

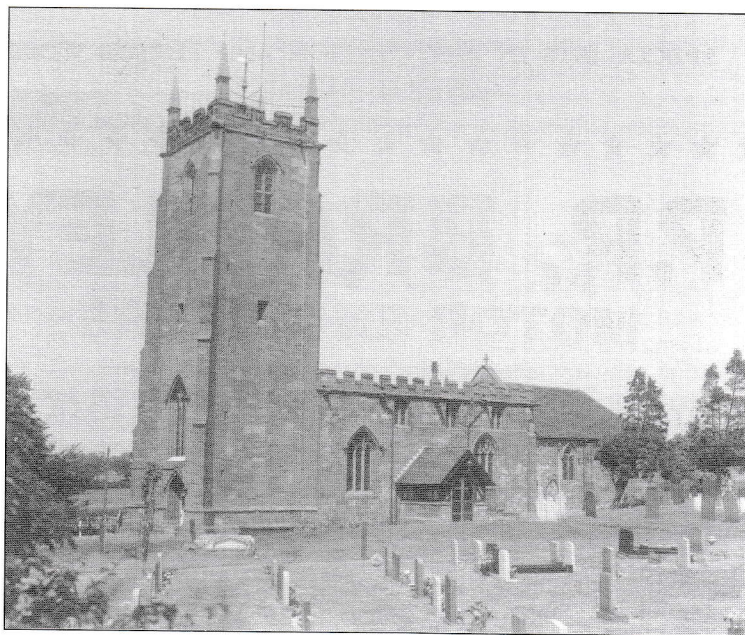
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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Seeing Hope

Some people say that the only things that matter are things you can see, touch and feel. Others believe that only spiritual things count, that the material world that we see, touch and feel is simply a cage from which we will eventually escape.

Both views are wrong. On my way back with Pauline from a break in Suffolk we stopped at Anglesey Abbey to see the Winter Garden. It was quite amazing how many plants of all shades and colours were showing their best in the middle of February. It was as beautiful as many a garden at the height of Spring or Summer. How could anyone have seen it and said that what we see and touch and feel and smell is a cage from which we need to escape? There were many beautiful trees, plants and shrubs that thrive in all seasons but but best of all were the snowdrops. Small in size but packed with truth. Beautiful in their own right, yes. But even more special because they are signs of hope. Winter is defeated. Spring is nearly here. Summer is on its way. I thank God for signs of hope everywhere. The new windows at the Village Hall, the funding for a youth worker whatever is your sign of hope, give thanks to God.

Seeing faith

It is wonderful to see faith in the lives of people around us. We thank God for those who continue to place their trust and faith in us even when we fail them. We thank God for those who persevere in their care for our community even when things go wrong. We thank God for all whose faith in Jesus drives them in their support and care for those around them. Sometimes people speak of their admiration for men and women of faith but feel they are excluded. No-one is excluded. All are welcome. If you are unsure whether faith is for you, why not come and find out more? We shall be starting an Alpha course soon, precisely for those who want to learn more. It is a friendly, unthreatening course where questions are welcomed. If you are interested please let me know.

Seeing love

In the life of our church we want do our best to ensure that everyone feels welcome. So at St. Laurence we are changing our pattern slightly. On the second Sunday of each month at 10.30 a.m. and on the third Sunday in March and on alternate months at 6.30 p.m. we are giving everyone the opportunity to receive prayer and the laying on of hands for healing, guidance or any special need. On March 5th and on the first Sunday of every month at 4 p.m. we shall be holding in the annexe a lively, informal service for families and children. It is planned with children and families in mind but no-one is excluded. You are most welcome to join us.

Join with me as Spring begins, look out for signs of hope, faith and love. Let us rejoice in such signs and may others find in us hope, faith and love.

Your friend and vicar,

Peter

March What's On

St. Laurence's Church

Sunday 5 th	Lent 1	10.30 a.m.	Morning Worship
		4.00 p.m.	Family Service
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 12 th	Lent 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion & Healing Service
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 19 th	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	Morning Worship and Godly Play
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion.
Sunday 26 th	Mothering Sunday	10.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong

St John's Hall Ansley Common Services

Wednesday 1 st		9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 5 th	Lent 1	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 12 th	Lent 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion & Sunday School
Wednesday 15 th		9.00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Sunday 19 th	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 26 th	Mothering Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

Other Activities at St. John's Church Hall

Monday 13 th	7.00 p.m.	Prize Bingo
Mondays alternate	7.00 p.m.	Indoor Bowls
Tuesdays	9.00 – 12.00 a.m.	Krazy Kettle Kafé
Wednesdays	6.30 p.m.	A.C.Y.C.
Thursdays	9.00 – 12.00 a.m.	Krazy Kettle Kafé
Thursdays	7.00 p.m.	Youth Club

Activities at Village Church Hall

Mondays	7.00 p.m.	Links - Youth Club
Tuesdays	10.00 a.m.	Senior Citizens
Wednesdays	10.00 – 11.30 a.m.	Ansley's Little Angels
Wednesdays	2.00 – 4.00 p.m.	Community Café
Wednesday 8 th & 22 nd	7.30 p.m.	Bingo
Thursday 9 th	7.30 p.m.	Parish Council Meeting
Thursday 23 rd	7.30 p.m.	P.C.C. Meeting

Other Parish activities

Tuesdays	10.00 a.m.	Family History Class (Annexe)
Thursday 2 nd 16 th & 30 th	7.30 p.m.	Ansley Common Fellowship
Fridays	1.00 p.m.	Art Classes at the Club
Saturday	10.00 – 4.00.	Open Church

From the Registers

There have been no entries in the parish registers since the February magazine was issued.

Ash Wednesday

On Ash Wednesday we traditionally begin the commemoration of the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness being tempted by the devil. We will, as mentioned in the February magazine, this year commemorate Ash Wednesday on the 1st March by holding a joint service at 7.30 p.m. at St. Wilfrid's Old Arley.

During Lent we will be having retiring collections for the work of Duncan and Helen Watts for their work in central Asia.

Sunday Afternoon Services

As the vicar mentioned in the February magazine these services will commence on Sunday 5th March. They are especially for children and their families, and will be welcoming lively, short and never more than forty minutes. There will be a light meal following.

As this is a new venture especially for families, we welcome your comments and your involvement so that the service can be as friendly and helpful to you as it possibly can.

Open Church

As in previous years the Church will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday 25th March (the day before Mothering Sunday) and light refreshments will be available in the annexe. The Ansley 2000 history display will be on show in Church. This is a scrapbook type display of articles, dating back to the Doomsday Book, with pictures and photographs of the different areas in our parish, through to more recent times. There is a lot of local and family history contained in the display.

The Church Tower

After what seems an age we have now formally got permission to proceed with this project, and the Church architect is now communicating with the company, Bowden & Ward on a suitable start date for this work. This work will not affect the day to day running of the Church and services will be carrying on as normal.

Church Yard

Starting in March and each subsequent month during the grass cutting season, the P.C.C. have decided to place a list each month on the notice board, acknowledging sponsorship towards the cost of the cutting. The idea is that the names of loved ones people wish to remember in that particular month will be added to the respective list. If you wish to remember a loved one in this way please use one of the envelopes in Church or contact one of the P.C.C. members. There is no fixed sum for this and any donation will be much appreciated. Please remember to make it clear which month you wish the name to appear on the list.

Please also note the grass is not cut November, December, January and February. It costs £210 each time the grass is cut and in addition other costs are incurred for the Churchyard maintenance.

Thank you to the anonymous family who gave £500 to the Churchyard fund.

Thank you also to the friends and family of Daphne Norwood who are planning to donate a bench in her memory.

Soil

Over that last few years piles of soil have been dumped around the churchyard,

especially against the wall at the bottom by the field. It is a very dangerous practice to put soil against this wall as the ground is much lower on the field side, basically the wall will not bear the weight of excess soil.

Soil is also being dumped on the rose bed by the cremation garden and this is undoing all the good work that has been achieved in improving the quality of the soil on this garden. Soil should not be moved from a grave; this soil will sink as the ground settles, and this may cause the gravestone to slip.

Please DO NOT remove soil or leave soil in the churchyard. Any problems please speak to the church wardens.

Village Church Hall

Work on the refurbishment of the hall, as many of you will have seen, has now commenced. What a difference a week has made to the appearance of the hall. The windows are a great improvement. We also expect the room to be warmer now there are no boarded up, cracked and broken panes. This work will be completed in stages, and it is hoped that there will not be too much disruption to hall users while this is being carried out. However some changes will be inevitable, but users will be advised as soon as dates are fixed with the different contractors.

It is wonderful that this project is now moving forward with tangible results.

To enable this work to be carried out grants have, to date, been received from Garfield Weston Foundation, Waste Recycling Environmental, (Wren), Awards For All, Bridge the Gap (Coalfields Regeneration Trust), The Alan Edward Higgs Charity, and The Baron Davenport's Charity Trust.

Users of the hall have already started talking of arranging a 'grand reopening' if you have any ideas of what form this event should take, please let it be known.

Annual General Meeting.

This year the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting will be held on 6th April, at 7.30 in the Village Church Hall. Anyone on the church electoral roll, or resident in the parish can attend the meeting but only those on the electoral roll can nominate people for the office of Church Warden, sidesman and P.C.C. member.

Four members each year are automatically up for re election. The Church wardens also have to be elected each year.

It is at this meeting that the accounts for 2005 will be presented together with reports on Church life and the various groups and organisations that are affiliated to the Church.

2005 has been a year of preparation and planning, with applications for funding for the Village Church Hall being submitted and by the end of the year we had almost reached our target.

Food Hygiene course

Anyone who wishes to attend a foundation food hygiene course to be held in Atherstone on Saturday 11th March please contact Margaret Antill.

Spurgeons & Tear fund

In 2005 a total of £748.67 has been forwarded to Spurgeon Child Care and £271.82 to Tearfund Children at risk.

March, 2006

I was reading an article recently where people had been asked about their favourite subject at school, and it made me think that although mine was English Literature, I also loved Nature Study classes. Some Spring, Summer and Autumn days we would all troop from Hartshill Old School to Oldbury Woods (now Hartshill Hayes). There were no set walks or sign posts, only narrow tracks, but we all seem to know where we were going. The teacher would gather us round and proceed to educate us on the names of the flowers, trees and birds. My favourite visits were in Autumn when we collected leaves for leaf rubbing and I still press flowers and leaves and do leaf rubbings for my grandchildren. Recently when I pointed out a bird in the garden, my 16 year old granddaughter asked me how I knew all the names, and I told her I learnt these at school. I'm sure the youngsters of today would enjoy a good old fashioned nature study lesson.

I was sitting in the car waiting for my daughter in the old part of Stockingford and was amazed to see the dates on some of the houses. Over one side they were built in 1903 and over the other side in 1890. I was astonished as they were in such very good condition and couldn't help but think of all the families who had lived in those houses and all the history attached to them. What tales those walls could tell!

There was a programme on television about different phrases and where they came from and while many are obvious, one was really enlightening. We have all been told by our parents years ago when we are going somewhere to 'watch our P's and Q's'. It appears that apprentices in the printing trade many years ago were told to do this as when setting out the letters, the P's and Q's were very close together and easily mixed up. That surprised me as I always thought it meant to watch what you were saying or even behaving.

We have a new sort of weather now on the forecast - 'soft hail'. What on earth is that? Perhaps it's just another way of saying 'snow', or perhaps it's a way not to commit yourself to rain or snow. My mother didn't need weather forecasters as she always seemed to know what sort of weather we would have. One of her favourites was if the fire burnt black it was going to snow, and she always knew when the wind was in the East, even without a weather cock as it was the coldest wind of all. Of course I must admit the weather was a lot more predictable in those days.

Marie Cove.