

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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Vicar:

Rev. John Langlands

Tel: 024 7667 5236

email: jlanglands@sky.com

Wardens:

MARGARET ANTILL
MOREEN FREESTONE

Tel: 01827 874520

Tel: 024 7638 1833

Deputy Wardens

Diana Kealey
Margaret Oliver

Tel: 024 7639 5089

Tel: 01455 822822

St. Johns Leaders

MARIE COVE
JOHN COX

Tel: 024 7639 4114

Tel: 024 7639 4802

www.ansleychurch.org

Print Centre 024 7638 6017

When you live in a village in the English countryside there's always something missing that you will always find in a large town or city – it's skyscrapers. Have you noticed there is often much rivalry around the world to build the tallest skyscraper. Many people these days enjoy visiting cities that have some of the highest ones in the world, for example in New York, Hong Kong or Dubai. It must be admitted, they are an incredible feat of humankind's ability to design, engineer and construct such monumental structures, often against difficult climatic and natural conditions. They must rank as one of the greatest wonders of the modern world.

A skyscraper reminds me of the story of a tall building that started to have cracks appearing on the outside. The owners immediately got some engineers and other experts to find out what the problem was. For a month, the senior executive of the building came in every day to see if any progress was being made. He wondered what the experts were doing as they never seemed to be visibly working on the cracks. In exasperation he got his maintenance director to report on where they were. A message came back to say that the experts were working down in the lowest basement because that is where the problem lay - not with what could be seen but with the foundations!

In the Bible we can read about a parable Jesus told of a wise and foolish man. The story ended with Jesus saying, "The foolish man built his house upon the sand, the wise man built his house upon a rock. When the storms came, the house on the sand collapsed."

This is a sober thought when we consider the state of the world and our nation today with the economic, political and social turmoil at this time of history. What about your own life? As individuals, what is the foundation of your lives built upon? When storms or trouble comes, do cracks start appearing? Or is your life built on The Solid Rock which the Bible speaks of in Psalm 46?

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way.
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;

Without strong spiritual foundations we may well be walking on sand. Don't be fooled by what you see on the outside – no matter how wonderful it may look.

With best wishes

Rev John

February St Laurence's Church, Ansley Services

Sunday 3 rd	5 th before Lent	10.30 a.m.	Ordinary Time Screen
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 10 th	Candlemas	10.30 a.m.	Joint at St John's
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 17 th	3 rd before Lent	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 24 th	2 nd before Lent	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong

St John's Church Hall, Ansley Common Services

Sunday 3 rd	5 th before Lent	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 10 th	Candlemas	10.30 a.m.	Special Service
Sunday 17 th	3 rd before Lent	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 24 th	2 nd before Lent	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

From the Registers

No entries this month.

Candlemas

There will be a Candlemas service at St John's on Sunday 10th February at 10.30 a.m. This is a joint service, so St Laurence's congregation are invited to join the fellowship at St John's. There will be no service at St Laurence's that morning.

Confirmation

If you would like to explore the possibility of being confirmed, please contact the Reverend John (See front cover of this magazine.) He will arrange sessions as convenient for candidates. Do make contact, even if you are not sure that this is for you, as you can attend sessions without commitment.

Children's Holiday Club – Ansley Village Church Hall

This club will be held on Thursday 21st February from 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. Do pass this information on to families you know with primary age children. They do not have to live in Ansley itself.

St John's Children's After School Club

The next meeting of this club will be at St John's on Tuesday 26th February from 3.45 to 4.45 p.m. This club will meet each month. Again, do please let families with primary age children know. Participants do not have to live in the parish.

Ansley Prayer Meeting

Everyone is welcome to come to the next prayer meeting in the Annexe at St Laurence's on Tuesday 29th February from 2.00 to 3.00 p.m. This will be a monthly meeting on the last Tuesday of the month, where practicable.

Advance Notices – Lent 2019

Ash Wednesday

New Arley, Old Arley and St John's congregations are warmly invited to a Joint Benefice service on Ash Wednesday, 6th March at St Laurence's, starting at 7.30 p.m.

Lent Reflections

The Reverend John will be leading a series of reflections during Lent. These will rotate around the parishes. The first will be held at St John's on Wednesday 20th March between 2.00 and 3.00 p.m. You will be welcome at any of the venues whether you can attend them all or not. More details will be in next month's magazine.

Lent Collection

During Lent, a plate will be placed at the cross aisle for those wishing to contribute to the provision of clean water wells in Kaduna Province, Nigeria.

World Day of Prayer

A Benefice service marking the Women's International World Day of Prayer, now known as the World Day of Prayer, will be held at St John's Hall, Ansley Common 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." Frances Langlands is co-ordinating this service and members of St Michael's, St Wilfrid's, St Laurence's and St John's will be made very welcome.

St John's February Social

This event will be held on Friday 15th February at 7.00 p.m. You do need to buy tickets in advance. The cost is £5.00 with a pie and veg supper. This should be a very enjoyable evening.

Christmas Tree Festival 2018

We had another fabulous Christmas Tree Festival, from start to finish. It was just a lovely time for all. Although some decorators could not take part this year, others stepped in. This did keep the organisers on their toes!

More than ever this year, visitors mentioned certain trees to the many helpers. They included the quirkiness of the Christmas Quackers Tree and the poignancy of the Poppy Tree with the names of those who made the ultimate sacrifice from the parish. Also commented on, surprisingly, was the Spring Hill Surgery Tree, regarding the number of missed appointments and the impact it had on the workload there.

Fortunately the weather was kind and we had a good number of visitors each day but unusually the last weekend was quieter, probably because it was so close to Christmas. The seasonal ill-health of some of our helpers especially for the last weekend made manning the rota more difficult and we extend a big THANK YOU to all who helped out throughout the event, and hope all who were poorly made a speedy recovery.

There were over 130 prayers on the Prayer Tree, and they were all taken to the altar and offered up to God during the Christmas Day service. They have all been prayerfully read and a selection were read aloud at our services during the event and on Christmas Day.

Financially we had a great success, up on last year and although not a record we did make £2634.50. £530 has been sent to the Mary Ann Evans Hospice, also £95.50 from the stars on the Remembrance Tree has been added to the Church Yard Fund. The concert of traditional English music on the 21st was attended by over 70 people and was much appreciated. We thank Jess and Richard Arrowsmith with Jo Maher who entertained us with many carols and other Christmas songs. This raised an additional £150 for church funds.

The Christmas cake raffle was won by a lady from Birchley Heath.

As usual a few comments from our visitor's book:

"Some very clever people and a lot of hard work."

"... Sets you up for Christmas."th

"1st visit. Amazing. Thank You."

"Amazing display of colour and design. Hard work."

"Very impressive. Touches the Heart! Well done!"

As is so often the case, publicity is probably one of the more difficult jobs of the whole festival. By speaking to the visitors it appears to be word of mouth, the signs along the road and yes, social media that pull in the visitors. We thank Nuneaton Memories for their help with this. We wish to say a big thank you to all the people, organisations and businesses who assisted with this event which gave so much enjoyment to so many people.

From the PCC

Safeguarding Training

Members of the PCC will be attending a safeguarding training session on Wednesday 13th February from 1.30 to 4.30 p.m. Other opportunities will be available at other venues for those who cannot come to this session.

Churchyard

The churchyard will be cleared of wreaths and unsuitable items (glass, other breakables etc.) on Monday 25th February, from 9.00 a.m. This is to prepare the churchyard for the first grass cut later in the year. A Health and Safety check will also be carried out. Do please remove any items that you would like to keep from your family grave/graves and dispose of faded wreaths/arrangements before this date. Any help you can give on the 25th will be much appreciated.

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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 forwho is.....

February, 2019

It seems like only a couple of weeks since we were rushing about and worrying over Christmas presents, cards and food etc. and then it was a relief when it was all over, but a sadness too as we get back to our routine.

It is strange over the years how the seasons have changed. When we were children November was a dreaded month with thick fogs, grey and cold; December and January were the months of ice and snow. Our grandchildren have been longing for snow, but not older people. This winter, although the days have been very grey and dark, the snow and ice have stayed away, but there is still time. However, in the middle of January I picked a spray of Chrysanthemums from our garden and Daffodils were being sold in the shops.

When I was 14 years old the Sunday School at Hartshill gave me an Autograph Book, when I became a Sunday School teacher. Two years later, when I left school, I collected autographs from school friends and teachers. It is almost filled with signatures and good wishes. Autograph books, like photograph albums, are mostly a thing of the past, but it is a shame because both of these albums are a snapshot of the past. My autograph book has some lovely rhymes in it, but one in particular made me smile. One girl wrote –
"Love is a virtue, love is a passion.

Love is a thing even Churchill can't ration."

This certainly dates the autograph book and me.

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 day but they know Spring will very soon dawn.

So February we welcome you now and every bird on every bough.

Marie Cove.