete floor has been put in its place.

Many many thanks to those who came and cleaned up after the work, it was a mammoth task.

Tear fund Sunday

Tear Fund Sunday on 16th November raised £131.07 which will be sent to Tear Fund Children Risk. The total sent this year is £265.45. This charity works with children around the world who are in danger from so many different evils of today.

Christmas fayre

This very enjoyable evening was well attended, and there was wonderful array on the stalls. The carols and stories told together with the Christmas message brought us to a real sense of the coming of Christmas. A total of £765 was raised on the day with the money from the wreaths still to be added.

Spurgeon Child Care Coffee Evening and Bring and Buy

This is an enjoyable event each year. The boxes being opened by Martin who works his way counting through hundreds of pennies and small coins during the evening while Margaret keeps the kettle busy making the tea and coffee. The total raised for the Spurgeon Child Care that evening was £310. Thank you to everyone for your continued support.

Used stamps

Now that Christmas is over and all the cards are being cleared away please remember that used stamps are always being collected in the Church to raise funds for missionary work.

January, 2004

When you read this letter, Christmas celebrations will be over for another year, but not the Christmas Season. We will all have eaten too much and it is now time for New Year's Resolutions, or is it? We all have moments of madness when we resolve to change in some way. I once resolved to stop eating sweets but finally changed this to cutting down by half the amount I ate. I knew I would only have to see a Jelly Baby, a bar of Nougat or a Sherbet Fountain and gone would be my resolve. It is a 'get out' but at least I now eat only a few sweets and when I have my bar of Nougat once a week, it is sheer bliss.

In December my daughter, 2 grandchildren and I went to see Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' at Warwick University Arts Centre. It was magical and it kick-started Christmas for me as we sang carols along with the cast. The theatre was full of grandparents, parents, teachers and row after row of children. But, after this great experience there was 'the shop' and my grandson and I had to be almost dragged out. It was fascinating and so cheap and I bought things for party prizes like Magic Spectacles, tin clicking frogs, wind up fishes that zoom round the bath and many more. I hadn't seen many of these small novelties for years and years. It was the end to a perfect day.

Have you noticed how we 'wish our lives away' as my mother called it. Before Christmas my grandson asked me frequently 'How many more days to when we break up'? I can remember being the same and some Christmas Eves my brother, sisters and I would lie and listen for the clock to strike downstairs on each hour. We must eventually have fallen to sleep but not for what seemed like an age. We just wanted it to be morning. Then, as you grow older you learn to savour the present time. You enjoy the milestones in your children and grandchildren's lives, because it is perfectly true that 'when you go over the hill you gather speed down the other side' So, time is more precious and may we in 2004 have many memories to store, old memories to remember but also enjoy the days as they come and go.

The year begins with ice and cold piercing both the young and old,
But as the snowdrops begin to peep, God's promise of Spring he soon will keep

Marie Cove.