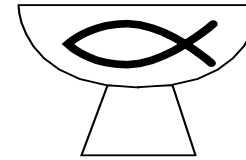


December 2021

30p

Upton-cum-Chalvey Parish News

St Mary St Laurence St Peter



Parish of Upton-cum-Chalvey

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):	
Verger (SL): Allan James	01753 532425
Organist (SM): Malcolm Stowell	01628 660651
Mothers' Union: Julie James	01753 532425

Clergy days off:

Revd Alistair Stewart Tuesday

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Web-sites:

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

<https://www.saint-laurence.com>

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

Fr Alistair Writes:

This time last year I wrote about Advent. We were about to go back into lockdown, you may recall, and all services in the churches were put on hold. I suggested that this was a useful way of thinking about Advent, as a time of uncertainty and waiting, as a time in which to await the coming judgement... "a time to repent and to seek forgiveness." I went on to say: "Possibly when Christmas comes we will be able to come to our churches; if we come in a state of forgiveness and renewal, then even without the hymns and carols which are so much part of our celebration we can encounter behind the stark and stripped-down worship the reality of the messiah who comes to us again to confirm our forgiveness and to pronounce the judgement by which we are set free to serve."

A year later and one wait is nearly at an end, as during December Fr Scott Lamb becomes the new team rector. So I reckon that this is my last magazine letter (no chance ed.)

Now if we kept Advent properly we would know that waiting involves speculation. "What exactly are we waiting for?" "What kind of Messiah are we to expect?" "Will he come on clouds of heaven or on a donkey?" The end of an inter-regnum is also a time of speculation. So as we wait for December 19th the questions are, "What's he like?" "What is he going to do about... (insert your pet topic here)?" "What difference will it make to St Peter's?" I may point out here that Fr Scott will not arrive on a donkey... though one of his first duties is to conduct "donkey carols."

I will answer none of these questions here. And indeed, apart from finding out what he looks like (!) it may be a while before any of these questions get an answer, as Fr Scott has to take some time to look around, to get to know us, to understand what and where the issues are, just as we need to take time to get to know him. What I can say is that we have been working together on the order of service for the licensing; we hope we get our own way (as the bishop and others have to approve it) but we have designed it so that the first things he does in this parish are proclaim the Gospel, lead us in prayer, and give us Holy Communion. And the reason for that is that these are the things that a priest is here to do. And if we get these things right, then we are on the way to getting other things right as well.



DECEMBER & JANUARY SERVICES & EVENTS

Regular services at the three churches are listed on the back page

December

Sun 5th	11.00am	St Laurence's Dedication Festival & Gift Day, followed by Christmas Lunch (SL)
Tue 7th	12.30pm	"Mulling It Over" group Christmas Lunch (SL)
Sun 12th	12.30pm	Carols in Herschel Park - meet by the kiosk
Sun 19th	10.00am	Licensing of Revd Scott Lamb: Joint Parish Eucharist (SM)
	4.30pm	"Donkey Community Carols": led by Revd Scott Lamb. (SM)
Fri 24th	4.00pm	Parish Crib Service led by Revd Scott Lamb (SL)
	11.30pm	Midnight Mass (SM, SP)
Sat 25th	9.30am	Family Eucharist with Carols (SM)
	10.00am	Christmas Day All Age Celebration (SL)
	11.00am	Family Eucharist with Carols (SP)
Sun 26th	10.00am	Family Eucharist (SP) - no morning services at SM or SL and no Evensong at SM

January

Sun 2nd	4.00pm	Parish Epiphany Carol Service (SP)
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St Mary's News

Lions led by donkeys: from St Mary's

At Saint Mary's we are very pleased to be hosting the whole parish, and representatives from the deanery, to the licensing of Fr Scott Lamb as our new rector, on 19th December. Representatives from St Mary's church, alongside representatives from the other churches, will be taking part in the liturgy. Because this is a parish event we are hoping for help from all the churches, and with this in mind we are having a short and business-like meeting on 29th November, at 6pm to look at the practical arrangements.

The afternoon then sees the town carol service, again hosted at St Mary's, and led by a donkey, assisted by the new team rector.

Finally, we will be glad to have our usual Christmas services this year, after last year's disruptions.

St Mary's Lunchtime Concerts

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

Plastic spending

We spent more than £4 in every £5 by using plastic last year, according to the British Retail Consortium. Debit and credit card transactions accounted for 81% of all our spending, up from 78% in 2019.

For the first time, we used our debit cards for more than half (54%) of all our transactions. Cash accounted for 15% of our total spending in retail, down from 20% in 2019.

St Laurence's News

Many thanks to all those who helped, especially other Parish folk who got roped in, grandchildren and friends, to make Santa's Special a joyful and prosperous occasion. It was our best Christmas Fayre to date, making over £1,600 for our funds. There were lots of new visitors to the church.

Our Dedication Festival and Gift Day will be led by Revd Linda on Sunday 5th December and will be followed by Christmas Lunch. The Gift Day contributions will be used for general funds.

Revd Scott Lamb will be on board for our Crib Service at the earlier time of 4.00pm on Christmas Eve. The collection will be for Crisis.

Revd Linda will lead our Christmas Day family service at 10.00am.

Our Christingle Service will be held at Candlemas on 30th January 2022

Dave

Dwindling wildlife in Britain

Be kind to the wildlife in your garden – what little of it remains. The UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries, and it may not even have enough biodiversity - variety of plant and animal life - to prevent an ecological meltdown.

That is the finding of new data by the Natural History Museum. It says that the UK has an average of only 53% of its natural biodiversity left, well below the global average of 75%.

Worldwide, scientists warn that the variety of plant and animal life of earth is dwindling fast. It will have a serious impact on human life: "those systems have lost enough to mean that we have to be careful about relying on them functioning in the way that we need them to."

St Peter's News

We did remember them: from St Peter's

As 2021 marked the centenary of our war memorial in St Peter's, we were joined by children from Slough and Eton and from Montem Academy to remember the fallen of Chalvey on 11th November, and to keep the silence. A wreath was laid by the children from Montem Academy.

As part of the preparation we found that not only a teacher from the primary school, but the head-teacher from Chalvey National School, a predecessor we believe of Slough and Eton, lost their lives in that conflict. They were remembered by today's children.

And having looked back we now look forward; our Christingle takes place during mass on 12th December, and alongside the usual Christmas services we look forward to hosting the whole parish for a single mass on 26th December, at 10am. Hopefully there will be some mince pies left...



Brian had found a Nice Little Earner

The Real Ebenezer Scrooge

Did you know that the story of Ebenezer Scrooge is more or less true and was written about an actual man? Charles Dickens wrote about him in "A Christmas Carol." The man's real name was John Meggot. He learnt his miserable money tendencies from his family. When his father died his mother inherited about £100,000 which is about thirteen million in today's money. Apparently she died because she was too mean to pay for personal comforts and her own health.

John's desire was to impress his baronet uncle, Sir Harvey Elwes, and to try to keep in good favour with him because of his fortune. They would both share one glass of wine between them. John changed his surname to Elwes to please his uncle.

When Sir Harvey died he left his fortune of £250,000 (about £33 million today) plus an estate and land.

Afterwards John spent as little as possible on everything. He would go to bed in the darkness to save using a candle and sit with his servants in the kitchen to save lighting a fire in another room. The rest of the mansion was not used and he refused to pay for any maintenance. In his last few years, his houses had all become virtually uninhabitable, but he didn't care.

He wore ragged clothes and kept them on in bed as well as during the day. He really lived just like a tramp. He regularly ate mouldy or decaying food.

He was elected MP for Berkshire in 1772. When he died, he left £500,000 (about £1 million pounds today) and two sons born out of wedlock.

The one thing that doesn't go together though was the fact that although he was so stingy with his own expenses, he went to great lengths to help friends in trouble and lend money right away! He also gave his fortune to his two sons for the redevelopment of London's West End, most of which survives to this day.

Alice Sanders

NEXT MONTH'S MAGAZINE

Please let me have articles for the January 2022 issue by **Sunday 5th December** at the latest!

Dave

Advent

Waiting is not popular in our culture, when so much can be obtained simply at the press of a button! Advent, when we wait for the coming of Christmas, is also an opportunity to learn what it means to be waiting for the promised return of Jesus. He says: *'It's like a man going away: he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore, keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back'* (Mark 13:34-35).

We live between Jesus' first and second comings and this parable reminds us of the need to watch and wait, as disciples living faithfully for Him. It reminds us of two kinds of waiting: *passive* and *active*. Imagine you're at the railway station, awaiting the arrival of a train. On the platform a man is asleep, as he thinks there is plenty of time before the train arrives. He is *passively waiting*. There is also a small boy on the platform who is excited about the train coming. He can't sit still and constantly looks down the track to see if the train is coming. He is *actively waiting*, for he expects the train to arrive at any moment.

Advent gives us a choice: *how will we wait for Jesus' coming?* Passive waiting doesn't require much attention on our part. We can live our Christian life pre-occupied with our own concerns, rather than looking to God. However, active waiting involves an eager expectation, as we await Jesus' return or simply look to him coming to us today. All we want is to be found faithful as His disciples. There is nothing more important than being ready to meet our Master!

Revd Canon Paul Hardingham



21st December: Winter Solstice

A Midwinter festival has been a part of life since pre-Christian times. When the hours of daylight are fewest, the warmth of the sun weakest, and life itself seemingly at a standstill, our ancestors, the pagan peoples of Europe and Western Asia, kept festival by lighting bonfires and decorating their buildings with evergreens.

Perhaps they believed that the dying sun could be enheartened by fire, and the life of the buried seed assured by the presence of evergreen branches.

With the advent of Christianity, the Spring gods became identified with Christ, and the birthday of the sun with the birthday of the Light of the World.

The early church father Tertullian did not approve of Christmas decorations. "Let those who have no light in themselves light candles!... You are the light of the world, you are the tree ever green..." But by the time of St Gregory and St Augustine, four centuries later, this had changed. Pope Gregory instructed Augustine not to worry about harmless outward customs, as long as the right God be worshipped through them. And so many Anglo-Saxon customs were never discarded, but simply endowed with a new significance.

By 1598 one John Stow of London wrote how: "Against the feast of Christmas, every man's house, as also their parish churches, were decked with holme, ivie, bayes, and whatsoever the season of the yeare afforded to be greene."



25th December: Christmas throughout the Christian world

For nearly four weeks leading up to Christmas Christians recognise a period called Advent. It means 'coming'. It is a time of spiritual preparation. 'Coming' refers to Jesus' first coming as a baby, but it also looks forward to a day when Jesus is expected to return in triumph at His 'second coming' to establish perfect justice and a new order of peace.

Originally Christians marked Advent as a time when they refrained from excessive eating and drinking. Then Christmas Day reintroduced them to the joys of feasting. Christmas celebrations lasted for 12 days, with gifts exchanged

as a climax at Epiphany (6th January). Today, however, Advent is more likely to be associated with accelerating festivity, with the days following Christmas something of an anti-climax until ‘twelfth night’, on which decorations are removed. Many Christians worldwide are trying to revive the spirit of Advent by setting aside time to pray and address global poverty.

Christmas Day is celebrated as the anniversary of Jesus’ birth, although the actual date is not known. Most Christians celebrate it on 25th December. However, the Orthodox Church (the ancient churches in Eastern Europe and parts of Asia) follows a different calendar and celebrates on 7th January. Christians make a point of taking communion on Christmas Day. Many make it the first thing they do as the clock strikes midnight.

On 6th January the Christmas festival continues with a celebration of Epiphany, which means ‘the appearance’. Christians remember the visit of wise men (magi) to Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Christmas tradition of exchanging gifts originally honoured these men, who were the first non-Jews (Gentiles) to worship Jesus. It forms a reminder that in Jesus God was giving Himself for the benefit of the entire world.

Orthodox Christians use this day to recall the baptism of Jesus as a grown man. The significance of Jesus being baptised was that He identified Himself with human beings in all their need. They mark the day by praying for God’s blessing on rivers, wells and water sources.

Christmas has never been just an escapist festival for Christians. Those who treat it seriously recognise that not all the world is able to face the days with frivolity or joy. The day after Christmas, Boxing Day, was historically marked as the feast of St Stephen. He was the first man to be put to death rather than give up his belief that Jesus was God.

And two days later a day remembering the Massacre of the Innocents recalls Herod’s attempt to destroy Jesus by killing all male babies in Bethlehem. Although not so widely marked as Christmas Day, it gives Christians the opportunity to pray for children in today’s world who suffer as a result of the actions of adults.

This is from: https://christianity.org.uk/christmas-throughout-the-christian-world/#.W9Ll_xNKhsM



A Christmas Gift

It’s not easy getting the right Christmas present for others, especially in these uncertain times. However, the Magi’s gifts were entirely appropriate and help us to understand God’s gift of Jesus to us.

‘On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.’ (Matt 2:11).

These were the expensive kind of gifts that visitors from the east would bring: gold, frankincense (a plant gum resin used in incense) and myrrh (another resin used in perfumes).

Who is He?

Gold is a gift for a king. In Jesus, we see a king in baby clothes. The worship of the wise men was costly, not only in terms of their gifts but for their lives.

Why did He come?

Frankincense was used by the priests in the temple in offering sacrifices. Jesus, as the ultimate priest, is the one who came to bring God and man together. He could do this because He is both divine and human.

What did it cost Him?

Myrrh was used to embalm the dead. This gift reminds us that the baby of Bethlehem would die on the cross to give His life for us. The wood of the crib and the cross are the same wood!

What are we going to offer Him this Christmas? Jesus is *Christ*, the king who comes to rule our lives; He’s *Lord*, the One who knows what it’s like to be human as well as divine; and He’s *Saviour*, who enables us to be friends of God.

“At Christmas time, when we receive presents that we don’t really need, God offers us a gift we cannot do without.” – J John

Revd Canon Paul Hardingham

Church launches consultation on plans to get to net zero carbon in just nine years

The Church of England is consulting dioceses, cathedrals, national institutions, parishes, schools, and other interested parties on a proposed route map to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

The draft route map suggests how all parts of the Church of England can make changes together, in order to achieve the ambitious target set by General Synod in 2020: to be net zero carbon 20 years ahead of the Government's targets.

It includes recommendations for building maintenance, heating and the availability of specialist advice for each, setting alongside how the central Church and dioceses can offer support.

The draft net zero carbon route map was written by a sub-committee of the Church of England's Environmental Working Group, chaired by the Bishop of Selby, Dr John Thomson.

He said: "God's creation is in crisis, and there is an urgent call to address this at every level of our global community.

"Synod has set an ambitious target. We recognise this will be challenging, however many adaptations can also be made simply and quickly, such as switching to a green energy provider, filling gaps in windows, and changing lightbulbs, all of which can help to reduce energy costs.

"I encourage individuals and communities to engage with these consultation proposals and to think at every level what can be done to be part of the change. We need to safeguard and care for all of God's creation."

The Government has committed to a target of net zero carbon by 2050, with an interim target of a 78 per cent reduction, set in April 2021.

Anyone can respond to the consultation online before the closing date of 28 February 2022, with responses particularly requested from Dioceses and Cathedrals.



On the peril of choosing new kneelers

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

After all these years, I now understand why the non-conformist denominations sit down, rather than kneel, to say their prayers. That way, no decisions have to be taken over the number, size, shape, colour, material and design of kneelers in church.

Our present set was donated by a retired Major-General in 1899 to celebrate the Relief of Mafeking, and after more than a century of use by the pious and not-so-devout has taken its toll. Like certain members of our congregation, they now look a little worse for wear. Many have sprung leaks, so that when used, a jet of flocking is emitted all over the clothes of their neighbour, who then leaves Mattins looking like a Yeti.

Other kneelers have been occupied by grateful mice, who find them most congenial for nesting and who leave in high umbrage, creating chaos as Miss Mapp chases them down the aisle with her umbrella; that this provides her with the perfect excuse to leave before the sermon is, I am sure, entirely coincidental. The final straw came when my own, by some quirk in its design, now sounds like a whoopee cushion every time I kneel. It may cause the choirboys much amusement, but it lends nothing to the dignity of our worship.

So, we have decided to have a completely new set – and therein lies the problem. Who makes them? What will be the designs? Who co-ordinates the whole project? There is enough here to occupy the combined minds of our Church Council for the next Millennium and there will be enough scheming, manoeuvring, signing of non-aggression pacts and formation of tactical truces to make the United Nations look like amateurs. Unfortunately, we do not have the ecclesiastical equivalents of the blue berets to enforce peace.

The more patriotic members of the congregation have suggested they all show the Union Jack – presumably so they can be waved at appropriate moments in our services; one belligerent individual wants to see depictions of St Michael slaughtering the dragon, John the Baptist's head on a platter and other such tasteful scenes; on the other hand, dear Miss Timmins wants them all to depict doves or small fluffy creatures, which would make the church look more like pets corner.

Cutting through these vital issues, I have suggested that the entire congregation converts to Roman Catholicism.... and then we could stand for our prayers and do without kneelers entirely.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



*We don't sing carols no more...
you 'ave to listen to 'em off me iPod!*

Meditation on the Incarnation

*After the bright beam of annunciation
fused heaven with dark earth
His searing sharply-focused light
went out for a while
eclipsed in amniotic gloom:
His cool immensity of splendour
His universal grace
small-folded in a warm dim
female space*

This extract from Luci Shaw's poem *Made Flesh* captures something of the wonder of the moment when the second person of the Trinity became an embryo.

How does a single cell turn into an infant, and what does that process say about us – and God? These are the questions that Professor Jeff Hardin, a developmental biologist, asks himself. Having studied theology as well as science, he has a unique perspective on embryonic development.

A new-born baby is made of around five trillion cells. These cells come in hundreds of different types, each of which must be in the correct place for the child's body to function properly. Every new life is the result of intricate and highly ordered processes. Three things must happen as an embryo develops.

The first important process is for cells to take on their identity as types of muscle, bone, nerves, and so on. The second is when each cell learns which part of the body it belongs to. Third, those cells are moved around to form the different tissues and organs. These three are not discrete stages, but they all happen at around the same time, building up gradually like the different aspects of a picture coming into focus.

All three of these processes are driven forward by the movement of cells, the connections between them, and the signals they pass to each other. Jeff studies a sort of cellular glue which is involved in joining cells together. Making and breaking these adhesions can affect how cells move and signal to each other, their identity in the body, how they are organised as groups, and ultimately their survival. This glue is found on the surface of cells throughout the animal kingdom, including the small worms Jeff's lab studies.

For Jeff, peering down a microscope at tiny worm embryos can be an act of worship. It is also an exercise in art appreciation, as he learns to appreciate the created order. Understanding the complexities of development, while also being aware that God knows that process intimately both as Creator and created, fills Jeff with a profound sense of awe, wonder and worship.

Does the minute scale of our early development, compared to the incomprehensibly vast and ancient universe, give us a sense of insignificance? Psalm 8 says, “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?”

For Jeff and the Psalmist, such feelings can be a positive experience if they serve as a reminder to be humble in the face of a universe that is vastly complicated but also deeply meaningful, made by a God who loves each one of us.

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz

Daily Hope phone line receives more than 550,000 calls

Daily Hope, a free phone line which offers prayers and support for callers, receives nearly 20,000 calls every month. The service, which was launched during the Covid-19 lockdown, has spent more than 7.15 million minutes on more than 550,000 calls.

The phone line originally launched in April 2020, only to continue in response to ongoing demand once restrictions were eased.

Daily Hope set up by the Church of England nationally, has also been supported by Connections, a Missional Programme to older people based at Holy Trinity Claygate in Surrey and the Christian charity Faith in Later Life.

Over the year and a half of service, Daily Hope has continued to encourage people across the country and beyond including Australia, Japan, and the United States.

Since the phone line launched, users have been able to listen to a range of audio, including the Church of England’s national weekly service, hymns and daily prayer.

Many have messaged Lambeth Palace to express their thanks for the introduction of the phone line, particularly for elderly people.



Mouse Makes
Colour the tree then colour in one star each day until Christmas. Leave the large star at the top of the tree to colour in on Christmas day!

What's on the Christmas Tree?

Presents at Christmas under the tree,
A red Christmas stocking waiting for me,
But what really is Christmas,
What is it about?
Just look and the Bible and you will find out!
It's about **JESUS** - the best present of all,
JESUS our **Saviour**,
God's gift to us all!

A STAR shows the way to Jesus
Read Matthew 2:1-12

ANGELS bring messages from God
Read about Gabriel's message in Luke 1:26-38
Read the shepherd's story in Luke 1:26-38

LIGHTS AND CANDLES remind us that Jesus lights our way to God
Read Luke 2:29-32

PRESENTS remind us of God's special gift to us ... **JESUS!**

"For God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." John 3:16

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Matthew 2:1-10

Around the time of Jesus' birth, in a land far to the east of Israel, there were men who studied the stars...

When they saw a new star they believed it showed a special King had been born.

They set off to see that King.

They reached Jerusalem, the home of King Herod.

Where is the new King whose star we saw?

The Romans had made Herod king of the Jews about 30 years earlier. He was ruthless.

The Jews hated him and he was always worried that people were plotting against him.

He had them killed even if they were his wife or children...

So what the wise men said about a new King upset Herod

Herod got the teachers and priests together and asked about the king's birthplace.

That would be Little Bethlehem

and that made everyone else afraid.

*Micah 5:2

Herod secretly met the wise men and asked when they had first seen the star.

Go to Bethlehem and look for the child. When you find him let me know so I can come and worship him.

As they left Jerusalem the wise men were elated to see the guiding star again.

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

UPTON-CUM-CHALVEY / LANGLEY BRANCH PROGRAMME

All are open meetings and are joint meetings unless otherwise stated

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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SERVICES IN THE PARISH

St Mary's Church, Church Street, Slough, SL1 1PJ

Sunday:	9.30am	Family Eucharist with children's groups.
	6.30pm	Evensong/Evening Prayer (BCP)
Tuesday:	10.00am	Eucharist
Wednesday:	12.30pm	Eucharist

St Laurence's Church, Upton Court Road, Upton, Slough, SL3 7LU

Sunday:	11.00am	Family Eucharist with children's group.
Thursday:	10.00am	Holy Communion

St Peter's Church, Church Street, Chalvey, Slough, SL1 2NL

Sunday:	9.30am	Family Eucharist with children's groups.
Wednesday:	9.30am	Holy Communion

Websites:

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

<https://www.saint-laurence.com>

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

