

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

No: 1101

JANUARY 2018

Price 30p



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Image of Old Father Time

Tempus Fugit! – How time flies – Where does the time go to? We say all these things so often; but it hardly seems possible twelve months have passed by and here we are in a brand New Year. Some of us make New Year resolutions and more often than not forget or give up soon after. Jesus came into our world as a child and completely turned the world around. There is still much of His work to be carried out, in Ansley as well as everywhere else. Maybe our new year resolution should be to aim to be part of His work in whatever way we can.

Old Father Time had ideas of his own, as we read in the poem by Devon Tremblay

The seconds are ticking away
And the minutes are crawling behind me.
Time is running out.
We've all been set to self-destruct
And the countdown begins.

I look at my reflection.
It's just another illusion
Because deep down I know I'm decaying.
Beneath my skin I'm slowly fading.

Now we might as well make this worthwhile,
Help rebuild what you defiled.

There's only one shot at this,
So take aim and shoot high.
Let's make a difference before we die.

This disease of time is eating away.
I feel weaker day after day.
Crawling deep within,
Never showing its face
But it flaunts its grin
To reassure our fate.

Time is at a premium. So let's make our lives worthy in the time we have left
to secure our place in Heaven. On that cheery (!) note, I wish you all a very happy
New Year.

Gwyneth

January St Laurence's Church Services

Sunday 7 th	Epiphany	10.30 a.m.	Christmas Screen
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 14 th	Epiphany 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 21 st	Epiphany 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 28 th	Epiphany 4	10.30 a.m.	Christmas Screen
		6.30 p.m.	Memorial Service

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 7 th	Epiphany 1	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 14 th	Epiphany 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 21 st	Epiphany 3	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 28 th	Epiphany 4	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

Please Note

During the interregnum it may be necessary to change the pattern of services from time to time at fairly short notice. This would be to enable visiting clergy to hold a communion service.

From the Registers

Funeral

The funeral of Iris May Perry from Ansley Village took place at St. Laurence's church on Monday 4th December with the decorated Christmas Trees all in place. We extend our thoughts and prayers to her family and friends at this time.

Memorial Service

This annual service will be held at St Laurence's at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday 28th January. Please do let a church member know if you would like a name or names mentioned during the service. We will welcome you to the service, but if you do not want to, or cannot, be present on the night the names of those you wish to remember can still be read out at church. Whether your loss is recent or from longer ago the person or people close to your heart can be remembered at this service.

Advance Notice – Candlemas

On Sunday, 4th February, St Laurence's congregation will join St John's church family to celebrate Candlemas. There will be no morning service at St Laurence's on that day.

Interim Report on the Christmas Tree Festival

The decorating of the trees was a very happy time, despite the biting wind that blew across the church yard. People came in and began to decorate "their" tree, while others were suspending the bell, angels, trumpets etc. from the ceiling and arranging the village scene among others. We were also able to display the beautiful nativity set that we were given earlier in the year by Radford and Holbrooks Methodist Church. We placed the Holy

Family with the lambs on the font and the Three Kings, travelling from the east end of the church, in one of the chancel windows.

We will be leaving these figures on display in the church during Epiphany. Once the trees have been cleared the kings will be moved nearer the font. The church has donated £50 to the Radford and Holbrooks Methodist Church for their Christmas Charity as they would not accept anything for themselves.

Unlike the Flower Festival this year, when the sun shone and it was lovely and warm, the weather for the Tree Festival has been very different. The first weekend it was very damp and drizzly and the second weekend saw snow and ice!

However, despite the weather, it was well worth the work and everyone who has commented has said how much they enjoyed their visit. At the time of writing, the number of visitors is lower than in previous years but is reasonable considering the weather.

Christmas Raffle

St Laurence's Christmas Raffle raised £567 for church funds, a record sum. Thank you to everyone who donated prizes, both individuals and local businesses. There were thirty prizes in all and, for the first time, the draw was held in the Annexe after the morning service.

Christmas Tree Festival Quiz

Please send your answers to the address on the quiz sheet by 10th January 2018. Everyone who does this will receive a set of correct answers, so it is worth sending your entry in whether or not you have answers for all the questions. The winner will be announced in next month's magazine.

Concert at St Laurence's

Report next month.

St John's Events

Following the Christmas Fayre, £50 has been sent to Acorn Children's Hospice, £50 to Childline and £100 has been placed into St John's Hall funds. Thank you to everyone who helped run this event or who came along and supported it. The Christmas Bingo evening raised £100 for Hall funds.

Spurgeons' Boxes

The opening of boxes and collection of donations for the work of the Spurgeons Children's Charity took place in spite of our representative being in the process of moving house! £306 has been sent for its work in the UK to support children living in poverty or in danger of neglect, harm or abuse. More about the work can be found at info@spurgeons.org. You can also find out about the beginnings of this Christian charity and ways of becoming involved.

Tearfund

A retiring collection box is available regularly in church throughout the year to support the

work of the charity, Tearfund. This charity is a Christian relief and development agency based in the United Kingdom which has worked in over fifty countries. It works primarily in supporting people in poverty and providing disaster relief for disadvantaged communities. It also helps to alleviate hunger and provide clean water and toilet facilities. It promotes lasting change in its work in education and addressing global issues. Find out more at info@tearfund.org. A total of £127.43 has been sent to this charity from this year's collections.

Regular Giving

We will all remember Sunday 10th December 2017 as the day it snowed heavily. It was an unexpectedly early spell of wintry weather! It looked beautiful and the children had a wonderful time. However many events and activities had to be cancelled.

The church was also affected. St John's cancelled the morning service, and the evening service at St Laurence's was also cancelled. Only five people attended the morning service at St Laurence's and two of these were the visiting vicar and his wife! It was sensible not to venture out when the weather was so bad, especially as a fall can be life changing for an older person.

One result of the bad weather was that little or no income for the church was received on that day, neither from services nor the tree festival. We know that our regular members will either bring their envelopes to the next service they attend, or put extra cash on the collection plate. We would however like to ask that if you do not give regularly, you would consider doing so. Using the free will offering envelope scheme is a helpful way to be sure that you are giving a weekly contribution to the work and upkeep of the church or St John's Hall. We understand the envelope scheme will not suit everyone, but if you want to know more, please have a word with Margaret Antill (01827 874520). It is estimated that £100 to £150 could be lost to St Laurence's church because of that one snowy Sunday. That is without including the effect on St John's collection and the lack of Christmas Tree Festival income on that day.

It would appear from the state of the General Account that there may well be a shortfall by the end of the financial year. The church would be very grateful if you could help to boost the funds.

Into 2018

Worship leaders, the Lay Reader, Wardens and PCC members would appreciate your prayer support as the responsibility for worship and fellowship at St Laurence's and St John's continues into 2018. We pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit, for our faith to be deepened and that we may be confident, as we put our trust in our heavenly Father, that He will provide for his people in this parish.

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 a warden. Phone numbers are on the front page of this magazine. Please remember that a visit can be arranged to anyone who is sick, but the wardens do need to know, so again please ring.

Please pray forwho is.....

January, 2018

It is always strange putting in the date at New Year, because it doesn't seem long since we were changing the year last year. Over many years I have heard people make New Year's resolutions and many have not been kept for longer than a couple of weeks. In times gone by watch night services were common and people went to their local church on New Year's Eve to give thanks for the parting year and to rejoice in the coming of a new one. As the clocks struck midnight, bells rang out all over the country.

December 2017 started like the winters of old with heavy snow when schools were shut, roads blocked, aeroplanes grounded. We felt like prisoners for two or three days, but it was wonderful watching the children in our Crescent enjoy the snow with snowball fights and then building snowmen, which were the best I had ever seen. Despite all this, our Milkman came as usual (we still have milk delivered in bottles), and it was wonderful to know this is one service we can rely on.

We may sometimes complain about how many adverts there are on commercial T.V. and even the B.B.C. advertise forthcoming programmes and if you are watching a serial, show a preview of what is to come. However there are two adverts for B.T. which really make me smile. One is two children capturing their dog on their 'phone, as he puts his head out of the window of the car, letting the wind blow through his fur. The other one is two lads looking at their 'phone and their laughter is infectious. These adverts are brilliant.

When you read this we will have started a new year – 2018, but I would personally like to thank our congregation at St. John's and all the people who have supported us in our social events. They make St. John's, not only a church to be proud of, but also to enable us to make it cosy and welcoming, having had the floor resurfaced and a radiator put in our cold kitchen. Thank you all.

New Year is a time not only for resolutions but for good wishes, and a time for new beginnings. These words sum up all that we could wish for each other on January 1st. May this be a happy and healthy year for all of us.

Marie Cove.