

# Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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No, 906

DECEMBER 2000

Price 25p

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## DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

**"Peace on earth, Goodwill to all men."**

Some years ago I did some family history, and I discovered in all the censuses in the last century, the Kimbers were agricultural labourers. In fact they must have been shepherds working on the big estates of Hampshire. So the Christmas story always has special meaning for me, because the first people to be told of the coming of Jesus were also shepherds—common people working hard for their living in a cold, dirty and poorly paid job.

I am glad that the angels were sent first to shepherds because it tells us something about God's priorities—he thinks the poor of the world should get the news first. Perhaps he doesn't quite trust the rich to hand it on, and not keep it for themselves. Jesus later said that his message was "good news to the poor"—and that they had a better chance of entering the kingdom than the rich. The church has too often behaved as if the rich had special privileges in the kingdom, while the poor had better learn to stand at the back. Jesus turned all that on its head, and showed an equal love for all men. He calls us to do the same and to love all, and to work for those who are oppressed.

There is a most unusual pub in South Warwickshire, and anyone who has driven south from Coventry towards Stowe will have seen it—the Joseph Arch pub in Barford. It must be unique in that it is named after a Methodist local preacher—and there aren't many such pubs around! Joseph Arch was not only a Methodist, he was also the founder of the first trade union for Agricultural workers. I am not sure how much the labourers of his day thought of his sermons, but they knew the effect of the gospel on his life—he was concerned that the gospel should mean just and fair wages and conditions for the working man. Like Jesus he knew that the gospel was for all, rich and poor, and that the kingdom of God was not only about our personal relationship with Jesus, but also about how people treat each other, about fairness, justice and equality.

So Christmas is not just a celebration of the coming of the King of Kings, it is also the celebration of the coming of the Liberator who said that he had come "to set free the oppressed." So I invite all of you to come and celebrate the coming of our Saviour this Christmas, in beautiful carols, lovely Christmas readings, candles and communion. And as we receive the bread and the wine—his body and his blood, to remember that he was born to change us—inwardly in our relationship with him, and outwardly in our relationships with each other.

I don't know if my ancestors had a living faith in Jesus, but I hope that they did and that they knew the One for whom the angels sang, who brings

**"Peace on earth, Goodwill to all men."**

Christmas greetings to you all,

Gill and Geoff.

#### **Thanks**

Many thanks to all who provided food for the wonderful Confirmation celebration last Sunday evening. Thank you also to the anonymous donor of £100 to the church recently.

#### **FROM THE REGISTERS**

Our prayers and commiseration go to the families of Albert Raynor, of Tuttle Hill, who was aged 66. Also the family of Roy Palmer, aged 69 of 62 Birchley Heath; and of Hilda Fallows, aged 76 of 26 St. John's Road, Ansley Common.

#### **A note from Gill**

Recently I was asked to become the assistant of the diocesan International Director, Canon Andrew White. This was completely unexpected, but for many reasons it seemed right to give it a try. However, I am not leaving Ansley! The new job is 20 hours per week in Coventry, which leaves me time to continue with some of my parish ministry. Now Geoff's studies have come to an end, he is able to take on more pastoral work, so rest assured that Ansley will still be cared for, to the best of our joint ability.

#### **SERVICES FOR DECEMBER**

Theme: God's plans declared.

At St. John's Hall, Ansley Common:

December 10—10.15 a.m. Family Service.

Christmas Eve: 10.00 p.m. Holy Communion.

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

December 3—a.m. All-age worship.

p.m. Traditional Holy Communion.

December 10—a.m. Holy Communion.

p.m. Traditional Evensong.

December 17—a.m. Jesus' Birthday Party, for all ages.

p.m. Nine Lessons and Carols.



December 24—(Christmas Eve) a.m. Special service to prepare for Christmas.

p.m. NO EVENING SERVICE, BECAUSE

11.30 p.m. Midnight Communion, with the Rev. Philip Bell.

December 25—Christmas Day 10.30 a.m. Family Communion.

December 31—a.m. New Year's Eve service.

NO EVENING SERVICE.

Mid-week service in village church hall:

Tuesday, 19th December Holy Communion with carols at 9.30 a.m.

#### **DECEMBER DIARY**

Monday evenings at 7.00 p.m.: LINKS club in village hall for 7-10 year olds, Subs 30p.

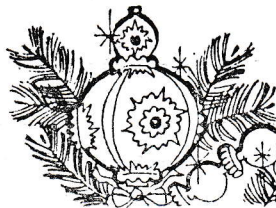
December 4—7.30 p.m. Ansley Common Fellowship at 1 Nursery Road.

FRIDAY, 8th DECEMBER: 7.30 p.m. START—CHRISTMAS FAYRE IN VILLAGE HALL! Stalls : Games : Refreshments : Raffle : Bran Tub. Our usual high-quality happening, with Holly and Carols too! Come and enjoy yourselves and help us raise funds for the church.

Margaret Antill will be taking orders for holly wreaths at this event or you can phone your order on 01827 874520. Price £5 for plain wreaths, £5.50 with ribbon.

December 12—Tuesday, Home Communion.

December 13—7.30 p.m. Wednesday Fellowship at 34 Nuthurst Crescent.



## EDITORIAL

December 2000

'Chill December brings the sleet, blazing fire and Christmas treat'

This doesn't sound very much like the weather we have been having this year, as we seem to be playing catch up. Did you ever see roses in bloom at the end of November? Perhaps one of these years we will be picking roses at Christmas. The border plant in our garden is in bloom again and even the leaves have been reluctant to leave the trees as the countryside looks splendid with foliage of gold, red and brown, more like September than November.

Another Bonfire Night has passed but what a contrast to only a few years ago when children spent hours and hours making a Guy Fawkes as most families had their own bonfire party in the back garden, with the Guy occupying pride of place on top of the fire. Now most families go to organised displays where hundreds of pounds worth of fireworks are set off and what a sight they make. Some years ago we had Catherine wheels which never seemed to want to stay in place and either flew off in all directions or refused to go round, jumping jacks which had a mind of their own, Roman candles and rockets, but nothing in comparison to now as rockets explode in the air in cascades and fill the sky with colour—what a sight they make.

Have you ever tried to open a blank video tape, a packet of biscuits, a box of chocolates, and had to resort to using scissors. Have you counted the pins in a new man's shirt? Even opening a jar of jam is a job for Superman, but despite this the bought jam goes mouldy unless it is kept in the refrigerator. Isn't it strange that jam containing preservatives to make it keep longer goes mouldy, whereas home-made jam containing only fruit and sugar keeps in the cupboard. This is very puzzling, but it is called progress.

Someone asked me the other day where 'Plus Fours' (the trousers very popular at one time with golfers) got their name. It seems that to produce the overhand the original length was increased by 4 inches, which doesn't seem very much to make such baggy trousers.

May Christmas bring you many things, parcels and packages tied with string.

Good food to eat and share aplenty and joy that people who visit us bring,

Everything to make for happiness at this special time of the year.

When Christ came in earthly form to bring us love and calm all our fear.

Marie Cove.