

ANSLEY CHURCH MAGAZINE

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1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Sundays
11.00 a.m. Parish Communion.
6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.
3rd Sunday
11.00 a.m. Family Worship.
6.30 p.m. Holy Communion.

Holy Communion also on 1st Sunday at 8.00 a.m.

Sunday School meets on Sundays at 11.00 a.m., in the Village Church Hall except for the 3rd Sunday when it joins the Family Service.

St. John's Hall—Family Worship at 10.00 a.m., on 4th Sunday.

A bus runs for the evening service. Leaves Ansley Corner at 6.00 p.m., picks up through the village, leaves Ansley Common at 6.10 p.m., and Birchley Heath at 6.15 p.m.

CHURCH GOING ?

One of the standard complaints of the past few years has been the observation that church attendance is declining. This is nothing new; it has been said for hundreds of years. It is part of the philosophy that thinks the past was always better than the present.

It seems to me that the rise and fall in church attendance is more a reflection of fashion and social acceptability than a reflection of rise and fall of our inner faith. In days when there were no cars, no television, no video, no home entertainments, village events were more important in people's lives. The church and what went on in and around it was more of a focus of the community's life and a symbol of the spiritual meaning behind life's changing patterns. A sign of the changing social patterns might be the numbers who now watch 'Songs of Praise' on television—if everyone in the parish who watched that was in church on Sunday I'm pretty sure we'd find it hard to fit you in !

So is the 'church going ?' I do not think so. There are still a significant number of people who ask for baptism for their children (but not the implications of that baptism for themselves as parents). Some still feel the need for a church wedding—I feel more married in church—as an alternative to the bleakness of the registry office. And even today it takes a strong-minded individual or family to refuse a funeral that does not have at least some formal connection with the Christian church or ministry.

These events can be dismissed (and sometimes are by zealous clergy) as mere folk religion. And a lot of it is sometimes mere witch-doctor fantasy and spiritual bondage. The pagan nonsense about God bringing bad luck on gran if mum leaves the house before being properly church-ed (what kind of God is that ?); a belief that children won't behave properly unless they are baptised. Just under the surface of our Christian veneer often lies a maze of semi-pagan sentimentality.

But these folk-religious customs are not the real substance of the church. Studies have shown that when churches close people complain for a while (especially if they feel guilty) but by and large get by without the need for these occasional events for hatching, matching and despatching.

A POSITIVE MINISTRY

The Christian response to the occasional users of the church must be positive but also challenging and on occasions must say 'no' just as Jesus himself said 'no' to those who would follow him without first thinking about Christian commitment. One of the charges given to a man at his ordination is that they may be 'messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord; you are to teach and admonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family, to search for his children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, and to guide them through its confusions, so that they may be saved through Christ for ever.'

I take the view that this charge is not only given to 'The Revd.' but to all Christians. We all share in the ministry that Jesus Christ has given to his church by the Holy Spirit. All Christians have the responsibility for bringing the gospel of Christ and for making disciples. 'Send us out into the world in the power of thy Spirit to live and work to thy praise and glory. Amen.'

TIM GOULDSTONE

It was sad to hear about the wanton damage to the property of one of our parishioners, Mr. Geoff Laws of Nuthurst Crescent. Perhaps the same motives that resulted in the thefts from the parish church in February. Whilst I'm not a paid up member of the 'hang 'em and shoot 'em' brigade, I feel that we have lost something compared with the times when the village bobby or parson could solve a problem with a good thick ear and a visit to the parents. Legend had it that Charles Heaton the vicar and his schoolmasters worked this way !

ACTION ! — FOOTPATH TO CHURCH END

Last year considerable time and trouble went in to widening this footpath. It would be a pity if this effort proves a waste of time as the new growth of nettles, etc., spreads over the path. The present state means some inconvenience to walkers who have to use the dangerous road.

Perhaps the Parish Council could arrange to have this verge cut ? Even better if it's done before this magazine appears . . . !

DONATIONS

The church acknowledges with thanks two recent gifts; one to the memory of Mr. Eddie Moore—£127 and the other to Mrs. Cooper—£38. To the families of these two beloved parishioners we offer our prayers and condolences at this sad time.

THE BARN DANCE

This was held at Suttons Farm on Saturday, June 11th and proved to be a most enjoyable evening. Everyone who attended said how good it was. A profit of £212.41 was made. The Vicar and Churchwardens offer a sincere thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Sutton for the loan of their Barns and their staff and to all those people who helped in any way to bring about this good result.

THE CHURCH FETE

Once again this was held at the Village Church Hall and inspite of the many other attractions on that day the attendance was good. The stalls were well filled and the buying and selling were very brisk. The financial result was £238.50 profit. This was very good and again the Vicar and Churchwardens offer a sincere thank you to all those who helped in any way. We all missed Mrs. Phyllis Hodgkins, who is now recovering at her daughter's home in Stoke Golding. We wish her well in her recovery and our prayers are with her and her husband George and her family at this difficult time.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH LAND

This has now been sold to a building firm for home development. The interest from the money received will be in the control of the Parochial Church Council for the furtherance of the work of the Church in the parish of Ansley. It is hoped that many repairs will be done to St. John's Hall to make it a Church centre for the area.

Worship is always on the 4th Sunday in the month at 10.00 a.m. Remember, people of the Common, that this depends on your support and interest. The bus still runs to the Parish Church on Sunday evenings.

HOLY BAPTISM

Welcomed into the family of the Church

Sunday, June 19th—Racheal Ann Roberts, 60 St. Lawrence Road.
Leanne Margaret Smedley, 65 St. Lawrence Road.