

# Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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Dear Friends,

New versions of the Bible are being produced all the time. The latest one, which is causing a stir, is called 'The Scroll' and is advertised as 'The Tabloid Bible' (published by Harper Collins). The writer, Nick Page, has taken extracts from the Bible and re-written them in the way that they would be reported in today's tabloid newspapers. Here is an example:

**'TEENAGER IN LOVE'**

Carpenter denies 'rumours'

A Nazareth-based carpenter is to marry his teenage bride, despite the fact that she is pregnant. The village is abuzz with rumours and innuendo. According to the girl herself, the whole thing is a miracle.

'This angel appeared to me,' said the girl, who as a junior cannot be named for legal reasons, 'and told me I was going to have a baby. Naturally I was confused. But the angel insisted that the baby will be the son of God.'

**Convinced**

Joseph (48), her husband-to-be, was ready to call off the marriage. Now it appears that even he has been convinced.

'God visited me in a dream and told me what was going on,' he said to our reporter. 'Now get out of my shop before I hit you with this mallet.'

The Nazareth Child Support Agency has praised Joseph's choice. 'I think we'd have had quite a lot of trouble calculating the amount of maintenance the father should pay otherwise,' they said. 'I mean, what is a reasonable figure for the owner of the world?'

Do you find it amusing? Or perhaps shocking? Or do you think Nick Page is making some interesting points?

He is of course sending up a certain type of newspaper reporting that concentrates on the sensational, sometimes at the expense of the real facts. He's also putting the Bible stories in modern terms, so that everyone can relate to them.

But he has a serious purpose. It is true that the 'pregnant teenager,' Mary, would give birth to a baby who is indeed the owner of the world. People look around at the mess and sadness of that world, and say 'Why doesn't God do something?'

**God has done something.** He has sent His Son Jesus to share our human life. One day Jesus would grow up and die on the cross for us, so that we can look forward to the time when everything will be put right. That is the heart of the Christmas message.

Come and celebrate God's love at our Christmas services! Make sure that Jesus is part of your Christmas and ask for his blessing and peace in your home.

A very happy Christmas to you all. In God's love,

Gill and Geoff.



**SERVICES FOR DECEMBER Theme: Songs of joy at Christmas**

**At St. Laurence services are at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.**

December 6th: a.m. Family Service.  
p.m. Traditional Holy Communion.

December 13th: a.m. Holy Communion.  
p.m. Traditional Evensong.

**December 20th: a.m. All Age Nativity.  
p.m. Nine Lessons and Carols.**

**CHRISTMAS EVE 11.30 p.m. Midnight Communion.  
Celebrant and Preacher: Rev. Philip Bell.**

**CHRISTMAS DAY 10.30 a.m. Family Communion.**

December 27th: a.m. Holy Communion.  
p.m. Traditional Evensong.

**AT ST. JOHN'S HALL, ANSLEY COMMON**

December 13th: 10.15 a.m. Family Service.

**CHRISTMAS EVE: 10.00 p.m. Midnight Communion.**

(No service on December 27th).

**EVENTS IN DECEMBER**

Tuesday, December 1st: Quiet Holy Communion at St. John's: 9.30 a.m. This will be followed by House Communions for those who are unable to get out to Christmas services. If you know of anyone else who would like to have Communion at home for Christmas, please let Gill know.

**Friday, December 4th: 7.30 p.m. AN EVENING OF CHRISTMAS FUN!** As last year, we are holding this event again in the Church Hall. There will be a sale of goods, followed by refreshments, Christmas songs and carols. There will be stalls for preserves, Christmas gifts and decorations, a bottle tombola, and cakes.

Margaret Antill is again making holly wreaths, which can be ordered from her (01827 874520) or during the evening itself. There will be a raffle.

Do come along and support this venture and help to make it the very enjoyable and successful evening it was last year!

December 10th: 7.45 p.m. at St. John's Hall: PCC.

December 15th: 9.30 a.m. Shorter Morning Prayer with Carols in the Church Hall followed by Senior Citizens.

7.30 p.m. W.I. Carol service will be held at St. Laurence's this year.

Saturday, December 19th: from 10.00 a.m.—all hands on deck—to deck the church for Christmas! Any help will be appreciated.

Tuesday, December 22nd: Over 50's at Ansley Common hold their Carol Service at 2.30 p.m.

### FROM THE REGISTERS

Our sympathy and prayers go to the families of Olive Smith (aged 80) from Exhall whose first husband was from Ansley;

Sybil Rowley (65) who kept the newsagents in Chapel End for many years;

Thomas Unite (87) of 93 Birmingham Road;

Hilda Raven (84) of 11 Croft Mead;

Dorothy Hall (70) of 14 Ansley Common;

William Hatter (89) of Willow Lodge, Pipers Lane.

Christmas will be strange this year for these families and we pray God's comfort and peace for them.

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### JUST NOW

Never mind about tomorrow—it always is today.

Yesterday has vanished, wherever none can say,

Each minute must be guarded—make worth the while somehow;

There are no other moments; it's always just now.

Just now is the hour that's golden, the moment to defend.

Just now is without beginning; just now can never end.

Then never mind tomorrow—'tis today you must enjoy

With all that's true and noble; and the time for this is now!

Author unknown.

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Try this Trivia Quiz.

Example—Question: 26 = L in the A. Answer: 26 = Letters in the alphabet.

1. 57 = H V
2. 999 = O L than a T
3. 7 = D in S W
4. 39 = B in the O T
5. 1 = T of the P
6. 8 = H (K of E)
7. 40 = D and N of the G F
8. 100 = Y W
9. 7 = D in the W
10. 6 = G (K of E)
11. 13 = U F S
12. 52 = W in a Y

## EDITORIAL

Anyone who knows me knows how I love reading and writing poetry and one of the poets I have always loved is Christina Rossetti with her easy to read style and simplicity. I was delighted when I was given a book of poetry together with a bible on my retirement from Sunday School two years ago, to find her featured a few times. Her most famous one must be "In the bleak mid winter" which has become a very popular carol over the last few years. This made me scour through the hymn book to see if other famous poets or authors had written hymns, and you will be surprised how many there are including Rudyard Kipling, John Milton, Emily Bronte, Alfred Lord Tennyson, William Wordsworth and Robert Browning to mention just a few.

As we watched pictures of Astronaut John Glen, aged 77 years, in space and then on his return to earth, we cannot help but be reminded of how different 'old age' is today. We have always been used to seeing a Grandma depicted as a white haired little lady sitting in her rocking chair by the fireside in shawl and warm slippers, quietly knitting or dozing. Well, these images have certainly changed! The pastimes of the elderly now are more likely to be joining their local daytime clubs, gardening, answering questions on T.V. Quiz Shows and many also enjoy holidays abroad. In fact, as we stood on the touch line in the pouring rain last month watching the 'Under 8's Arley Hurricanes' playing football, there was an 80 year old Great Grandma standing by us cheering on the team. The message seems to be "You are only as old as you feel, but we are all young at heart."

So far from many who have been making enquiries, it would seem that Mrs. Salmon, aged 94, is the oldest inhabitant of Ansley Parish, but we stand to be corrected if this is not so.

As we look forward to Christmas, we all seem to be rushing about and if you are like me busy making lists of cards and presents. I love Christmas shopping, Christmas Services and Christmas parties and the coming together of families and friends in celebration. Over the months before Christmas it all seems so far away; we cannot even begin to think about it, but once Bonfire Night has passed we are on the 'count down.' We are bombarded with adverts and children are tempted by images of expensive presents. It is all so commercial and money-orientated that most people have lost sight of the 'Holy Child' but after saying this, as we rehearse our Nativity Play at St. John's, the children know very well the story of Jesus' birth. All they need is reminding of just why we all have parties and presents at Christmas and our play this year does just that. It is called "What is the most important part of Christmas?" Of course the answer is celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

May Christmas be a time of sharing, love and happiness for you all, and a time for us to say 'thank you' for God's greatest gift of His Son.

Marie Cove.