

# Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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## IS ANYONE ELSE THERE ?

Dear Friends,

The man clung to the cliff edge by his finger nails and looked at the sea hundreds of feet below. "Is anyone there?" he prayed. "Please help me!" "Just let go and I'll catch you," said God. There was a long pause, "Is anyone else there?"

All of us have times when our faith is not strong, and like the man in the story, we wish God was different or worked in a different way. In the last few months I have felt this several times as I have done difficult funerals—those of two of the lads killed in the car crash by Seeswood Pool, and more recently of Ray Hobbs, a good friend, who just faded away so fast.

If we could always see why God was doing things, we would hardly need faith—we would know. It is when we cannot see that we need our faith most, because then we are trusting him entirely, not knowing what he is doing.

Wasn't it good on Christmas Day to hear the Queen talk about her faith. She has traditionally been so reserved. Although she is the head of the Church of England, and we know that she attends church from time to time, none of us could have said what she personally believed, and whether she ever really prayed or relied on God. And real faith is not who we are or whether we go to church, it is more what God means to us, and how seriously we take his love for us and his requirements of us. She spoke clearly of her trust and of her sense that she is answerable to Him.

And so are we all.

The church fathers who designed our calendar did not start with the year 0 A.D. They started with 1 A.D. So 2001 is actually the real millennium and it is this new year that we celebrate 2000 years since Jesus first came and told us we have a heavenly Father who loves us and calls us to follow his son, Jesus.

Some churches seem to say, "Follow Jesus and all your problems will go away." I can find no evidence that this is what Jesus meant, or indeed that his followers have ever found it so. This life is never easy, and God has not sent Jesus to take away our problems. He has sent Him to share our problems, and to give us the strength to come through them.

So next time you are hanging on by your fingernails, don't give up. Just drop into his arms. The problems will still be there, but you will not be facing them alone. God who has helped our Queen through some very bad times, will help you also. When we have a God who loves us, we do not need to ask, "Is anyone else there?"

In His Love,  
Geoff and Gill.

## **SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2001**

**Theme: Tell the Good News**

### **At St. John's Hall, Ansley Common**

Services at 10.15 a.m. on 11 and 25 February.

### **At St. Laurence's Church**

Services are at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

February 4—a.m. All age worship,  
p.m. Traditional Holy Communion.

February 11—a.m. Holy Communion,  
p.m. Evensong.

February 18—a.m. Morning Prayer,  
p.m. Holy Communion.

February 25—a.m. Holy Communion,  
p.m. Evensong.

### **Mid-week service**

February 20th 9.30 a.m. in the Village Church Hall, followed by Senior Citizens Group and by Home Communion.

## **FEBRUARY DIARY**

Ansley Common Monday Fellowship, February 5th and 19th at 1 Nursery Road.

Also every Monday in school holidays: LINKS children's group in the Village Hall 7.00-8.00 p.m. for 7-10 year olds.

Every Tuesday David and Gill Morley run a club for older children. They urgently need some help—please phone David on 01676 540298 if you can give him a hand with this very valuable work.

Wednesday, 7th February, Prayer Group 2.30 p.m. at Arley Rectory.

Wednesday Fellowship, February 14th at 10 Nuthurst Crescent.

We would be delighted to hear from those who enjoy arranging flowers, to join the church flower rota. Please speak to Margaret Kimberley (7638 4680).

February 28th is **ASH WEDNESDAY**. As usual, we will be holding a special Holy Communion in the church at 7.30 p.m. This year, we will be following the service with an **EVENING OF PRAYER**, when the church will remain open and people are able to come and go as they please, to spend time in quiet and prayer for themselves, the church and parish, and for the world.



### **ADVANCE NOTICE**

There will be no Lent course in Ansley this year. Instead, we are starting the new Deanery Lay Training Course with a Lent course for all who wish to come in the deanery. The course will be about prayer, and it will aim to be relevant both personally, for the individuals who attend, and also provide training for those interested in leading intercessions and prayer groups in their own parishes.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Dave and Marie Cove, who have successfully completed the Bishop's lay preaching course. This entitles them to preach 10 times a year each, which helps us greatly at Ansley Common.

**THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE**—remember that? The Kimbers' daughters, Caris and Juliet, son in law Paul, John Collins who attends our church, and 15 of their friends climbed the three highest peaks in the British Isles in 30 hours last year. Their efforts made the grand total of £5,686! for the charity 'TB Alert.' Caris thanks all those who contributed. It is much appreciated.

I am very pleased to say that we are starting a small Sunday School at Ansley Common on alternate Sundays, during the service. Many thanks to Lisa Emmett, Michelle Quick and Marie for being willing to 'have a go.'

### **FROM THE REGISTERS**

Our love, prayers and sympathy go to Ken and the family of Margaret Horton, from Croft Mead.

Also to the family of Ray Hobbs, aged 67, of Malthouse Close. Both much loved and missed.

Ansley Village Allotment Association have vacant half and full allotments. Contact either Paul Gaskin, Nuthurst Crescent or Doug Wright, St. Lawrence Road. (£3 and £7 per year respectively).

Many thanks to the Ansley Common family who donated the proceeds from their New Year Party to the Tarmac Fund for St. John's Hall. This is greatly appreciated.

**Tear Fund**—Donations received December 2000 £85; January 2001 £23.75. Many thanks to all who give to this Fund.

## EDITORIAL

February 2001

"If Candlemas Day be fair and bright, winter will have another flight but if Candlemas Day be clouds and rain, winter is gone and will not come again."

As Candlemas Day is February 2nd, let us hope it is cloudy and rainy and we will have seen the last of the Winter, if we are to believe this old saying. When I read this I had to find out the precise meaning of Candlemas Day, and it is the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary named from the candles which were distributed in church, recalling Simeon's words that the Infant Christ was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

Despite all the rain, some snow and some bitter cold weather this winter the bulbs are all peeping through and snowdrops are in bloom giving us a glimpse that Spring is not far away. Yet, despite the cold winter the birds in the garden seem to have been more varied than I can ever remember. For the first time ever, a Long Tailed Tit came to feed. It is such a pretty bird, but I haven't seen it since.

Did you see the Lunar Eclipse? It was a great sight and clear from the beginning to the complete eclipse and then through to the full moon again. We seemed to be having some beautiful skies this last few months and we are told there is to be another eclipse later in the year, but this will not be so clear.

There are lots of everyday sayings but sometimes we don't know what they mean. 'Sent to Coventry' amounts to being a social outcast as those who are 'Sent to Coventry' are ignored by other people who refuse to speak to them. Well, during the Civil War, Coventry was a stronghold of Parliamentary support and when Royalist prisoners were captured in the Midlands they were sent to Coventry, where the local people wouldn't have anything to do with them. There must be hundreds of well known sayings we use every day but are not aware of how they originated.

Marie Cove.