

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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Ansley Village, Church End

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MAY NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

We are still talking about **Mike Stewart's visit** to our Fellowship Day recently. Mike has been an evangelist with Coventry City Mission for 14 years, and works on the Wood End estate. He's married with three growing-up children, and also travels round the country, taking part in missions and training others.

He was inspiring! He was also encouraging and very practical in suggesting ways in which we can share our faith with others. The church is losing people hand over fist, and one of the main reasons is that we have found it so difficult, over the years, to tell people what we believe: to get what's inside us, out to others!

Of course there are all sorts of reasons. English people tend to be reserved, and not to like talking about personal things, and to many people faith is very personal. In cultures where there is less reserve and more sharing of one's faith, the church is growing like Topsy. We are also afraid of offending people. And maybe we are worried that people will ask us questions to which we don't know the answers.

Mike gave a very helpful summary of **attitudes in society today**. He talked about how many people believe in **fate or destiny**. Then there is **bewilderment**: there are no longer jobs for life, and there is an increasing breakdown in family relationships. **Pluralism** is another factor: it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere." **Amorality** has replaced immorality because it is more attractive: it means that each individual can make their own rules. An incredible number of people believe in **reincarnation**, and often confuse this with resurrection. And it is a **DIY generation**: people feel they are on their own. Success is measured in what we have, not what we share.

So how is the Christian faith relevant?

For those who believe in an arbitrary, impersonal Fate, we can bring good news of a **personal, loving God**. For those who are bewildered and fearful, we bring the security of knowing that a Father who loves us has a purpose for our lives, and if we trust him **he will care for us and provide for all our needs**.

Pluralism, amorality and a DIY attitude can lead to a selfish way of life which does not really care about others. They also mean that there are no shared standards of behaviour, because it is every man (or woman) for him or herself. Into this we bring the good news of **the love of Jesus**, of compassion and a life laid down for others.

And reincarnation? One little girl apparently said she would like to come back in her next life as a dog—how sad!—when we can offer **the hope of the resurrection life of Jesus**, of being changed from one degree of glory into another.

Mike helped us to think about our own experiences of God, and how to talk about them. He encouraged us to look for opportunities in daily conversation to share our faith, but with gentleness and respect.

He challenged us to realise that the church is not a club for members only, but the living Body of Christ put into this world with the responsibility of loving other people enough to tell them the Good News of Jesus.

I share with you **5 ways forward for us as a church** on this critical matter.

- 1—**Pray earnestly**, each day, for at least one other person known to you, to come to faith in the Lord Jesus.
- 2—**Pray for a chance each day to talk about your faith** with someone else—and pray for the courage to do so!
- 3—**The friendship of others** is the single most important way that people come to faith. Make the most of the social occasions organised by the church, to invite your friends along to an event which is friendly, relaxed and enjoyable.
- 4—**Come along to hear J John at the Cathedral!** Mike considers him the best evangelist in the world today. There are remarkable stories of people's lives being changed after hearing him. He is very lively and humorous, and is speaking every Tuesday at 7.30 from May 2nd. Bring a friend. If you would like a lift, please let me know.
- 5—**Pray and consider whether we should have a short mission** next year. If so, what sort of mission should it be?

Let us work together to help other people experience the joy of knowing Jesus.

In His love,
Gill & Geoff

SERVICES FOR MAY Theme: Creativity

The services at St. John's will be on May 14th and 28th at 10.15 a.m.

Services at St. Laurence's are at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

May 7—am Family Service
 pm Traditional Holy Communion

May 14—am Holy Communion
 pm Evensong

May 21—am Morning Prayer
 pm Holy Communion

May 28—am Holy Communion
 pm Evensong

Please note that there will be no mid-week service this month. Home Communions will take place on Tuesday, 9th May.

MAY EVENTS

Tuesday 2nd May 7.30 p.m. at the Cathedral: J John will be speaking today and every Tuesday for 10 weeks on the 10 Commandments. We expect this to be a very popular event so arrive early!

Monday 8th May: 'Links' children's club resumes at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Church Hall. Contact Diana Kealey for details (76395089).

7.30 p.m.: The Archdeacon, Ian Russell, will be at St. Peter's Mancetter for his annual visitation to swear in all newly-elected churchwardens. Please remember Margaret Antill and Moreen Free-stone, Ansley's wardens, in your prayers.

Wednesday 10th and 24th May at 7.30 p.m.: Wednesday Fellowship. Venue to be announced.

Friday, 12th May: There will be a plant sale in the Village Hall. Details from Dave Cove.

7.30 p.m.: Mr. Roundtree's cine film about the 1966 Pageant and other notable events in Ansley was so popular last month, he is repeating it at St. John's Hall, Ansley Common tonight.

Saturday, 13th May: Please pray for Mandy Watts, who is due to go to Selection Panel today to see if she will be recommended for training as a Lay Reader in the Church of England.

Sunday, 14th May: Please also pray for Rev. Andrew de Smet, who is being licensed today at Offa House, the diocesan Retreat House, as the new Warden. He is also diocesan adviser on pastoral care, and an experienced counsellor. He will live in Offchurch with his wife and four children.

Monday, 15th and 29th May: Monday Fellowship in Ansley Common at 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday, 16th May at 7.30 p.m.: 'Links' leaders meet at 135 Tunnel Road.

THURSDAY, 18th MAY: LINE DANCE at 7.30 p.m. with Samantha Hayward at Ansley Social Club. Some of you know her already as a very good teacher! Come along, enjoy yourself and bring some friends. Tickets £2, £1 for children and spectators. Buy in advance or at the door.

Saturday, 27th May: Church will be open 2-5 p.m. and every other Saturday.

Monday, 29th May: Bank Holiday, and the wedding of Rebecca Cugin and Darren Manton. Congratulations and every good wish for their future.

Wednesday, 31st May at 2.00 p.m.: Prayer Group meets. Please let Gill know if you would like anything remembered in prayer.

The Christian Unity Coffee Morning at Lea Lodge on April 5th realised more than 400 pounds between the three churches at St. Laurence received 20 pounds for Easter Flowers and One Hundred and Twenty Pounds, Ninety Five Pence for the Fabric Fund. We thank everyone who worked hard supplying items to buy, running the raffle and making the coffee. It was a magnificent effort.

Please note that **the Rev. Geoff Kimber is officially on study leave** from Easter until July 3rd, with the blessing of the diocese and a grant from Ecclesiastical Insurance. Geoff will be completing his studies on sociology and religious attitudes in Arley, and has to write 40,000 words in order to complete his thesis. He then has to pass a viva exam if he is to gain an MPhil!—so he would be glad of your prayers. He is hoping that his studies will help others to under-

stand ex-coal-mining communities. He will not be at work during this time, and has arranged cover for his parish responsibilities. Please pray too for Gill and for Donald Parr, who will continue to be available.

NOTES FROM THE AGM.

Churchwardens: Margaret Antill and Moreen Freestone.

All PCC members continue as before.

Treasurer: Marcia Sutton.

We need a new PCC Secretary! Please get in touch with Gill or the churchwardens if you can help. The next full PCC meeting will take place after Geoff is back at work. Meanwhile, the Standing Committee will deal with ongoing work.

THANK YOU to George Ponder, for his years as churchwarden. George has been constant and hard-working in his support and commitment, and we are grateful to him and to Winnie who is always at his side. As a thank-you gift in recognition of his services, the PCC has made George 'Honorary Churchwarden for life.' He will however continue as Deanery Synod rep. We wish you a well-earned retirement, George—but don't get too comfortable—because we hope you will still be available to help!

Thank you also to all those who contributed in any way to make the Fellowship Day such a success. It was very much appreciated.

Also to the Social Committee, who put on the craft display at church on April 1st, which was well-attended and enjoyable.

I'm sure Duncan and Helen Watts would appreciate your prayers as they go to Krgygstan this month for a placement, as part of their mission studies at Redcliffe College.

PARISH VISITORS

These have now completed their training, and were commissioned at the Ash Wednesday service. They are: Diana Kealey, Moreen Freestone, Ray Hobbs, Mandy Watts, Joyce Allton, Margaret Antill (from autumn 2000) and, for Ansley Common, Dave and Marie Cove. Please let Gill know if there is anyone who would like a visit.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Our prayers and thoughts go to Ben Smedley and family on the loss of Connie at the age of 69. Also to Mary Newnes, who lost Ron aged 68.

Constance 'Connie' Smedley, wife of Ben, passed away peacefully at home on April 9th. Many thanks to all who have sent cards, donations and their good wishes. Connie will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved her.

The Last Farewell: Ella Evelyn Bennett (nee Goode). Ella inherited the same kind nature to help others as her parents had shown. She loved all animals and was exceedingly comforting to anxious patients and parents by carrying messages when anyone was in the George Eliot Hospital, where she worked for many years. She will be sadly missed. E. E. Clark, Cousin.

Bill Willn was a kind man, liked by all. He was born at Ansley Hall and lived in Chapel End and Ansley Common all his life. After his retirement from Jaguar, he cared for his wife Maisie, by whom he is much missed.

EDITORIAL

May 2000

Whatever happened to the Spring? One minute we were all congratulating ourselves on the mildest March/April we could remember, flowers were blooming early and it looked as if summer was just round the corner. Well, we were all brought back to earth with a bump with bitter cold days, frosty nights, cold winds and even torrential rain. It seems we should always heed the old saying 'Cast not a clout till May be out.' May was always a very active month when I was young. A May Queen was chosen and Maids and then on May Day she and her entourage rode through Hartshill on a horse and dray. Lots of other people dressed as different characters—I remember one year a girl a little older than me went as Cleopatra and she covered herself with tanning lotion. She looked great and I never forgot it. It was just like a carnival with the procession and then we sang and danced around the Maypole, and the sun always seemed to shine. I have seen one or two explanations of why this month is called 'May', but in the Roman calendar it is called the Month of Mary. Any suggestions?

As I sit eating my breakfast each morning I feel like a mini-David Attenborough. First I feed the birds and then watch carefully to see how many different sorts I can spot. From mid-April it is a joy to see the birds collecting straws and other oddments to build their nests. I saw a huge crow carrying a long piece of grass which was like a streamer trailing behind. It is a lovely experience to see so many different kinds and mostly in pairs, but the loveliest sight I have seen is 2 collared doves sitting together on the fence like a courting couple. If you look closely they have such pretty faces and they make a lovely sight. However, I not only watch the birds, I like to see the shoots peeping through the earth, the Blackthorn blooming in the hedgerow and lambs appearing in the field. May certainly can be a wonderful month, with lighter nights and everywhere a promise of things to come, even if we must still wear our warm winter clothes for a little longer yet. This is an extract from a poem I wrote some time ago called 'God's Promise':

As lambs go gambolling and rabbits play on chilly March and April day,

Very soon it is May when God's promise of summer is on the way.

We were talking in the office about books when someone made the statement 'Books have a very short life span as we will soon all be reading from the Internet.' I was amazed and replied 'It would be hard to lie in the bath and read from the Internet or curl up in an armchair with Internet.' It made me think how awful this world would be without books—from nursery rhymes, fairy stories to novels, poetry, and especially the Bible, who could imagine not being able to hold these in our hands and read. I still have books from my childhood—'Black Beauty,' 'Little Women,' 'The Wind in the Willows,' 'Robinson Crusoe,' to mention just a few and I hope many generations will continue to read these and numerous others. What a pleasure we had when given a book to write our name and date inside—how could the Internet take the place of such treasures, even in this technological age.

Enjoy the beautiful month of May.

Marie Cove.