

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

Parish including Birchley Heath, Ansley Common,
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MARCH NEWSLETTER 2000

Dear Friends,

Before our eldest daughter Hannah left for a job in Ecuador, she planted some bulbs in a trough outside our window. Now they are showing healthy green shoots; a nice reminder that winter is not going to go on for ever. One day the cold, frost and gale-force winds will give way to gentler weather, buds, leaves and flowers and the singing of the birds.

Just as nature goes through its cycle of death and new life each year, so do our lives. There are times when everything seems cold and bleak, when happiness is very far away. We can't avoid these experiences or go round them. We find ourselves having no choice but to go through the sadness or the loneliness.

The strange thing is, that when we go through these times clinging to the hand of God, we can look back and discover that they are the very times when we have learned the most. Nobody would wish to go through them again, but we may find ourselves with some precious and valuable understanding that we did not have before. It's as if God has turned a raw and bitter winter into spring, and the shoots of new life are showing.

The Christian church has recognised this pattern for many centuries. This month Ash Wednesday on 8th March heralds the beginning of Lent. Traditionally Christians have observed Lent with fasting and prayer, two powerful weapons in the spiritual battle against evil. I invite you to do the same.

However, it is not right for everyone to fast. Instead, we can look at our lives and see if there is a bad habit or a wrong attitude which we know we should give up, and we can ask God to help us change inwardly.

Maybe we wish we could be more effective in sharing our faith with friends and relatives. Help is at hand!—**our Lent course this year is on 'Sharing our faith'**—why it is important, and how we can do so in a way that will not offend others.

Every Christian can use Lent to do some serious business with God, and to find a way of deepening our spiritual lives. It doesn't come easy!—but if we stick with it, we will find that God has been at work when we were least expecting it. He has promised to do a good work in us.

For Lent this year I commend to you the prayer of Sir Thomas More. Pray it slowly each day, thinking deeply about its meaning in your life:

**Dear Jesus, thank you
For all you have given me,
For all you have taken from me,
For all you have left me. Amen.**

In God's love,
Gill and Geoff.

SERVICES FOR MARCH Theme: Friendship

Services at St. John's Hall are at 10.15 a.m. on 12th and 26th March

Services at St. Laurence's are at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

- 5 March: am Family Service
 pm Prayer Book Communion
- 12 March: am Holy Communion
 pm Prayer Book Evensong
- 19 March: am Morning Prayer
 pm ASB Holy Communion
- 26 March: am Holy Communion
 pm Evensong

Mid-week services

Tuesday, 7th March 9.30 a.m. at St. John's: Holy Communion.

Tuesday, 21st March 9.30 a.m. at the village hall: Shorter Morning Prayer.

March events

LINKS children's club meets every Monday at the village hall at 7.00 p.m.

Wednesday, 1st March: Wednesday fellowship meets at 10 Nuthurst Crescent.

Wednesday, 8th March: 7.30 p.m. Ash Wednesday service at St. Laurence's. Holy Communion with imposition of ashes.

Tuesday, 14th March: 7.30 p.m. Morning Worship Team meets at the Rectory.

Wednesday, 15th, 22nd and 29th March: Lent course at 7.30 p.m. at St. Wilfrid's upper room on 'Sharing our faith.'

Wednesday, 22nd March: 2.00 p.m. Prayer group meets at 10 Nuthurst Crescent.

Thursday, 23rd March: There are plans afoot for a Quiz Evening in the village hall at 7.30 p.m. Come along and bring your knowledgeable friends. Further details from church members.

Saturday, 25th March: **CLOCKS GO FORWARD, SUMMER TIME BEGINS TOMORROW.**

Sunday, 26th March is the last Sunday for Rev. John Law before he retires from his ministry at Fillongley and Corley.

Thursday, 30th March: PCC at 7.45 p.m. at St. John's.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

On Saturday, 1st April St. Laurence's church will be open all day from 10.00 a.m. Refreshments will be available and we hope to have a small craft exhibition. If you have handiwork you would like to display—be it painting, embroidery, drawing, tapestry, carving, pottery or whatever—please be in touch with Margaret Kimberley (384680). All are welcome to pop in, look round and have a cuppa, especially those visiting the churchyard in preparation for Mothering Sunday.

2nd April: **MOTHERING SUNDAY.**

Saturday, 15th April: Fellowship Day in the village hall. Mike Stewart from Coventry City Mission will be our visiting speaker on 'How to give away your faith!' Look out for details and tickets for this popular and valued annual event.

Many thanks once again to the hard-working social committee for an enjoyable Cheese and Wine evening last month. For this millennium year we are planning to have a social event each month. We hope there will be something for everyone to enjoy and to ask friends to come along.

A PRAYER OF ARCHBISHOP ROMERO

This is what we are about,
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that,
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future that is not our own.

Amen.

FROM THE REGISTERS

We are all shocked and saddened by the sudden loss of Ian Kimberley. Margaret, Ray, Martin and Jane continue to be very much in our thoughts and prayers, and further condolences on the death of Elizabeth Froggett.

Our love and support also go to Ray Hobbs on the death of his mother, and to Margaret Antill and Anthony Truelove and the family on the death of Henry. Both were in their nineties.

Joyce Grenfell, that late great comedienne, wrote the following for her friends:

'If I should go before the rest of you,
Break not a flower nor inscribe a stone,
Nor when I'm gone speak in a Sunday voice,
But be the usual selves that I have known,
Weep if you must,
Parting is hell,
But life goes on,
So sing as well.'

On a lighter note, here is **Ogden Nash's** 'Word to Husbands':
To keep your marriage brimming
With love in the loving cup,
Whenever you're wrong, admit it,
Whenever you're right, shut up!

Gill Kimber

We would like to thank Mrs. Margaret Jones, her family and all who contributed in memory of Harry Jones, who died in January. A total of £320 was raised and this has gone into the Fabric Funds. Thank you all again,

Advance Notice: Christian Unity Spring Coffee Morning on April 5th, 10.30 to 12.30 at Lea Lodge, Monwode Lea (home of Mrs. Stella Inglis), Admission £1. All proceeds to be equally divided between St. Leonards, Over Whitacre, St. Anne's and St. Joseph's, Arley and St. Laurence, Ansley. Bring and Buy, Raffle. Everyone welcome.

EDITORIAL

March 2000

March is with us once more, the month which comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb or visa versa, as the old saying goes. You might agree with the "Gardeners' World Handbook" which describes March as being schizophrenic. You think Spring is on its way and then we have bitter cold winds, snow, hail and freezing rain. However, all around us there are signs that the earth is coming alive after its winter sleep. We shall have to note whether in fact March does come in like a lion or a lamb, and see if there is some truth to the old saying.

Have you ever thought you would like to bottle a special moment, which you never really have time to savour at the time, and uncork it when things are not so good, in the same way we take the summer fruits and make delicious jam, and the taste and smell reminds us again of those summer months. In a way the video recorder and camcorder can do this and indeed we ourselves have videos of Christmas parties, weddings, nativity plays and special anniversaries. However, how many of us wished we had enjoyed other special moments, which are over in seconds, such as a child's first tooth, first words, the tearful first day at school. The present generation are very lucky as they do video special moments such as holidays and weddings and we all have photographs, but I still think the idea of a bottle to uncork would be brilliant, especially when we are feeling low, as our memories get farther away.

I asked last month why the cross was cut in the base of Brussels sprouts, but the only explanation seems to be that it makes them cook quicker, or, as I feared, to let out creepy crawlies. It does not seem to have a religious connection, but has been passed down from generation to generation and nobody knows why—we just do it.

I have been listening to and thinking about some of the sayings which are used. My mother used to say if someone had a run of bad luck "He must think he killed a robin." What on earth has bad luck to do with a robin? My mother-in-law had an even stranger one 'Give a beggar a white horse and he'll ride it to the gate of hell.' I still struggle to understand that one. Perhaps it's something to do with if you give something valuable to a poor person they don't know how to handle it. Any ideas?

I was given the following verse from the MENCAP magazine:
'If winter is mild at the moment be grateful for bright days of grace.
If weathers are simply just awful, let sunshine be seen on your face.'

Marie Cove.