

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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March

"March brings breezes loud and shrill to stir the dancing daffodil."

By Sara Coleridge from "The Garden Year" 1834

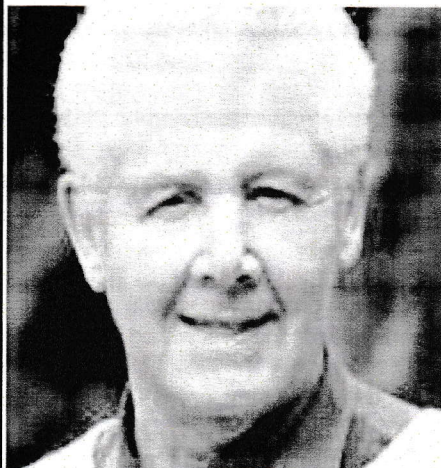
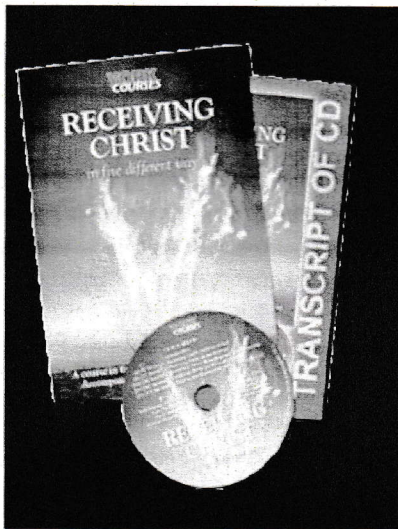
The earth is waking and so should we. Easter is a little later this year but before then we have Lent- I'm always glad when Lent is over and yet it is a time for us to meditate and be thankful- reflecting on the enormous sacrifice that Jesus underwent for all our miserable sins.

Although I never enjoy Lent, it is something as Christians that we have to do. This Lent I shall be leading a weekly Lent group, starting on 9th February, and we will be reflecting on the "York" course on the theme of "Receiving Christ in five different ways," by canon John Young. The course CD brings the opinions and thoughts of leading Christian thinkers into our discussion group.

The course is intended to be used in tandem with a course booklet, five of which are available to buy or just borrow. They are optional as is the discussion and you are welcome to just come and listen if you prefer.

I hope you can join me this Lent and help me to get through this Lenten time and come out at the other end to enjoy Easter.

Gwyneth Hickman



March St Laurence's Church Services

Sunday 5 th	Lent 1	10.30 a.m.	Lent Screen
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 12 th	Lent 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 19 th	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	Lent Screen
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 26 th	Mothering	10.30 a.m.	Lent Screen
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 5 th	Lent 1	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 12 th	Lent 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 19 th	Lent 3	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 26 th	Mothering	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

Please Note

During the interregnum it may be necessary to change the pattern of services from time to time at fairly short notice. This would be to enable visiting clergy to hold a communion service.

From the Registers

No entries this month.

Ash Wednesday

The benefice service for Ash Wednesday this year will be held at St John's, Ansley Common at 7.30 p.m. on 1st March. St John's congregation is looking forward to welcoming members from St Laurence's Ansley and from St Wilfrid's Old Arley and St Michael's New Arley to mark the beginning of Lent.

Women's World Day of Prayer

You are welcome to this special, informal service at St Laurence's on Friday 3rd March at 10.30 a.m. Men are very welcome too! The service this year has been prepared by the Women's World Day of Prayer Committee of the Philippines and has the title, "Am I being unfair to you?" Volunteers from the congregation usually take on roles from the service sheets and we will learn about concerns of the church and women in the Philippines. Refreshments will be served in the Annexe after the service.

Lent Lunch

St Laurence's will be hosting a soup lunch in the annexe on Friday 3rd March at 12.30 p.m. We hope this will be a more convenient day and time than the Sunday Parish Meals we have held in recent years. The cost will be £1.00 and will go towards the Lent collection in aid of clean water wells in Nigeria. We hope people from the Women's World Day of Prayer service will be able to stay for the Lent lunch and that others will join us too. A plate will be placed at the cross aisles on Sundays in Lent for donations towards providing clean water in Kaduna Province, Nigeria.

Lent Course

Meetings will be held in the Annexe at 7.30 p.m. each Thursday in Lent on 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th March. The last meeting of the series will be on 6th April. The title of the course is "Receiving Christ in five different ways," by John Young. The purpose is to meet and discuss our faith, share experiences and encourage each other at this special time of the year. Do come along. Even if you cannot manage every meeting, you will be very welcome to those you can make.

Mothering Sunday

Special services for Mothering Sunday will be held at St Laurence's and St John's on 26th March. Posies will be given to members of the congregation in recognition of their belonging to "the mother church."

Open Church

St Laurence's Church will be open to visitors on the 25th March from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon. Light refreshments will be available in the annexe during this time.

Advance Notices

St John's Easter Bonnet Social

This enjoyable event will take place on Friday 7th April at 7.00p.m. in St John's Hall. Please make sure you book tickets in advance.

Easter

The date of Easter Sunday is 16th April this year. Details of services will be in next month's magazine.

Report on the Poppy Appeal November 2016

Notification of the sum raised at church for this appeal has been received recently from the British Legion. The total was £63.43. Thank you to all who bought a poppy from St Laurence's.

More about the Lent Course

'To all who received him ... he gave power to become children of God.' (John 1.12.) This raises big questions. **Aren't we all children of God anyway? Just how can we receive Christ? And what does it mean to have 'a relationship with God'?** In a course crammed with discussable questions, John Young teases out from the New Testament at least three different ways in which we receive Christ. John's course booklet is supplemented by four leading Christians, from a variety of backgrounds, on the course CD. Together they demonstrate that St John's theology in his magisterial Gospel has very practical implications for our day-to-day lives.

Five Sessions

- Session 1:** Receiving Christ: as children of God
- Session 2:** Receiving Christ: in the stranger and the needy
- Session 3:** Receiving Christ: in Holy Communion
- Session 4:** Receiving Christ: through prayer and fellowship
- Session 5:** 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Colossians 1:27)

An Overview of the Church Finances

The accounts for 2016 have been sent to the independent examiner for checking. A brief description of trends in the financial health of our church and halls is provided below.

St John's Hall

It is pleasing to report that St John's Hall has a reasonable surplus, despite a big reduction in the number of hours required by one of its regular hirers. The Hall members should be proud of their fund raising through the year.

Ansley Village Church Hall

This hall has regular lettings and a reasonable number of occasional lets. It has a healthy balance to put towards future repairs or improvements. It was able to give a contribution to the General Fund this year.

St John's Services Account

St John's congregation continued to contribute towards St Laurence's Parish Share from service collections. In January 2017, at a Hall committee meeting, the congregation agreed to increase their giving to St Laurence's to £20 from each Sunday service, which is very much appreciated.

Churchyard Account

The sum in this account can vary considerably from year to year. It has covered the cost of grass cutting (£4760) for the year, but it would not have done so had it not been for a bequest and a donation of £1000 each.

Fabric Fund

The balance in this fund has increased by over £7000. Very little was spent on the fabric of the building in 2016, however we know internal redecoration is needed but are waiting to locate where water is getting into the nave roof. The quinquennial inspection takes place this year and may indicate further work to be done.

St Laurence's Account

Income from weekly envelopes and standing orders through gift aid continues to fall. Gift aid donations from the Flower Festival showed a marked increase. Cash collections are lower across all services but not because of a move to gift aided schemes.

Income from weddings and funerals was lower and is a sum that cannot be predicted or planned for. The Parish Share to be paid to the diocese has been met, despite a 4% increase (£1030) on the previous year. Once this sum and running costs had been paid, the final figures showed a deficit of just over £1000.

The PCC have been asked to pay a total of £24200 in Parish Share in 2017, £2500 less than last year. This reflects the fact that we have been without a vicar and that the amount received as fees for weddings and funerals increased. Prudence is very much required though as the Parish Share can be anticipated to rise sharply in 2018.

Although the church is managing to meet its financial commitments at the moment, the PCC would greatly appreciate a regular increase in weekly giving by church members. As our Lay Reader suggested in last month's magazine an increase of 50 pence a week would help our situation. Please do consider this if you are able to do so. If not, do be sure that your presence, commitment and contribution to the life of our church are invaluable.

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 a warden. Phone numbers are on the front page of this magazine. Please remember that a visit can be arranged to anyone who is sick, but the wardens do need to know, so again please ring.

Please pray for who is

March, 2017.

I cannot recall in all my many years that I didn't have a book for Christmas, from when I was about 6 years old and I have kept and treasured most of them. In fact some of them I take out of the bookcase and read again and again. This year one of my Granddaughters gave me a book called 'A Nuneaton childhood in the 1950's'. What memories it evoked and how Nuneaton has changed and also the way we live. People say we shouldn't live in the past but it is the past which makes us. Even the youngsters today can look back and have memories they treasure, whether it is scoring a goal for their team, achieving something at school or even a family party when the elderly and the young get together. As the song says 'Memories are made of this.'

Do you know what Nurdles are? Well they are small pellets from which plastic products are made. They are also known as 'Mermaids' Tears' and this is because these pellets are getting out of containers and entering the sea in great quantities. They are ingested by fish who starve as they clog up their insides. A few years back we thought we had a mouse in our pantry, as we found all these small pieces of plastic. It turned out they were the remnants of a recycled plastic carrier bag. What a mess one carrier bag made, so we can imagine that the many millions of plastic bags released on beaches and the sea would be catastrophic.

We have all seen stately homes which contain many beautiful fixtures and artworks acquired before the age of the credit card when the owners were on European grand tours, but how did they pay for these items? The most useful and safest way was 'letters of credit', which were promissory notes giving the recipient the right to have the funds transferred from the purchaser's bank. These led to the development of the cheque, pioneered by the Bank of England in 1717.

Soon 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.