

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

No. 873

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Dear friends,

01676 540378

I was brought up on the old saying that March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb—but these days, what with all the threats about global warming, etc., nobody really knows what March will do—or any other month, for that matter!

There are other threats too. As I write, we are all wondering if war will be declared on Iraq. Although it seems far away to us, countries in that area are bound to be anxious that they will be targeted with dreadful chemical weapons. Whatever decision is taken will have far-reaching consequences.

As Christians we can feel helpless about all these things. As we watch the graphic scenes of trouble and violence on our TV screens from all over the world, we wonder if there is anything we can do.

One highly effective response to a wounded and lost world is to pray. People may scoff at this, and point to all the things where prayer has apparently not been answered; but what would have happened if there had been no prayer at all? We may never know. What we do know is that God calls us to pray, and He uses our prayers in mysterious and marvellous ways. Only God knows what harvest prayer will reap.

People pray in all sorts of ways. Some of us like a time of quiet and solitude. Others like to march through the streets, singing with banners, praising God and praying for the place where they live. Some of us like both! — and some of us find it very hard to pray at all.

Does this sound familiar? “Why, O Lord, is it so hard for me to keep my heart directed toward you? Why do the many little things I want to do, and the many people I know, keep crowding into my mind? Why does my mind wander off in so many directions? Do I keep doubting your love and care? Do I keep wondering whether you will give me all I need?” (Henri Nouwen)

Prayer can be hard work. For this reason our Lent course this year is based on a book which will help us to deepen our prayer life, and to find more ways of praying effectively together. Lent is traditionally a time when Christians make a special effort to understand more about God and to draw closer to Him, and **I'm inviting everyone to join us in the village hall on Wednesday evenings during Lent to learn more about 'Secrets of prayer together.'**

When I have led this course before, those who came found that they were inspired to pray in a fresh way. It is based on the Lord's Prayer, and each meeting will be structured on a phrase from the Prayer.

As God is calling us to pray more, so it seems appropriate to have as our **Quiet Day Pause for Thought the topic 'Lord, teach us to pray' on 14th March.** This is what Jesus' disciples asked him. As His modern-day disciples, we too need to learn how to pray better and we need help in doing so. I hope as many people as possible will join in, and give God a chance to inspire us.

In His love,
Gill and Geoff.

SERVICES FOR MARCH

At St. John's:

On Sundays at 10.15 a.m.:

March 8: Family Service.

March 22: Mothering Sunday Family Service.

On Thursdays at 9.15 a.m.

First Thursday (March 5): Holy Communion.

Third Thursday (March 19): Morning Prayer.

At St. Laurence:

On Sundays at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

March 1: Family Service (am),

Traditional Holy Communion with hymns (pm).

March 8: Holy Communion.

Traditional Evensong.

March 15: Morning Prayer.

ASB Holy Communion.

March 22: Mothering Sunday Family Service.

Mothering Sunday Evening Service.

March 29: Family Holy Communion.

Bereavement Service in the evening.

On Thursdays:

March 12: 9.15 Morning Prayer.

March 26: 7.15 Night Prayer before PCC.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Everyone is most welcome to our **Bereavement Service at 6.30 p.m., on Sunday, March 29th**. This is for all who have lost someone they love, whether you are a church person or not, and whether your loss is recent or some time ago. Feel free to invite family, friends and neighbours.

March 14th 10.00 a.m.-3.00 p.m. in the Village Church Hall: PAUSE FOR THOUGHT QUIET DAY. Topic: "Lord, teach us to pray" with Rev. Michael Simpson, Joint Warden of Offa House (our retreat house) with his wife Rev. Sharon Simpson. They are both the Diocesan Spirituality Advisers. Tickets will be £3 each and will include mid-day meal and coffee or tea. **If you want to know more about how to pray, this is for you.**

Lent Group every Wednesday in the Village Church Hall at 7.45 p.m.

Thursday, 26th March 7.45 p.m. in St. John's Hall—**P.C.C.**

Saturday, 28th March at Attleborough: Workshops to help churches develop their vision and work. Some of us will be attending workshops on children's work: ideas for a Millennium Event: and church planting. These workshops continue to follow up the Swanwick Diocesan Conference.

A PRAYER TO USE DURING LENT

Heavenly Father,
Through your Holy Spirit grant to us
Thoughts which pass into prayer,
Prayers which pass into love,
And love which passes into life with you,
In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Bus details for 6.30 p.m. Evening Service:

Ansley Village turn 6.00 p.m.

Ansley Common St. John's 6.20 p.m.

Return journey from Parish Church 7.30 p.m.

St. John's Children's Club: Every Tuesday 6.30-7.30 p.m.

To book St. John's Hall: Contact Pat Barnes, 69 Ansley Common.

Next Millennium Meeting: March 17th 7.45 p.m. St. John's Hall,

Millennium Event: Coffee Evening/Nostalgia, St. John's Hall. Friday,
March 27th, 7.30 p.m. Bring old photos and stories of the past.

The death is reported of Rev. Donald Munro at the age of 89 in Seaton, Devon. Many in the Parish will remember him when he was Vicar of Ansley during the 1950's. Although he was advanced in years, he had bought seeds for this year for his allotment. He had also previously rebuilt the Porch of the Church at Seaton himself. We send condolences to his widow Lilian.

PAST PARISH EVENTS

The Cheese and Wine Evening on January 30th was a great success. The food was excellent and the entertainment first class. Everyone enjoyed it and we thank Margaret Kimberley and her helpers who worked so hard both before and on the night. We look forward to the next one.

The Blue Peter Bring and Buy: Held on Saturday, February 7th at St. John's Hall was a real combined effort. We especially thank the Community Workers who did the heavy work and the "Over 50's" who provided lots of things to sell and manned the stalls. This event was well attended and enjoyed by all, raising a magnificent total of £112.70. Thank you everyone.

FROM THE PARISH REGISTER

It was with sadness we heard of the death of Verners Baginski of Ansley Village, who died on January 24th, aged 72 years, after a long illness borne with great patience and courage. After cremation his ashes were interred in the Churchyard. Verners came from Latvia in the Baltic States to work in the coal mines and was readily accepted and befriended by Ansley Village residents who knew him for his quiet gentle manner.

We send our sympathies to Jean, and all the family and many friends in these sad days.

The funeral took place on February 17th of Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Smalley of Birchley Heath, who died suddenly at the age of 58 years. We extend our condolences to her husband and family in their sad loss.

We also extend our sympathies to Dot Hurst, whose husband Harold died recently. Dot has always been a faithful worshipper, helper and friend to St. John's. May she find comfort in her faith in her sadness and loss.

"The Eternal Father is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms."

28 Nuthurst Crescent
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Telephone: 01203 394114
March 1st, 1998

Dear Friends,

Well, another month has passed and what wonderful weather we had in February. It was the warmest it had ever been in February since records began. It was more like April or May and I am sure we all appreciated it.

At this time of the year it is like a time of looking forward and expectation as winter starts to give way to spring. Already we see lighter mornings and it stays light later at night. We see the bulbs peeping through and the little snowdrops as they stand like miniature soldiers so brave against whatever weather they have to withstand. Seeing these signs we all have a sense of hope that spring is just around the corner.

I used to wonder why people spent hours and hours birdwatching, but as I sit by the window watching the perky sparrows, the precocious starlings, the cheeky robin and all the other birds who come every morning for scraps and nuts, I know why people bird-watch—for sheer enjoyment. The birds are such wonderful little characters and they tell us when the seasons are changing as they become more numerous, more industrious and prepare for nests and families.

Many years ago "The Seekers" made a record, which started "To everything turn, turn, turn. There is a season, turn, turn, turn, and a time for every purpose under heaven." How true these words, as we feel so deflated after the Christmas celebrations, but very soon we see signs of Spring, Easter eggs are in the shops and holiday brochures are tempting us to book our holidays. So once again we turn towards other festivities and celebrations.

No matter what time of the year it is God remains constant and true to His promises. We remember especially His promises to Noah after the flood when God said "As long as the world exists, there will be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night." I'm sure you will agree as we once again see green shoots peeping through and trees starting to bud, that God has indeed kept His Promise.

"Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses," Ecc. 3 v 1.

God Bless,
Marie.