

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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One minute for God?

There are many things I like about Christmas. One of them is the calm after Christmas is over. The week between Christmas and New Year is the one week I can holiday at home without being disturbed. Few people want a Vicar in the last week of December! Even the early weeks of January can be relatively peaceful. Time to do all the things put off because of Christmas, time to prioritise and time to plan ahead. It's an opportunity to concentrate on what is important and get that right from the start of the year.

So here is my challenge.

Give God a minute of your time.

Of the 24 hours in the day we are awake roughly 16 of those hours. How about dedicating one minute of every hour to enjoying being in God's presence?

Here are four ways,

At the hour, on the hour, every hour, pause for one minute. In the silence give glory to God, then reflect on your conduct over the past hour, thank God for all He has given you that hour and finally pray for anyone you have met that hour who is in need.

Or put all those minutes together and spend sixteen minutes in prayer each morning or each evening. Follow the pattern I described above. Include reading from the Bible and a time for silence.

Or put all those minutes together and put aside an evening a week. Join the confirmation course that will be starting at the end of January. This course is suitable both for those investigating the Christian faith and those seeking to refresh their understanding. If at the end you wish to be confirmed, the course leads to the glorious confirmation service in Coventry Cathedral at daybreak on Easter Day. Ask me for details

Or you can spend the time going deeper into prayer. A beautiful fortnightly course starts on Thursday 8th January at Berkswell Church. Lifts are available. Again ask me for details.

How you do it is up to you but I would urge you to give God a minute. It will help you live life to the full.

You'll be glad you made the effort!

Your friend and Vicar,

Peter

January St. Laurence's Church Services

Sunday 4 th	Epiphany	10.30 a.m.	Morning Service
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 11 th	Epiphany 1	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 18 th	Epiphany 2	10.30 a.m.	Morning Service
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 25 th	Epiphany 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Memorial Service

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 4 th	Epiphany	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 11 th	Epiphany 1	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 18 th	Epiphany 2	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 25 th	Epiphany 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

From the Registers

Weddings

On 24th October we celebrated the marriage of Peter Thomas Allton and Charlotte Louise Taylor. In a full church illuminated by candles we shared in laughter and we shared in the deep solemnity of a very special occasion. A good day was had by all as we sent Peter and Charlotte on their way with our love and prayers.

On 12th December we celebrated the marriage of John Paul Brittle and Daniela Warren. The beautiful atmosphere of our ancient church filled with Christmas trees and the whole wedding ceremony spoke of the joy of celebration and the steadfast love of Jesus born at Christmas to bring us love whatever we face. On a chilly but dry day we had a lot to celebrate!

Funerals

On 2nd December the family of Baby Reef Robert Lees gathered at St. Laurence's Church to celebrate his all too brief life and to mourn his passing. The service was concluded with his interment in St. Laurence's Churchyard. Our heartfelt prayers are with Reef's parents, Nathan and Katrina at this sad time.

On 2nd December we gathered at the Heart of England Crematorium for the Funeral of Elizabeth (Liz) Ann Howarth mother of William (Willis) of Ansley Village. In her life, and the lives of those she loved, Liz knew both joy and sadness, laughter and grief. She will be deeply missed by her mother, her sister, her son and her grandchildren and her many friends.

On 10th December the funeral took place at St. Laurence's Church of Brian Trevor Harper. A man of great humour and sheer determination he was an inspiration to all who knew him. He is deeply missed by his wife Judith, his daughter Rachael and by his many friends. The service was followed by committal at the Heart of England Crematorium.

Survey

On 25th January at St Laurence's morning service there will be a follow up to the survey that was completed last year on different aspects of our church life and community. It should be interesting and enlightening to compare the results and to seek advice on what should be our focus for the next twelve months.

Memorial service

This annual service at St Laurence's on 25th January at 6.30 p.m. will be an opportunity to remember loved ones, to give thanks for them and to light a candle in their memory. There will be time for quiet contemplation. Names may be added to a remembrance list which will be read aloud during the service. Bereavements may be recent or past ones and you do not have to be present at the service to have someone mentioned.

St John's Christmas Fair

The organisers of this event were extremely pleased with the result of their efforts for this new event and £235 was raised for hall funds. Attendance was very good and the afternoon was a great success.

St Laurence's Christmas Fayre

There was a varied and enjoyable programme of stalls, bingo, refreshments and not least carol singing. The raffle raised £412 and an overall total from the event of £608 has been added to church funds.

St John's Hall Bingo

The Christmas Bingo session was very well attended. The evening proved to be very enjoyable and raised £100 for hall funds.

Girls' Brigade

Members of St John's congregation enjoyed the opportunity to join members of the Girl's Brigade at their Christmas Carol service.

St Laurence's Ninth Christmas Tree Festival

By the time this magazine is read, the Christmas Tree Festival will be over for another year.

The first weekend

The sun shone down on a frosty start for the first day and from 11 a.m. until almost closing time people were coming to see the trees. Over 100 people visited on that day. The Sunday had a few showers and the wind was cold, even so people braved the weather and were pleased that they had made the effort. Afterwards there was a warm "cuppa" and mince pie available in the annexe. The event raised £695.81 over the first weekend and a further £33 from the remembrance tree to go to churchyard funds. Final totals and the sums donated to this year's charities will be included in next month's magazine.

Thank you to all who contributed to this festival in any way.

Margaret Antill

Concert

We would like to thank Jess and Richard Arrowsmith, and their friend Jo, for their excellent performance on 12th December in St Laurence's church. We are especially grateful to Jess, who had been unwell all week but managed to entertain us in spite of being unsure how her voice would sound. Fortunately it did not let her down! Thank you too to all who helped to make the evening such a success.

St John's Christmas Social

This event mixed singing carols and playing games to provide an evening of fun and sociability for all who came. A sum of £50 was also added to hall funds.

Ebola Collection

Donations of £66 from St Laurence's and £40 from St John's were given during December to help fight the outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa.

New Monthly Insert

This is the first month that our "home-grown" insert has been included. Do please pass on ideas of what you would like to see in this section and/or send in items for consideration.

Free Will offering Envelopes

If you do not pay tax in any form and would like to give regularly to the work of the church, even when you cannot come every week why not think of having Free Will Offering Envelopes which are dated so that you can be sure you do not forget the weeks that you cannot attend. Don't forget the running costs of the church like everything else keep rising and by everyone remembering their giving each week it will help us to meet our bills.

New Year

At this time we would like to thank all those people who over the year go around doing all the many jobs that are so often taken for granted but make the work of the church possible. Whatever task you do Thank you.
If you would like to help in any way either in the church the church yard or in the community please do have a word with one of the Church wardens. As the Bible says Luke C10 v.2 "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few." Please do not wait to be asked.

Prayer Requests

If you would like someone or a particular situation remembered in prayer at our Sunday Services both at St. Laurence's and at St. John's please hand the slip below to a member of the church congregation or contact the Vicar on 024 7639 9070. Please remember the vicar would be pleased to visit anyone who is sick, but he does need to know, again please ring.

Please pray for who is

January, 2015

When you read this, Christmas will be over for another year and the New Year is with us. Some of us will heave a sigh of relief that everything turned out all right in the end, whereas others, like me, wish that Christmas was not so fleeting. However, we can now look forward to signs of Spring as Snowdrops and Hellebores lead the way to new life.

There was a poll of people's favourite gadgets, and the electric kettle came top. Well, it's not so surprising as the first thing many of us do when we get up is to put the kettle on for a cup of tea. But did you know that the electric kettle was first invented in 1893? Now, one hundred and twenty two years on, Britain still considers the electric kettle as the most important appliance in the home with 23% putting it in number one, followed by the washing machine 18% and the fridge freezer 15%.

We have had a lot of Rainbows this year and I like to look to see if I can make out the colours in order, but very rarely manage this. Someone wrote to the newspaper saying she could not distinguish between Violet and Indigo. The reply was that the seven colours of the Rainbow were an invention of Isaac Newton. When prisms were first used in the mid 1660s to create a rainbow like spectrum Newton chose seven of the colours, as the number seven had mystical properties and matched the seven notes of a musical scale. Imports of Indigo dye had just arrived from India so Newton introduced boundaries defining the colour Indigo between Blue and Violet. I should think that lady wished she had never asked.

Just for a laugh: Three boys are in the school playground bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My Dad scribbles a few words on a paper, calls it a poem and they give him \$25". The second boy says, "That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a paper, calls it a song and they give him \$200." The third boy says, "I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon, and it takes eight men to collect all the money!"

In these days of worry and strife I came across these few words and thought them very appropriate for the start of a New Year – 'Laughter is a brush that sweeps away the cobwebs of the heart.' The problems of the world can be immense but the best thing we can do is to spread a little sunshine in our own small corner, and also to share God's gifts with others not so fortunate.

Marie Cove.