

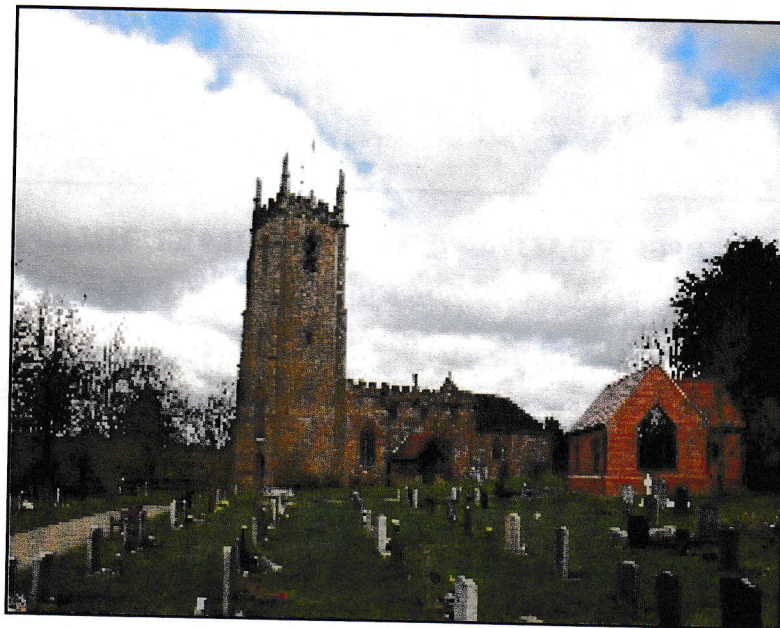
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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Ansley Village, Church End

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Thoughts on my final five months

When I announced in mid November that I would retire the following year it all seemed quite a long way away. Now June is getting closer and there seems a lot to do!

There are four very different aspects I want to talk about.

Firstly, my final confirmation class:- As always this is open to all - not just those who want to be baptised or confirmed or renew their confirmation vows. Our first meeting will be on Tuesday 2nd February at St. Laurence's Annexe. If you cannot make 2nd February and especially if you would prefer a different time or venue (e.g. you can't easily get babysitters and would prefer us to come to you) please get in touch. We don't want to exclude anyone. If I have prepared you for confirmation in earlier years or if you were prepared for confirmation a long time ago you would be most welcome. The course helps us to prepare for the early morning celebration of baptism and confirmation at Coventry Cathedral - always a highlight of the year!

Secondly, I would like to share with you why I believe - a very personal account of what attracts me in the Christian faith. This series will be entitled "Person, Purpose, Prayer and People." I will take this series as the subject of my final four sermons at every church. In addition I shall explore my thoughts more deeply at St. Laurence's Lent Group at the Annexe on Thursdays at 7.30pm. The dates will be 18th February, 3rd March, 10th March and 17th March. You are all welcome to attend. Additionally I will lead Songs of Praise at 6.30p.m. at St. Laurence's on 29th May with hymns that tell my Christian story.

Thirdly, I want these last months to be a time of celebration. On Sunday 10th April at 10.30a.m., the Bishop of Coventry will be dedicating the cross that used to be on the original St. John's Church and has now been returned to us and placed on St. John's Hall. At St. John's on 8th May, at St. Michael's on 15th May, at St. Laurence's evening service on 29th May and at St. Wilfrid's and St. Laurence's on 5th June, I will celebrate my final services with each congregation. Then in the afternoon of 5th June, at St. Michael's, we shall have the farewell from the whole benefice. Unlike the farewells at each church, where we shall largely follow our usual format, this whole event will be designed to cater for the needs of churchgoer and non-churchgoer alike. After an informal service we shall have refreshments in the Community Centre.

And finally, we need to look ahead. Probably in March (date and venue to be fixed) Archdeacon Morris will speak to an open meeting for all who wish to come about the process of choosing a new Vicar. In April everyone at each church will be asked to complete a questionnaire to discover the strengths and weaknesses of each church. St. Wilfrid's, St. Michael's and the morning service at St. Laurence's have done this before; for St. John's and the evening service at St. Laurence's this will be new to you. I have asked that all congregations participate so that prospective candidates get a good idea of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

Ideas on how best to mark my departure and plan for the future will emerge in the weeks to come and there may be changes to this programme. If changes occur, I will keep you informed in future newsletters. In the meantime, let us pray for one another as we prepare for the changes this year will bring.

Your friend and Vicar,

Peter

February St. Laurence's Church Services

Sunday 7 th	Next before Lent	10.30 a.m.	Ordinary Time [Screen]
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 14 th	Lent 1	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 21 st	Lent 2	10.30 a.m.	Lent Service [Screen]
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 28 th	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 7 th	Next before Lent	10.30 a.m.	Joint at St Laurence's
Sunday 14 th	Lent 1	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 21 st	Lent 2	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 28 th	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

From the Registers

The funeral of Pat Harris took place at St. Laurence's Church on Friday 15th January, followed by interment in the churchyard.

Pat and Frank were married at St. Laurence's in 1965 and celebrated their Golden Wedding in style last year. Qualified and supremely gifted as a hairdresser, she delighted in being mum to her children and their many friends and she loved being a grandma. She has faced health problems for thirty years and it is a remarkable tribute to her own determination and to the love and care of her family and friends that she maintained such a quality of life in the face of adversity. The church was full for her funeral service as many came to pay their respects to a very special lady. She is deeply mourned by her family and friends.

Confirmation Classes

The first of Peter's last series of confirmation classes will be held in the Annexe on Tuesday 2nd February, at 7.30p.m. Please contact Peter if you would like to attend.

Shared Parish Meal on Sunday 7th February

St John's congregation are warmly invited to join St Laurence's for the morning service and a shared meal. There will be no service at St John's. We shall be gathering in the annexe after morning service to share in our annual parish meal of jacket potatoes with chilli con carne, chicken casserole and other fillings, plus sweets. You may bring a dish with you, if you wish, but don't worry if you forget or if time runs out. With or without a contribution you will be very welcome. Coffee or tea and biscuits will be available in the annexe after the service, followed by a talk from Peter and then the meal.

Ash Wednesday

Easter is early this year, so Ash Wednesday falls on 10th February. A joint service will be held at St Michael's, beginning at 7.30p.m. for the congregations of St John's, Ansley Common, St Laurence's, Ansley, St Wilfrid's, and the Methodist Chapel, Old Arley and, of course, St Michael's, New Arley. This service marks the beginning of Lent and enables

members of all the local churches to reflect on their personal faith journeys and to prepare once more to remember the awesome events of the first Easter. There will be a collection plate at the cross aisles during Lent for the work of the Anglican church in Kaduna Province, Nigeria.

St John's Valentine Social

This event will take place at St John's Hall on Friday, 12th February at 7.00 p.m. Refreshments will consist of soup, a turkey batch and a sweet. Tickets cost £4.00 each, and should be ordered in advance. Come along and enjoy an entertaining evening.

Lent Course

The first meeting of this year's course will be in the Annexe on Thursday 18th February at 7.30 p.m. See Peter's letter for further details.

Safety Check of Churchyard Memorials and Clearance of Christmas wreaths

The churchwardens would be very grateful for any help with the task of making sure the churchyard is in a suitable condition for this year's mowing to begin. This involves removing Christmas wreaths which remain on memorials and checking the condition of the stones. Do make sure you have removed items you wish to keep before Monday 29th February as work will start from 9.00 a.m.

Advance Notice - Women's World Day of Prayer

A service, prepared by the women of Cuba, will be held on Friday 4th March, at 10.30 a.m. in St Laurence's church. The title this year is "Receive children, receive me." This is an informal service, offering opportunity to take part [no rehearsals needed!] Men as well as women may join in and refreshments will be available in the annexe afterwards, with a few materials on display to look at and/or purchase. Do come along if you can.

Advance Notice - Mothering Sunday Weekend

The church will be open to visitors on Saturday 5th March, from 10.00 a.m. to 4 p.m.

St Laurence's Tenth Christmas Tree Festival

"A Joyful experience."

"Thanks for the inspiration – fantastic."

"What a magical display, just breath taking. Loved it!"

"An inspiring display – well done to all involved – a true Christmas message."

"Lovely display ☺"

"Absolutely stunning, a great feeling of joy."

"Beautiful again! Thank you."

"Really made us all feel festive, excellent Christmas trees."

"All my favourite things together, Church Xmas trees & Xmas village scene. Truly beautiful."

"More beautiful every year."

"1st time visitors – amazing trees. Thank you."

"Lovely ideas – well presented."

These are some of the comments from our visitors book which best sum up the three weekends of our Christmas Tree Festival 2015.

It was a wonderful event for all concerned and, despite the wet weather; well over 1,000 visitors came through the church door, many of whom spent a considerable time looking in detail at the trees. People from the local community and the church family should feel proud that the countless hours involved in decorating the 60 trees and the other items around the church, brought pleasure to so many.

The true meaning of Christmas was brought out especially in the Nativity scene on the altar and others around the church.

The festival was a very happy and enjoyable event throughout. We are so grateful to the many individuals, groups and organisations that participated this year, giving of their time and talents to decorate "their" tree. Nor do we forget the many who helped in other ways, by providing the refreshments and serving them, by setting up the trees and removing them or by cleaning and tidying up.

It is pleasing to report that the proceeds were again up on the previous year with £2778 having been raised, of which £420 has been given to the Mary Ann Evans Hospice. A further £125 was raised for the Churchyard Fund from the stars on the "Remembrance Tree."

Thank you again to everyone who helped with and supported this event.

Christmas Quiz Result

Many thanks for taking part in this year's quiz. Ten entries were received, with scores ranging from 38 to 47. As two entries tied on 47 correct answers, a draw took place in church on 17th January. Mr Roger M^cQuade was declared the winner. The winner's voucher has been sent to him. Corrected quizzes have been sent to all entrants and a copy of the correct answers has also been placed in the church porch. Thanks again. Moreen Freestone.

Finance

The treasurer would like to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of a sum of £80, given to the church in memory of Baby Reef Lees.

The small change collection from last year amounted to £216.98, a slight increase on the previous year. Do ask for a container if you would like to donate your small change coins to church.

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

Already February and Christmas is just a fond memory, as bulbs are up, Hellebores are flowering and Spring is surely on its way. When we were at school we were taught a rhyme for each month and February was, "February brings the rain, swells the frozen dykes again." From this you can see how the seasons have changed, as no way do we need more rain as the rivers and dykes are full to capacity.

At St John's, Ansley Common, the cross from St. John's Church, which was demolished in the 70's, has been found, repaired and put on the top of the Hall, so don't forget to look up and see it if you are passing by. We now look forward to April 10th when the Bishop of Coventry will be dedicating the cross at 10.30 morning service, and we would like to invite anyone who has memories of the original church to come to this service, and of course everyone is welcome.

Lately it seems that historians, in particular, are always trying to change long held beliefs and one is the spelling of Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, as now they have decided her name is 'Boudicca'. They explain this away as it was originally a misprint, by a playwright. Well, as far as I am concerned, as our teachers taught us, she will always be Boadicea.

February we welcome you, as shoots of green come peeping through.
The Catkins are hanging like jewels fair;
Company for the ivy who is always there.
The birds are hungry each and every morn,
But they know that Spring will very soon dawn.
So February we welcome you now
And every bird on every bough.

Marie Cove.