

This is my story – Diana from Ansley

I have started writing this a couple of times and either found myself bogged down in the detail or unsure what might be relevant. It has also been a somewhat emotional experience. I am hoping this will be the final version!

I am grateful that I had experience of attending Sunday school and church services from around five years old. We often lived a little way from church and it was quite an effort for my mother to gather the five of us and walk along country lanes to our local village parish church, so church attendance was not a weekly habit.

I also went to a Church of England school for my last few years of primary education. I remember we always said a short prayer at the end of each day. (Lighten our darkness..., the third collect from Evening Prayer.) The church's annual festivals were marked and our local vicar visited the school occasionally. I was learning about the Christian faith throughout my school years. When I moved to Nottinghamshire in the early secondary school phase, I was given an illustrated Bible, as were all secondary school pupils in the county. I was confirmed in the Church of England a few years before leaving school.

For many years, once I began working, church attendance and personal belief did not figure in my life. Eventually, however, I was drawn back to the church. I noticed that some children and families had a Christian faith that was evident in their lives and ways of dealing with others. About the same time I moved house, arriving in Ansley at the beginning of 1984. Soon after a contact card was put through my letterbox. I phoned the vicar (the Reverend Timothy Gouldstone) and arranged a meeting. This was the start of my re-commitment and regular attendance at St Laurence. Since then my personal faith journey has been and is being enriched by meeting people at the church and appreciating their Christian faith. Also, over the years I have attended or led small Bible Study sessions, took part in an Alpha course and went on Offa House weekends. Looking back I feel my years at St Laurence church have taught me a lot and encouraged my personal faith to develop.

I am grateful that my faith has been a rock in life's turbulent times, especially when both my parents and a dearly loved sister in law died within a twelve month period. Through that deeply upsetting time, I felt an inner calm that helped me to cope even through the worst of experiences.

I recognise, on looking back, that God was at work in my life even when I was not aware of it, giving me examples and experiences that eventually prompted my return to an active Christian faith. I am aware too what a privilege it was to have parents whose lives demonstrated Christian principles in their support and care for their family and for the people they met and stayed in contact with as they moved around the country. This is my story – so far.