

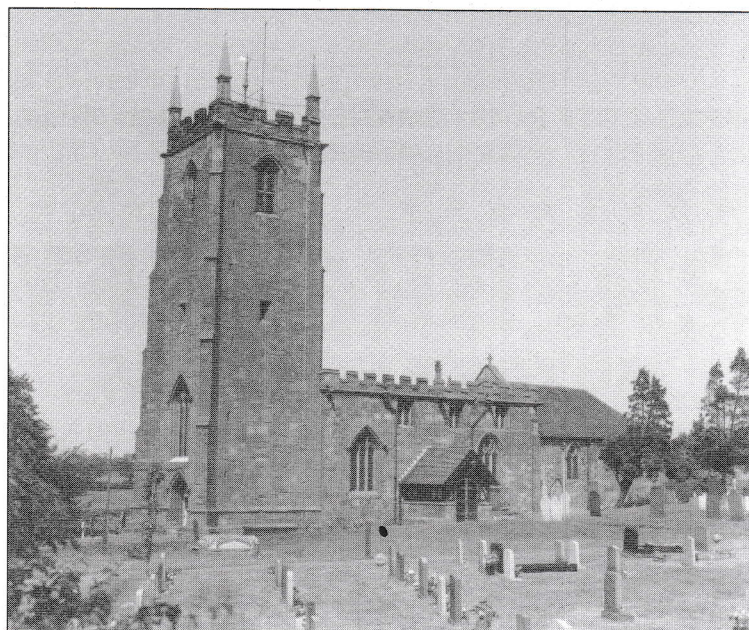
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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WHAT MAKES A HAPPY CHRISTMAS?

I know it isn't true for everyone but I hope it's true for you that as you look back to your Christmases as a child you are full of happy memories. So what makes Christmas so special for children? It's being special. Whatever has happened during the year adults trip over themselves to make Christmas a special time for their children.

You enjoy being the centre of attention..It's the surprise.

You don't quite know what you will be getting. You know it will be something good. You wait with excitement. It's the sense of wonder.

When someone dresses up as Father Christmas they want the children to believe in them. They don't want to be analysed but simply believed. (That can cause problems. Dressed up as a school

Father Christmas I asked a small boy what he wanted for Christmas. His answer was definite

"Have you forgotten already? I told you at the Co-op two weeks ago.")

We are not children but what makes Christmas special for them is for all of us whatever our age. Being Special.

We are special because Jesus was born as a baby for each of us.

The Surprise Expect God to be with you and bring the joy of His presence. The Sense of wonder and awe.

You don't have to be a small child to put aside rational argument in order to be still in the presence of something greater than yourself.

Yes Christmas is wonderful time for children - of all ages.

HAVE A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Your friend and Vicar,
Peter.

St. Laurence's Church - Services

Sunday 2 nd	Advent Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Morning Worship
		4.00 p.m.	Family Service In Village Church Hall
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion & Ministry of Healing
Sunday 9 th	Advent 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy communion
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 16 th	Advent 3	10.30 a.m.	Family Carols
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion & Ministry of Healing
Sunday 23 rd	Advent 4	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	Traditional Nine Lessons and Carols
Monday 24 th	Christmas Eve	11.30 p.m.	Midnight Communion
Tuesday 25 th	Christmas Day	10.30 a.m.	Family Communion
Sunday 30 th	Christmas 1	10.30 a.m.	Joint service at St. Michaels New Arley

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 2 nd	Advent Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Joint at St Laurence
Sunday 9 th	Advent 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Wednesday 12 th		9.00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
Sunday 16 th	Advent 3	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday 23 rd	Advent 4	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Monday 24 th	Christmas Eve	10.00 p.m.	Holy Communion

Please note the 4 p.m. service will be in the Village Church Hall for December for craft work.

Other regular activities

Most regular activities will have a break over the Christmas New Year holiday full details on the notice boards

From the Registers

Funerals

The funeral of David Roberts (63) took place at St. Laurence's on 11th October followed by interment in the churchyard. David was someone who made a huge impact on everyone he met bringing life and laughter into every situation. He had many jobs most involving driving and working with the public. In them all his friendliness and good humour always shone through. David loved his dogs and most of all he loved his family. They will all miss him greatly.

St. John's Prize Bingo

On Monday 3rd December St. John's hall committee are organising a Christmas Prize Bingo. This will commence at 7 p.m. there will be prizes for a full line and house. There will also be a Christmas hamper for the final prize and a raffle. All proceeds are in aid of hall funds. Do come and support the hard work of all concerned in the organising of this event, and have a very enjoyable evening.

Christmas 2007

We commence our celebration this year with the preparations for the Christmas Tree Festival which will start with the delivery of the trees on Monday 3rd December we would appreciate any help that afternoon to set the trees in church. We are expecting each tree sponsor to decorate their tree on either Thursday 6th between 2-8 p.m. or Friday 7th

between 10a.m. and 6p.m. offers to help clean the church on Friday afternoon ready for the festival will be much appreciated.

Help will also be required during the festival to steward in Church and to help with providing and serving refreshments in the annexe. If you could help in any way at any time during the festival do please have a word.

The festival will run from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday 8th, Sunday 9th, Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th with the normal Sunday services taking place as listed above.

We will have our traditional Nine Lessons and Carol's service at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday 23rd. and chances to celebrate Holy Communion on Christmas Eve at 10 p.m. at St. John's, 11.30 p.m. at St. Laurence and on Christmas Day 10.30 a.m. also at St. Laurence.

With all the rush of this festive season please do find time to be still and come and meet the Christ Child in Church this Christmas.

Harvest (continued)

St. Laurence's harvest on 14th October was again a very happy occasion, the Church looked lovely with the wonderful array of flowers, vegetables and especially this year the fruit. We wish to thank all who contributed to the harvest by giving produce from their gardens, allotments or from the shops. We all have so much to thank God for in our lives, and it was mentioned in the morning service which was also the memorial service for May Stain that she often said we did not Thank God enough!

On the Monday the older children from Nursery Hill School and the Old School came and celebrated their harvest. With parents looking on the children gave of their best to show everyone there what they have been learning about the harvest.

When all the children had departed all the produce was moved to the annexe ready for the sale and the fish/chicken and chips supper. The produce was sold and auctioned and £136 was raised for church funds.

Thank you to everyone who helped with the harvest both at St. Laurence and St. John's in any way.

Thank you

The P.C.C. wish to thank the family and friends of Kath Jones for their generosity who have given £605 to the church in her memory. The family have asked that £305 be put in the Fabric Fund and £300 to the General Account.

The P.C.C. also wish to thank the family and friends of May Stain who have generously donated in her memory a total of £374. At the family's request this has been divided between the Church Yard Fund and the General Account.

Whilst on the subject of thank you the P.C.C. very much appreciate all the hard work done each year by so many people to help the life of the church run smoothly. We can never remember everyone but this year we would like to mention Ansley Taxis, who provide the transport for the evening and special services at a very, very reasonable rate, (if anyone who lives in the parish has difficulty getting to church please ask for details).

Our Architect, who has had a very busy year, and at the time of writing was in the process of completing the quinquennial inspection report on the state of the church fabric. Those who clean the church week by week, this year has been particularly heavy due to the amount of building work being carried out. If anyone could help by volunteering to go on the cleaning rota and clean the church about four times a year, please let us know preferably before the end of the year.

We are also looking for people to volunteer to put their names on the flower rota to ensure that there are flowers in church each week. Alternatively you may wish to give a donation towards the cost of the flowers, perhaps in memory of a loved one, if you feel you could help please do have a word,

Also we greatly appreciate all the hard work that has been done at the Village Church Hall which has greatly changed its appearance over the past two years. The P.C .C. wish thank the Parish Council for the additional £500 which will complete the repairs to the guttering. At the time of writing the planning stages for St. John's Church Hall were well in hand.

Thank you everyone, and thank you to God for giving us the will to work together for the good of all.

Results

Tear Fund

Over the Harvest Festival weekend those who have boxes for this charity brought them to church and after being counted a total of £110 has been raised and with the £22.75 raised in the box in church over the previous three months this has all been sent for the children at risk fund which we support. Thank you

Spurgeon' Child Care Trust

On Wednesday 7th November Margaret Oliver welcomed us to her home for a coffee evening and the annual box opening. With coffee and cakes everyone had a very enjoyable evening. The total raised in the boxes and the proceeds from the bring and buy amounted to £362.

If anyone would like to have a collection box for either or both of these charities please ask. Remember every penny helps children, either in this country or over seas.

Quiz Evening

On Friday 9th November the small group of people that came to the quiz evening had a very happy and enjoyable time. There was discussion who would be in the winning team, eventually it was Marie's team who gained the highest marks. A total of £38.45 was raised for hall funds.

Operation Christmas Child

This idea for helping children in Eastern Europe has been running for many years, but it is the first time we have embraced it as a project for the whole Church family. We are pleased to say that it has caught the imagination and a total of 25 shoe boxes have been sent in for shipping to the children in time for Christmas.

As we approach Christmas let us 'Thank' God for his goodness to us and especially for the gift of his Son

We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy and peaceful New Year.

Prayer Requests

If you would like someone or a particular situation remembered in prayer at our Sunday Services both at St. Laurence and St. John's please hand the attached slip to a member of the Church Congregation or contact the Vicar on 024 7639 9070. Please remember the vicar would be pleased to visit anyone who is sick, but he does need to know again please ring.

Please pray forwho is

December, 2007

Bedroom slippers are making a comeback - I never knew they had gone away. When we were young we always clubbed together and bought Mam and Dad slippers for Christmas. They were always the same sort, but in those days there was very little choice. My mother wore slippers in the house all year long, and her Christmas ones lasted the whole year. I love walking about with no shoes but my mother did not approve and always told me 'You'll suffer when you get older'. Well, I have to say that now my grandchildren have taken up my habit and take their shoes off as soon as they get inside.

We are always told that puddings like Treacle or Jam Sponge, Apple Crumble or Bread and Butter Pudding are no longer eaten. As one mother who was interviewed said 'A piece of fruit or a Yoghurt is quicker and healthier. Our mother made Suety Apple Pudding or a Spotted Dick, which was cooked in a cloth. It was really stodgy but my Dad said it stuck to your ribs on a cold day and kept you warm. I don't recommend these sort of puddings every day, but perhaps for a treat just to give the younger generation the taste of a real pudding, preferably with real custard.

The best laugh I had recently was from our junk mail. First I personally was asked to 'Feed Africa', then a whole spate of gift catalogues from firms I had never heard of, followed by The Diabetes Society, Age Concern and then finally The Alzheimer's Society. I thought 'is somebody trying to tell me something?', but then finally a request was received from The Ghurkhas, so I knew it wasn't personal.

As we awoke in the middle of November to thick white frost, sunshine, followed by cold nights which eventually lead on to damp days, it reminded me of a poem I wrote some time ago, which I would like to share with you.

The first cold morning

The first cold morning of Autumn is shivery and damp.
The moon is bright and stars twinkle like moths around a lamp.
Fingers and toes and cheeks are cold.
As the weather and the year begin to grow old.

People are hurrying at early morn,
Some go to their work before the day can dawn.
Others are sleeping and curtains are drawn tight.
They snuggle up warm until the day is light.

Soon the world is alive and the sun peeps through.
Banishing winter sky and the morning dew.
These days bring wonder as the birds return to feed.
The first cold day of Autumn, but they have all they need.

Marie Cove.