

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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EASTER 2002 NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

In the Orthodox church they celebrate Easter by waiting until midnight. There in the pitch-dark the crowds wait silently. All of a sudden, the priest emerges from behind the sanctuary screen, bearing three candles to represent the Trinity. 'Christ is risen!' he says, and the whole congregation responds 'He is risen indeed!'

People go forward to light their own candles, then turn and share the light with others, until everyone is carrying a lit candle. It is an inspiring moment.

It reminds us of the body of Jesus held in the darkness of the grave and of death. But death could not hold him: His resurrection flooded the tomb with light, and he walked free for ever from the power of death. Ever since, those who believe in him receive the light of his resurrection life and love, and share it with others.

My thoughts turn to Ansley as I leave. How can Ansley share the light of Jesus with others?

Believe in Jesus. Pray, read his word, share your faith. Unless the light of your faith shines, there will be nothing to share with others.

Love other Christians, tolerate their funny little ways, care for them, support and encourage them. Put aside your differences, forgive others from the heart and practise your unity in Christ. A divided church is weak and cannot move forward to do what God is calling you to do. A united church is strong, able, loving, welcoming and wise. It is ready to move as God desires.

Find ways of telling others about your faith. They may think you're odd. They may not agree. But then again, it may be just what they most need to hear at that moment. Take risks, and trust God.

Care for those in need. Ansley church is very good at this: it is one of your gifts. Use that gift in practical ways, to comfort those who struggle, to pray for and with them so that they too may know the grace and help of God.

Give generously, not only to those who are near, but also to those who are far off, and do not enjoy the benefits we have in this country. Without our aid they die.

Have a laugh (but never at someone else's expense). A sense of humour makes the world go round, cheers people up and defuses awkward situations.

Jesus lived, laughed, loved his disciples and put up with their weaknesses, cared for those in need, taught people about his Father, prayed, forgave his enemies and gave up his life for them.

Follow the Master. Share his light. Then the power of the resurrection will be yours in Ansley.

Geoff and I are leaving, but those who believe in Jesus are always one in spirit, wherever they may be. So it's not goodbye, It's 'until we meet again!'

With love to you all in the resurrection joy of Jesus,
Gill and Geoff.

SERVICES IN MARCH Theme: God's Word and God's Life

The services at St. John's are at 10.30, with Sunday School.

March 10—Mothering Sunday.

March 24—Palm Sunday, with Communion by Extension.

I am delighted to tell you that Bishop Colin has given permission to Dave and Marie Cove to continue preaching. He has also agreed for them and Donald Parr to use the service 'Communion by Extension.' This involves taking the bread and wine, which have already been consecrated at a Holy Communion service, to a special service for those who for various reasons can't attend a normal Communion. It is a way of expressing our unity in Christ.

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

March 3—am All age worship with Baptism.
pm Holy Communion.

March 10—am Special Mothering Sunday Service.
pm Evensong.

March 17—am All age worship.
pm Holy Communion.

March 24—am Holy Communion for Palm Sunday.
pm Evensong.

March 31—EASTER DAY

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.

10.30 a.m. Easter Worship (not Communion).

6.30 p.m. United Holy Communion, and Geoff and Gill's final service.

SENIOR CITIZENS Easter Communion in the village hall at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 19th March, followed by Home Communion.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday, 4th March: Ansley Common Fellowship.

Tuesday, 4th, 12th and 19th March: Alpha in St. Wilfrid's Upper Room.

Thursday, 7th March: PCC.

Saturday, 9th March: Church Open. A warm welcome and refreshments for visitors, especially those visiting the churchyard before Mothering Sunday.

March 13th: Wednesday Fellowship.

Thursday, 14th March: Archdeacon Mark Bryant visits Geoff and Gill.

March 28th Maundy Thursday: Last Supper at St. John's Hall at 7.30 p.m.

March 29th Good Friday: Vigil at St. Laurence's at 7.30 p.m.

Retiring collections continue throughout Lent for Bishop Colin's Lent Appeal: the Syrian Orthodox School in Bethlehem, and a cottage hospital in Kaduna, Nigeria for hundreds of villages more than 50 miles from the nearest hospital and town. The Syrian Orthodox Church in the Holy Land, and the diocese of Kaduna, are Companion dioceses with Coventry. The Bishop of Kaduna and Canon Andrew White, of Coventry Cathedral, are very involved in reconciliation work between Muslims and Christians.

Please note that, after Easter Day, all enquiries about the parish should go to the churchwardens. All services and weddings have been covered up to July. Funerals will be taken mainly by our Reader, Donald Parr, or Rev. Nick Clarke, vicar of Fillongley and Corley. Thanks are due to all those who shoulder extra responsibility during the interregnum. Please support them as much as you can, and pray for them, so that their work is a joy, not a burden!

FROM THE REGISTERS

Welcome to Ciaran Murray, joining the church family by Baptism on March 3rd, and to his parents Robert and Donna.

Our prayers and sympathy go to the family of David Watkin, who died on February 15th, aged 49. Also to Martin and Margaret Oliver and family, on the loss of Martin's mother,

GREAT EXCITEMENT! At long last we have received building regulations for the new church annexe, and we are asking builders to tender for the work. Pray for the building committee and PCC in all the decisions that lie ahead.

Quiet but heartfelt thanks to Marcia Sutton for her many years of faithful service as Church Treasurer, and to Joyce Allton and Diana Kealey for being prepared to take over from her.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SUPPER. This will be held in St. John's Church Hall, 7.30 p.m., on March 28th. Bring your own glass, soup dish and spoon. Everyone welcome.

A collection is being taken for a gift for Gill and Geoff who leave us on Easter Sunday, 31st March. Donations to the Churchwardens. Watch this space for details of the presentation.

Substantial amounts were collected at the funeral of Alan Neale for the Fabric Fund and Winnie Ponder for the new Annexe. Full amounts will be in the next magazine, but we thank the families and friends for these donations.

EDITORIAL

1st March, 2002

When you see the daffodils at this time of the year in almost every garden, roadside, park, etc., we think of them as simple spring flowers, but even the daffodil has evolved over time. No longer is the yellow daffodil the only option, as in catalogues, nurseries, and on videos from seed suppliers, we can see lots and lots of different ones. There are yellow with white centres, yellow with orange centres, all white, white with gold centre, gold with white centre, fluted petals, miniature daffodils—the list is endless. Some of them are truly spectacular and beautiful, but no matter what the colour or the shape, we can all agree that the daffodil is greeted with delight every year as the herald of Spring to brighten up drab winter gardens.

You may think that advertising is a modern phenomena, as we receive stacks of offers for everything from food, hearing aids, insurance and the once in a lifetime chance to win thousands of pounds. Well, you will be surprised to know that someone said that they had seen advertising on a piece of Roman pottery. I wonder what it was advertising, and at least it wasn't using tons of paper and helping to destroy the rain forest. There is now an idea to get volunteers to receive offers through their mobile 'phones as text messages. It sounds a bit hit or miss but would perhaps cut down the amount of junk mail we receive through our letter boxes.

Did you watch the Winter Olympics. What courage the athletes have as they career down steep icy mountains, take leaps over hills and rumble round sheer bends. Then there were those who catapulted themselves over great heights to land immaculately at the bottom. However, the most scary was what they called the skeleton bob, where a single person hurtled down an ice lined tunnel at high speed on what looked like a tea tray. Incidentally our girl won a bronze medal. The Winter Olympics do not have the glamour or attract the audiences like the Summer Olympics, but they are certainly not for the faint hearted.

We all remember the poem about the North wind and the Robin, but there are other verses, one of which is 'The North wind doth blow and we shall have snow and what will the swallow do then, poor thing? O, do you not know, he's gone long ago to a country much warmer than ours, poor thing?'

Marie Cove