

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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April Editorial

Snakes and Ladders

One of the games I enjoyed as a boy was Snakes and Ladders. You never knew when you would hit the top of a snake and go right down to the bottom. There were numbers on the board you just had to avoid. But if you were lucky you could end up at the bottom of a ladder. The thrill of overtaking someone who was gently making their way up the board was wonderful to feel. Lent is a bit like that with the steady progress, the disappointments and the unexpected joys that a Lenten discipline brings.

If I remember rightly there was one thing a ladder never did - take you straight to 100, your final destination. In the end, however successful you were, you had to throw the right dice to win. That's true of Lent too. There are many joys but there is no escape from the final part of the journey.

Yes I know you can ignore all the rules and, without even bothering to throw the dice, pick up your counter on the Snakes and Ladders board and simply place it on the final square. You can also attend on April 10 then give Church a break and come back on the 24th. But if you do that I don't think you will appreciate the final destination. If you don't take trouble to participate in Palm Sunday and Holy Week it is very difficult to enter into the true delight of Easter.

So my prayer for you is this:

Share in the Passion of Jesus this Holy Week and

HAVE A VERY HAPPY EASTER,

Your friend and vicar,
Peter

April St. Laurence's Church – Services

Sunday 3 rd	Mothering	10.30 a.m.	Special Service
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 10 th	Passion	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 17 th	Palm Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Friday 22 nd	Good Friday	7.30 p.m.	Vigil
Sunday 24 th	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	Mothering	10.30 a.m.	Special Service
Sunday 10 th	Passion	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 17 th	Palm Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Joint at St Laurence
Thursday 21 st	Maundy Thursday	7.00 p.m.	Last Supper
Sunday 24 th	Easter Day	10.00 p.m.	Holy Communion

Discussion Groups

Discussing the parables – Tuesday 12th at 7 p.m. in St. Johns Church Hall.

'The year through the Bible' Wednesday 10th at 7.30 p.m. 128 Birmingham Road.

Other regular activities

Full details on the notice boards.

From the Registers

Baptism

On Sunday 20 February we celebrated at St. Laurence's the baptism of Liam Matthew Albutt and on 27th the baptism of Isobel Keeling. On these joyful occasions we gave thanks and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we reaffirmed our commitment to God the Father revealed to us through His son Jesus.

Funerals

These past few weeks have been a time of sadness for many.

On Wednesday 23rd February we held the funeral of Betty Chandler followed by burial in the churchyard. Friends and family and friends gathered to celebrate the life, love and hard work of this wonderful lady from Birchley Heath.

On Friday 25th February we held the funeral of Pru Turner followed by cremation at Heart of England Crematorium and internment of mortal remains in the churchyard. Stories of Pru's life of laughter, love and faith inspired us. We shall all miss her not least the church family of St. John's Ansley Common who marked her passing with a Memorial Service on Sunday March 6th.

On Tuesday March 1st we held the funeral of Robert Frederick Ward. The service was followed by burial in the churchyard. We celebrated his long and full life and prayed for all who mourn his passing

Open church

As in previous years the church will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday 2nd April for quiet prayer and the Ansley 2000 display will be available for any one who wishes to see it. Light refreshments will be available in the annexe and there will be plenty of time for a chat.

Mothering Sunday

The morning worship at both St. Laurence and St. John's will take the format of a special service for Mothering Sunday 3rd April and at all services that day posies of fresh flowers will be given from Mother Church to all.

Holy Week

This very important time in the Church's calendar will commence on **Palm Sunday** with a special joint service at St Laurence on Sunday 17th at 10.30 a.m. when we will commemorate the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. Palm Crosses will be distributed at this service and at the usual Evensong service at 6.30 p.m.

On **Maundy Thursday** 21st April we will commemorate the Last Supper with a Communion Service at St John's at 7.00 p.m. during which we will have a simple meal of soup and bread and sing hymns.

April 22nd **Good Friday** - a day of contemplation. There will be a vigil at St Laurence at 7.30 p.m. At this service there will be prayers, readings, hymns and times for meditation. From 9 a.m. on 23rd **Holy Saturday** we will be decorating the church, any help both decorating and cleaning up would be much appreciated. If you would like to contribute to the cost of the flowers particularly in memory of a loved one, there will be a plate in church for the two weeks leading up to Easter or donations can be given to any member of the congregation to forward on your behalf. ●

EASTER DAY

Hallelujah Christ is Risen!

We celebrate this special day with the following services

8 a.m. Holy Communion at St Laurence.

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion at St. Laurence.

10.30 a.m. Holy Communion at St. John's.

6.30 p.m. Evensong.

Everyone will be most welcome at these services.

Lent Collection

This year the retiring collection for Lent will be in aid of Tear Fund (Children at Risk) a charity we have supported for many years with our special collection on the first Sunday of each month.

Lent Discussions

The final Lent meeting will take place in the Annexe on Thursday 7th at 7.30 even if you have not been able to make the other meetings you will still be most welcome, your views and thoughts will be most useful as will be the prayers of every one as we seek our way forward.

Church Security

Following on from the "Not so good news" item in the March magazine many issues have been identified, most of which have yet to be resolved regarding church security, however some progress has been made and on the recommendation of the police new notices will be appearing at all entrances to the churchyard and car park.

The PCC ask everyone visiting the churchyard or car park to look out for anything suspicious e.g. broken glass and to advise the wardens as soon as possible. If you visit on a regular basis it would be much appreciated if the wardens could be told so that they are aware at what time there would be someone in the grounds this would enable an informal rota to be drawn up. Please do help with this as the Church and churchyard belongs to you all, and everyone, both now and future generations are the losers when such incidents occur. Please remember everyone is most welcome, as mentioned, the church and churchyard are there for you.

Easter Bonnet Dance

On Friday 15th April St. John's Hall Committee will be organising an Easter Bonnet Dance tickets will be £3.50 which will include meat pie with vegetables and a sweet.

Update on St. John's heating next month.

Annual General Meeting

This year our Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 14th at 7.30 p.m. in the annexe. This is an open meeting but in several parts. The first part is the vestry meeting to which anyone who lives in the parish of Ansley or on the church electoral roll can vote, it is in this part that the wardens are elected. The second part is where the accounts and end of year reports are presented and the PCC members are elected any one on the church electoral roll can vote. Finally there is a short PCC meeting for the election of the officers and any urgent business at which only the PCC members can vote. Nomination forms will be in the church porch and at St John's for completion by any electoral roll member.

Thank you

Each year in the annual review it is very obvious that there are so many people that have contributed in so many different ways – some known by name some not – and whilst any list would be sure to miss someone and space would not be adequate, please take this as a big thank you to anyone and everyone who has helped or supported in the work of the church, the two church halls, or in the churchyard. Thank you!

'From tiny acorns mighty oaks do grow'

It has been decided to continue with this small change collection and anyone who would like a collecting tin please ask and one can be organised. The total paid into our Fabric Fund in February was £22 bringing the total to £60 so far this year all from the small change collection. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

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

April, 2011

Before I start my letter, may I thank the kind person or persons who anonymously gave £100 cash as a donation towards St. John's kitchen repairs. This is greatly appreciated as it takes great effort by many to raise such an amount. Please accept the thanks of all at St. John's for this very kind gesture.

I have heard people mention Simnel cake, although I have never tasted it. This is a sort of Christmas Cake served on either Mothering Sunday or at Easter. Some say the name came from the Latin 'simila' meaning 'fine flour', but there is a lovely 19th century tale about a couple called Nelly and Simon having a row over whether a cake they had invented, made of dough filled with leftover Christmas Pudding, should be boiled or baked. They compromised by doing both and they called the cake Sim-Nel.

I was very surprised to see a Scarecrow in a field near us, as I haven't seen one for years, except Worsel Gummidge on the T.V. which was also years ago. Then to my amazement I read in a book instructions on how to make a scarecrow. It was a real coincidence and I was really tempted to try to make one, but as the book says watch you don't scare yourself, as this could be mistaken for an intruder on a dark night, so perhaps not.

Children picking Daffodils in a park were reported to the Police. It was then explained that it is not against the law to pick wild flowers in meadows but in parks these are council property. I can remember every year at Bluebell time us setting off for Oldbury Woods (now Hartshill Hayes), and we could collect arms full of Bluebells. Our Mam wouldn't allow wild flowers in the house, so these were relegated in jam jars to the verandah. I was, however, quite pleased to know it is not illegal to pick wild flowers as I have made so many Daisy Chains and been told off for this. I also press wild flowers for my journal, but at least now I know I am not breaking the law, as I realise some wild flowers are rare and protected, so I make sure I don't pick these.

As a young mother of three teenagers we had a schedule on the kitchen cupboard for them to take it in turns to do the washing up after the evening meal, which I must say they kept to, and this reminds me of this when my see my grandchildren arguing whose going to do the washing up and disappearing at the appropriate time. So, the following quotation can be very true -

'The best way for a housewife to have a few minutes to herself at the end of the day is to start washing up.' Arthur Godfrey.

Marie Cove.