

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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Rev John's Jottings

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year!

I mentioned last month that it is a good thing at the end of one year and the beginning of another to take stock of our lives, pause, breathe in, then step forward with confidence into a new year.

It never ceases to amaze me how many people always seem to be in a rush, particularly when driving on the roads. There seems to be no time to take in what is around, especially the lovely surroundings of our countryside. Speed seems to be of the essence of life these days. Some of you may recall the song, 'If I only had time' by pop star Gene Pitney:

So much to do,	Time, like the wind
If I only had time, if I only had time.	Goes hurrying by, and the hours just fly.
Dreams to pursue,	Where to begin?
If I only had time, they'd be mine.	There are mountains I'd climb, if I only had time.

Over the past six months since I was appointed vicar in the parish, I have taken quite a number of funerals. Occasionally one of the passages I have spoken about has been about 'time' from the Book of Ecclesiastes chapter 3 which says, 'There is a time and season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot.....'

It is important that we do not fool ourselves into thinking we do not have enough time to do what really matters. And what does matter in life? That's what the churches in Anselm are here to help you discover. Life does have a purpose and is worth living. I hope that as this new year unfolds, you will find time to do those things which really matter in life.

As the famous prayer says –

'Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.'

With every blessing,

Rev John

January St Laurence's Church, Ansley Services

Sunday 6 th	Epiphany	10.30 a.m.	Christmas Screen
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 13 th	Epiphany 2	10.30 a.m.	Christmas Screen
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 20 th	Epiphany 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 27 th	Epiphany 4	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Memorial Service

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 6 th	Epiphany	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 13 th	Epiphany 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 20 th	Epiphany 3	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 27 th	Epiphany 4	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

From the Registers

Funeral

The funeral of Delia Elizabeth Warren took place at St Laurence's church on 15th November, followed by burial in the church yard. Many members of her family and many friends were there to celebrate her life, to say their farewells and to support each other. Interment of ashes

Kenneth (Jack) Knight's ashes were interred in a family grave on 26th October, following his death earlier this year.

Memorial Service

Our annual memorial service will be held at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday 27th January. You are invited to come along to remember loved ones. Names will be read out during the service. If you would like a name to be included, please add it to the list in church or speak to a church member before the service date. You may want to mark a recent loss or a past bereavement. It would be lovely if you could attend yourself but, if not, your loved one's name or names will still be included.

Advance Notice

A service marking the Women's International World day of Prayer will be held at St Laurence's on Friday 1st March at 10.30 a.m. The material this year has been prepared by the committee in Slovenia and has the title "Come. Everything is Ready."

Christmas Tree Festival 2018

Interim Festival Report

The trees arrived on Monday 3rd December, as planned. It was a very stormy day and we were very lucky that the lovely trees arrived in the dry. Fortunately, after some heavy rain, the weather was drying up as we started to put them in the buckets and carry them into church.

The decorating of the trees and the other displays took the rest of the week and was completed almost on time. It was lovely to see all the different people and organisations greeting each other and chatting as they worked on their displays.

Some very positive comments were given to the stewards in church and some visitors took the trouble to write in the Visitors' Book. When we have time we will need to translate one comment that was written in Latin!

As always, we encouraged everyone to pass on their thoughts to their friends and neighbours, as getting the message out that the festival is worth a look is quite a task.

By the end of the first week we had raised £677.66 for church funds and £169.42 for the Mary Ann Evans Hospice. £36 was also donated to the separate Church Yard Fund.

We now look forward to the next two weekends, trusting that the weather will be on our side.

The final totals and the winners of the Cake Raffle and Quiz will be in next month's magazine.

Pana Bore-Hole, Kaduna, Nigeria

You may remember that a collection was held during Lent last year towards providing clean water wells in Kaduna Province, Nigeria. An update on progress was included in a recent Diocesan Bulletin.

"A big thank you to all those churches and individuals who donated to provide a much needed water bore-hole in Pana village in Kaduna diocese, Nigeria. £3080 has been raised and this has been transferred to Kaduna and the drilling will start shortly. It is hoped that we will be able to provide photos of the drilling and the finished well."

The Bishop of Kaduna, the members of the Anglican diocese of Kaduna and particularly the benefited communities say, "Thank you so much."

Christmas Raffle

The winners of the raffle prizes were drawn after the morning service on Sunday 2nd December. This fund raiser made £625 for church expenses.

Diocesan Conference

Two people from the PCC attended a Diocesan Conference at Coventry Cathedral earlier in the autumn. The day took the form of a talk by Bishop Christopher and then a conversation between Sarah Hills and Richard Cooke, followed by lunch, a choice of two workshops each from a list and ended with Holy Communion. It was interesting to spend time and share experiences with people from other parishes. The Reverend John Langlands and his wife, Frances were able to attend the morning session but had other commitments for the afternoon.

A Rural Theology of Place

The discussion centred on how people appreciate churches in rural settings and like to visit them and/or to have the opportunity to 'be quiet with God.' Although many issues were raised, it was the general consensus that churches should be open for visitors as

much as possible but monitoring to check that no abuse takes place is important. Some churches provide a kettle and a supply of tea, coffee etc. for visitors and walkers, especially when the church is close to popular walks and trails.

Digital Giving

It was recognised that many people carry little cash with them nowadays, preferring to use debit or credit cards. The methods by which the latter could be used for giving in church were discussed. One method would involve giving a pre-set amount each time a card is swiped using a contactless machine and another would involve the church having a card reader linked to a mobile phone, so the donor can choose what sum to give. The options will be brought before the PCC for discussion next year. If you have any thoughts on this, please let us know. I

Reaching Twenties and Thirties

Some ideas that emerged were that this is a wide age group, experiencing very different stages of life. They can appreciate different styles of worship, may welcome services during the week, or incorporated into other activities. They may like to have their views considered, take responsibility and mix with other age groups. They may be much more into social media and able to share their skills. A number of practical suggestions were given for consideration

Rural Ministry

This group discussed some of the pros and cons of being a rural church. An encouraging statement was that "Rural churches are not failed big churches any more than satsumas are failed oranges!" In the end the mission of both urban and rural churches is the same.

From the PCC

The PCC very much appreciates that a few people have increased their giving, following the information given about our financial situation. At the time of writing we do not have exact figures for the end of the year but a report will be given in the February magazine. We realise that economic circumstances are uncertain and that we each have to make ends meet. As we start a new year, please consider prayerfully how much you can give, either regularly or as a one-off contribution. If you would like to know the most efficient way of giving to the church, considering your circumstances, please do have a word.

We wish all our readers a healthy, happy and prosperous new year!

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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 cover 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 for who is.....

January 2019

Well, 2019, let us hope this year doesn't fly past as quickly as the last. What do they say "Time flies when you are enjoying yourself." Well, I must have had a whale of a time. This is the time when lots of people make New Year's Resolutions but I never do as I have seen so many of these broken before even January is out, not always by those who made them but by circumstances. I like to look back over the past year and remember all the blessings we have had. Our family kept healthy; we celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary; we had increased consistent worshippers at St. John's; we had some lovely social evenings with the friends of St. John's. Who could ask for more?

There are two months of the year – June and December when so much seems to be happening but once Christmas is over we have a lull until Spring. Last December I went to a Nativity Play on the Tuesday, Wednesday dinner at the Blue Boar and Friday dinner at the White Hart. I enjoyed the dinners but not as much as seeing our Great Granddaughter as the Angel Gabriel.

The last few weeks the birds have come back in abundance in our garden and also a Squirrel, who gets up to such antics to get at the bird feed. In fact he is so acrobatic I think he is falling but of course he doesn't.

I saw the following in a book and thought it was very appropriate.

"Discarded rubbish has its worth, so love the planet – save the earth.

Bottles, cardboard, papers, tins. Take them out to wheelie bins.

Showing that the people care, when recycling they all share.

Just love the earth you're living in, by walking to the nearest bin."

My message to all is --All gloom be with the old year past and this year be happier than the last. May it be a happy and healthy twelve months for us all.

Marie Cove.