

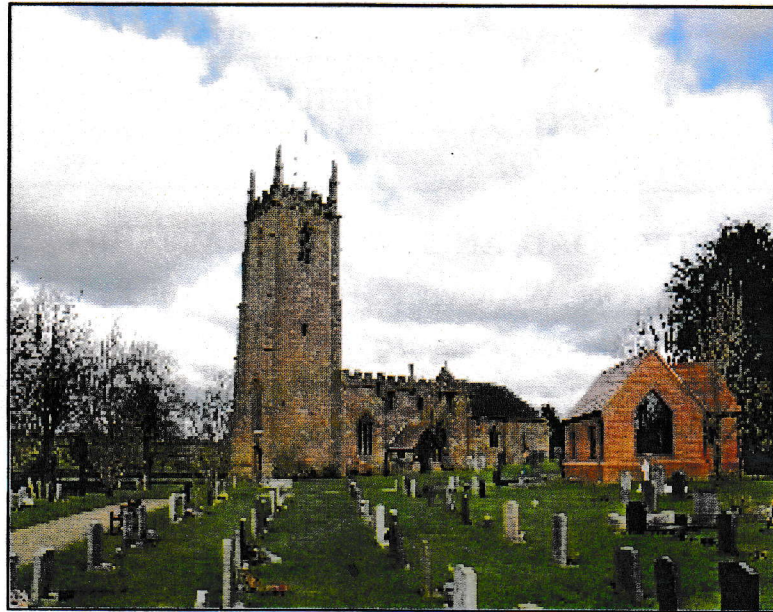
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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Old or New?

(This article is based on my sermon at our Harvest Festival Evensong.)

If you are in a group of people who are quietly rubbing shoulders together but you feel that a good argument would bring a bit of life just ask one question,

"What is the best television comedy?"

Everyone will want to participate, including those who have never watched T.V. comedy and know it's not worth watching. My favourite is Fawlty Towers. Yes Minister/Yes Prime Minister come a close second.

I particularly like the episode when Jim Hacker, recently installed as Prime Minister, is about to give his first television broadcast.

"Will you say anything?" ask his advisers.

"Yes of course I'll be saying something," he replies. "I'll be speaking for ten minutes."

He pauses. "Why do you ask?"

"Because if you are saying something radical and different you will need a tailored suit and a traditional background, rows of leather bound books, a fire in the grate, maybe an aspidistra. It will bring comfort to the traditionalists. But if you really aren't going to say anything different dress more casually and give yourself a contemporary background."

Evensong tonight could not be more traditional - for 71 years Harvest Festival at Ansley has been celebrated at St. Laurence's on the second Sunday of October. For around 150 years Harvest Festivals have been celebrated in England. We are using a form of service written 350 years ago in a church that dates back nearly 950 years and have read texts that date back 1,950 and 2,450 years. We can go back further. The custom of the first settled farming people of bringing their harvest to their gods and goddesses dates back perhaps ten thousand years. I challenge you to find a more traditional event in this country today.

Traditional certainly but the messages we have heard could not be more radical. Paul in his letter to Timothy says if you have food and clothes you should be content with that. If we really believed that, advertising would be pointless and the search for greater amounts of money to buy ever more luxuries would disappear. It is a hugely radical message utterly different from all the messages we receive today. In our Old Testament lesson (Joel 2: 21-27) Joel speaks to the fields, to the animals and to the tiny insignificant oppressed nation of Israel in complete contrast to our desire to speak to the rich, the strong and the powerful.

In this very traditional setting can we find a radical message of hope for the poor and vulnerable and can we truly find contentment in what we have? I pray we can.

Your friend and Vicar,

Peter

November St. Laurence's Church Services

Sunday 1 st	All Saints	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 8 th	Remembrance	10.30 a.m.	Remembrance Service
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 15 th	2 before Advent	10.30 a.m.	Kingdom Service[Screen]
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 22 nd	Christ the King	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 29 th	Advent	10.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		6.30 p.m.	Songs of Praise

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 1 st	All Saints	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 8 th	Remembrance	10.30 a.m.	Joint at St Laurence
Sunday 15 th	2 before Advent	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 22 nd	Christ the King	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 29 th	Advent	10.30 a.m.	Family Service

From the Registers

No entries this month.

Our Focus for the Year

Each year at St. Laurence's we hold a questionnaire to discover what area of church life we should concentrate upon in the year ahead. We seek to discover and then to focus on our weakest areas because a church, like a chain, is only as strong as its weakest link. Last year we focussed on Passionate Spirituality. Over the year we greatly improved in this area and now we are focussing on Need Oriented Outreach - reaching out to people where they feel their greatest need for help. We thought about who we might reach out to and decided to focus on people who visit the church building during the year whether visiting when the church is open, attending our events or enjoying our services. How, we asked, might we help every visitor to feel welcome and leave with a greater understanding of why we are here?

As a result we have improved and made more easily available our boxes of children's toys and books and are producing a series of free leaflets such as, "Welcome to Worship" and "Welcome to Church Life." We are also planning three booklets, Faith in Glass, Faith in Stone and Faith in Words. The first two will take the visitor around the church to reveal the faith our ancestors were seeking to proclaim in the stained glass and the stonework, whilst Faith in Words will be a series of Bible Studies based on our present confirmation course - the first confirmation course I have written myself for nearly thirty years. We shall buy a rack to make this material widely and easily available to all our visitors.

Our prayer is that the church door will not only be the way in to a good and happy experience but will also lead into an encounter with God that each visitor will cherish forever. In short we pray that the door of our church will be a door to faith. Peter Allan

Spurgeon Coffee Evening and Bring & Buy

Please come along and enjoy a chat over tea and cakes whilst supporting Spurgeon, a

charity that helps children in our country who suffer from deprivation, abuse or neglect. The boxes of loose change that have been collected over the last twelve months will also be opened and counted.

Thank you for your continued support.

Margaret Oliver

Confirmation at Coventry Cathedral

You are warmly invited to join the candidates at the service in Coventry Cathedral as they confirm their commitment to the Christian faith. We pray for all attending the confirmation course and for those who decide to go forward for confirmation, which will take place on Saturday 21st November. Please ask Peter for further details.

Christmas Social Event at Ansley Village Church Hall

After discussion at a recent PCC meeting, the decision was made to reorganise the Christmas Fayre to encourage a wider community involvement. Come along to enjoy Christmas songs and carols, a fancy dress parade and light refreshments, to meet Father Christmas and for the Prize Raffle Draw. The event will start at 7.00 p.m. to encourage families to attend and will be on Friday, 27th November. Entry will be free to all.

St John's Christmas Fair

You will be very welcome at St John's Christmas Fair on Saturday, 28th November from 2.00p.m. to 4.00 p.m. There will be a cake stall, preserves, bric a brac, a raffle, crafts and refreshments. Come along to browse, to buy and to enjoy refreshments and a chat.

Syrian Refugee Crisis

A retiring plate was put out on two Sundays recently to provide support for refugees. After discussion, it was decided to send the money to "Medecins sans frontieres", also known as "Doctors without borders", as they work in the camps and in hospitals with people in most need of help. £75.50 from St Laurence's and £42.50 from St John's has been sent to this charity.

St Laurence's Harvest Festival and Supper

The display of produce and flowers in church looked beautiful as we gathered to thank God for all the good things He gives us. Thank you to everyone who helped to decorate the church or gave in any way towards this celebration. The fish supper on Monday 12th October was much appreciated and was an enjoyable social occasion. A sum of £26 was added to church funds after costs had been met. The sale of produce after the supper raised £66 and all items were sold on the night. A further £98 had been collected from donations of fruit and vegetables in the weeks leading up to our harvest celebration.

Tenth Christmas Tree Festival 2015

If you wish to decorate a tree, please make sure you fill in an application form and pay the £14 as soon as possible.

Help to place trees in pots and to move them into position will be much appreciated on Monday, 30th November. Decorating will take place on Wednesday 2nd December from 2.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. and on Thursday 4th December from 2.00 to 8.00 p.m.

Visitors will be welcome during the three weekends before Christmas, from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on the Saturdays 5th, 12th and 19th December and from 11.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. on the Sundays 6th, 13th and 20th December. There is an entry charge of £2.00 per person. Accompanied children under 12 have free entry. Proceeds are in aid of church funds and a donation of 12.5% will be donated to the Mary Ann Evans Hospice.

A donation of £1 towards the cost of mowing the churchyard is requested if you wish to place a star with the name of a loved one onto the 'Memory Tree'. You may wish to light a candle too. A 'Prayer Tree' will also be in church. Peg your prayer to the tree and it will be included in our intercessions.

If an organisation/group would like to arrange a visit on a week day please contact Margaret Antill on 01827 874520.

Throughout the weekends there will be tea, coffee, hot chocolate, small cakes and mince pies available in the annexe and also a raffle for a Christmas cake.

The 60 trees, decorated by organisations, groups and individuals from the local community, are spectacular. What a wonderful way to add to your Christmas celebrations. Do come along, with your family and friends, to enjoy our festival. A few of the comments in our Visitor's Book from last year are given below:-

"Another great effort by the whole community – well done."

"Wonderful! Thank you, it's really blessed me!"

"So pleased you had the Nativity Scenes to tell of the true meaning of Christmas."

Christmas Shoe Box Appeal

Please make sure shoeboxes are in before 15th November so they can be delivered to the local distribution centre. Remember to check the information about suitable gifts by searching "Operation Christmas Child" which is under the Samaritan's Purse charity, or take a leaflet from church.

Sponsored Cycle Ride

The final total for the fundraising ride to raise money for the Warwickshire Historic Churches Trust is £178. Half of this will be returned to St Laurence's funds. A further £17 was donated to the church on the open day. We would like to thank Phil Rees for his efforts and all who sponsored him.

Christmas Wreaths

If you would like to order wreaths at £7.00 or £7.50, please contact Margaret Antill on 01827874520.

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 for who is

November, 2015

Well, what a wonderful Autumn we are having. The trees make a kaleidoscope of colour and the fields are still very green. There is an abundance of berries, hips, haws and of course conkers. A valued interval before winter comes, but since when did Christmas come in October? I couldn't believe it when before Halloween the shops were filled with Christmassy items. Somebody said it's to make Christmas last longer, but I would sooner it is lengthened after Christmas Day, not before.

As an avid knitter since I was 4 years old and once briefly ran a wool shop, I have accumulated hundreds of patterns, and what a difference the new patterns are to the old. We had never heard of stitch holders, but used large safety pins or usually kilt pins. And just lately I find new patterns hard to follow. Instead of 'cast off' it says 'bind off', so I am glad I kept all my old patterns, and let's face it the fashions haven't changed that much.

It was amazing to see a new children's hospital which opened in Liverpool. Gone were the old Victorian buildings with tiny windows and depressing atmosphere. They had large picture windows with views over wild meadows. There were play areas, flat screened T.V.s and the walls were bedecked with model animals. There were folding beds for parents to sleep. It was great!

You have heard the expression 'happy as Larry' but who was Larry? The most likely is an undefeated Australian boxer named Larry Foley. He went from bare knuckle fighting to fighting with gloves. The fact is he never lost a fight and that may be the reason behind his happiness.

We have all probably heard Louis Armstrong sing 'What a wonderful world' and it inspired me to write: - I see the trees glorious and green; I see the flowers loveliest ever seen; I see the sky both night and day, and see God's work in every way. I see the children at school and play; I see the people working away; I see the elderly as they struggle and strive; but thanking God they are alive. In all the works God's hand has made, most of all there is earth's great beauty which will never wane.

Marie Cove