

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

Parish including Birchley Heath, Ansley Common,
Ansley Village, Church End.

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DECEMBER 1996

Price 20p



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Sunday Bus Timetable for 6.30 p.m. Evening Service

Ansley Village turn 6.00 p.m.

Ansley Common St, John's 6.20 p.m.

Return Journey from Parish Church 7.45 p.m.

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Ansley Vicarage,

1st December, 1996

Our Dear Friends,

This month, all over the world, the birth of a very special Baby will be remembered and celebrated. The birth of our Lord Jesus Christ divides the whole of world history into the years labelled 'B.C.' (before Christ), and 'A.D.' (from the Latin Anno Domini, meaning 'in the year of the Lord'). That birth was 1,996 years ago.

No other human being in history has attracted such a combination of attention, devotion, criticism, adoration, and opposition. Every recorded word He spoke has been studied and analysed. Every one of His recorded actions has attracted the same intense interest. Today, 20 centuries after His death, millions of people are reading what He said and did and trying to apply the significance of His words and actions to their lives.

Doctor Luke wrote a record of His birth, all detailed in his second chapter. Because of the census, referred to, Joseph and Mary had to make the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a distance of 80 miles in length. The accommodation offered was most primitive. They would have to find their own food; all that the inn keeper provided was fodder for the animal and a fire to cook. So it was in a stable where there was a common courtyard that Mary's child was born. Swaddling clothes consisted of a square of cloth with a long, bandage-like strip coming diagonally off from one corner. The child was first wrapped in the square of cloth and then the long strip was wound round and round Him.

So it was like that, that Mary placed her Baby in the manger, a place where animals feed. That there was no room in the inn was symbolic of what was to happen to Jesus. The only place where there was room for Him was on a cross. He sought an entry to the over-crowded hearts of men; He could not find it; and still His search, and His rejection, go on.

In Palestine the birth of a child was an occasion of great joy. When the time of the birth was near, friends and local musicians gathered at the house. When the birth was announced, the musicians broke into music and song and there was universal congratulation and rejoicing. Because of the conditions in which Jesus was born, that ceremony could not be carried out; however, the minstrels of heaven took the place of the absent minstrels of earth and angels sang the songs for Jesus. 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth Peace available for all.' It must have been a magnificent sight and sound, superior to any earthly singing no matter how grand.

There will be lots of opportunities for everybody in the Land to open their homes and lives to our great God during this season. May that supreme privilege not be missed.

A very happy Christmas to you,

James, Catherine, Mark and Rebekah.

CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 1996

Sunday, December 1st — First Sunday in Advent

- 8.00 a.m. Holy Communion.
- 10.30 a.m. Morning Prayer and Baptisms.
- 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer.

Tuesday, December 3rd

- 3.00 p.m. Mothers' Union Christmas Party.

Wednesday, December 4th

- 7.30 p.m. Women's Viewpoint.

Friday, December 6th

- 7.30 p.m. Coffee Evening with Christmas flavour!

Sunday, December 8th — Bible Sunday

- 10.30 a.m. Family Communion — "The Value of the Bible."
- 6.30 p.m. Evening Service — "The Power of the Bible."

Thursday, December 12th

- 7.45 p.m. Parochial Church Council at St. John's.

Sunday, December 15th

- 10.30 a.m. Family Service.
- 6.30 p.m. Holy Communion.

Sunday, December 22nd — 4th Sunday in Advent

- 10.30 a.m. Family Communion and Children's Christmas Play.
- 6.30 p.m. Carols and Lessons. Guest Preacher: Roger Murphy.

Christmas Eve — Tuesday, December 24th

- 10.00 a.m. Christmas Communion at St. John's, Ansley Common.
- 11.30 p.m. Christmas Communion at the Parish Church.

Christmas Day

- 10.30 a.m. Family Communion.

Sunday, December 29th

- 10.30 a.m. Family Communion.
- 6.30 p.m. Evening Service.

Every Week in the Village Church Hall

- Tuesday** 10.00 a.m. Senior Citizens, 6.00 p.m. Children's Club.
- 8.00 p.m. Youth Club.

- Thursday** 10.30 a.m. Mums and Toddlers.

Every Week in St. John's Church Hall

- Tuesday & Thursday** 9.30 a.m. Playgroup.

- Wednesday** 7.30 p.m. Youth Club.

- Thursday** 6.30 p.m. Explorers.

- Meet for Prayer in Church** every Friday at 6.45 p.m. and 10.00 a.m., each Sunday morning; 6.00 p.m. each Sunday evening.

Brazil's Street Children in the town of Santarem are still waiting for Matt Roper to arrive from England. Matt is waiting for his visa from the Brazilian embassy. Santarem base workers contact groups of street children, offering friendship, medical assistance, food, clothing and a place to come to during the day. They have already been given a building for a workshop to provide teaching and children's activities, and many local Brazilians have offered their time and assistance. Obviously the needs of the children will differ, especially those caught in prostitution, and this will require very skilled ministry. Please pray for Matt, that God will give him wisdom and skill as he settles down to this work.

THE GUIDE BOOK ?

On the table side by side,
The Holy Bible and the TV guide,
One is well-worn but cherished with pride,
(Not the Bible—but the TV guide),
One is used daily to help folk decide,
No! it isn't the Bible, it's the TV guide,
As pages are turned, what shall we see,
Oh, what does it matter, turn on the TV,
So they open the book in which they confide,
(No, not the Bible, it's the TV guide),
The word of God is seldom read,
Maybe a verse as they fall into bed;
Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can be,
Not from reading the Bible, from watching TV,
So then back on the table, side by side,
Is the Holy Bible and the TV guide,
No time for prayer, no time for the word,
The Plan of salvation is seldom heard,
Forgiveness for sin so full and free,
Is found in the Bible, not on TV!

Rwanda, a land of great natural beauty and home of the mountain gorilla, has become a country torn by brutal civil war, fear and unrest. As we know, hundreds of thousands have been killed and the refugees who flooded into neighbouring countries in vast numbers, have in the most recent weeks, been returning back to their homeland. Much infrastructure has been destroyed and most people have lost all their possessions.

The Christian Church, under the leadership of Bishop Ken Barnham, is very strong and is helping in the rebuilding. Boxes of ten beautifully produced note cards, are on sale at the Church for £2.80 per box. The money, thus raised, will go direct to the Rwandan Church who will spend it on some rebuilding programmes now being undertaken.

Parochial Church Council meets on Thursday, December 12th 7.45 p.m. at St. John's, Ansley Common. Dates for the Parish Church Council meetings for 1997 have been chosen to be, with few exceptions, on the third Thursday of each month. Items for the agenda should reach the chairman at least three days before the meeting.

Women's Viewpoint meet at Fillongley Village Hall on Wednesday, December 4th at 7.30 p.m. It is a Ley Group event, when the ladies, not only from Ansley, but also Arley, Corley and Fillongley will be present. The tickets are on sale at £1. This includes light refreshments together with what is called 'A taste of Christmas' presentation by Mrs. Roper.

Mothers' Union meeting on Tuesday, December 3rd for the annual Christmas Party in the Village Church Hall at 3.00 p.m.

Church Diaries for 1997 are on sale at 25p each or 40p for two. Why not add them to your Christmas presents and take 6 for £1.

The Coffee Evening on Friday, 6th December will be held in the Village Church Hall at 7.30 p.m. This event replaces the Christmas Bazaar. There will be a Bring and Buy stall—items for this will be appreciated. Orders for Christmas wreaths will be taken. Christmas confectionery stall with a good selection of mince pies on sale.

A young boy was helping his grandfather lift potatoes. After a while the child began to tire. 'Granpa,' he asked wearily, 'what made you bury these things anyway?'

The Alpha Course which concluded at the end of November was a great blessing to a number of those who attended; affording greater insight into aspects of the Christian faith hitherto taken for granted. Through the ten meetings quite a friendship has built up amongst the groups that were formed.

Another course is now planned to commence with a dinner in Ansley Village Church Hall on Wednesday, January 8th. This will then continue each Wednesday evening until March 26th, which will be in the middle of Holy Week.

The invitation to join this course is given to everyone. Those who have already been on the course are invited to come again and this time to bring a friend.

Dawn Waterton will be the 'after dinner' speaker on this occasion.

At the Carol Service of nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 22nd Roger Murphy will be bringing the Christmas message to us. Roger is based in Warwick and has an ever growing ministry to the Churches throughout England and Wales.

Popular for quality, price and service are the Christmas Holly wreaths on sale now at £5.00 and £5.50. To place your order please ring David Morley 01676 540298 or Margaret Antill 01827 874520. All the profits go to the Church funds, so your support is valued. Orders can also be placed at the Coffee Evening on Friday, December 6th.

The telegram. In 1845 the first telegram ever to be cabled in the world was sent by its inventor Samuel Morse. It read—"How marvellous are Thy works." Psalm 139 : 14. One among many scientists to acknowledge God's Greatness.

An Old Chinese Legend — Heaven and Hell

Hell — People sitting around a table, full of good food. Each had long chop sticks in their hands. Every time they attempted to eat they became frustrated as the chop sticks were too long to reach their mouth or some one joggled their elbow—that's hell.

Heaven—People sitting around a table full of good food. Each had long chop sticks in their hands. Each bent forward and fed the person sitting opposite to them—that's heaven.