

# **Church of St. Laurence Magazine**

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

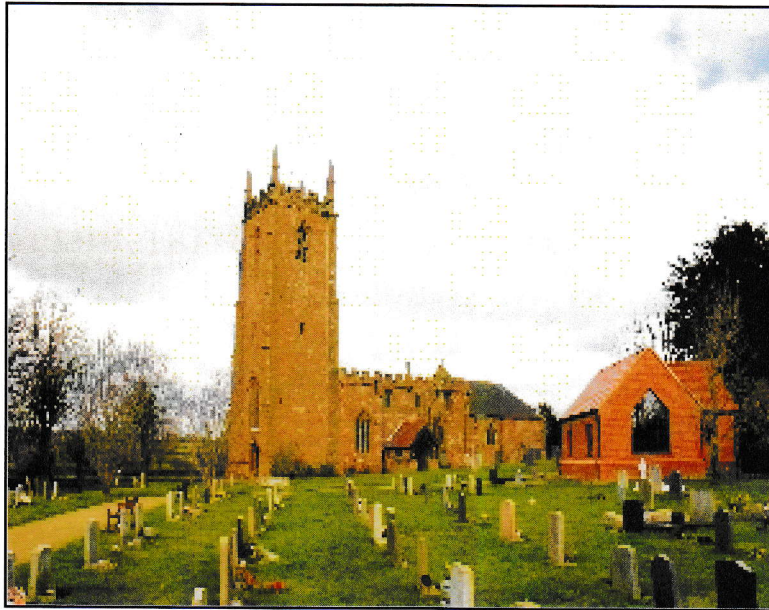
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No: 1054

DECEMBER 2013

Price 30p

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## Christmas Editorial

Our new Archbishop of Canterbury, Rt. Rev. Justin Welby pops up everywhere. I am so grateful he was there when Bishop Christopher and I were contemplating our trip to Kaduna.

And now I see him on ITV on The Martin Lewis Money Show - the Twelve Saves of Christmas.

The Archbishop of Canterbury on ITV, on a programme about saving money on Christmas presents. What is the world coming to? Surely Archbishops should stick to beautiful services and studious discussions on BBC2? At any rate faith and money should never be spoken of in the same breath!

For myself I believe Justin Welby is totally right. The Church cannot live in a cosy corner separated from the world. That way is death.

Moreover if you believe that Jesus wants to keep his followers removed from the world's problems you cannot celebrate Christmas.

At Christmas we celebrate that Jesus came down from heaven to bring life to the world. He left his perfect existence in heaven to be born in a stable. Then he left his family to be immersed in the problems of the world and to love all - regardless of their gender, nationality or moral conduct and regardless of the sacrifices he had to make to keep on loving.

So this Christmas we commit ourselves again to get involved, to love and to care for all in need - for those who believe and those who do not. We commit ourselves to being Christmas people, not just on December 25 but always.

And what is a Christmas person? It is one who seeks to bring love to this messy world. It is not easy being a Christmas person. We won't always get applause or encouragement. But we won't give up.

And how can I be a Christmas person? Not in our own strength. That just won't work! Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit working in our lives is the true Spirit of Christmas and that doesn't disappear with the New Year Sales!

HAVE A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

Your friend and Vicar,

Peter

### December St. Laurence's Church Services

Sunday	1 <sup>st</sup>	Advent	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
			6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	8 <sup>th</sup>	Advent 2	10.30 a.m.	Christingle
			6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday	15 <sup>th</sup>	Advent 3	10.30 a.m.	Morning Worship
			6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Advent 4	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
			6.30 p.m.	Carol Service
Tuesday	24 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Eve	11.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Wednesday	25 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Day	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	29 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas 1	<b>9.00 a.m.</b>	At St Wilfrid's
			6.30 p.m.	No service

### St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday	1 <sup>st</sup>	Advent	10.30 a.m.	Joint at St Lawrence's
Sunday	8 <sup>th</sup>	Advent 2	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	15 <sup>th</sup>	Advent 3	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Sunday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Advent 4	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Tuesday	24 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Eve	10.00 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	29 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas 1	<b>9.00 a.m.</b>	At St Wilfrid's

**NOTE time of 29<sup>th</sup> service at St. Wilfrid's**

### Discussion Group

Fellowship Group – Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 10.00 a.m., in St John's Church Hall.

### From the Registers

On Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October Rev. Gill Hancock, Chaplain of Mary Ann Evans Hospice, took the funeral of Audrey Rowley at St. Laurence's Church. Audrey was born 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1933 and died 12<sup>th</sup> October 2013. She moved to Ansley Common soon after she was married in 1952 and enjoyed 28 very special years there, before she had to move away in 1980. She loved flowers, but in later years because of her health was unable to have any in her room, so her daughter thought it fitting to have a lovely display in the church for her funeral.

### Special Christmas Services

The Christingle service takes place at St Laurence's at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December. It enables all ages to appreciate the Christmas message.

The Christmas Tree Festival closes with the traditional carol service at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

To celebrate the birth of our Saviour, there are the following services:-

Christmas Eve Communion 24<sup>th</sup> December 10.00 p.m. at St. John's

Midnight Communion 24<sup>th</sup> December 11.30 p.m. at St. Laurence's

Christmas Day 25<sup>th</sup> December Family Communion Celebration 10.30 a.m. at St. Laurence's.

On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December there will be a joint service at **9.00 a.m.** in St Wilfrid's, Old Arley.



## REMINDER

THERE WILL BE NO SERVICES AT ST LAURENCE'S OR ST JOHN'S ON 29<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER.

## Christmas Tree Festival at St Laurence's

The eighth Christmas Tree Festival will be open on the three weekends leading up to Christmas. Admission for an adult is £2.00. Accompanied children have free entry. We hope to welcome many visitors to St Laurence to see 60 trees decorated by people, businesses and organisations from the local area. Opening hours are listed below.

Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> December	11.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> December	11.30 a.m. – 6.00 p.m.
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> December	11.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> December	11.30 a.m. – 6.00 p.m.
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> December	11.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December	11.30 a.m. – 6.00 p.m.

The trees will be arriving on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> and any help to get them into the buckets and into church will be much appreciated.

The main times for decorating are 2.00 to 8.00 p.m. on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December. These decorating times should ensure that the church will be clean and tidy and the programmes printed before the opening on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

Any help throughout the festival, in church or in the annexe, serving refreshments and welcoming people would be much appreciated, as well as the provision of mince pies for the refreshments. Lists are in church for anyone to add their name to help. If you wish to send fliers about this event in your Christmas cards or would like to hand them to friends please ask for some.

Proceeds are in aid of church funds with 10% being given this year to Nuneaton and North Warwickshire Equestrian Centre for the Disabled at Galley Common.

Stars may be placed on the memory tree, with donations going to the churchyard fund to help with mowing costs.

The first glimpse of the trees on entering the church is a wonderful sight and we hope the festival will bring joy and peace to all who visit.

Dismantling and removal of trees will be on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> December from 9.00 a.m. and the church will then be cleaned. Your help would be very much appreciated.

## Remembrance Day

The amount raised through selling poppies in church will be advised once known.

## Confirmation

This was a lovely occasion. The candidates spent some time with Bishop Christopher before the service began. It felt special to be in a local church, sharing fellowship and refreshments after the service. Sue Pearson reaffirmed her baptismal vows. Caroline Day thanked the Bishop and all who attended on behalf of herself and the other candidates. Please continue to pray for Caroline and the other candidates.

### Samaritan's Purse Shoebox appeal

Twenty one shoeboxes filled with small gifts for children of the third world have been sent on to the local centre. Thank you to all who filled and checked the boxes and to Marie Cove for organising the collection.

### Reports

Reports on Marie's Christmas Event and St Laurence's Christmas Fayre will be in next month's magazine.

### St. John's Halloween Pie and Sweet Social

This was a great success. Tickets were sold out well in advance and £100 was added to St John's Hall funds.

### Spurgeon Childcare Coffee Evening and Bring and Buy

Many thanks to all who came to my coffee evening on 20<sup>th</sup> November. With money collected throughout the year in boxes, bring and buy and donations we are able to send £360 to Spurgeon's. There is more money to come in, so the final total will be notified later. Spurgeon's helps confused, abused or frightened children in this country. They provide safe environments, contact centres and help and support to children in need. If anyone would like to know more, please contact Margaret Oliver, telephone 76395674.  
Margaret Oliver

### Reports

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### Magazine

The cost of this magazine will remain at £0.30 per issue, i.e. £3.60 for the year, during 2014. Please be prepared to pay your deliverer when he/she calls by. If you receive your magazine through the post, please add £6.00 to the price to cover postage. A second class stamp costs £0.50 now!

**We wish all our readers a Happy Christmas and a peaceful, prosperous New Year.**

### Prayer Requests

If you would like someone or a particular situation remembered in prayer at our Sunday Services both at St. Laurence's and at St. John's please hand the slip below 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.

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Please pray for ..... who is .....

Well, next stop 'Christmas' and it doesn't seem five minutes since we were at the same time last year. We had some dark, dismal days last month and more like Novembers of old, but it does not deter the avid shoppers, and as I bought the party poppers and confetti shooter, the lady in the shop said that I would be finding bits of them until Easter, but we know this and still love to watch the faces of the children.

I am not very fond of some of the Big Cats (lions in particular as they are so cruel), but Cheetahs are so different and easy to like. There is a story of why the Cheetah's cheeks are stained, and this is told in an old Zulu myth about a cowardly hunter who stole three cheetah cubs while their mother was fetching water. When she returned the mother cheetah cried so much and for so long it left tear stains on her cheeks. The story ends happily though with the elders of the tribe so angry with the hunter they drove him from the village and returned the cheetah cubs to their mother. However, the tear stains never went away.

Most people have heard of The Passion Play in Oberammergau, Bavaria, and many thousands of people from all over the world have been to see this, but 'how did it all begin'? The Black Death swept across most of Europe and arrived in Oberammergau in 1662 when a villager returned home unaware that he was carrying the plague. Within a few months 24 people had died, so in desperation the surviving community made a pledge to God that they would perform the play of the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, every 10 years if they were spared. From that day on, no further deaths from the plague were reported and the villagers presented their first Passion Play at Whitsun in 1634. What a wonderful story for what I am led to understand is a wonderful play.

Why do we throw confetti over the bride and bridegroom at weddings? Traditionally it was rice. The reason rice was thrown was because rice was a symbol of fertility, so it was hoped that the throwing of the rice would bring the happy couple many children, or failing that, they would at least have something to put in the larder. Confetti does seem more hygienic though, especially today in a 'politically correct' world.

'Christmas time is very near, what can we give to those near and dear?  
We have cards to write, food to buy. Not many days, oh me, oh my.  
But let us be calm, we've done it all before. We'll get everything done, you can be sure.  
Let us savour this time whilst we may; as the days before Christmas fly so quickly away.'

Wishing you all a lovely, merry Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Marie Cove.