

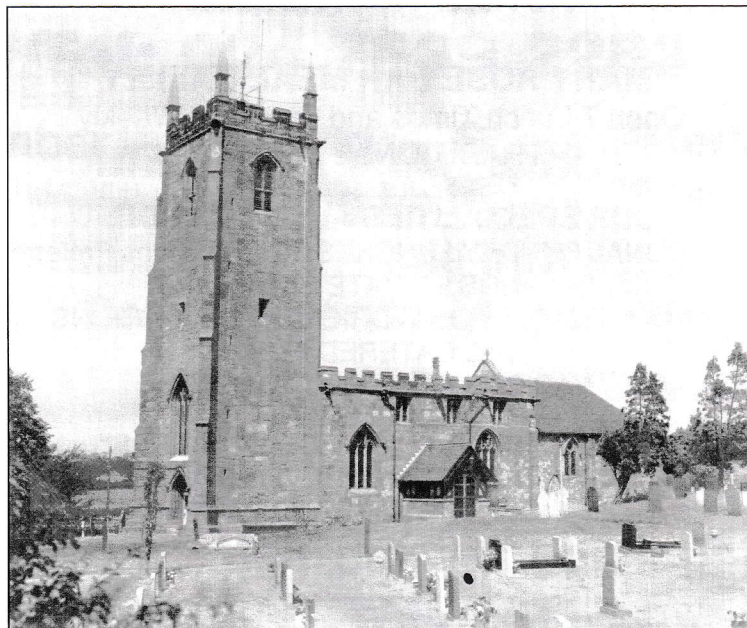
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

No: 1045

MARCH 2013

Price 30p



Vicar:

REV. PETER ALLAN

Tel: 024 7639 9070

Wardens:

MARGARET ANTILL

Tel: 01827 874520

MOREEN FREESTONE

Tel: 024 7638 1833

St. Johns Leaders

MARIE COVE

Tel: 024 7639 4114

JOHN COX

Tel: 024 7639 4802

Lay Reader:

MANDY WATTS

Tel: 024 7639 7654

GWYNETH HICKMAN

Tel: 024 7639 8901

www.ansleychurch.org

Print Centre 0800 389 4089

Gay Marriage?

There has been much controversy on government plans since the beginning of this year. Few items have gathered as much discussion and as many column inches as the issue of gay marriage - the proposal that persons of the same sex may enter into a binding legal covenant together on the same terms as couples of different genders have joined together for time immemorial. As when man and woman join together this is called marriage so the same word will, it is proposed, be used for the union of man with man or woman with woman.

With a few exceptions Christians have opposed this. The reasoning of those who oppose this change is sometimes odd in the extreme. I have heard it claimed that marriage is primarily intended for the procreation of children. This is a ridiculous argument. The Church has happily and rightly married people past child bearing age and even given the opportunity for the officiant to omit all references to child bearing from the service. There can and must be no suggestion that without children marriage is necessarily limited or diminished.

On the other hand the reasoning of those who argue for gay marriage is also bizarre. We are told that in the future everyone will look back and ask what was the fuss about, in the same way as we wonder how anyone opposed the decriminalisation of homosexual practice or the establishment of civil partnerships. But can we predict the future? Fifty years ago I had a passion for cutting out newspaper articles that caught my interest. Reading some of them now it is clear that no-one had any idea of how the world would change. From the troubles in Northern Ireland and the rise of nationalism in Scotland, from entry into (what is now) the EU, to the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the invention of the internet and the rise of militant Islam - none of these were under consideration. We do not know the future. It may be that in years to come we look back on gay marriage and wonder what the fuss was all about. It may be that we agree to gay marriage in the UK only to find that very few other countries in the world do the same. We simply do not know.

I would not wish to deny in any way the strength of loving commitment that someone can have for another of the same gender. Nor do I believe it right for the Church to oppose any plan by the state to deny to those couples the chance to celebrate their union in a manner that civil partnership does not allow. But it can not offer marriage.

I would oppose gay marriage for two reasons. First the union of two persons of the same gender can not be the same as the union of a man and a woman. How can we have the same Table of Affinity (the prohibition of who you cannot marry) and the same rules governing non consummation of marriage and adultery?

But there is a much more important argument. For thousands of years and across the globe marriage has the marriage of a man and a woman until parted by death. Different societies and generations have had varied definitions of the age when marriage can take place and of the opportunity to remarry after divorce, but the fundamental is non-negotiable. The state does not have the right to fundamentally alter the definition of marriage by allowing two people of the same gender to marry, any more than it has the right to offer fixed term marriages for e.g. a trial period of five years. There are just some things that are the fundamental building blocks of human society and I believe that the time honoured definition of marriage is one that cannot and must not be undermined.

In the end let us remember above all that God has created this world as a place to love and be loved. However strongly we feel we must never use our disagreements as a reason not to love our neighbour, not least because that totally undermines not just our arguments but our faith in a loving God.

And to end on a personal note. Please pray for me as I travel this month for a week in Nigeria to see the life of the church in Kaduna. It will be a challenging, demanding and exciting experience and I shall need your prayers. Thank You.

Your friend and Vicar,

Peter

March St. Laurence's Church – Services

Sunday 3 rd	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	All age worship for Lent
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 10 th	Mothering Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 17 th	Passiontide	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 24 th	Palm Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Special Service
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Friday 29 th	Good Friday	7.30 p.m.	Vigil
Sunday 31 st	Easter Day	8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
		10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 3 rd	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	Joint at St Laurence
Sunday 10 th	Mothering Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 17 th	Passiontide	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 24 th	Palm Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Joint at St Laurence
Thursday 28 th	Maundy Thursday	7.00 p.m.	Special Holy Communion
Sunday 31 st	Easter Day	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

Discussion Groups

Prayers in the Bible – Wednesday 6th March, 7.30 p.m. at 10 Nuthurst Crescent.

Fellowship Group – Tuesday 5th March, 7 p.m. in St. John's Church Hall.

From the Registers

No entries this month.

New Confirmation Course Starts Shortly

The current confirmation course leading up to Easter is going well.

There has been a request for a late Spring/early summer course to be held at weekends. If you are interested please contact Peter as soon as possible as numbers are filling up fast. This course is open to those interested in the Christian faith but not contemplating confirmation, those who were confirmed many years ago who want to refresh their faith and renew their confirmation vows and those who are not confirmed and would like to prepare for confirmation.

Lent Study Sessions

The first two of five weekly sessions took place on Thursday 21st February and Thursday 28th February in St Laurence's annexe from 7.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. You are welcome to join in some or all of the remaining meetings, on the 7th, 14th and 21st March. The title of the series is "Glimpses of God".

Women's World Day of Prayer, Friday 1st March

There will be a special service in St Laurence's Church at 10.30 a.m.

Lent appeal

The focus for charitable giving this Lent is to help raise funds towards the replacement of a sixteen year old vehicle being used by the Anglican Church in Kaduna, Nigeria. Our vicar, Peter, is visiting Kaduna in March as a member of a small group from Coventry diocese. A collection began with donations at a fellowship meal after the morning service on 17th February. Refreshment donations during the remainder of Lent will be used for this purpose. Donations may also be placed on a collection plate at the cross-aisles in church.

Mothering Sunday 10th & Saturday 9th March

Mothering Sunday falls on 10th March this year. We will follow our tradition of giving a posy of fresh flowers from 'Mother Church' to everyone during each service. The morning services at both St. Laurence's and St. John's will be special ones for Mothering Sunday. On Saturday 9th St Laurence's will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and there will be light refreshments available in the annexe. During the week leading to Mothering Sunday there will be leaflets about the churchyard in a tin by the gate. Please help yourself to one.

Holy Week and Easter

Our celebration of Easter will start with the **Palm Sunday** service at St Laurence's, when Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem will be commemorated. The congregation of St John's will travel to St. Laurence's for this joint service. We will gather in the annexe to begin the worship at 10.30 a.m. and then process into the church for the remainder of this special service.

You are warmly invited to a shared meal of bread, soup and a glass of fruit juice or wine on **Maundy Thursday** at St. John's at 7 p.m. to reflect on the Last Supper, when Jesus blessed the bread and wine.

At 7.30 p.m. on **Good Friday** a vigil will be held in St. Laurence's, to remember what our Saviour endured for us, with prayers, readings, hymns and contemplation.

The church will be decorated from 9 a.m. on **Holy Saturday** ready for the Easter Sunday celebrations. We would appreciate any help in arranging the flowers. If you would like to make a donation towards the cost of lilies and other seasonal flowers, we would be very grateful.

Easter Day

Hallelujah! Christ is Risen!

Please feel welcome to attend a service. There will be Holy Communion at St Laurence's at 8.00 a.m., followed by Holy Communion services at St Laurence's and St John's, both at 10.30 a.m. The Easter celebrations will conclude with Evensong at 6.30 p.m. in St Laurence's church.

It will be lovely to meet together to celebrate this most joyful and meaningful day of the church's year.

Electoral Roll

Every six years we are required by the Church of England to prepare a new electoral roll, instead of revising the existing one. This means that everyone who wishes to be on the electoral roll from 2013 must fill in a form, whether on the current roll or not. If you wish to be considered a member of the church and to give it your support, please collect a form from St Laurence's, St John's or from a churchwarden. You do not have to be on the electoral roll to be welcome at our services! The last date for handing in forms is Sunday 17th March. Information about electoral rolls can be found at <http://www.churchofengland.org/aboutus/structure>.

Please ask if you need any help.

St John's Easter Bonnet Social

This fun event will take place on Friday 22nd March from 7.00p.m. Tickets cost £3.00, with faggots/sausage, peas and mash on the menu. Do remember to book in advance as numbers are limited.

Live and Local Brassed Up

On Saturday 9th February James Stretton and Iain Jackson of Orichalcum, provided a highly entertaining evening of brass and keyboard music in Ansley Village Church Hall. The event was organised with the support of Live and Local, an organisation that facilitates the presentation of live music and drama in small communities. The performance was partly funded through grants from the Arts Council of England and Wales, Warwickshire County Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council. A total of £120.46 was raised for hall funds from a small percentage of the ticket sales, a raffle and the sale of refreshments. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way.

St John's Valentine's Day Entertainment

As a result of this enjoyable evening a sum of £75 was added to St John's Hall funds. Thank you to the organisers and those who took part.

Table Top Sale, Saturday 16th February

A sum of £80 has been shared equally between Ansley Village Church hall and St Laurence's fabric fund. Thank you to all who supported this event.

Prayer Requests

If you would like someone or a particular situation remembered in prayer at our Sunday Services both at St. Laurence and St. John's please hand the slip below to a member of the church congregation or contact the Vicar on 024 7639 9070. Please remember the vicar would be pleased to visit anyone who is sick, but he does need to know, again please ring.

Please pray forwho is

MARCH, 2013

It is strange but after living so many years, I still feel uplifted when I see the first Snowdrops, followed by Crocus and other Spring flowers. They must be very hardy, especially this winter, as they brave whatever is thrown at them, and are always such a welcome sight. As the poets of old said 'The Snowdrop is the harbinger of Spring'.

We are told now that there is not enough P.E. in schools; it is not competitive and not strenuous enough, whereas a few years ago the younger children did not participate in competitive sports. The schools have kitted out magnificent sports halls, but they should take a leaf out of the schools in our day. At Infant and Junior School (Middle) ,we played rounders, ran races and played with hoops and bean bags, all in the playground. We had teams with different colour bands – no shorts ,tops, tracksuits; the boys tucked their shirt in their trousers (short) and the girls tucked their blouse or their dress in their pants, and we were out there in all weathers unless really severe.

Just when you imagine you have heard it all, on the radio they were talking about 'Snail slime' – not as obnoxious and horrible but as a beauty product. Apparently this was a very old remedy and now some modern women are using it as it tightens the skin and so supposedly takes 30 years off your age. I will keep my saggy skin, thank you, rather than smear snail slime on my face.

Children say such funny things, e.g. in a magazine there was an article called 'Humour' which told this story. 'When the vicar moved his family into the large Victorian vicarage, a member of the congregation asked the young son how he liked his new home. "It's great" the little boy replied. "At least I have my own room, and Mike has his own room, and Jemma has her own room, and Bobby has his own room. But poor Mum is still in with Dad".

Now Spring brings forth her jewels of flowers. From Pearls of Snowdrops in shady bower.
To Daffodils of Amber hue which herald those days all bright and new.

Marie Cove