

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2002

Putting our money where our mouth is

Dear Friends,

Well, it was bound to happen some time. We have been in Arley 10 years, and are on a five-year contract in Ansley, which finishes this year. Our children have grown up and are leaving home. The main surprise for us is that we are going abroad again, as mission partners.

It was Gill's Dad who started the ball rolling last year. 'Why don't you go abroad again?' he asked. I was startled. 'Because of you and Mum, of course!' I said. 'We want to be here for you.' 'Why?' said Dad. He seemed to have thought it all out in advance. 'We're very well-supported here. We have wonderful neighbours, excellent health care, and plenty of family still in this country. I think you should consider it.'

After we got over our surprise, we gave it serious thought and prayer. We started some tentative explorations. Would the mission societies say that we were too old—that we ought to act our age and carry on quietly until retirement? But in fact they were looking for people like us. That was surprise number two. The upshot is, that in mid-January the Church Mission Society accepted us as mission partners.

What will we do? Our final Sunday will be Easter Day. Then we move to Crowther Hall, the CMS training college in Birmingham, for a term of study. Then we go to Romania in the summer where we will begin language learning.

Our eventual goal is to run the Cross of Nails Reconciliation centre there. It is part of a small project, started by English Christians, in response to the great need and poverty. The project, known as Ascensium, gives medical help and training and ante-natal care. It also does social work, teaching literacy to children who normally are not able to have much schooling. It is the only project to work with Downs Syndrome children, and children who are HIV-positive.

We have made no secret of the fact that we believe that we are part of the world wide church, and that since that world wide church is also part of the body of Christ we have responsibilities to learn from and support it. We also believe that, although this country does have problems, on the whole it is very well-off and we should be helping those who have little or nothing.

Romania has had a desperate history of constant violence and war. It has suffered greatly from the brutal rule of Ceaucescu and his wife, and in many ways is even poorer since their demise. It has also been largely forgotten by the west, as the media have brought us ever more dreadful stories of suffering around the world.

Our role will be ecumenical—to try and bring churches together in a better understanding across the ethnic and denominational barriers, and to see if we can help them to help their communities. It will be exciting, demanding, very challenging and at times we feel very daunted.

In January we have been reading the story of Joshua. We don't know what those passages have done for you, but they have been speaking to us to be strong and of good courage, and to have the faith to move on into new areas as God directs us.

Like Joshua we face a real challenge, but also like him we do not need to depend on our own strength—we have God to turn to. Without Him it would be impossible. With him all things are possible. He is 'Emmanuel'—God with us—not just at Christmas, but always.

Please pray for us, as we do for you. that God will give us all the strength to face the challenges of the future with him.

In His love,

Gill and Geoff.

SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Theme: What kind of church will Ansley be now ?

ST. JOHN'S HALL, ANSLEY COMMON; ONLY ONE SERVICE THIS MONTH ON FEBRUARY 10th at 10.30 a.m. On February 24th, at the request of St. John's folks, we will have a church Away Day instead. See details below.

ST. LAURENCE'S CHURCH—SERVICES AT 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

Feb. 3—am All Age Worship.
pm Holy Communion.

Feb. 10—am Holy Communion.
pm Evening Prayer.

Feb. 17—am All Age Worship.
pm **ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE. Speaker: Rev. Ruth Walker, from Keresley.**

Feb. 24—**CHURCH AWAY DAY AT OFFA HOUSE —**
10.00 a.m.-4.30 p.m.
pm Holy Communion.

SENIOR CITIZENS Morning Prayer: 9.30 a.m. on February 19th followed by Home Communions.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY/CALENDAR

February 4th & 18th at 7.30 p.m. Ansley Common Fellowship.

Tuesday, 5th February and every Tuesday until Easter: Alpha for Ansley and Arley in St. Wilfrid's Upper Room.

Monday, 11th February at 2.00 p.m. Churchwardens' Meeting.

ASH WEDNESDAY, 13th February 7.30 p.m. Joint Service in St. Wilfrid's, Old Arley. During Lent there will be a retiring collection each Sunday for the Bishop's Lent Appeal. The money will go to help build a school in Bethlehem, and also to building a cottage hospital in Kaduna, Nigeria. (Not first Sundays, which will continue to go to Children at Risk, Tear Fund).

Wednesday, 20th February at 3.00 p.m. Time to Pray at 10 Nuthurst Crescent.

CHURCH AWAY DAY AT OFFA HOUSE: Theme: Spending Time with Jesus.

Arrive 10.00 a.m.

Worship Service at 10.30 a.m. Speaker: Rev. Andrew de Smet, Warden
1.00 p.m. Lunch.

2.00 p.m. Talk by Andrew.

4.00 p.m. Tea and Depart.

Cost: £11. Please get in touch with Gill if you need a lift.

February 27th at 7.30 p.m. Wednesday Fellowship,

FROM THE REGISTERS

We have lost many dear friends recently. Our love and prayers go to the families of Betty Norwood, Emily Sturgess (aged 91 of 18 St. John's Road), Elsie Twaites of 44 Nuthurst Crescent, Winnie Ponder (aged 86 of Izons Croft) and Alan Neale (70) of the Rookery in Birchley Heath.

THANK YOU to Diana Kealey and the Links Children's Club, both leaders and members, for the Blue Peter Bring and Buy in aid of Help the Aged. It made about £80, Geoff and Gill's coffee evening raised £80.75 towards the new church annexe. Geoff and Gill would like to thank all those who contributed. A big thank-you too, rather belatedly, for all the lovely Christmas cards we received. They were much appreciated.

RECENT SPECIAL ANNIVERSARIES. Congratulations to May Stain on reaching the grand old age of 90; and to Bill and Peggy Roundtree on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Our new Common Worship service books are finally here. We hope you enjoy using them.

UPDATED GRAVEYARD REGULATIONS. Please note that the PCC have amended the wording as follows:

'Graves and the immediate surroundings are to be kept tidy by the relatives. The PCC can take no responsibility for loss or damage to graves and gravestones. The PCC reserves the right to remove stones which have become unsafe through neglect.'

Every 6 years the Church electoral roll is renewed. It is now time for everyone to fill new forms to be an electoral member of the Church. Perhaps it is also the right time to review the amount you give to be a member.

If you pay by standing order a simple note to your bank is all that is required.

If you use envelopes (any sort) simply put in that bit extra.

If you just put cash on the plate please continue to do so.

Don't forget if you are a tax payer (on any income) have a word about gift aid, if you don't use it already. The Church can claim 28% extra from the Inland Revenue.

If your income is limited please don't feel under pressure to do more.

To everyone we say thank you for your past and future support to the Church.

It is with sorrow that we report the death of Winnie Ponder. She will be fondly remembered as a loving wife, mother, grandmother

and great-grandmother and for her years of dedication not only as a stalwart of Ansley Church, but also as a guiding light with Ansley Ladies and leader of the Mothers' Union. We remember her boundless energy as she supported and helped in the organisation of countless social and worship events and we extend our condolences to George, her family and friends, and we thank God for Winnie's life of witness and example.

Tear Fund: Collections at St. John's for October, November and December amounted to £31.14.

EDITORIAL

February 2002

February always seems an anti-climax after the Festive Season. All the Christmas lights have gone which lit up the dark winter nights, the weather is dull and non-descript but if we look February does have it's good points. We have Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day) on the 12th, Ash Wednesday (the start of Lent) on the 13th and for all those still young at heart we have Valentine's Day on the 14th—not bad for the shortest month of the year. Also during this month we see the bulbs peeping through with the promise of Spring. During the very cold, icy weather in January we thought nothing could live, but the bulbs are proving us wrong and the Winter Jasmine has never stopped flowering.

Well, we are over Christmas and the New Year Sales—back to normality. Have you the same problem as me over the Christmas period. There are certain things I always forget—mine are jellies and trifle cakes. This year I was determined not to forget and finished up with two lots of trifle cakes and had to dash out at the last minute for jellies. On the other hand, there are some things I buy every year which I do not need—this year I had 2 half packets and 1 full packet of balloons, so next year I will resist the temptation to buy any more.

Someone loaned me a book called "Tales of Old Warwickshire" and it is very interesting. I remember in history at Hartshill Junior Old School being told of "The Siege of Caldecote Hall" during the English Civil War, and it was very exciting for us as this was so near. Well, this book tells the full story.

Also there is the story of the poet Michael Drayton who was born locally at Hartshill. Michael Drayton was just about a year older than William Shakespeare and wrote his poetry at the same time. Perhaps the fame of Shakespeare overshadowed Michael Drayton, as he never enjoyed the same success and when he died he had only £5 to his name, but you will be surprised to know that despite being poor, he was so well loved that the "Gentlemen of the Four Inns of Court" and others of note arranged for his body to be taken and buried in Westminster Abbey. Not bad for a local lad, but it makes you wonder why he has never been really famous.

A thought for February 2002: I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good deed, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to my fellow creatures, let me do it now. Let me not deter or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

Marie Cove.