

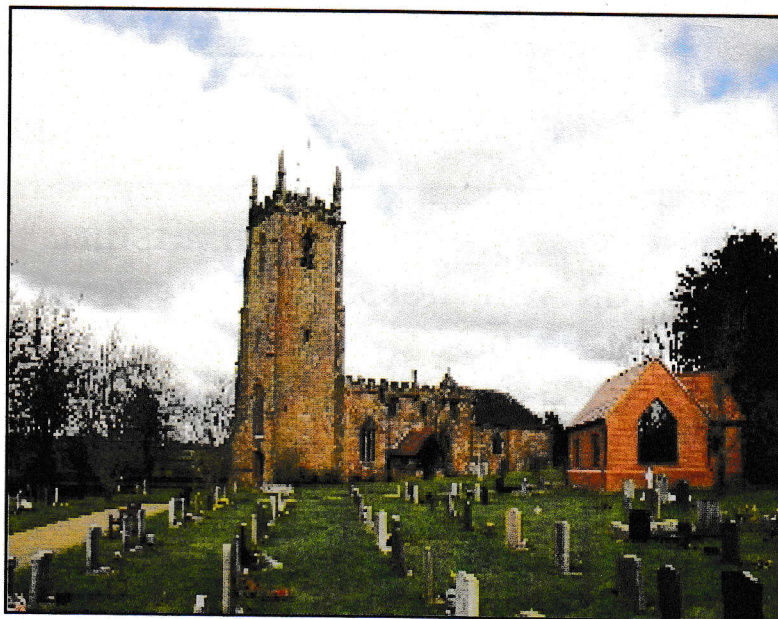
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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Thank You.

May I start by thanking you for your prayers, cards and sympathy at the death of my mother. Perhaps one of the best things about church life is that we are all here to both give and receive. It is my task as your Vicar to support and care but sometimes the tables are turned and it is I that need help.

People have often said to me that it is hard when mother dies. I have sought to be sympathetic but have admitted that I did not know what it would feel like. It is hard. There are very deep feelings of relief. Mum's life was increasingly impeded simply by sheer frailty - loss of eyesight, partial loss of hearing, loss of mobility but she was in a place of love and care and I was with her as she passed away peacefully. To use the Bible phrase she "died full of years" - just short of her 97th birthday. We have been deeply blessed. But we still miss Mum, Gran, Great Gran.

The funeral also took some planning. Was it easier because I take funerals every week? Yes and No. Yes because it does help to know about the details. No because being a mourner is a very different matter to being the Vicar. Did I want in any way to lead the service? Most definitely not. Did I want as Mum's son to share part of her story rather than delegate it to the minister? Yes I did. We had two services. The first was an extended committal beautifully taken by Rev. Heather Barnes at which the four grandsons spoke about what Gran meant to them. Then, at a service in the chapel in the home where Mum had lived, my sister and I told the story of her life.

It is all a mixture of sadness and thanksgiving. One does not cancel out the other. They live side by side. But it is tiring. Bishop John has told me to take a few days off in early March. It is odd being told to look after yourself. That's normally my job! But I'll do as I have been told. I will, I trust, come back revived and refreshed to carry on the work that was nurtured in me when, as a small boy, I sat on my mother's left hand side (always on the left!) as we attended Holy Communion together.

With many thanks for all your prayers and support,

Your friend and Vicar,

Peter

March St. Laurence's Church Services

Sunday 1 st	Lent 2	10.30 a.m.	Lent Service
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 8 th	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 15 th	Mothering	10.30 a.m.	Special Service
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 22 nd	Passion	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 29 th	Palm Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Special Service
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 1 st	Lent 2	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 8 th	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 15 th	Mothering	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 22 nd	Passion	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 29 th	Palm Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Family Service

From the Registers

On Sunday January 25th we celebrated the baptism of Fearne Evie Coton of Ansley Village. It was a truly joyous occasion as we gave thanks for her birth and marked her out as a disciple of Jesus. The songs "He's Got the Whole World in his Hands" and "All Things Bright and Beautiful" summed up the spirit of thanksgiving.

On Tuesday January 27th we gave thanks for the life of Janet Goadby. She faced all the challenges of her life, not least her final illness, with courage and steadfastness. She worked with dedication and determination. She loved, she cared, she laughed and so she will be deeply missed by her family and her many friends who packed St. Laurence's Church to thank God for such a wonderful woman. The service was followed by committal at the Heart of England Crematorium.

On Wednesday February 18th the funeral service of Joseph Derrick Thurman was held at The Heart of England Crematorium. Joe was one of these unique characters who is quite irreplaceable. His work was in mining and farming. His leisure time was used to grow vegetables in his garden which he then generously distributed. Deeply devoted to his dear wife Janet they are now reunited. His mortal remains were interred on February 20th in St. Laurence's Churchyard.

Lent meetings

Each Thursday evening during Lent, beginning on 26th February, there will be a meeting in the annexe at 7.30 p.m. The programme will be planned to address the results of the recently completed survey of our strengths and weaknesses. If you are unable to attend at that time, you may wish to join a group at Margaret Oliver's house, 33, Nuthurst Crescent at 10.45 on Monday mornings, beginning on 2nd March.

Women's World Day of Prayer

You are warmly invited to attend a service for the Women's World Day of Prayer in St Laurence's church at 10.30 a.m. on Friday 6th March. The service this year has been

prepared by the women of the Bahamas and is entitled, "What have I done to you?" This is a valuable opportunity to reflect on aspects of life for women around the world today and is open to everyone – men too!

The Voice of Flowers

St. Laurence's Church Ansley has now held 50 Flower Festivals. To celebrate this there will be a special exhibition in the church on Saturday 14th March. There will be photographs and newspaper cuttings mounted and displayed around the church to depict previous festivals and to give an impression of how things have changed over the years.

One of the important features of St. Laurence's Flower Festivals has been the emphasis placed on the Christian message. This has always been at the heart of each festival. The people of St. Laurence's have not tried to compete with others, but have sought to carve their own way of spreading the Gospel.

The title was the one used by the festival founder Mrs Edith Truelove when she put together jottings that were to form a book covering the first twenty five years of the festival. Mrs Truelove died 25 years ago in March 1990, but knew that the work of spreading the Christian message in flowers, that she started, would carry on in Ansley.

It will be interesting to notice the changes in the flowers used, in the techniques and in the materials that are now available to the arrangers. How things have developed in the space of time! It will also be possible to note changes to the building itself.

The church will be open from 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. and refreshments will be available in the annexe. Some will remember the hours that were spent in that old scout marquee in the churchyard!

Do come and appreciate this wonderful record of many years of inspiration, skill and shared endeavour.

Mothering Sunday

On Sunday, 15th March, special services will be held at St John's and St Laurence's churches. Posies will be distributed to each member of the congregations as a token gift from "Mother Church." We will remember all that our mothers mean or have meant to us and give thanks for their love and care.

Matters Financial

By the end of 2104 the three main church accounts all showed a surplus which after several years of deficit is very encouraging. However we do have to look at the underlying reasons for the surpluses to give a true picture and to be able to plan for the future.

The fabric fund had a proportion of the funds raised at both the Flower and the Christmas Tree Festivals amounting to £1,048. There were also generous donations for specific work, but in all there was an increase of £6,653 of which £3,744 will be going towards the long awaited painting of the church interior. However It MUST be noted that there was no work carried out on the church fabric in 2014.

The churchyard fund was able to show a small surplus of £1,090, after many years of deficit, this was due to the generosity of those who give money towards the maintenance of the churchyard; and also includes the grant of £600 from the parish council. It should also be noted that a total of £1,752 was also received from fees, which is very much a variable figure. In 2014 cost £4,500 to cut the grass alone. In 2015 we will be having the legally required inspection of the trees and how much this and any required work will cost is at present unknown.

The general account also had a small surplus of £1280, but it must be remembered that there were eight weddings, far more than usual, as well as an increase in the number of funerals compared with the previous year. These occasional services obviously helped boost our funds, but as a church we cannot be reliant on them. We were fortunately able to contain our running costs. However what is showing is that the amount given through the Gift Aid scheme has fallen over the last twelve months and the decline has continued. Gift Aid is a major source of income and if there is anyone who can do so, PLEASE do consider giving using this method of giving. The only criteria is that you pay tax in one form or another then the church is able to claim this back in proportion to what you have given. There are various ways have a word with Margaret Antill

St John's Valentine's Social

Although slightly down in numbers (because some of the regular people had a clash of dates) this was again a very happy event enjoyed by all who came, the homemade soup was much appreciated and all had fun in the activities after. A total of £75 was raised for hall funds.

Message from ANSLEY MORRIS

We are a ladies team, who were formed in September 2007. We practice on Thursday evenings in Ansley Village Hall from 7.00p.m. till 9.00p.m. We have lots of fun, and it is good exercise!! We have some wonderful musicians who accompany us.

We dance out at various venues during the summer months, Fillongley Show, Tamworth Moot, Baddesley Scarecrow Festival, Lichfield Folk Festival and Ansley Flower Festival, to name but a few.

We always welcome new members. Don't worry if you have not done Morris before, all will be explained.

For further details contact either
Pat Arrowsmith 02476 392555
Margaret Oliver 02476 395674

Prayer Requests

If you would like someone or a particular situation remembered in prayer at our Sunday Services both at St. Laurence's and at 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 2015

'March brings breezes loud and shrill; stirs the golden Daffodil.' Oh how we love the first sight of these golden Daffodils. They are so bright after the grey days of winter and are a sign that Spring is really on the way.

I watched the story of the song 'Danny Boy', which is 100 years old, and I shed a few tears in the process. This was one of our favourites as children and now, but we didn't know why. However, the tune which is the Londonderry Air, we sang at school along with many folk songs, and I think it's a shame that these songs from the past are now hidden in old books and after our generation will probably not be passed on. This is just one of the skills which we learned at school e.g. needlework, knitting for the girls and woodwork for the boys. We went on nature walks which gave us a chance to see the wonderful world around us, and gave us skills for later life

Watching England play Australia at cricket I was amazed how the game has changed - once it was a tranquil, soothing game with the players all in white, and played in a leisurely fashion but now it is frenetic. In Australia in the background they were playing Queen singing "We will rock you".

I couldn't believe it when it was suggested we get rid of the silent letters in words such as Wednesday to help children spell. Why, I ask? The English spelling of words has been good enough throughout the generations, so I say – leave well alone.

An Irish wish: May there always be work for your hands to do; May your purse always hold a coin or two; May the sun always shine on your windowpanes; May the rainbow be certain to follow the rain ; May the hand of a friend always be near you; May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

Marie Cove