

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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AUGUST NEWSLETTER

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Dear Friends,

Recently the Archbishop's Council commissioned Focus Groups all over the country. Some of us said 'Focus groups?? What next?? Haven't we got anything better to do?' In fact, the findings have just been published and I have to eat my words, because it makes interesting and helpful reading.

What happened was that ordinary churchgoers met in 17 dioceses, and took part in questions and exercises to find out what they think of the Church of England. Each group had to be representative of churchmanship, age and gender.

They were asked to rank, in order of priority, 12 areas of the church's work. What was most important out of the following?

Giving a moral lead—caring for people—providing worship for all—debating human sexuality—accompanying people on their spiritual journeys—looking after church buildings—spreading Jesus' message—conducting baptisms, weddings and funerals—and several others.

Top of the list from the groups came 'spreading Jesus' message.' Bottom came 'debating human sexuality.'

Then they were asked to say how well they thought the church was doing, and the clear message is that they thought the church was not doing the most important work well enough. It only got half-marks for 'spreading Jesus's message,' and even less for 'giving a moral lead.'

No surprises there. Some of us have felt very frustrated for a long time at the way the Church of England seems incapable of speaking up for what is right. A church spokesman said "There is concern that we are perceived as a divided Church, with leaders who sit on the fence on most issues because they do not want to upset or offend anyone."

But here's the best bit. The groups have made recommendations to the Archbishop's Council, which include having clear, agreed positions on key divisive issues.

Let's pray the Council listens. Meanwhile, we get on with these priorities ourselves, here in Ansley. We will be 'spreading Jesus' message' through our Flower Festival at the end of the month. You are all invited to come along and enjoy it.

Yours in God's love,
Gill & Geoff.

(Information from 'Church Times' newspaper, 16th July, 1999).

SERVICES FOR AUGUST Theme: Work and Leisure

Services at St. John's Hall will be on 8th and 22nd August at 10.15 a.m.

At St. Laurence's church, services are at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

August 1—a.m. Family Service,
p.m. B.C.P. Communion.

August 8—a.m. Holy Communion with Rev. Celia Adams.
p.m. B.C.P. Evensong with Donald Parr.

August 15—a.m. Morning Prayer,
p.m. A.S.B. Communion with Rev. Peter Dodds.

August 22—a.m. Holy Communion.
p.m. B.C.P. Evensong.

August 29—Flower Festival.

a.m. Praise Service.

p.m. Festival Evensong with the Bishop of Warwick,
Bishop Anthony.

There will be no mid-week services during August.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The church will be open on Saturday, 14th August from 2.00-5.00 p.m.

Otherwise it begins as a restful month! Get your strength up, because as usual there is a great deal of work connected with the Flower Festival. Once more we are looking for volunteers for the following jobs:

August 16—Come and join the **working gang** to tidy up the churchyard. Bring your own tools—come any time—do any job!

August 26—Time to **put up the marquee**. Come along at 7.00 p.m., and bring muscles and co-ordination.

Friday, 27th August—From 2.00 p.m., the **church will be cleaned**. Please give a hand.

If you can help with **serving refreshments** in the marquee, see Marcia Sutton (392488);

—or if you can spare the time to help with **stewarding in church**, contact Diana Kealey (395089).

After the Festival, there's always **the clearing up**—Wednesday, 1st September in the morning.

We would also be grateful for **donations**. If these are of flowers, or cash for flowers, please contact Margaret Antill (01827) 874520.

If you can offer **cakes**, please see Marcia.

If you want to donate **produce**, please see Dave Cove (394114).

Yes, it's a lot of hard work—but it's also good fun, and remember why we're doing it: to spread the message of Jesus and to raise money for charity. Proceeds will be divided between the Nuneaton Hospital's League of Friends, the Acorn Children's Hospice, Selly Oak and church funds.

We will also be supporting a new charity that does relief work in Eastern Europe and in other parts of the world. It is called Christian Outreach and is based in Leamington. There will be a jar in the Marquee for this work.

'STAND FIRM'

Ansley Flower Festival 1999

Opens for visitors from 6.00 p.m. on Friday 27th August. Short informal worship at 7.00 p.m. Then from 9.30 a.m. to dusk on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Sunday services at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

Monday 8.00 p.m. Finale.

Refreshments will be available throughout the event.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Andrea Lewis and Stephen Jones, and Sarah Smith and Simon Mellor, who were married last month.

Also to Hetty Sharman on her baptism—the first in St. John's Hall for many years, and an occasion of great rejoicing. Well done Hetty and may God bless and keep you.

Also to Helen Mellor and Juliet Kimber, who were awarded their degrees after much hard work, and who both have found employment.

We also congratulate —

Christopher Faulconbridge of Nuthurst Crescent, Ansley—A Degree in Retail Management.

We wish them all every success in the future.

Our thoughts and prayers go to Shirley Prime and the family on the loss of Miriam (Mib) Rollins, aged 82, from 135 Ansley Common.

Are you age 16-25, having trouble finding a job; needing help with forms; needing help with CV; wanting information on health care and other matters? Then "16 to 25" is for you, St. John's Hall, Ansley Common, every Thursday 3.00 to 6.00 p.m. Georgina and Sue are there to help, free of charge, and in complete confidence.

We have been asked to put in the following letter from Duncan Watts:

It was good to see so many of you on Sunday, 4th July at the Family Service. Helen and I both enjoyed our visit. We wanted to thank all of you for your prayers and kind words, and also your support with our surprising news.

As I said in the service, our wedding is on the 14th August at St. John's Church in Harbourne, Birmingham at 2.30 p.m. It isn't possible to invite you all to the reception afterwards, but it would be wonderful to have your support at the church during the service itself. Just ask my mum if you need any directions!

Looking forward to seeing you there, Duncan.

There will be a Coffee Morning on Thursday, 5th August, 10.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., at 28 Nuthurst Crescent, in aid of St. John's Ramp Fund.

Note for your diary: Coffee Morning, Thursday, 16th September at Woodbarn Farm, Ansley (the home of Jennifer & Peter Woolliscroft) also in aid of St. John's Ramp Fund.

Food for thought: Old age is when you know all the answers but nobody asks you the question.

A hair in the head is worth two in the brush.

EDITORIAL

1st August, 1999

As I look out of my window at work I can only wonder at all the different shades of green there are and all in perfect harmony. It reminds me of the Irish song "40 shades of green." Well, there are certainly many shades of green in our countryside, not forgetting all the other varied colours of nature, especially at this time of year. We saw a man talking from the Chelsea Flower Show about all the new varieties, and he was saying how many different colours of roses there are now, including blue. I must be old fashioned as I still prefer the old roses with their lovely shades from white up to deep red and their glorious scent. I certainly hope they never decide grass should not be green.

I was putting on clean bedclothes the other day and thought that if I could have one luxury in life it would be to get into freshly washed cotton bedclothes every night, but of course although washing is no problem, drying and ironing is quite another thing. Also I hate the struggle putting on duvet covers, although I have got better. It is funny the things we think of as a luxury. When I was a child we went to the sale of a large house (it is now the Camp Pub) with my Dad, and although he only went to buy chickens, my sisters and I went around the house. In the main bedroom, which was like a Hollywood movie, there was a white fur rug and my sisters and I took our shoes off and walked on it. I said that when I had my own house I would have a white fur rug by the side of my bed and step out onto it every morning instead of cold lino. Well, I have one, although mine is only synthetic, but it still feels the same on bare feet and I can put it in the washer. Does anyone else wish for one luxury in life, or perhaps you already have it?

When you listen to the radio or watch television, it is absolutely amazing that the main part of it is taken up with war, fighting, murder, tragedy and everything which by now civilised man should have eradicated, and we sometimes long for the newsreader to come before us with a happy smiling face and tell us some good news. Well, the other day there was some good news. When we raise money for charity or disasters which touch our hearts, we often wonder exactly what happened to this money and in fact what the situation is now. Well on the news the other night we saw exactly how funds had been used in Sudan where we all witnessed horrific scenes of men, women and children literally starving to death. The pictures now are so different, and the situation is so much better. We saw healthy children playing and the adults waiting for the harvest. What a success, what good news, and well worth all the fund raising efforts. Let us hope we have more news like this in the future.

Marie Cove.