

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

No: 1068

FEBRUARY 2015

Price 30p



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February 14.

In case you forgot February 14 is Valentine's Day- a time to celebrate love perhaps with an anonymous card or a bunch of flowers. Truly a time of love.

At the wedding service we pray for each couple that their love will overflow to strangers in need. As we delight in love, spare a thought for those whose lives are blighted by fear and violence.

As we think of those in need, let us in particular remember fellow members of the Anglican Communion. There are 85 million members of the Anglican Communion (of which just over 1% are members of the Church of England). Around 20% live, like us, in areas of relative peace and stability. 80% live in nations torn apart by conflict and violence. From the Church of England men and women went overseas to share the Gospel. The churches to which they went remember those missionaries with gratitude and pride. We must continue to share in their pain and joy.

On Valentine's Day, February 14th, I would ask you to pray for Nigeria. That day it holds its presidential election. Violence is already growing in the run up to the election. The atrocities committed against the young and the innocent are appalling and no side is blameless.

Pray for all who are afraid. Pray for all who suffer. Pray for all who are tempted to fight violence with violence. Pray for men and women who work for peace often at great risk to themselves in particular pray for Bishop Josiah and his wife Comfort whose work for peace is quite amazing. Pray for quality relationships to grow across the religious divide between Muslim and Christian. Pray for a just and fair election. Pray that the democratic process will be respected.

Pray for the peace of Nigeria that beautiful country of such amazing people as I was so privileged to discover two years ago:

Lord God bless Nigeria, Guide her rulers, Guard her people and Give her peace, Amen.

Pray that prayer on February 14 but not just on that day for Nigeria needs our prayers every day of the week.

Your friend and Vicar,

Peter

February St. Laurence's Church Services

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|--------------------|
| Sunday 1 st | Candlemas | 10.30 a.m. | Joint at St John's |
| | | 6.30 p.m. | Holy Communion |
| Sunday 8 th | 2 before Lent | 10.30 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| | | 6.30 p.m. | Evensong |
| Sunday 15 th | Next to Lent | 10.30 a.m. | Morning Worship |
| | | 6.30 p.m. | Holy Communion |
| Sunday 22 nd | Lent 1 | 10.30 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| | | 6.30 p.m. | Evensong |

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|------------------------|
| Sunday 1 st | Candlemas | 10.30 a.m. | Special Service |
| Sunday 8 th | 2 before Lent | 10.30 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| Sunday 15 th | Next to Lent | 10.30 a.m. | Family Service |
| Sunday 22 nd | Lent 1 | 10.30 a.m. | Joint at St Laurence's |

From the Registers

The funeral of Eileen Joyce Worrall (89 years) took place at the Heart of England Crematorium on 19th December. Eileen lived in Ansley her whole life. Eileen was very involved with the Chapel, where she also ran the Play School; many village children have fond memories of their pre-school days.

Eileen was very practical and lived very much for her home and family. She is greatly missed by her sons Stephen and Andrew, their wives, her grandchildren, great grandchildren and her friends and neighbours.

Candlemas

On Sunday 1st February the congregation of St Laurence are invited to join St John's fellowship to celebrate Candlemas. The time when we remember Jesus coming into the world to bring light and then moving into the season of Lent and is half way between Christmas and Easter. There will be no service at St Laurence's on that morning.

Ash Wednesday

This year's service will be held in St Laurence's church, Ansley at 7.30p.m., on 18th February. Members of our local churches/chapels are warmly invited to join us to mark the beginning of Lent.

Lent meetings

Each Thursday evening during Lent, beginning on 26th February, there will be a meeting in the annexe at 7.30 p.m. The programme will be planned to address the results of the recently completed survey of our strengths and weaknesses. If you are unable to attend at that time, you may wish to join a group at Margaret Oliver's house, 33, Nuthurst Crescent at 10.45 on Monday mornings, beginning on 2nd March.

Shared Parish meal

St John's congregation will be very welcome at St Laurence's on Sunday 22nd February for the morning service and for a shared meal in the annexe afterwards. There will be no

service at St John's that day. After the meal you are invited to stay for a short talk about the results of our survey.

St John's Valentine's Social Evening

This will take place on Friday 13th February in St John's Hall, starting at 7 p.m. There will be refreshments, soup, turkey batch and an entertaining evening is anticipated. Numbers are limited so please make sure you obtain a ticket [£4.00] in good time.

Churchyard Clearing and Check

On Monday 23rd February volunteers will clear the churchyard of winter wreaths and check that graves provide no hazard to the general public. Please remove any items you wish to keep before this date.

Women's World Day of Prayer – Advance Notice

The theme this year is, "What have I done to you?" The service, prepared by the women of the Bahamas, will be on Friday, 6th March at 10.30 a.m. in St Laurence's church.

The Voice of Flowers – Advance Notice

We are pleased to announce that there will be a special exhibition in St Laurence's church on Saturday 14th March. Photographs and newspaper cuttings will be on display around the church covering the 50 years since our flower festivals began. Refreshments will be available in the annexe. The church will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

St Laurence's Ninth Christmas Tree Festival

Well over 1,000 people visited our ninth Christmas Tree Festival during the three weekends leading up to the Carol service on 21st December. The opportunity to celebrate the individuals, groups and organisations that form our local community is much appreciated. Visitors were also able to reflect on the message that is the foundation of our Christmas celebrations.

We are very grateful to all the people who made this such an enjoyable event- the "muscle!" the decorators, the stewards, the car park attendants, the cleaners and the providers and sellers of refreshments. Thank you to everyone who made this year's festival such a success.

Some comments from the visitors' book,

"Another great effort by the whole community – well done."

"This is brilliant this must have taken ages!"

"I am spell bound. Wonderful. Thank you."

"Our annual visit was once again a triumph for everyone. Brilliant, it's not Christmas without a visit Thank you."

"Wonderful! Thank you, it's really blessed me!"

"So pleased you had the Nativity Scenes to tell of the true meaning of Christmas."

It is also pleasing to report that the proceeds were up on last year with £2585 having been raised, of which 12.5% - (£324) has been divided between Three Spires Tots, Cherish Dementia Holiday Trust and Kate's Ski tracks, the three local charities we are supporting this year.

A further £138.50 was raised for the Churchyard Fund from the stars on the "Memory Tree".

Church Fabric - Stained glass window

The PCC have secured a faculty to install a window, to be given by the family, in memory of Jennifer Woolliscroft. The small stained glass window will replace the cracked glass situated behind where the vicar usually sits. This window will depict a rural scene. Work on constructing the design begins this month.

Poppy Appeal

The British Legion has informed us that £42.32 was received from the container at St Laurence's church. Thank you.

Christmas Tree Festival Quiz.

Many thanks to all who supported the quiz. I had a number returned and when marked results ranged from 29 to 43 correct answers. The winner was Mrs C. Councell from Coventry who scored 43 and has now received her £10 voucher. Thanks again.

Moreen Freestone.

Ebola collection

Donations to help fight the Ebola outbreak came to £56 from St Laurence's and £40 from St John's congregations. Thank you.

Small change collection

During 2014, £201.80 was added to the Fabric Fund from the small change collection tins available from St Laurence's. Thank you for your contributions. Please ask if you would like a tin.

Churchyard Fund

Visitors to St Laurence's have only to glance about them to see how beautifully the graves are looked after by members of the local community. We would like to thank Ansley Parish Council for a grant of £600, which has been put towards the cost of cutting the grass and enabling people to access their family graves more conveniently.

A few people have given very generously to the churchyard fund during the last year. Together with the grant, fundraising and individual contributions, we have been able to meet the £4860 maintenance cost. Thank you very much for your donations.

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

After all the celebrations, parties, shopping, presents we come down to earth with a bang as January came and surprisingly was a quiet month until half way through weather wise, except for some blustery winds. However, the Spring flowers must be puzzled as we have pots of Primulas in bloom, and the Daffodils are well up.

Someone wrote to the newspaper and asked if birds suffer from 'indigestion'. My first reaction was that they should the way they gobble down the seed we put out, especially the Goldfinches. The answer to the question was yes birds do have indigestion with reports of Parrots, Seagulls and even hundreds of Turtle Doves falling from the sky in Italy, killed by indigestion. Hens, as a rule, have attacks of indigestion. These had been fed on concentrated food and not enough green feed. Much like indigestion in humans.

When I see the Fashion Pages talking about 'layers', I can honestly say my generation were pioneers of 'layers. During the winter months from October to May, we wore bloomers so large they had a pocket in them for your handkerchief; then a vest, a liberty bodice, full length underskirt, a jumper, pinafore dress and a cardigan and knee length woollen socks. When we went outside we had a thick coat, pixie hood, woollen scarf and mittens and of course heavy lace-up shoes. Then when we went to bed we kept on the vest underneath our Winceyette pyjamas, and 3 of us girls would cuddle together to keep warm. Many mornings we would awake to see the bedroom windows covered with ice patterns. Of course there was no central heating and cold lino on the floor, so during winter months we all said our prayers with our mother downstairs in our warm kitchen because it was too cold to kneel by the bed, and I'm sure God understood.

Having seen all our grandchildren in 'onesies', it reminded me of the 'Siren Suit' which was worn by grown-ups and children during world war two, because these all-in-one suits were easy to put on over nightwear, in case of an air raid when everyone had to go to the shelter in the garden or public air raid shelters. Winston Churchill was famous for wearing the siren suit, which he invented, and was similar to boiler suits worn by brick layers and tank crews. Churchill wore his siren suit regularly, even when meeting important people like President Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Eisenhower and Joseph Stalin. That's confidence for you!

'You don't stop laughing because you grow old; you grow old because you stop laughing.'
Benjamin Franklin.

Marie Cove.