

# Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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## CHRISTMAS 2001

Well, I am back safely and thank you for your prayers. I have been away for three weeks on assignment from our diocese to the diocese of Kaduna. It is mind-boggling. How can such different places exist on the same planet? I went in part to help set up the work on reconciliation that is so much needed there. You may know that eighteen months ago there was rioting in Kaduna in which over 1,000 people died—both Christians and Muslims—over the installation of Muslim law, called “shari’a.”

The stories that I heard were awful:

- I stayed with a vicar whose son, aged 26 was killed by a Muslim mob. The vicar had been called to the police station, with the Muslim religious leader, to try and calm their respective populations. The son went to look for his father and was murdered.
- I also met with Rev. Luther, the retired head of the church in Jos, who was shot by a gang of “Christian” youths who came to his door and mistook him for a Muslim!
- I did however hear encouraging stories. I stayed with an old friend, a retired pastor, Ezekiel. He told me that in his village, when the trouble came, many of the Muslim traders fled, but many left their valuables in the hands of Christian friends. “In fact I’ve still got a lot of their stuff here,” he added quietly. That night the village chief set up a patrol to make sure that no Muslim property or their mosque was attacked, and the next morning personally visited all the Muslim compounds in the town. No damage or injury took place there.

Our diocese is working with the bishop of Kaduna to bring peace and reconciliation between the Muslim and Christian communities. Of course the problem is not religious doctrine. It is more to do with power, with which tribes have more influence and a bigger share of the government budgets. It is about pride, greed, distrust, hatred, poverty, need, criminality, personal ambition—all the same things that cause riots all over the world, including England.

We are working with the community and religious leaders from all sides to try and bring a new level of trust and co-operation. Most Muslims and most Christians just want a quiet and peaceful life to get on with their business. But on both sides there are minorities who hope to gain something from creating trouble.

Please pray with us for peace in Nigeria; for safety for Muslims there as well as for our Christian brothers and sisters. Pray that in all this, the Christians may show a level of Christian love, compassion and Christ-likeness that may witness to His power in a way that words can never do. In this way we and they witness to our faith in the Prince of Peace, whose birth we are soon to celebrate.

With our love for a peaceful Christmas,  
Geoff and Gill.

**SERVICES IN DECEMBER** Theme: God's long-term view

Services at St. John's are at 10.30 a.m. on 9th and 23rd December, with Midnight Communion on 24th AT 10.00 p.m.

Services at St. Laurence's are at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.

December 2—am All Age Worship.  
pm Traditional Holy Communion.

December 9—am Holy Communion.  
pm Evensong.

December 16—am **Jesus' Birthday Party** — for the young-at-heart, with contributions by the children and young people.  
pm Holy Communion.

December 23—am Holy Communion.  
pm **Nine Lessons and Carols.**

**Christmas Eve—St. John's Hall, Ansley Common: 10.00 p.m. Holy Communion.**

**St. Laurence's: 11.30 p.m. Midnight Communion with Canon Chris Burch, Precentor of Coventry Cathedral.**

**Christmas Day—10.30 a.m. Family Communion.**

December 30—am Service of Reflection and Prayer.  
pm No service: an evening with your feet up!

**Tuesday, 18th December: 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion with carols for Senior Citizens, followed by Home Communions.**

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**December 1st 9.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m. at the Cathedral: an International Training Day for all parishes. This will be a Christian response to the events of September 11th and will include reports from Bishop Mano of USPG on Pakistan and Bishop Anthony on Nigeria.**

December 5th 7.30 p.m. Wednesday Fellowship at 10 Nuthurst Crescent.

**December 7th 7.30 p.m. CHRISTMAS FAYRE IN VILLAGE HALL —ALL WELCOME. GIFTS, GAMES, REFRESHMENTS, TOMBOLA, CAROLS.**

December 10th Ansley Common Fellowship at 7.30 p.m.

December 11th Senior Citizens' Christmas Meal.

December 12th 3.00 p.m. Time to Pray, at 'Wayside,' Birchley Heath.

**SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SERVICES: SEE DETAILS ABOVE.**

### **FROM THE REGISTERS**

Our sympathy and prayers go to the families of Kathleen Leedham, aged 74 from Camp Hill and also of Catherine Glover, aged 77 from St. Laurence Road, Ansley.

### **THANK YOU**

To Margaret Oliver for her very successful coffee evening for Spurgeon's Child Care, which to date has raised £250. Thanks to all those who supported it.

Thank you to St. Laurence's choir and organist, for their musical support at a packed and very special Ley Group Confirmation Service at St. Michael's with Bishop Colin.

### **NEW SERVICES!**

We are now in the final stages of getting ready for the new Prayer Book, Common Worship. We are only allowed to use the Alternative Service Book until the end of the year! It has been a long process of PCC and Worship Team discussions, with trial draft services, but we should soon be using our preferred versions of the new services. This will affect all morning services and the evening Communion on the 3rd Sunday of each month, as well as baptisms, weddings and funerals. The Book of Common Prayer services stay exactly the same as before.

A special prayer would not come amiss for Duncan and Helen Watts for their first Christmas in Kyrgyzstan.

### **HOLLY WREATHS**

These are available once more, thanks to Margaret Antill (01827 874520). Please order your wreath from her, Holly only: £5. Holly wreaths with ribbon: £5.50. Prices held from last year! Proceeds to the Christmas Fayre and Church Funds.

### **IDEAS!**

We still need lots of fund raising ideas for our church annexe. The churchwardens would be delighted to hear from you. Well done everyone on a superb effort so far—but we still have some way to go to turn our plans into bricks and mortar! Thank you all for your generosity.

## EDITORIAL

1st December, 2001

As Christmas draws ever nearer and shops are full of expensive presents and good things to eat, I remember with affection the simplicity of shopping 50 years ago. Within a few hundred yards of where we lived there was a Fish and Chip Shop, a Cycle/Barber/Cobbler, a Bakery, a Chemist, a Wool Shop, Post Office, Co-op Store, Butchers, Garage, Billiard Hall (which we were told to give a wide berth) and a Doctor plus a couple more general stores, but my favourite shop was Arnolds. It was dingy and cramped but they sold groceries from one small counter and everything from liquorice stick to chamber pots at the other counter—it was a magic place. You couldn't ask for the wrong thing. So we had everything we needed within a very small distance and shopping was very simple and easy.

We also had bread, milk and coal delivered, the Insurance Man called. Occasionally a knife sharpener came but my favourite caller was a foreign gentleman who wore a turban, but I can't remember what he sold. The one thing I do recall is that he was scrupulously clean—his clothes, his hands and his whole appearance which certainly recommended him to our mother. We also had 'The Tribune' and 'The Daily Herald' delivered. So, you see we were almost self sufficient in our little community—we knew all the tradesmen and women and they knew us, although we did have to go to Nuneaton Market for fresh fruit and fish and at Christmas time for luxuries such as dates and nuts.

There are definitely some items which can be called 'Grandma things,' as I have been reminded recently. Such things as a button box—mine is greatly admired by my grandchildren. Then there is a bodkin, hooks and eyes, plain postcards, but everyone in our family is especially highly amused by our 'bolster.' Then there is the 'pinafore'—what could be more sensible when you are cooking but this also seems to be a 'Grandma thing' and a constant source of amusement. So, when certain items are needed, perhaps it would be a good idea to pay grandma a visit, and she's sure to have what you want. Perhaps in years to come we will have a complete turnaround and the modern items of today will become 'Grandma things' of tomorrow.

Are you a list person? I make a list which I start every Monday and add to it when I go shopping on Thursday. Then when I have a full day to do housework I make a list of all the jobs I need to do and make it my aim to finish the list, which mostly I manage. Then there is the Christmas card list which grows and grows, the Christmas present list, a list of all birthdays in date order, the lists can go on and on. If you are a 'list person' then it is a way of organising certain activities, but this is completely irrelevant if you go shopping and forget the list which I have done many times, or if you can't find your Christmas card list, but still I can't resist making lists.

Wishing you a happy Christmas and a healthy and peaceful New Year,

Marie Cove.