

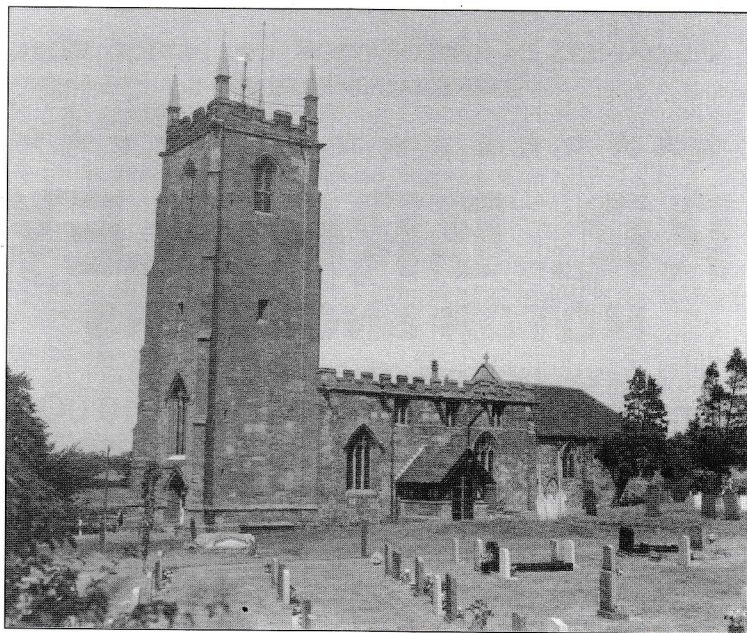
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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Price 25p



Vicar:

REV. PETER ALLAN

Tel: 024 7639 9070

Wardens:

MARGARET ANTILL

Tel: 01827 874520

MOREEN FREESTONE

Tel: 024 7638 1833

St. Johns Leaders

DAVID & MARIE COVE

Tel: 024 7639 4114

Print Centre 0800 389 4089

Christmas Cheer

After Christmas there is always a long queue at the customer services sections of the major stores as people seek to return unwanted Christmas presents or need the cash more. But let's not think about that now. During December the thought is about getting, collecting, making, buying things for Christmas. Somehow we always have more around us at Christmas time. Some people even pay an extra premium to insure their purchases. It's not Christmas if we don't gather more things around us.

The first Christmas was quite the opposite. It was not about getting but letting go. Jesus through whom the world was created let go of the power and status that he deserved. Instead he took the form of a baby - weak and dependent on others, even for life itself. That letting go was to be the hallmark of his life. He said 'No' to the temptation to grasp power and popularity when his ministry began. Instead he set out to bring sight to the blind and freedom to the oppressed. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said 'No' to the temptation to find an easy way out. Instead he walked the path of humiliation, pain and death. Because he let go of all the power and status and with it the protection that he could so easily have claimed for himself, he rose from death and was given the highest place of all. Because he let go.

Jesus did not grasp tightly what he had earned and deserved. He let go. The real meaning of Christmas is not in the shopping, the buying and the getting but in the letting go, the giving away. May you find great joy as you share the presents you have bought for others.

May you find even greater joy as you share with us in Christmas worship and celebrate Jesus' wonderful sacrifice. Together we worship Jesus, the one who inspires all our giving. We give thanks for Jesus who let go of everything he had that we might share his risen life.

HAVE A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS,

Your friend and vicar,

Peter

December What's On

St. Laurence's Church

Sunday 4 th	Advent 2	10.30 a.m.	All Age Worship & Godly play
		6.30 p.m.	B.C.P. Holy Communion
Sunday 11 th	Advent 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion and Baptism
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 18 th	Advent 4	10.30 a.m.	Christmas Carols
		6.30 p.m.	Nine Lessons and Carols
Saturday 24 th	Christmas Eve	11.30 p.m.	Midnight Holy Communion
Sunday 25 th	Christmas Day	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

St John's Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 4 th	Advent 2	10.30 a.m.	Family Worship & Sunday School
Wednesday 7 th		9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 11 th	Advent 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion & Sunday School
Sunday 18 th	Advent 4	10.30 a.m.	Family Christingal Service
Wednesday 21 st		9.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
Saturday 24 th	Christmas Eve	10.00 p.m.	Holy Communion

Other Activities at St. John's Church Hall

Mondays	7.00 p.m.	Indoor Bowls
Tuesdays	9.00 – 12.00 a.m.	Krazy Kettle Kafé
Tuesdays	7.30 p.m.	Line Dancing
Wednesdays	6.30 p.m.	A.C.Y.C.
Thursday 1 st 8 th & 15 th	7.00 p.m.	Youth Club
Fridays	7.30 p.m.	Ballroom Dancing
Saturday 10 th	2.00 p.m.	Christmas Fayre

Activities at Village Church Hall

Monday 5 th & 12 th	7.00 p.m.	Links - Youth Club
Tuesdays	10.00 a.m.	Senior Citizens
Wednesday 7 th & 14 th	10.00 – 11.30 a.m.	Ansley's Little Angels
Wednesday 7 th & 14 th	2.00 – 4.00 p.m.	Community Café
Wednesday 14 th	7.30 p.m.	Bingo
Thursday 8 th	7.30 p.m.	Parish Council Meeting

Other Parish activities

Tuesday 6 th	10.00 a.m.	Family History Class (Annexe)
Thursday 8 th & 22 nd	7.30 p.m.	Ansley Common Fellowship
Fridays	1.00 p.m.	Art Classes at the Club

Most of the regular activities will close for the holiday period and recommence in the New Year.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

From the Registers

Blessing of Marriage

Rachael Doughty and David Worrall confirmed their wedding vows in Church on 22nd October, The poem 'On Marriage (1886) for the Prophet by Kahlil Giban was read during the service.

Funeral

The Funeral of Henrietta Alice Varden (Hetty) age 85 years took place at the Heart of England Crematorium on the 3rd November. Hetty as a child lived at the Hollies in Birchley Heath, was in the choir at St Laurence for many years. Hetty was married to Norman, they loved dancing, travelling around the country winning many trophies. Hetty was a good friend to her neighbours and joined in all the activities when she lived at St John's, moving to Harmony House five years ago. She will be sadly missed by the friends and family, especially her four grandsons. (Scot, Ricky, Carl and Paul).

Christmas Preparations and Services

On Saturday 17th we will be decorating the Church ready for the Christmas Festivities. We would be very grateful to any one who could spare an hour or so to help both with the decorating and the cleaning. It is a very busy time for us all and any help would be much appreciated. Please come along after 9.30 a.m. we aim to be finished by lunch time.

We are planning a slightly different format for the morning service on 18th and aim to tell the Christmas story through the carols that shall be sung. This service is particularly appropriate for children, and during the service the Mary and Joseph figures that have been at homes in the parish, during Advent, will be returned and placed in the crib. As in previous years at the evening service on the last Sunday in Advent we will be holding our traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols This year the readings will be from the King James Version of the Bible.

The service at St. John's will be a Christingal service for all the family.

Christmas Communion will be available at the three services to be held on Christmas Eve. 10 p.m. at St. John's and 11.30 p.m. at St. Laurence and Christmas Day 10.30 a.m. at St. Laurence. If you would like to receive Communion and are unable to attend because of ill health please contact the vicar and he will be pleased to make arrangements to come and visit you in your own home in the days leading up to Christmas.

St John's Christmas Fayre

On Saturday 10th there will be a sale of Christmas items, bric a brac, and cakes etc. Father Christmas will be in his grotto for any children wishing to pay a visit. There will also be time for a chat .

The Church Gates

We are pleased to advise you that we have now received permission to have the gates between the car park and Churchyard replaced. This work will now commence in January and as can be expected there may be a time the gates will be missing. This work is costing £770, and at the time of writing we have received donations amounting to £625

towards this work. If you would like to contribute to this cost please contact one of the P.C.C. members.

St John's Building renovations and extension.

An application for planning permission has now been submitted and we are now seeking estimates for the work to be undertaken both for the new building and for the refurbishment of the existing building. We are in the process of applying for funding to complete this project, but it will take time. In the meantime we must continue to raise the share of funding required for the work, and to ensure that the improvements will be of benefit for the whole of the community.

We have received a grant from the Coventry Diocesan Development Fund of £3000 towards the purchase of new tables and chairs which have now been ordered.

Village Church Hall

The Ansley Little Angels have paid to have some storage cupboards built in the snooker room in the hall. This will enable all their equipment that is presently stored on the stage to be put away.

We would remind all hall users to ensure they do not use other group's equipment etc. without prior arrangement.

Rota's

During this month we will be drawing up the rota's for Church cleaning and for providing and arranging the flowers in Church for the next twelve months.

We have lost one or two of the people who have cleaned the church for many years due to ill health etc. If you feel you could devote an hour or two to helping clean the church once a quarter please do have a word.

Some people like to donate flowers or money to buy flowers on a particular date during the year it would be helpful if you could let Margaret Kimberley know as soon as possible and a date, will be allocated for your donation. Or you may wish to arrange the flowers yourself if so, we would be pleased to hear from you. Volunteers always welcome. Rest assured you will not be 'thrown in at the deep end', and any help is always much appreciated.

Asia Earth Quake

For two weeks we had a retiring collection for this disaster appeal and a total of £166.62 has been sent from St. Laurence's and St. John's.

Spurgeon Child Care Coffee Evening, The Christmas Bazaar and St. John's Christmas Fancy Dress Party

All these events are held after this issue was prepared. A full report will be in the January magazine.

Free will Offering Envelopes

The envelopes for 2006 are now available, if you wish to participate in this method of giving to the church please do ask as this method does ensure that if for some reason one week you are unable to attend, the church, will not miss out on your giving. Please remember if you are a tax-payer and wish to make use of the tax efficient gift aid system please speak to one of the wardens or Margaret Kimberley.

I was reading a letter to a magazine about the 'good old days', and while I agreed with a lot it said, one thing I wouldn't swap for those days and that is the winter weather. We had good summers but the winters were awful. There were what seemed to be endless months of cold, ice, snow and fog and we dreaded even getting out of bed in the mornings as our bedroom was so cold you could see your breath. Central heating hadn't been heard of and every day the journey to school was horrendous, as we had icy hands (despite mittens or gloves) and feet, resulting in 'hot aches'. So, although the 'good old days' have some wonderful memories, I wouldn't want those winters back again 'for all the tea in China', as the saying goes.

'Homes with real fires' - that was the advertising pitch for selling some houses in a Sunday supplement, and there wasn't one of those houses under £450,000. I wouldn't have thought this was a selling point in today's world where everything works at the click of a switch. Would they really want to chop wood and build fires?

Have you noticed how the 'match' which used to be so essential is losing it's importance. Gas fires and cookers light automatically, fewer and fewer people smoke and those who do use a lighter. What made me think of this was an activity for the children and it entailed collecting 24 small match boxes to build this. I can't imagine how long it would take to collect these. Perhaps I should start collecting now to do the activity next Christmas.

There are many words we use every day, but we never know how they came about. Did you know if you rub a cloth over Amber it makes static electricity and the Greek word for Amber is Electron, and this is where we get the word 'electric'?

As we now build up once again to celebrating our Lord's birth, it is hard to see how Jesus squeezes into the hubbub of crowded chops, frantic present buying etc., but there is plenty of room for Him in many, many peoples lives and He is as real today as on that very first day of His birth.

Christmas time, how wondrous what fun.
A shame it's over almost as soon as begun.
Parties to enjoy, lot of food to eat.
So many people, can't find a seat.

But God would want us to enjoy His Son's birth.
That day when our Saviour came to this earth.
So when parties are over and paper cleared away.
Take time to thank God for that very special day.

Marie Cove.