

Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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Due to Covid19, Christmas will be different than any we have had before

This year, there may well be more focus on relationships that matter and less on the material quest for spending, which can so easily dominate the reason for the season.

More than ever, how many have been searching for 'Peace, good news and goodwill to all people on earth', which is all about the real meaning of Christmas. In actual fact, good news, good will and peace have nothing to do with material things.

If you could have anything in the world, what would it be? Surprisingly most people, whether rich or poor, young or old, male or female desire such things as inner peace, contentment, making sense of personal suffering and knowing the secret of happiness.

One of the many popular Christmas carols is 'Silent Night':

*Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
'Round yon virgin mother and child,
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

As we make rather limited plans to journey to loved ones this holiday season, think about your faith journey as well. Where has your faith been lately? And where do you want it to go? In this advent season, God still bids us to "Follow in the Saviour's footsteps." When we respond with our hearts, we might just find ourselves on the paths of calm, light, love, joy and peace. We might just hear that 'Still small voice of God' amidst the turmoil and uncertainty of Covid-19.

With all good wishes as you prepare for the run up to Christmas,

Rev John

Please see below an update on church services for December 2020
(As at 21st November 2020)

Planned December Services

6 th December	Advent 2	Joint Benefice at St Laurence	10.30am
13 th December	Advent 3	Joint Benefice at St Wilfrid's	10.30am
20 th December	Advent 4	Joint Benefice at St John's	10.30am
20 th December	Nine Lessons and Carols at St Laurence		6.30pm
25 th December	Christmas Day Joint Benefice at St Wilfrid's		10.30am
27 th December	Christmas 1 Joint Benefice at St Laurence		10.30am

All the above are subject to government guidelines and may be changed at short notice.

January to March 2021

Regular services, venues and activities are to be decided in early December.

Funerals, burials, cremations, interment of ashes and other requests will be dealt with as they arise.

From the Registers

Interment

The ashes of Amelia Brown were interred in a family grave on 10th November.

Funeral

The funeral of Paul Gaskin (82) took place in church on 4th November followed by burial in the churchyard. There were three eulogies the first from a school friend and best man at his wedding who spoke of his love of good food, good company and talent at sports going on to become a national basketball player. After a spell in a bank he became a teacher for the rest of his working life. His daughter spoke of his love of his family, his work and commitment for the Allotment Association in the village. One of his grandsons spoke of the fun they used to have and his enthusiasm for steam trains. We extend our condolences to his wife family and friends.

Fifteenth Christmas Tree Festival 2020 (Virtual)

After hearing the appreciation and joy our virtual 56th Flower Festival brought to so many people and still being unable to meet in church to decorate our Christmas Trees, we have decided to go "virtual" for this festival as well. Photographs of decorated trees from earlier festivals have been assembled which, with other highlights from the previous 14 years, will form the 2020 festival.

While we will all miss the social side and mince pies etc. of our normal festival, we do hope you will enjoy this event from home. Again we will be doing our best with new technologies to make it as special as possible.

We will however have two trees in the church, our usual Prayer tree and a Remembrance tree. While it will not be possible for you to come in person to put the star or prayer on the respective trees we will be more than happy to do this for you. Please email your request to admin@ansleychurch.org or contact one of the church wardens directly.

For some years we have given a percentage of the funds raised at this event to the Mary Ann Evans Hospice in Nuneaton and this year we will be giving half of the proceeds to this cause, the remainder will be for church funds. If you would like to donate please use the "give.net" button on the right of our home page on our website below. The festival will be available from Saturday 5th to Sunday 20th December 2020. Go to www.ansleychurch.org.

In normal times we have had a concert in church during the festival. Although this is not possible this year, Jess & Richard Arrowsmith are going to stage a Zoom Concert on Friday 18th December from 7.30 – 8.30 p.m. instead.

Go to <https://arrowsmithmusic.co.uk/gigs/>

Jess & Richard have very kindly offered to divide any donations they receive between the church and a food bank local to their home in Sheffield.

We hope and pray we will all be able to welcome you to our church in person for next year's festivals. The Flower Festival will commence on 27th August 2021 and the Christmas Tree Festival on Saturday 4th December 2021.

Carol Services

There will be a Carol Service on 20th December 10.30 a.m. at St John's.

A traditional Nine Lessons and Carols Service is planned at St Laurence at 6.30 p.m., again on Sunday 20th December. These services will be subject to any restrictions in place at the time, so do check if you are unsure.

It is hoped that, at St Laurence, at least some of the carols will be able to be sung as solos.

Please Note

To enable us to be sure that we can get people into church safely for the Carol Service at St Laurence it will be necessary for all seat(s) to be booked. The organisers will need to know exact numbers in household groups. Seats will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Please contact Rev John on 024 7667 5236.

Christmas Wreaths and Cards

Wreaths cost £7 each and can be ordered from Margaret Antill.

Please remember not to leave Christmas cards in church. Thank you.

PCC Annual Meeting

This meeting, delayed from April, was held in church on 28th October. Social distancing and masks made communication a little harder than usual. The regular reports had been circulated in March, before Lockdown. These were formally accepted at the meeting. The PCC retains the same members and officials were voted to continue in their posts.

The Archdeacons' Visitation for Nuneaton is planned as a Zoom service on 25th November. This is when Churchwardens and Assistant Churchwardens take their oath of office for the year ahead. The Churchwardens and all PCC members value your prayers, especially during these times.

Fruit and Jam Donations

A total of £250 plus has been received from the fresh produce and jams left on the bench in the church yard. This has been placed in the General Fund.

Car Park gates It is a matter for regret that the car park gates have had to be kept locked during the November Lockdown. This action was due to misuse of the area and was recommended by the police.

Remembrance Day

The poppy wreaths were brought into church on 1st November and prayers said to remember those who died in both World Wars and in later conflicts. Those who lost loved ones and the injured were also remembered. The wreaths were collected after the service so they could be placed at the memorial at a suitable time.

The service planned at Old Arley was cancelled because of Lockdown 2. Permission was given through the Bell Ringers Guild to toll one bell for five minutes just before the two minutes silence on Remembrance Sunday, 8th November, so this was done.

Shoe Box Appeal and Spurgeons

Reports next month.

Finance

Church Funds

The treasurer and PCC would like to thank people who have been sending donating to the church at this time. We are very grateful. At the beginning of Lockdown 1 it seemed possible that there would be a shortfall of as much as £7000 plus, even when taking into account the reduction in running costs. However with the help and support we have received it now appears (as at mid November) as though we may be facing nearer a £3000 deficit in a worst case scenario.

St John's Hall and Ansley Village Church Hall

The income from the two halls has been hit hard but fortunately they are both able to pay their way at the moment. We hope that it will not be too long before the few activities that had been able to recommence after Lockdown 1 will be able to do so again.

The Reverend John and Frances Langlands

Loving Lord, we pray for Frances that her heart operation may have a successful outcome. We are thankful that she is getting the help she needs and for the care offered by the medical staff. We remember John in our prayers too as he supports Frances, prepares for her recovery at home and continues with his duties. Bless them both at this difficult time and may they know your peace, Lord, as they put their trust in you. Amen.

We wish our readers a good Christmas and New Year, filled with much blessing and peace.

Prayer Requests

If you would like someone or a particular situation remembered in prayer during this time of disruption, please make contact by email or phone one of the following.

Rev. J. Langlands	024 7667 5236 email jjlanglands@sky.com
Margaret Antill	018 2787 4520
Moreen Freestone	024 7638 1833
Margaret Oliver	014 5582 2822
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December 2020

Isn't it strange that we all have the same basic features but none of us look the same except for identical twins, and it's the same with tastes? I love music and even in these horrible times I can burst into song, especially when I am doing the washing up or ironing but Dave despite his Welsh roots, hates music, or perhaps it's my singing.

I love old films especially those that I watched in my teens like 'Singing in the rain' and Doris Day films and then when I had the children I took them to see 'Pinocchio', 'Snow White', 'The Wizard of Oz' to name a few. But Judi Dench, the actress, wrote in our Sunday newspaper that she shuns Hollywood classics, such as those above, as they remind her of her childhood. She doesn't know what she has missed.

During World War One up to 12 million letters were delivered to British soldiers every single week. They were considered being just as important as food rations for morale.

I love irrelevant facts such as in 1936 John Payne scored 10 goals in one game and this still holds the football league record. He was playing for Luton Town against Bristol Rovers and the game ended 12-0.

No matter what form Christmas takes, let us remember our family and friends are all celebrating the birth of our Lord in their own way, so pick up the 'phone and call a lonely person, sing a carol in your own bubble and remember we are all God's children in His bubble.

Marie Cove.