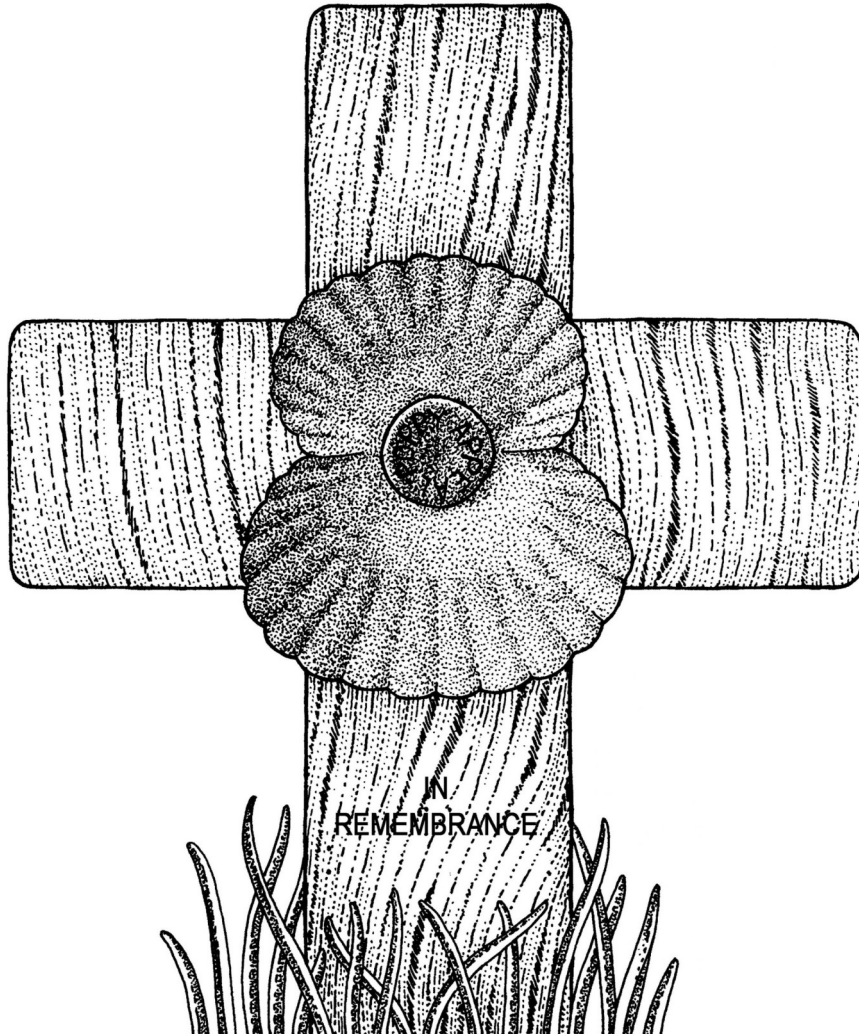


November 2020

30p

Upton-cum-Chalvey Parish News

St Mary St Laurence St Peter



SERVICES & EVENTS

Following the Prime Minister's announcement and advice from the Bishop of Oxford public liturgies in our churches will be suspended with effect from Thursday 5th November.

The churches will open for private prayer as follows:

Tuesday: St Peter's at 10.00am for one hour.

Wednesday: St Mary's at 12.30pm for one hour.

Thursday: St Laurence's at 10.00am for one hour.

Online liturgy will be offered via Zoom on Sundays at 10.00am, and on Wednesdays at 9.30am.

Scheduled meetings will continue via Zoom.

We will recommence liturgies as soon as we are permitted to do so.

Please check the churches' websites for the most recent information.

Fr Alistair C Stewart
Team Vicar

Fr Alistair Writes:

The story is told of a public school memorial service. The chaplain had chosen Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9. The retired general to whom the reading was assigned could not find this book in his Bible, and thought that the chaplain had intended the Song of Solomon. In stentorian tones he declaimed: "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not..."

Apart from acting as an encouragement to get a proper Bible (if you don't have one already) I think of this as I reflect on Wisdom 3. My mind turns to this passage as we enter the month of November, marked by a concentration on the end-times, for ourselves, for those who have already gone before us, and for the world. As the leaves change colour from green to gold and red, and then fall to rot, so our colours change in our churches from green to gold to red, and we contemplate the fact that, even though we are surrounded by decay and the descent into winter, "our hope is full of immortality."

Back in March, before the lockdown started, somebody told me that we would still be under restrictions in September. At the time I found that hard to believe; September has gone, and Slough has gone into tier 2. To coin a cliché, this is now obviously a marathon, and not a sprint. Some may find this depressing, some may worry, some may hanker after the old normality... certainly I miss my visits to the nursing homes, which used to be such a central part of my work here. But November, and the cycle of devotion which November brings, assures us that there is an eternity beyond, and that our experience here is a testing, as Wisdom assures us, for the eternity of God.

So we start with our celebration of the life of the Saints, an eternity which touches us now, and then, during the week, we remember our loved ones, those who have touched our lives here and pray that they may be part of the Communion of the saints. On the second Sunday we remember the fallen of the wars and conflicts not only of the last century, but of all human history. And the church's year concludes with the celebration of Christ as universal King. None of this can be done the usual way, but we are made to focus thereby not on the way we do things, but on the reason why we do it. And remembering our purpose, we can reflect that this strange year is a year which has enabled us to discover what is important in our lives and in our faith.

'Renewal' for Church is coming despite 'trauma' of pandemic – Archbishops

The Church will emerge "renewed and changed" from the crisis of the global coronavirus pandemic, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have said.

In a recent joint address to members of the Church of England's General Synod, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell said that amid a time of trauma, loss and struggle in this country and around the world, Christians have proved to be a "people of hope".

The address came at the start of special, one-day sitting of Synod in London, with reduced numbers, to make a rule change to enable it to meet remotely during pandemic restrictions.

Archbishop Justin acknowledged the multiple challenges and crises we are facing including hunger, poverty, domestic violence and climate change.

He said churches have played a vital role serving their communities and bringing hope through the gospel. But the Church itself will, he said, emerge changed.

"We do not know what kind of Church of England will emerge from this time except that it will be different," he said.

"It will be changed by the reality that for the first time all churches have closed - first time in 800 years. It will be changed because for the first time we have worshipped virtually."

He continued: "Out of these times we will see renewal - not because we are clever but because God is faithful.

"We will see a renewed and changed Church emerging from the shocks of lockdown.

"It is a Church that at the most local has fed so many, been in touch with the isolated through the heroic efforts of all who take part in it, of clergy and laity and those who even weren't near the church before these times.

"It is a Church which has continued to pray and to offer worship through our Lord Jesus Christ, even if in new and unusual ways."

Archbishop Stephen spoke with emotion about the impact of pandemic. "I hate this Coronavirus," he said.

"I hate it not only because so many people have died, but because so many people have died alone, unable to hold the hand of their beloved.

"I hate it because our health service has been stretched to the limit. I hate it because so many are bereaved and could not even sit next to a family member at a funeral.

"I hate it because weddings and baptisms and ordinations have been postponed or have gone ahead without the parties that were meant to be with them.

"I hate it because children's schooling has been disrupted. I hate it because so many people are so ill, so many crying out in pain, so many isolated, lonely, fearful, depressed.

"I hate it because behind locked doors terrible things have happened. I hate it because the poor and the disadvantaged have been hit the hardest.

"I hate it because it has left so many people across the world feeling hopeless as if life itself has been taken from us."

But he said he was also thankful for the faithfulness of all who have served others during the crisis and risen to the challenge.

He added: "I am thankful that despite all the horrors of a Covid world we are learning a new commitment to Christ and how to be a humbler, simpler, church and we are putting Christ at the centre of our lives and learning very, very, very painfully what it really means to be a church that is dependent on Christ alone.

"And I am filled for longing: I long for us to be a more Christ-centred and Jesus-shaped church witnessing to Christ and bringing the healing balm of the Gospel to our nation for this is our vocation."

NEXT MONTH'S MAGAZINE

Please let me have articles for the December issue by **Sunday 8th November** at the latest!

Dave

St Mary's Lunchtime Concerts

The 30th Year of Saturday Lunchtime Concerts at St Mary's!

Due to the coronavirus pandemic there will be no Saturday Lunchtime Concerts until further notice.



St Laurence's Preserves

If you would like to order some St Laurence's jam, marmalade, chutney or other item from the preserves stall, please call Allan on 01753 532425 and he will arrange collection or delivery in line with current Covid-19 regulations.



"Given the state of our heating system, you'd think the vicar would be all for it!"



We Will Remember – 80 years on

This year we've been remembering the Battle of Britain, described by Winston Churchill in August 1940 as *'one of the decisive battles of the war... never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.'* It was a dramatic turning point in the history of the Second World War. The occasions for Remembrance this month will provide us times of gratitude for what was achieved in the darkest moments of war.

However, this year we are very aware of our own struggles with the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. We face an unseen enemy, but the effects on our lives and society are almost as devastating as world war.

Remembering is not just about focusing on past events. It is also about making present past events, as we give thanks for all that took place. The Battle of Britain was fought by the Few and won in the skies over the Channel. In our battle with the virus, we can call to mind the victory of Jesus: *'Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David.'* (2 Timothy 2:8). Jesus secured the victory of death by His cross and resurrection, so that we don't need to fear death, but trust in His loving purposes for our lives.

Currently we can't see clearly what the future holds for us; it may be very different from what we might expect. However, we can pray for God's will to be done and that we will play our part, just as each of those airmen did so many years ago.

'They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them.'

Canon Paul Hardingham

18th November: Elizabeth of Hungary

Here is a saint for any young person who has a generous heart and a desire to please God, but who gets rather badly used by adults who should know better.

Elizabeth was born in 1207, a princess in the kingdom of Hungary. When she was four, she was sent to the court of the rulers of Thuringia in central Germany, to be betrothed to Louis IV.

At 14 she was married to Louis, and in 1223, when she was 16, some Franciscan friars arrived at the court. Elizabeth was inspired by them, and she became known for her many acts of charity. When flood, famine and plague hit Thuringia in 1226, Elizabeth distributed alms to the starving, and personally nursed many of the ill.

Elizabeth is best known for the miracle of the roses. She was taking bread to the poor one day when she met her husband out on a hunting party. The gentry were suspicious that she was stealing treasure from the castle, and so her husband asked her to reveal what was hidden under her cloak. Her cloak fell open, and a vision of white and red roses could be seen, which proved to her husband that God's protecting hand was over his wife. Hers was the first of many miracles that associate Christian saints with roses.

So far, so good, but then Konrad von Marburg, a priest and later inquisitor, was appointed Elizabeth's confessor, and began to gain considerable influence over her. When in 1227 Louis was sent off to join the Sixth Crusade, Konrad's power over Elizabeth grew. Then in September of that year, news came that Louis had died of a fever in Italy, just a few weeks before the birth of another child. Elizabeth reportedly said: *'He is dead. He is dead. It is to me as if the whole world died today.'*

Certainly Elizabeth's world changed. She left the court and moved to Marburg. By now she had made solemn vows to Konrad, similar to those of a nun, promising him total obedience. He then treated her very harshly, setting severe restrictions on what she could eat, ordering physical beatings, and sending her three children away.

Elizabeth used her dowry money to build another hospital, this time at Marburg, and to personally care for the poor and sick. But not for long. Worn down by the harshness of Konrad's regime over her, and exposed to the many diseases of the poor, she died in 1231, aged only 24. But she left behind many poor people who loved her, and who owed their lives to her.

Churches report rising food bank demand as a result of pandemic

Nearly 100,000 households sought food aid from the Trussell Trust's network of food banks for the first time earlier this year, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Demand is surging further this autumn, as a result of the economic fallout from the virus.

The research comes after food banks run or supported by Church of England churches reported rocketing demand during lockdown with some opening food banks for the first time while some opened new food banks after lockdown.

Just two examples:

Hackney Church in East London was distributing parcels with enough food for 1,000 meals a week at start of lockdown. This figure rose to 8,000 and 9,000 meals a week in June, after the church opened a second food bank. It has since served 120,000 meals.

In Co. Durham, the Shildon Alive food bank, founded by St John's Church, has seen demand surge by 500 percent during lockdown.



...at the going down of the sun we would have remembered them - but some rotten scrap metal thief has stolen the brass plaque with the names on!!



Psalm 122 and Advent

'I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord. Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem.' (Psalm 122:1,2). These words from Psalm 122 inspired Hubert Parry's great Coronation Anthem *'I was Glad.'* As a Song of Ascent (Psalms 120-134), it was used by pilgrims going to the great festivals in Jerusalem. For the Jews this represented *'coming home'* to worship at the Temple, the place of God's presence.

Our Worship of God:

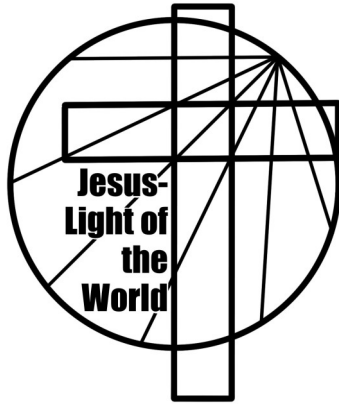
As God's people today, we are also called to worship in praise and thanksgiving: *'That is where the tribes go up - to praise the name of the Lord'* (4). Of course, currently our coming together in church to sing our praise to God is greatly restricted. We are a *scattered* rather than a *gathered* community. However, as individuals, we can still offer God the worship of our lives using the resource of psalms like this one.

Our prayer to God:

The psalm encourages the pilgrims to pray for the peace of Jerusalem: *'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May those who love you be secure.'* (6). The peace referred to here is more than simply an absence of conflict. Peace speak of wholeness of life in every aspect. This must be our prayer as we continue to struggle with the effects of the pandemic and as we seek the prosperity of the wider community: *'I will seek your prosperity'* (9).

This month sees the beginning of Advent, the season when we affirm the hope of Jesus' return. As we pray for peace, we know that it is fulfilled in the coming of God's kingdom in Jesus. Despite living with so much uncertainty, we have the assurance of God's future purposes for our lives, churches and the world.

Canon Paul Hardingham



Why do we need Advent?

Many people say: "I can understand God, but I can't see where Jesus fits into the picture."

A theologian called Athanasius, Egyptian by birth and Greek by education, gave the answer to your question 1600 years ago. He said: *"The only system of thought into which Jesus Christ will fit is the one in which HE is the starting point!"*

Once we try to begin with our own human-based attempt at understanding God and the meaning of life – let alone the place that Christ occupies – we'll be like the man who tries to do up his shirt buttons, *beginning with the wrong button*. He may hope that it will all work out, and that the shirt will eventually fit properly, but it never will.

So, you need to begin with Christ, if you want the picture to make sense. He is right there in the Bible, from the start. All Creation finds both its origin and its fulfilment in Him, its rightful heir (Colossians 1:15-17). You will notice from Colossians 1:17 that, far from Christ fitting into our system, we can only 'fit' – and thus find coherence and meaning – in His... or rather, in HIM.

It is through Christ alone that we can know the face of God, and His salvation in our lives. Jesus is fully God and fully human, Christ – the God-Man – is the perfect mediator. By His saving death He has bridged the gulf between heaven and earth (Philippians 2:5-11).

No one else will do. That was the blazing conviction of those first-century Christians. Beside Christ there was no other name (Acts 4:12). Historically, Christ's name claims supreme recognition in all the areas of life that matter most. It happened in the world of worship – where the Druids, ju-ju men, witch

doctors, temple priests and the gigantic gods Mithras, Serapis, Diana, Jupiter and Venus were all swept away.

It also happened in the world of suffering. When we put the leaders of history and of thought together, it is quite clear that none of them suffered as Jesus did. In Him we see God incarnate, living among us, loving, suffering, dying and reclaiming. This fact alone is enough to explain the beginning of hospitals in our world. They were never begun by a state department. They owe their origin to the influence of Christ, and reflect His compassion.

It happened in the world of creativity. Christ has inspired symphonies, paintings, soaring architectures and enduring literature. Take Christ away, and the writings of Shakespeare would be meaningless. Atheism, by its very nature, could never have this impact, for atheism has no wings.

It happened in the world of eternity. The pre-Christian epitaphs say it all: 'I was not, I was born, I lived, I am not, that is all'. 'Guesswork is over all', Xenophanes had written. Into that world exploded the message of Christ, bodily raised from death, never to die again. That message alone is enough to change our view of the entire universe. The universe itself only *fits* because of Christ.

Revd Richard Bewes

Help our wildlife before it is too late

A quarter of mammals in the UK are at risk of extinction, and this decline will continue unless their habitats are restored and some species are reintroduced.

So warns the chair of Natural England, Tony Juniper, referring to a recent list of endangered animals issued by the Mammal Society, and approved by the United Nations.

UK mammals most in danger are the greater mouse-eared bat, the water vole, the hedgehog, hazel dormouse and Scottish wildcat. The European wolf is already extinct.

Tony Juniper advises that reintroducing some mammals would help others at greater risk. For example, introducing more pine martens would help control the grey squirrels, which in turn would give our native red squirrels a better chance.

As one professor of environmental biology said: "Here in Britain we are managing to send even rodents towards extinction. Things have to change rapidly if we want our children and grandchildren to enjoy the wildlife that we take for granted."

God of the mountains, God of the valleys

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone ... The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment ... Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? Job 38:4–7, 14, 16 (NIV)

These verses from the biblical book of Job focus on the Earth, from the top of the highest mountains to the deepest valleys of the sea floor. Job used to have a very comfortable life, but lost everything: health, children, and much of his property. He can see no obvious reason for this terrible turn of events, so he demands an answer from God, asking “What have I done to you...? Why have you made me your target?”

There is no direct reply to Job's question, but instead a long conversation with his friends who assume (wrongly) that he must be being punished for doing something very bad. When God finally speaks, He draws Job's attention to his surroundings. The sun, moon and stars, the immensity of land and sea, the creatures that inhabit them, and the processes that produce weather are a wonderful display of God's creative power. God is the origin and sustainer of all these things, and they are far beyond anything humankind could produce, fully understand or imagine – even today.

The things we do know about the processes described in Job can help us appreciate how marvellous they are. Mountains are produced by the movement of the Earth's rocky crust over great periods of time. Erosion by weathering or glaciers then grinds down those rocks to produce the mineral component of soil.

Considering the wider perspective of creation can help restore our sense of who we are, who God is, and where we fit into His purposes. God speaks to Job in the midst of his suffering, lifting his eyes to the power and creativity of his Maker. Only after this theology lesson are Job's practical needs addressed. What will life be like for us over the coming months? A constant check on our own thinking – reminding ourselves of the bigger picture of God's plans and purposes – might be just what we need to help us keep going.

This article drew very directly on the writing of Prof Bob White in New Daylight (BRF, Sept-Dec 2020), and the input of a Bible study group based in Cambridge.

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz



On the ferocity of the church's Bridge drive

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

Your suggestion that we should hold a sponsored hymn-singing bicycle ride through the village as a way of raising money was well-meant, but I am not wholly convinced it would suit our clientele here at St James the Least of All.

You may have musical bike rides, but we have Bridge drives, although socially distanced at the moment, of course. But even at two metres apart, our Bridge games are generally as amiable and peaceful as bear baiting. Half of those attending will see the afternoon as an opportunity to catch up on local gossip and to exchange knitting patterns, the game of cards being a minor hindrance to these other activities. The other half arrive primed for a battle to the death, reluctantly conceding that eye-gouging is not allowed. They will demand total silence – which is wholly ignored by those at the tables discovering what Mrs Trumpington confided to Lady Driver halfway through 'Onward Christian Soldiers' at last Sunday's Mattins. The congregation is eternally grateful to Mrs Mitchell, who as a former mill worker is able to lip read.

Refreshments have been hit hard by Covid-19 of course, and the fact that everyone has to bring their own sandwich and drink has rather spoilt the fun. Usually half our players regard lunchtime as an opportunity to put jam on the cards, spill tea on the score cards and make sure that the other tables get the egg and cress sandwiches while they corner the boiled ham; the others usually

see it as an unwelcome interruption to the serious business of slaughtering their opponents. It is so sad that Covid-19 has halted this merry comradery.

As for drawing the raffle, it is the adult equivalent of ringing the school bell at going-home time. Half the players will immediately dash off to relay newly mined seams of gossip throughout the village, leaving the others holding reproachful post-mortems with their partners over their bidding mistakes.

Reproaches are never too violent, however, since the chances are that they will all be meeting again the following afternoon round a socially distanced card table at another location, for yet another re-enactment of the slaughter at Agincourt. The only difference will be that the French and English were not entertained with tea and sandwiches at half time.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Egypt tops list as 3.7 million Scriptures given to children last year

Bible Society teams worldwide provided almost 3.7 million Scripture items for children last year. More than 1.1 million children's Scriptures were distributed in Egypt alone. This is the largest number for one nation, in a place where ministry with young people is a top priority.

Through festivals, competitions and quizzes, the Bible Society of Egypt engages with hundreds of thousands of children each year.



Poppy Appeal 2020

Look out for the Poppy Appeal again this year, but not so much via street collections. Instead, the Royal British Legion will focus on contactless donations, as a safer way forward during the pandemic.

One such method will be 'point of sale donations'. This means that when you shop at your supermarket and reach the till or online, you may be invited to round up your total to the nearest pound to help the Poppy Appeal.

A spokesman for the Royal British Legion said: "The Poppy Appeal 2020 is very much still going ahead", but that "the safety and wellbeing of our volunteers, staff and members is paramount.

This means that collectors who fall into the vulnerable category have been advised "not to take part in activity on behalf of the Poppy Appeal that would expose them to any additional risks while coronavirus is still present."

And yet the need is still huge: "Members of the Armed Forces Community are suffering significant hardship as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak and we at the Royal British Legion will do everything we possibly can to support them."

Zoom to that stable in Bethlehem?

School nativity plays will take place differently this year. So warned the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, speaking recently at a school in south London.

He stressed that while he wanted to save the much-loved tradition, and "how special and important it is to go along to see your children performing in a nativity play", safety was still a priority.

"We've got to look at ways how we can ensure, maybe using technology, that this staple institution of every school right across the UK is able to go ahead."

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
Lk 8:40-56, Mt 9:18-26, Mk 5:21-43

Jairus, a town leader, had a 12 year old daughter who was ill and about to die. He came to Jesus and knelt at his feet...

Please come! If you touch her she will be healed.

In the crowd was a woman who had been ill for 12 years.

Jesus felt power go out of him

Jesus went with him.

If I touch his cloak I will be healed

Who touched me?

Jesus waited...

She knelt at Jesus' feet and told him everything

Go, daughter.. Your faith has healed you.

and the woman knew she had to tell him.

Then Jairus was told his daughter had just died.

But Jesus said

When they got to Jairus' house, it was filled with people mourning.

Don't be afraid, just believe and she will be healed.

She is not dead, but asleep.

They laughed at Jesus. He sent them out of the house.

Little girl, get up!

Her parents were amazed.

At once she stood up!

Give her something to eat, and don't tell anyone what has happened.

The tale of the Tower Builder



JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

ON ONE OCCASION JESUS EXPLAINED HOW IT WOULDN'T ALWAYS BE EASY TO FOLLOW HIM.

...YOU'LL FIRST NEED TO WORK HOW MUCH IT WILL COST.

JESUS BEGAN, IF ONE OF YOU PLANS TO BUILD A TOWER...

IF YOU DON'T DO THE SUMS...

...YOU MIGHT MAKE A START,

...THEN START TO LAY THE BRICKS, ...

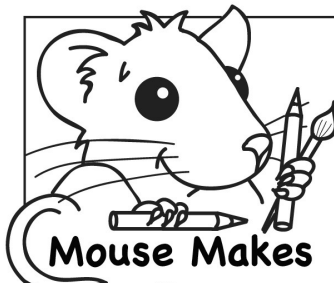
...WORK VERY HARD ON THE FOUNDATIONS.

...BUT SUDDENLY RUN OUT OF MONEY!!

THEN PEOPLE WILL LAUGH AT YOU!

TOWER TO BE CANCELLED BUILT HERE


WE NEED TO REALISE THAT ALTHOUGH FOLLOWING JESUS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO, IT'S ALSO A GREAT CHALLENGE.



REMEMBERING

How do you remember things?

In bible times God's people would remember what God had done for them by building monuments made of stones and by holding festivals and celebrations to give thanks to God.



READ Joshua 4:1-9 and Exodus 12:1-14

Today we too build monuments to remember and hold services of thanksgiving like **Harvest** and **Remembrance Sunday**.

Is there anything you would like to thank God for?

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HONOUR • CELEBRATE • PRAISE • REJOICE • THANKSGIVING • DAYS
FESTIVAL • EASTER • PENTECOST • HARVEST • CHRISTMAS

UPTON-CUM-CHALVEY / LANGLEY BRANCH PROGRAMME

All are open meetings and are joint meetings unless otherwise stated

2020 Theme: "Building with Confidence"

Meetings with a talk, either:

Third Wednesday of the month at St Laurence's Upton. Coffee and chat at 10.15am. A short service at 10.45am. Talk at 11.00am followed by a light lunch.

OR

Third Monday of the month at St Mary's Church Centre, Langley, 2.00pm

First Tuesday of the month: 2.30-4.00pm "Mulling It Over": Tea, Study and Prayer Group led by Revd Linda Hillier (see notice sheet for venues), open to all.

Second Thursday of the month at St Laurence's: 10.00am Mothers' Union Corporate Communion

Due to the coronavirus pandemic there will be no meetings until further notice.



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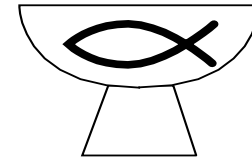
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The Anglican parish of Upton-cum-Chalvey includes St Mary's, St Laurence's and St Peter's churches.

Revd Alistair Stewart (Team Vicar)	01753 520725
Revd Linda Hillier (Associate Minister)	0208 8645728
Rob Walker (Licensed Lay Minister)	
Parish Churchwarden: Andrea Sparrow	07446 187762
Parish Churchwarden: Lynda Bussley	01753 573614
District Churchwarden (SM): Jean Smith	01753 862357
District Churchwarden (SM): Derek White-Taylor	Ex-dir
District Churchwarden (SL): David Kill	01628 776856
District Churchwarden (SL): Richard Emerson	01753 526325
District Churchwarden (SP): Peter Clarke	07464 718909
District Churchwarden (SP):	
Vergers (SL): Allan James	01753 532425
Organist (SM): Malcolm Stowell	01628 660651
Mothers' Union: Julie James	01753 532425

Clergy days off:

Revd Alistair Stewart Tuesday

Magazine Editor: David Kill

Tel: 01628 776856 E-mail: david.kill@btinternet.com

Web-sites:

<https://stmarys-slough.org.uk/>

www.saint-laurence.com

<https://www.stpetersslough.org.uk/>