

# ANSLEY CHURCH MAGAZINE

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The Vicarage, Birmingham Road, Ansley

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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.

Dear Friends,

I was intrigued as to what people would make of the Flower Festival theme of 'Time.' Learned people write books about how the Bible speaks of 'time.' The New Testament is full of the conviction that the 'time' looked forward to by the prophets has in fact arrived in history with the coming of Jesus Christ. Right at the beginning of Mark's gospel we read, 'The right time has come, and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!'

To embrace the opportunity of turning to Jesus Christ is to enter in to new life and the knowledge that God has not forgotten about us and about his world. Someone commented to me that we are often surrounded by tales of disaster and despair on a world-wide scale, so it is a blessing to see something creative such as the Flower Festival and the accompanying music and song at the concert.

Jesus announced a time when our relationship to God would not be that of formality and distance but characterised by a knowledge of the presence of God, in worship and life—'But the time is coming and is already here, when by the power of God's Spirit people will worship the Father **as he really is . . .**' (John 4 : 23).

God wants us to see him and know him 'as he really is,' not as the pocket-sized god that we sometimes think of, but as

the creator of the universe, the one who gives us the good gifts of life and draws us towards himself.

Many thanks to all those people who willingly gave of time and effort to make the Flower Festival the time it was. The proceeds (in excess of £400) will be divided between the League of Friends of Nuneaton Hospitals and the maintenance of the fabric of our church building here in Ansley.

TIM GOULDSTONE

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We note with sorrow the passing of Miss Edith Follows of Tunnel Road, Galley Common at the beginning of August. The Follows family have been consistent in their support of Ansley church for many decades and are a real example of the quiet and real support that stems from a genuine Christian faith. Our prayers and thoughts are with Florence Follows and her sisters and the many members of the family.

The baptism of Richard Bateman and David Watson at St. John's Family Worship on August 28th was well attended. Several people have said to me that they are "sorry, vicar, but I haven't had him 'done' as a baby." I don't mind in the least! I would rather have a family and parents and young child think about these matters together than to have people come forward requesting baptism just because it's the 'done thing' for the family.

Let's go on and make this worship at St. John's a landmark in the life of our community. Thanks to the efforts of quite a few folk the hall is now looking brighter. Hopefully it will look even brighter next year when we have new lighting, but this depends on the results of —

**ST. JOHN'S AUTUMN SALE on September 10th at 3.00 p.m.** Admission is 5p and there will be a door prize. Gifts and goods will be very acceptable for the sale; contact Mrs. Varden or anyone else associated with St. John's Hall.

Also St. John's Mothers' Union meets on **Wednesday, September 14th at 7.00 p.m., in St. John's Hall.** Miss Stafford will be talking about the work of TEARCRAFT, which is an organisation which gives employment to people in the developing countries. You will have already seen some of their produce at the stall at the Flower Festival—so come along and see what is going. **VISITORS ARE VERY WELCOME.**

#### **Dates for your Diary**

Harvest Festival Sunday, October 9th; worship at 11.00 and 6.30 p.m. — we might make the 6.30 p.m., a 'Harvest Praise' worship, but wait for further news. Harvest Supper on Friday, 14th, further details later.

P.C.C. meeting Wednesday, September 7th at 8.00 p.m., at St. John's Hall.

During September the Youth Training Scheme folk from Arley hope to re-varnish and restore the churchyard fence and gates.

The TEARCRAFT stall at the Flower Festival made £80 for this Christian organisation.

Thanks to Mr. Duncan Bedford of Church End for the restoration of the sign at the entrance to our church car park.

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### MARRIAGE . . . . OR WHAT ?

So at last the Church of England is to allow re-marriage of divorced people in church. Like all decisions of this kind this both creates problems and solves them. Up until the recent change in the rules, clergy could offer a 'service of blessing' to couples who desired a church ceremony for a second marriage after divorce. This was given only with the permission of the bishop, who usually went along with the guidance he received from the parish priest. But wasn't this rather dishonest? As matters stand, any eighteen-year-old, church member or not, had the supposed 'right' of getting married in their parish church without many questions being asked, their being no statutory provision for preparation for Christian marriage. But someone twice that age, who had been through the agony and trouble of divorce and learnt a lot of lessons about life, was subjected to a 'service of blessing,' a 'second-best,' i.e. the Church saying that they had failed and that if they behaved the Church might condescend to give them something. Divorce became the unforgiveable sin.

It's not 'the Church' that blesses a marriage, it is God; and God only blesses that which is given freely to him. No amount of pretty flowers, smart suits and photographs in the churchyard will make a Christian marriage. When two people marry, they marry each other—the vicar doesn't 'marry' them! As the preface to the new marriage service says very clearly :

**They** will each give their consent to the other; **they** will join hands and exchange solemn vows, and in token of this, **they** will give and receive a ring.

In this and other parts of the service there are a lot of "they's." The vicar blesses the couple, but it is their responsibility to obey God's will for their life together. For those who have no intention of permanence, the registry office can be seen as an option, but with the proviso that English law recognises that marriage is 'the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others' — but the reality of this definition is being threatened.

If the changes in the divorce law become fact, it will make it increasingly difficult for clergy of the Church of England to



remain registrars. For although the definition of marriage in civil law is still 'Christian,' the proposals which reduce the time enable divorce to take place after one year seriously undermine the Christian content. What is the value of a certificate of marriage if it is only a one-year's warranty on the couple's intention of permanence?

Pastorally one occasionally comes across people who want to make a new start and it is these points in life that people are most open to guidance from Christians and from the clergy who are usually the first to be involved. I am certain that for some there must be the option of second, valid marriage, with due recognition in repentance for past failures. Others will simply use the church as a public convenience for their wedding, and then we must say 'no,' even though it may cause conflict and misunderstanding.

These trends show how far we have departed from being a nation with a Christian consensus. To be a Christian today means an active, living commitment to the truth of our baptism; a conscious knowledge of the love of God; a real commitment to the worship of God, and a lively belief in the personal reality of Jesus for us.

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#### **FROM THE REGISTERS (JULY AND AUGUST)**

##### **Funerals**

- July 1—Fred Smith, 44 St. Lawrence Road, aged 69.  
July 7—Arthur Spencer Nash (of Mancetter).  
July 15—Howard Russell (formerly of Ansley), aged 71.  
(interment of Ashes).  
July 22—Constance Sylvia Gibbs, 11 St. Lawrence Road, aged 65.  
July 29—Robert Lorimer Grant, 5 St. Lawrence Road, aged 62.  
Aug. 1—Edith Follows, 101 Tunnel Road, Galley Common, aged 74.

##### **Baptisms**

- July 17—Steven Jon Allton, 53 Ansley Common.  
Andrew Keith Stain, 12 Nuthurst Crescent.  
Aug. 28—Richard John Dennis Bateman, 164 Ansley Common, aged 10. (St. John's).  
David James Watson, 6 West View, Ansley Common, aged 6. (St. John's).