

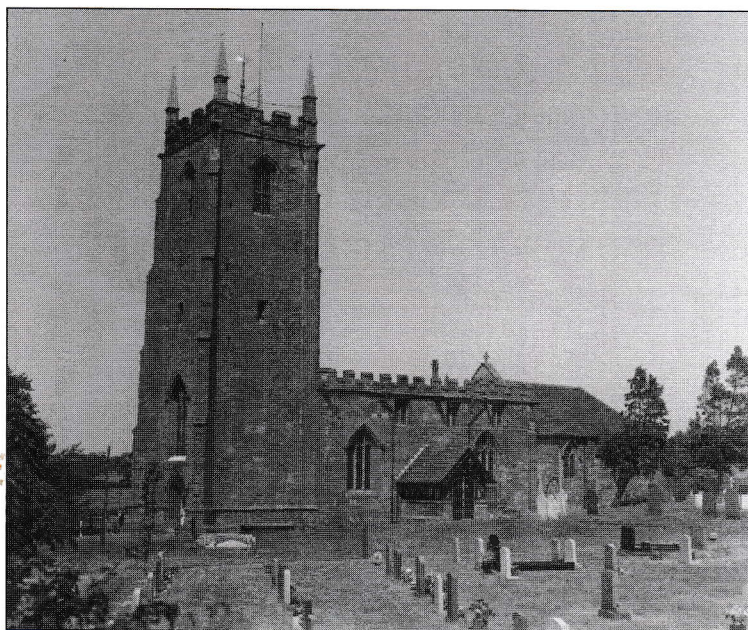
Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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'Let us go in heart and mind even unto Bethlehem...'

If you join us for our Nine Lessons and Carols on 19 December -and it is such a wonderful service you would be foolish to miss it- you will hear these words as the service begins.

Of course they reflect the stories of the shepherds and, before that, the story of Mary and Joseph as they travelled to Bethlehem. But let's travel back in time a further 1100 years to the story of Ruth. Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, were widowed. Naomi wanted to return home to Bethlehem and Ruth, though she had never known that land, insisted on going with her.

In one of the most beautiful statements of loving commitment she said to her mother-in-law:

'Where you go, I will go; where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die - and there will I be buried.'

So Ruth and Naomi travelled from Moab to Bethlehem.

On a clear day you can see Bethlehem from Moab, yet between them is a deep valley, a desert and the Dead Sea.

So, like Naomi and Ruth, let us travel to Bethlehem to seek the fulfilment of our deepest hopes. Yes, there are the times of darkness and sadness, frustration and difficulty. But like Naomi we do not travel alone.

As we travel together as a Church may we, like Ruth and Naomi, be bonded in loving commitment. Where we face hardship and difficulty, may we know the support of one another. May we find, as Ruth found, the fulfilment of our deepest hopes and longings. May we know, as Ruth did, our unique role in God's eternal plan. And may Jesus, the child born in Bethlehem, be with us on our journey and be our delight at the journey's end.

So this Christmas let us go in heart and mind even unto Bethlehem.

HAVE A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS,

Your friend and Vicar,

Peter

December St. Laurence's Church – Services

Sunday 5 th	Advent 2	10.30 a.m.	Morning Worship
		6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 12 th	Advent 3	10.30 a.m.	Special service
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong
Sunday 19 th	Advent 4	10.30 a.m.	Christingle service
		6.30 p.m.	Nine Lessons and Carols
Friday 24 th	Christmas Eve	11.30 p.m.	Midnight Communion
Saturday 25 th	Christmas Day	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 26 th	Christmas 1	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
		6.30 p.m.	No Service

St John's Church Hall Ansley Common Services

Sunday 5 th	Advent 2	10.30 a.m.	Morning Worship
Sunday 12 th	Advent 3	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 19 th	Advent 4	10.30 a.m.	Family Service
Friday 24 th	Christmas Eve	10.00 p.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday 28 th	Christmas 1	10.30 a.m.	Joint Service at St Laurence

Fellowship group Tuesday 14th 7 p.m. in St. Johns Church Hall. Discussing the parables.

Other regular activities

Full details on the notice boards.

From the Registers

At the morning service on 24th October we celebrated the baptism of Joseph Daniel Inglis and on the 31st October in the afternoon Amie Ruth Lyon was also welcomed in to the Church Family

Marie's Christmas event

On Tuesday 7th December between 2-4 & 6-8p.m. Marie and Dave Cove are holding their Christmas Event at their home 28 Nuthurst Crescent. There will be a bring and buy stall, refreshments, and a raffle. Do come along to enjoy a good chat and start to get in to the spirit of Christmas.

Christmas Tree Festival

Please note the different dates this year the church will be open on Saturday 18th Sunday 19th Wednesday 22nd & Thursday 23rd from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The festival will be dedicated in a service at 10.a.m. on Thursday 16th when the young people of the Ark School Church End will be having their Christmas Service and to which every one will be most welcome.

With 60 beautifully decorated trees we feel this will be a wonderful way to add to your Christmas celebrations. So why not come along and enjoy the wonder of our Festival, which promises to be another lovely experience adding to the comments from our Visitor's Book from last year; 'truly beautiful', 'a splendid show', 'capturing the spirit of Christmas', 'lights of

the world', 'as magical as ever', 'the church looks absolutely beautiful', 'what a wonderful start to the Christmas season', 'thank you God for people's talents'. Throughout the event there will be tea, coffee, hot chocolate and mince pies available in the annexe.

There will also be a raffle for a Christmas cake which will be drawn at the close of the festival plus a General Knowledge quiz.

The cost of entrance will remain at £2 and the proceeds this year will be in aid of Church funds with a 10% donation being given to the local Air Ambulance. The stars on the Memory Tree will remain at £1 which is in aid of the Churchyard Fund

The **Christmas Services** which are all listed above will be in the setting of the trees.

After the festivities the trees and decorations will be taken down during the evening of 28th Dec (between 6p.m. & 8p.m.) also from 9 a.m. onwards on Wednesday 29th when the church cleaning will be done. Any help would be much appreciated as it is a very big task to get them all out and the pine needles cleared

Church Fabric

You will be pleased to see that the damaged panel in the South Chancel window has now been repaired and is back in place. It looks so much better and hope it will be good now for another 100 years. The PCC wish to thank the couple who have anonymously paid for this work to be carried out.

It has been noticed that there is a damp patch in the chancel and at the time of writing it is looking likely that the PCC will be faced with a bill in the region of £5,000 for the repair work. The necessary paper work is being completed for this to be carried out as soon as possible to ensure there is no damage to the interior.

There is also a damp patch near the tower which has been puzzling us for some time. However the cause has now been discovered and in due time there will need to be work carried out on the stone work. It is not yet known how much this will cost

Unfortunately some stones have fallen from the churchyard wall and hopefully the repairs will be carried out shortly at a cost of £450.

It will also be necessary to repair the roof to the old store/boiler house and at this stage the work is estimated to cost a further £490.

A dead tree has been removed from the churchyard and the yew trees pruned at a cost of £387.75

Thank you

The PCC wish to say thank you for the £445 given to the church yard fund.

Messy Church

Please do not forget the Messy Church Day mentioned in the Vicar's letter last month at Arley and St. Michael's Community Centre on January 15 from 9.45 to 3pm.

Fancy Dress Dance – St. John's

This was a very enjoyable event with over 30 people attending and a surplus for St. John's hall funds of £70. Thank you to all who helped and supported this happy occasion

Prize Bingo

The latest session of prize Bingo at St. John's was held on Monday 15th. The proceeds amounting to £165 are to be forwarded to the N.S.P.C.C. Every one has a good time at these session

St John's Church Hall

During November the hall committee have received notification that the Parish Council have agreed £1,000 to support the purchase of the hot drinks water heater, the work to improve the covering of the central heating pipes and the new noticeboards. The hall committee are very grateful for this provision and it is hoped this work will be completed in time for Christmas.

Live and Local

This new venture was quite nerve racking for the organisers. However in the end it was a great success with all the seats sold. Everyone who came were very impressed with the musicians Hilary James and Simon Mayor who performed a vast repertoire and kept everyone entertained for over two hours. Thank you to all who helped with this event. The money raised from this event amounted to £233.95 for hall funds.

Christmas Fayre - Full report next month

Spurgeon Child Care

Unfortunately Margaret Oliver was unwell and this event had to be cancelled. The boxes are being collected and the amount that has been raised and forwarded to Spurgeon Child Care will be in the January magazine.

Apology for Errors

As you can see there has been a lot happening and although this is no excuse there were some errors in the November edition of the magazine.

Firstly, the wedding couple married on 10th September was Jason Moore and Samantha Sharmen (Donna Hewitt is to marry Robert Murray on 11th December). The date of the Wednesday opening of the Christmas Tree Festival is 22nd and not the 20th and the wreaths were laid at the 'War Memorial', and finally please also note the correct telephone number to book the Village Church Hall is 024 7639 4899. Please accept our apologies for all the errors last month.

'From tiny acorns mighty oaks do grow'

The total paid into our Fabric Fund in August was £27 bringing the total to £272 so far this year all from the small change collection. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

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 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.

Please pray forwho is

I thought this was great. A Beaver and a Rabbit stood staring in wonder at the immense wall of the Hoover Dam. The Beaver suddenly said 'No, I didn't actually build it but it was based on an idea of mine.'

I do a lot of Pickle Onions at this time of year and someone gave me a tip years ago to stop the eyes watering, prepare the onions under water. This helped but now I have discovered something even better, I sit on a high stool level with the sink instead of bending over the sink, and I have found this way the onions are much less pungent. Then this week I read that the onions should be soaked in warm water for a few minutes before preparing. Well, I will try anything once.

You know the well used phrases 'History repeats itself' and 'What goes around, comes around', well I can confirm these. I received a leaflet through the post selling books, and I was amazed to see the 'Milly Molly, Mandy' books for sale. I still have a 'Milly Molly, Mandy' book which 70 years ago was my first school book at Hartshill Infants. Another of my school books, of which I also have a copy, was 'Black Beauty' and my 8 year old granddaughter loves this story, and as we watch the film on T.V. we both shed a few tears.

When our school went down to London for the Festival of Britain, we saw men with barrows selling fruit, vegetables and flowers, and remembered my mother called them costermongers, and wondered why. Well it seems a coster or more commonly costard, was a type of large apple. This was very popular in the 17th century but went out of fashion except as part of the word 'costermonger', but then later on they expanded their wares into more general fruit and veg. Visiting the 'Festival of Britain' was the furthest I had even been away from home and it was an unforgettable experience. I bought a commemorative Crown and 6 Carnations for my mother. It was the most money I had ever spent in my life.

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 my, oh my.

But let us be calm, we've done it all before. We will get everything done you can be sure.

Let us savour this time whilst we may, as these days fly so quickly away.

Then on Christmas Eve heave a thankful sigh. The shops are shut, our Lord's special day is nigh.

Let us take time to remember our Saviour's birth, over 2000 years ago when our Lord came to earth.

Happy Christmas and a Peaceful, Healthy New year.

Marie Cove.