

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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An Invitation

In January 2014 and January 2015 members of St. Laurence's completed a questionnaire which gave us considerable insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the church and provided a focus for our planning for the year ahead. This April we shall be doing that same questionnaire again but this time the results will not only help in our church planning but will also be vital in helping you find the next Vicar. They will also be sent to all candidates to help them to discover whether God is calling them to apply for the job. The questionnaires have been used extensively in the Diocese of Coventry and across the world to build up and encourage churches, I pray they will help us too.

Because the results are so important we shall be doing the questionnaire not only with the morning service but also at John's and with the evening service. The questionnaire will be handed out and completed at St. Laurence's morning service on April 17 and at St. John's and St. Laurence's Evening service on April 24. Please can you make every effort to attend on that day. We will shorten the service so you won't be late home! If you know you will be away when the questionnaires are handed out please pick up a copy of the questionnaire beforehand. They will be available on 10 and 17 April. Whichever method you use please fill in the questionnaire. Your answers are vital as we plan ahead.

While I am writing here are a few dates for your diary. Sunday April 10 10.30am. Joint service at St. John's led by Bishop Christopher who will dedicate the cross which had been on the original church, was recently returned to us and is now in its new position on St. John's Hall.

May 29 10.30 am My final service at St. John's
6.30 pm Songs of Praise at St. Laurence's with hymns chosen by me to tell the story of my life and ministry

June 5 10.30am My final service at St. Laurence's
4pm An informal service at St. Michael's with contributions by people who have worked with me since my arrival followed by refreshments in Arley and St. Michael's Community Centre.

Your friend and Vicar,

Peter

April St. Laurence's Church Services

Sunday	3 rd	Easter 2	10.30 a.m.	Easter Screen
			6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	10 th	Easter 3	10.30 a.m.	Joint at St John's
			6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday	17 th	Easter 4	10.30 a.m.	Easter Screen + Survey
			6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	24 th	Easter 5	10.30 a.m.	Baptism
			6.30 p.m.	Evensong + Survey

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday	3 rd	Easter 2	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday	10 th	Easter 3	10.30 a.m.	Dedication Service
Sunday	17 th	Easter 4	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday	24 th	Holy Communion	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

From the Registers

No entries this month.

Bishop's Visit to St John's

St Laurence's congregation is looking forward to joining the congregation at St John's for a joint service on Sunday 10th April at 10.30 a.m. The Rt. Rev Christopher Cocksworth Bishop of Coventry will be conducting this service during which the external cross that was on the old mission church will be rededicated. This clay cross which has been returned to the church has been repaired and is now on the apex of the gable end over the entrance to the hall. It was September 2009 when Bishop Christopher last came to St. John's to dedicate the building once the refurbishment had been completed. Everyone will be most welcome to this special service and refreshments will be provided afterwards. There will be **NO** service at St Laurence's that morning.

Ansley Parochial Church Council AGM

This meeting on Thursday 14th April at 7.30 p.m. is open to all. The annual reports will be presented, followed by the appointment of PCC members and officers.

St John's Easter Bonnet Social – Reminder

St John's will be hosting an Easter Bonnet social evening on Friday 1st April at 7.00 p.m. The cost of tickets is £4 and they must be booked in advance. There will be a choice of sausages or faggots on the menu, followed by dessert. A warm, friendly welcome awaits you.

Live and Local Concert – Reminder

Tickets are now on sale for this concert at Ansley Village Church Hall on Friday 15th April. The cost is £8.50 for adults and £6.50 for 10 to 15 year olds. Jez Lowe is well known for his song writing and performing on BBC TWO's "Radio Ballads" series. An excellent evening of entertainment is anticipated. There will be a raffle for Hall Funds and light refreshments will be available in the interval. Tickets may be obtained from Diana Kealey 02476395089.

Thirty Three Years - Two centuries

An Article by the Reverend Peter Allan

When I retire in June I will have completed thirty-three years of parochial ministry in the Church of England. By a strange quirk of fate I will have completed exactly half my ministry in the twentieth and half in the twenty-first century. What enormous changes there have been in the Church of England over those years! It is impossible to summarise all those changes in one short article - for a start I wouldn't be writing this article on my laptop. I didn't even know of a Vicar with a computer. More interesting is how the church has changed. I suggest the title should be:

From Family to Community

In my first curacy the focus was upon family life. Our best attended service was The Family Service. For a huge proportion of the population the church provided services to mark the events of birth, weddings and funerals and most people, whether they attended church or not, looked to the church to provide a code of conduct for sexuality and family life. Today few churches have "Family Services." Sadly most people do not look to the church for baptisms, weddings and funerals and, when the church talks about sexuality and family life, it is a conversation among its own members. The world no longer listens.

This would be an exceptionally disheartening picture were it not for the fact the church is gaining prominence in an area that it had lost in the previous generation - its role in the community. In my first curacy I had no involvement in the local community at all. At each new job that involvement has increased.

Among many outside the church there is a growing realisation that the state cannot look after everything, that the loss of a sense of community needs challenging and addressing and that the local church is one of the organisations best placed to meet this need. In suburbia, churches are one of the few organisations that provide a sense of community across ages, genders and racial groups. In deprived areas, churches are taking a lead in the provision of food-banks and advice services. Where communities continue to exist and friendship networks are strong, churches give those communities a focus and a spiritual expression.

In all the gloom about church life it is as true today, as it has always been, that when a church celebrates and models community life, when it is truly a community at prayer, then it will grow. The challenge remains to deepen our love for God, to grow in friendship with all church members and to be deeply rooted in the community God has called us to serve. May you know God's blessing as you seek to do this in the years ahead.

St. Johns Easter Bingo

The prize bingo session held on 14th March was greatly enjoyed by all who attended and the proceeds amounted to £100 for hall funds. Thank you to all who supported this event.

Confirmation

Please remember Leah Roberts who is being confirmed at 5 a.m. on Easter morning at the Cathedral in your prayers.

Women's World Day of Prayer

Although few attended, this service gave an insight into the concerns of women in Cuba. The accompanying music was lively and the words of the songs were thought provoking. Tea and cake were enjoyed in the annexe after the service. £75.50 Was collected and sent to this organisation for their work around the world.

Acorn Children's Hospice

The representative from the Hospice who received the cheque at the Harvest Festival invited members of our congregation to visit the Hospice to see their work. We will be arranging this visit soon, so do please let a churchwarden know if you would like to come along by the end of April then we will arrange a day and time to suit. Transport will be sorted once the number going is known.

Church Yard

Thanks you to all those who helped tidy the church yard ready for mowing. Fortunately the weather although cold was dry and it was possible to get all the things cleared in one go. An attempt was also made to flatten the mole hills that have been appearing and we wish to assure visitors that we are trying our best to sort the problem. We have been told that the moles like to dig under the bases of the stones as the worms are more abundant under the stones.

Please also do not put objects etc. on the graves of loved ones; they can be a hazard to those working in the churchyard especially the grass cutter and they often get blown around. If you are not sure what is permitted please read the notice in the notice board.

Gift Aid

As we start a new tax year can we ask if you can consider making your donations via Gift Aid. It is fully understood that not everyone can so, but if you do pay tax in any form then please do consider this request as the church can obtain an extra 25p for every £1 donated. If you are interested or want to know more then please do have a word. Please rest assured that only the treasurer and HMRC will have any knowledge of any payment so made.

Open Church

The church will be open between services on Sundays [Midday to 6 p.m.] from Sunday 1st May for the summer. Do take the opportunity to spend some time praying, reflecting or quietly enjoying this peaceful space.

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

April, 2016

As we started to dead head old plants and cut shrubs back, it is amazing to see all our old favourite perennials coming through. It is as if they have been asleep in the dark earth all the winter and now they are ready to awake and face the light.

I still have my milk delivered in bottles and as I am rinsing them I am reminded of what it said years ago on every milk bottle 'Please rinse and return'. Also in school we had a third of a pint bottle of milk every morning with a straw, and I think this is where my love of milk started, but milk seemed more delicious back then when it was all 'full cream' and the cream floated to the top of the milk, but we never thought how fattening it might be because we were so active.

Does anyone remember the Magic Painting Books, well I believe you can still buy these, but when we had them they were firm favourites as you only needed a paint brush and water and the colours appeared like magic. Now painting books for adults are very popular and are selling in the millions. These are very good if you are not very good at drawing (like me) as some have a ready coloured picture and a blank drawing on the opposite page, so you can feel free to use your own colour interpretation of the picture.

I was talking to someone the other day, quite a bit younger than me and was telling her when we used to play skipping with a huge rope across Camp Hill Road. Also when 'The Grand' was a cinema and we used to queue up every Saturday afternoon for the children's matinee. She could hardly believe it as now Camp Hill Road is like Brands Hatch race track and The Grand is a Bingo Hall. They say you shouldn't live in the past, but it is nice to remember, and suppose everywhere people have such memories.

Welcome April, a month to stir the soul, when Spring begins to unfold. Sun and showers and lighter days, rainbow shining through watery rays.

Marie Cove