

# Church of St. Laurence Magazine

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

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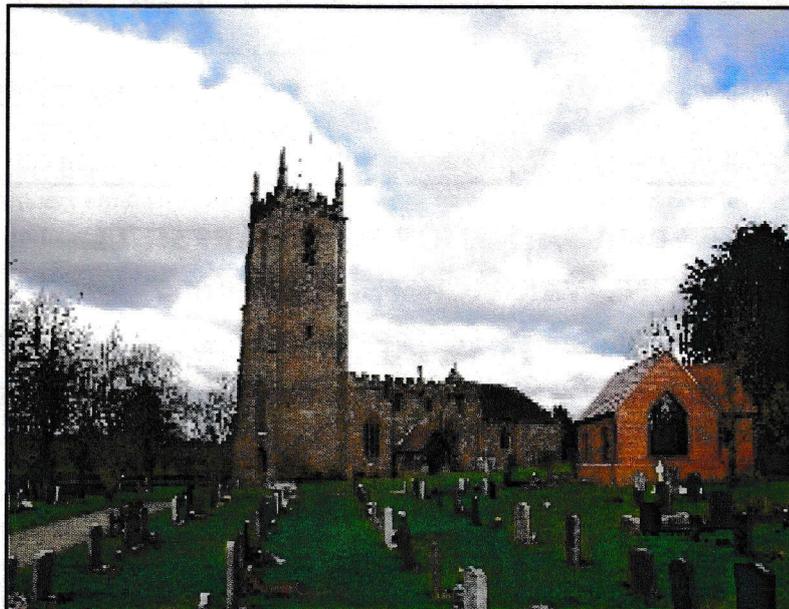
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[www.ansleychurch.org](http://www.ansleychurch.org)

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Print Centre 024 7638 6017

Those two questions were in my mind after I heard President Biden's inaugural speech on 20<sup>th</sup> January, because it came as a surprise to me that the new President of America is 78 years old! What was also very inspiring was the young woman of 22 who recited her poem at his inauguration, Amanda Gorman. Two people at either end of the age spectrum, yet both bringing such inspiring words to the world's attention and in such a gracious way! To get their message across, there was no shouting, no melodrama, no anger.

As I re-read President Biden's inaugural speech he said, 'My whole soul is in today, my whole soul is in this: Bringing our country together, uniting our people, uniting our nation. I ask every person to join me in this cause. Uniting to fight the foes we face – anger, resentment and hatred, extremism, lawlessness, violence, disease, joblessness and hopelessness.' It was inspiring to be motivated by someone who could so easily have retired from public office 20 years before becoming president. Do you know what his 2<sup>nd</sup> ambition was? To be ordained as a priest.

In his speech, President Biden called on people in his nation to be 'different and better'. He said, 'Many centuries ago, St Augustine, the saint of my church, wrote that a people were a multitude defined by the common objects of their love. What are the common objects we love? What defines us? Recent weeks have taught us a painful lesson: there is truth and there are lies, lies told for power and profit. We have a duty and responsibility to defend the truth and defeat the lies.'

President Biden concluded by saying: Here's the thing about life. There's no accounting for what life will deal you. **Some days you need a hand. There are other days when you're called to lend a hand. That's how it has to be, that's what we do for one another.**

Lastly, turning to the opening words of Amanda Gorman's poem, she wrote:

When day comes, we ask ourselves where can we find light in this never-ending shade?

The loss we carry, a sea we must wade.

We've braved the belly of the beast.

We've learned that **quiet isn't always peace,**

**And the norms and notions of what "just" is isn't always justice.**

And yet, the dawn is ours before we knew it.

Somehow, we do it. Somehow, we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished.

We, the successors of a country and a time where a skinny Black girl descended from slaves and raised by a single mother can dream of becoming president, only to find herself reciting for one.

May you continue to keep safe, stay healthy and lend a hand where needed too!

Please see below an update on church services for February 2021  
(As at 25th February 2021)

Public worship has been suspended in the Benefice during the month of February. This decision was circulated online or by post towards the end of January. The church web page [www.ansleychurch.org](http://www.ansleychurch.org) will have the latest information in the news section. The pattern of services given below is for information in the unlikely case that the situation improves unexpectedly. Regular reviews are taking place and services will be resumed when possible. Funerals, burials, cremations, interment of ashes and other requests will be dealt with as they arise and will follow the latest government regulations. Please speak to a churchwarden if you have any questions.

Service Pattern (See above.)

7 <sup>th</sup> February	2 before Lent	Joint Benefice at St Wilfrid's	10.30am
14 <sup>th</sup> February	1 before Lent	Joint Benefice at St Laurence	10.30am
17 <sup>th</sup> February	Ash Wed.	Joint Benefice at St Wilfrid's	10.30am
21st February	Lent 1	Joint Benefice at St John's	10.30am
28 <sup>th</sup> February	Lent 2	Joint Benefice at St Laurence	10.30am
7 <sup>th</sup> March	Lent 3	Joint Benefice at St Wilfrid's	10.30am

The Ash Wednesday service would normally be attended by members of the benefice churches and of Old Arley Methodist Church. We hope to be able to meet together again in the not too distant future.

From the Registers  
No entries this month.

Lent

Normally there is a plate at the cross aisles for a retiring collection during the Sundays in Lent. Please look for details next month if you would like to send a donation this year through the church in the way most convenient to you.

**Samaritan Shoebox Appeal (Operation Christmas Child)**

A letter has been received about this year's shoebox appeal. Evidently boxes are also packed at a large warehouse in Oldbury using money from online donations. They had packed 10,000 last year but this increased to 50,000 this year. It was reported that the staff do like to receive the individually packed boxes as they show such personal care and love. Because of Covid -19 and Brexit issues they struggled to obtain containers and then to ship the boxes overseas. They are working hard to get them all on their way and assured us that the children are always delighted to receive them.

## Virtual Christmas Concert

The final total from this event was £812.02, a wonderful sum.

## Churchyard

This month the Christmas wreaths will be cleared so that mowing can start when the better weather arrives. The Health and Safety check of headstones etc. will also be carried out. Because of the continuing corona virus outbreak we will not be able to gather as a working party in the usual way. Instead we are thinking of asking individuals to clear a particular section. It may be necessary to stagger the work over the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> February to minimise any risk of spreading the virus. If you can offer to help, please let a warden know.

## Census 2021

Isobel Pemberton has sent a Census Timeline. She is happy to respond to any questions you may have. Her contact details are below.

- Mid January to end of April – Media Campaigns
- Mid to end of February – Completion codes and paper forms sent out. Completion can be done online or on paper as soon as forms are received.
- End of February to April – Census completion events in community venues to give help/answer queries – depending on what restrictions are in place
- 21<sup>st</sup> March Census Completion Date
- April – reminder letters sent and field teams support completion
- May Enforcement teams begin to target non-completion households.

<https://www.censusjobs.co.uk/> or <https://www.census.gov.uk/>  
[isobel.pemberton77@field.census.gov.uk](mailto:isobel.pemberton77@field.census.gov.uk) – 07452943162.

## Vaccine Fraud

We have been asked by Warwickshire Trading Standards to warn you to be alert to vaccine scams. The following points are highlighted on a poster that is being circulated by the Government Counter Fraud and the NHS Counter Fraud Authority. A search using Government vaccine fraud poster will bring up local authority and other sites which are spreading awareness of the scam. Click on one of these to see the poster. The main points are below.

Remember the NHS will

- NEVER ask for payment – the vaccine is free.
- NEVER ask you for your bank details.
- NEVER arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine.
- NEVER ask you to prove your identity by sending them copies of personal documents such as your passport.

## Finance

The pandemic has of course made a comparison with previous years irrelevant. It is however clear that many people have managed to continue to give donations and/or weekly collection money in a variety of ways. We are extremely grateful to them all.

By the end of the year things were not as black as had been originally envisaged. The two halls have taken a big hit through loss of income but both have had some repairs carried out. The fabric fund benefited from a bequest and money has not been spent on planned work as it could not be carried out. The Churchyard Fund managed to pay its way with just a small decrease in funds. The Church General Fund ended the year with a deficit of just under £1,200. Fortunately we had a good year last year and have been able to pay our way.

#### Future Ministry in Ansley Parish

Following the Reverend John's update circulated towards the end of October 2020, the Diocese has confirmed that his placement in the Benefice will finish at the end of June 2021. The PCCs of Arley and Ansley were invited to meet jointly with the Area Dean, David Poultney and the Archdeacon Missioner, Barry Dugmore on 22<sup>nd</sup> September to start the process of reviewing our plans and hopes for the future. The next step should have been a meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January of the Archdeacon and Area Dean with the Churchwardens of Ansley and Arley to look at, revise and update the Parish Profile. This would then be the basis for advertising the post and giving information to interested candidates. Since a face to face meeting couldn't take place, the Churchwardens of Ansley are in the process of commenting on what may need to be altered or added to in the previous profile with a view to circulating this to the PCC for further comments. This is a rather unwieldy process but will, we hope, give us a picture of the needs of Ansley for the future. The church at Arley is going through a similar process.

The church in Ansley and the members of the wider community have really appreciated the Reverend John Langland's leadership and his and his wife's commitment, diligence and support of individuals and families in the parish. We are fortunate that his time with us will have been longer than might have been the case but have to accept the change and challenges ahead. In some ways it only seems two minutes since John and Frances came into the Benefice in others they seem to have been here for years and years. (In a good way!) Please pray for the communities in the parish of Ansley, its congregations and for all involved in making plans and decisions for our churches' ministry and life in the future.

Last but not least we pray for John and Frances as they look towards what lies ahead, wishing them good health and fulfilling, rewarding roles as they continue their life journey trusting in their Lord and Saviour's presence with them.

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#### 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 [janglands@sky.com](mailto:janglands@sky.com)

Margaret Antill 018 2787 4520

Moreen Freestone 024 7638 1833

Margaret Oliver 014 5582 2822

Diana Kealey 02476395089

February 2021

Every year I tell my children and grandchildren not to buy me any presents but they ignore me. However Christmas 2020 I had some lovely unusual presents. One in particular was a book and the front cover read, "Dear Grandma from you to me. 'A journal of a lifetime.'" I have to answer all the questions about my life and then give it back to my Granddaughter, Amie. What a lovely idea and I am enjoying filling it in and remembering.

During the lock-down it is easy to forget what day it is as each day is the same. We, at St. John's, have kept in touch with each other but it is not the same as a Service, singing hymns and having a cup of tea or coffee and a chat but as we have the vaccine we can look forward to happier days.

During the past months our garden has been our haven but reading an article about Gertrude Jekyll, a famous garden designer, I didn't realise she was losing her sight and had to give up painting and embroidery, so she decided to create her pictures by planting flowers. As her sight grew worse her other senses heightened – she could hear a hedgehog moving in the undergrowth; she could distinguish flowers by their scent as she brushed past them and identify a tree by the feel of the bark. She certainly made the best of her abilities to design beautiful gardens.

A little quote- "Learn from yesterday, live for today and hope for tomorrow."

Marie Cove.