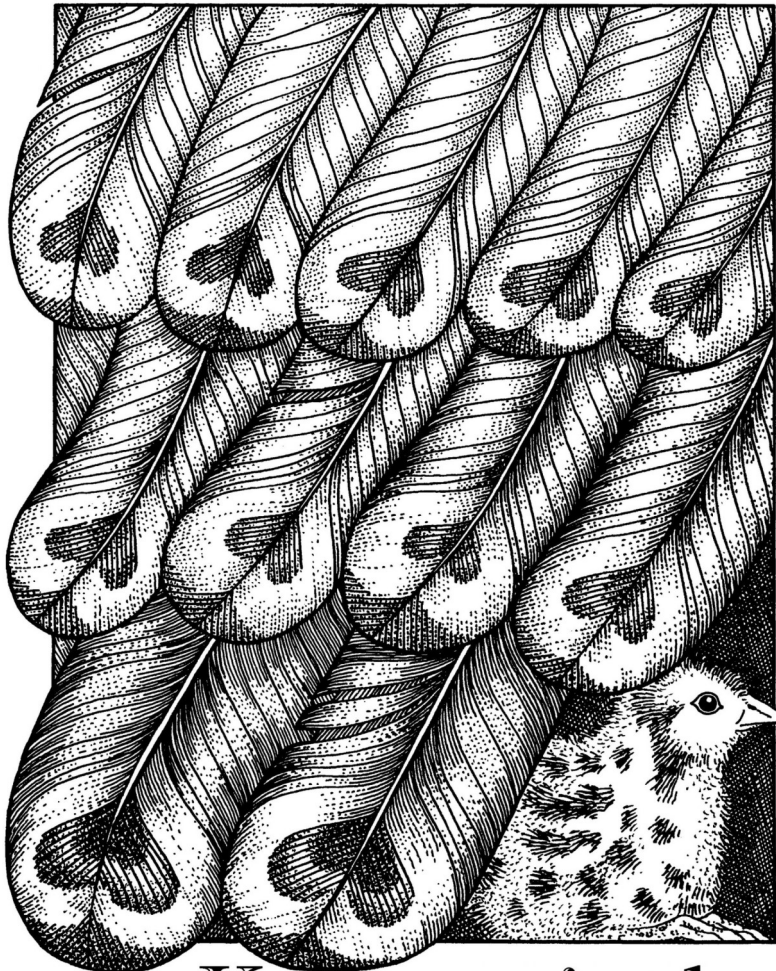


February 2021

30p

Upton-cum-Chalvey Parish News

St Mary St Laurence St Peter



shelter of your wings Ps 17:8

Keep me in the

SERVICES & EVENTS

Following the latest advice from the Diocese of Oxford, public liturgies in our churches have been suspended:

Online liturgy will be offered via Zoom

on **Sundays at 10.00am**, and

on **Wednesdays at 9.30am**.

Scheduled meetings will continue via Zoom.

Please keep an eye on the churches' websites for the latest information.

17th February - Ash Wednesday:

Services at St Peter's (9.30am), St Mary's (12.30pm) St Laurence's (7.30pm),
all with imposition of ash

Fr Alistair Writes:

The American politician, Donald Rumsfeld, once famously announced that there were “known knowns, known unknowns, and unknown unknowns.” At this point in our churches' lives we know exactly what he meant.

We don't know whether we will be able to continue worshipping in our churches, and we don't know for how long. We don't know when we will be able to go back. We think we know that we will not be able to keep Holy Week and Easter in our familiar ways, but we don't know that, and we don't know what we will be able to do instead. We don't know how long it will be that we have to have a single liturgy on a Sunday. We don't know whether we will be able to have annual meetings this year, or when. Add to that the uncertainty about when the new rector will come, and what sort of person that will be. Then, beyond that, some of us are uncertain about our own futures, our own jobs at the end of this lockdown, our own health amidst the pandemic, and we are simply surrounded by uncertainty.

Whereas we all, myself included, find all this uncertainty very draining, there is a positive aspect to this. When the disciples followed Jesus around Galilee, and went with him to Jerusalem, they did not know what would happen. They did not even know how they would cope for food and shelter, but they set out in faith. Going back, we may recall that Abraham set out in faith on a journey of uncertainty (see Hebrews 11:8). This uncertainty puts us in a new way into the shoes of the earliest followers of Jesus.

It may be that living in this uncertainty is enough for us as a Lenten observance. However, we will be having some additional devotions this year. Stations of the cross will be “live” in St Mary's, at 12.30pm each Wednesday in Lent (apart from Ash Wednesday), and online on Friday evenings. And we will have Lent groups, again online, on Wednesday evenings. Invitations for these will go out to the email list. If you do not receive regular updates via email, please ask to receive them.

Through all this uncertainty may we learn what it means to be people of faith.

Fr Alistair

Mountains make you feel better

The natural environment can make a real impact on your mood. Mountains can leave you feeling more optimistic, while the ocean can help boost your inspiration.

A recent study at Goldsmiths University of London found that water is most effective at increasing positive emotions, such as happiness and inspiration. Woodlands can help you forget your worries, and fields and meadows can enhance your energy levels.

Portrait

A primary teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was.

The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher blinked: "But no one knows what God looks like."

Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."



"Don't worry, I'm not getting Covid - I didn't realise the sign meant a low door..."

Launch of Rural Teaching Partnership

The Church of England, the education charity Teach First, and the Chartered College of Teaching have recently launched the new Rural Teaching Partnership.

The partnership will run in ten pilot regions across England, and will see trainee teachers, trained by Teach First, start two-year placements with Church of England primary schools by September 2021

By coming together, these three organisations hope to tackle teacher recruitment challenges currently faced by schools in poorer rural areas, with evidence showing that rural school leaders face greater difficulties with staff recruitment and retention compared to urban schools.

With more than half of its 4,644 schools situated in rural areas, the Church of England is the majority provider of rural schools nationally. Within ten pilot regions, schools serving areas of rural deprivation will be selected for placements either in Church of England schools, or non-Church of England schools which are part of a Church of England federation or multi academy trust.

The ten pilot dioceses are Leeds, York, Truro, Salisbury, Chelmsford, Norwich, Oxford, Hereford, Derby, and Bath-and-Wells.

Church Action on Poverty Sunday, 21st February

This month you can join churches around the UK in prayer, giving and action, on behalf of those who are struggling with poverty. Society should be “founded on compassion and justice, where all people are able to exercise dignity, agency and power,” says Church Action on Poverty.

For free resources to encourage prayer and fund-raising, go to: www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/

NEXT MONTH'S MAGAZINE

Please let me have articles for the March 2021 issue by **Sunday 14th February** at the latest!

Dave

St Mary's Lunchtime Concerts

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.

National Nestbox Week – time to help your garden birds

Our birds are short of nesting holes, and no wonder: gardens, parks and woodland are much neater than they used to be, and modern homes offer few crannies for nest building.

National Nestbox Week, which is celebrated from 14th February each year, aims to encourage us to put up more nestboxes, and to consider planting shrubs or trees with fruit that birds eat. These can make all the difference to birds struggling to survive, especially blue tits, great tits, house sparrows, robins and starlings.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) offers a variety of ideas for building and placing nestboxes. Go to: <https://www.nestboxweek.com>

Fairtrade Fortnight: 22nd February – 7th March

It has been a terrible year for farmers and workers in the global south.

In 2020, on top of the pandemic, they had to deal with the growing impact of climate change: more droughts and crop disease, locusts, floods, fires, and heatwaves. No wonder their harvests were shrinking.

Yet with the help of Fairtrade, many of these producers of food, drinks and cottons can be equipped to meet more everyday needs, and to deal with the challenges facing them.

So this month, why not visit www.fairtrade.org.uk and see how you can send some support.

The challenge to some over-60s

Last year saw a steep rise in redundancies among the over-60s, and a lack of proficiency with digital work tools such as Zoom helped contribute to the problem.

The number of workers over 60 who were made redundant increased from 8,000 between April and June to 31,000 between July and September – twice the percentage increase of any other groups.

According to research by Rest Less, a jobs site for older people, older workers are less likely to receive workplace training than their younger counterparts, and once made redundant are significantly more likely to find themselves in long-term unemployment. “Contrary to popular belief, most 60-somethings are not revelling in their gold-plated final salary pensions – a long lost preserve of their parents’ generation.”

Smart bird

Ravens have been found to be among the cleverest animals in the world. These largest members of the crow family can even score as high on intelligence tests as chimpanzees.

Ravens can remember where food is hidden, can use tools to get at it, follow human faces with their eyes, and understand what people mean when they point. All in all, researchers praise their “general, sophisticated cognitive skills.”

The study was carried out at Osnabruck University in Germany.

Truth at risk of being auctioned to the highest bidder – Archbishop

Truth is becoming a commodity, up for auction to the highest bidder, says Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell in a recent article published in Radio Times.

Lamenting the decline of truth in public life, the Archbishop explains “The echo chambers of social media and the fake news that often goes with it have led us to mistrust and cynicism.

“In other parts of the world, even news channels seem to be mouthpieces of certain political parties or vested interests.”

Commenting on the US Presidential election, Archbishop Cottrell says “Look at how divided and mistrustful of each other the people of that nation have become. Most alarming of all, there seems to be no common understanding of what is true or who can be trusted. Truth itself seems to have become a commodity, bought by the highest bidder.”

The Archbishop’s words echo those of former President Barack Obama, who told the BBC that the US was more sharply divided now than when Donald Trump won election four years ago.

Using the term ‘truth decay’ to describe a rise in conspiracy theories and disinformation in the US, Barack Obama said, “I think at some point it's going to require a combination of regulation and standards within industries to get us back to the point where we at least recognise a common set of facts before we start arguing about what we should do about those facts.”

The Archbishop of York, who took up the post last July, is warning that the divisions in the US could come to the UK. He believes that the BBC and other UK ‘public service broadcasting’ channels like Channel 4 have a vital role in holding the country together.

He says “I know that there are many across the country who feel that during this terrible pandemic year, others have been favoured at their expense. The vision of the united but diverse nation that we see on TV programmes such as ‘Gogglebox’ is not always what we see around us.”

The Archbishop is worried that the rise and spending power of US broadcasting giants Netflix and Amazon places “our British way of doing broadcasting under threat. A voracious, unchecked market may just sweep it away. Even some of our own politicians don’t always see this.”

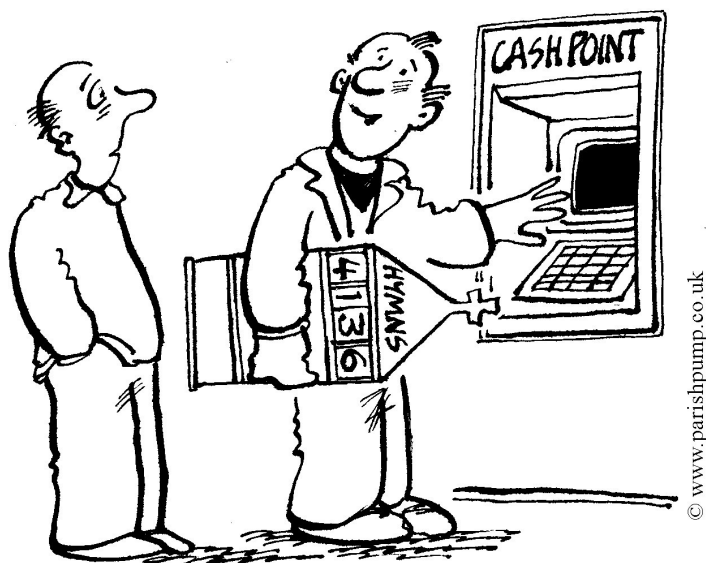
He adds: “Along with the NHS, and even the Church of England, the BBC and

other public service broadcasters are a precious part of our cultural ecology. They help us to see ourselves clearly. They can be trusted.”

Meanwhile, a project running in the CofE’s St Albans diocese has brought together journalists, scientists, representatives of Big Tech and authors with people from a range of faiths to consider how the rising tide of disinformation and fake news can be stemmed.

Grove Books has published ‘Responding to Post Truth’, showing how churches and Christians could fight back against fake news and disinformation. You can order a copy at: <https://grovebooks.co.uk/products/e-197-responding-to-post-truth>

Revd Peter Crumpler



...between you and me, it's the only way I can remember my PIN number!

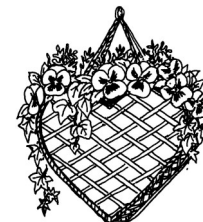
2nd February: Candlemas, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple

In bygone centuries, Christians said their last farewells to the Christmas season on Candlemas, 2nd February. This is exactly 40 days after Christmas Day itself.

In New Testament times 40 days old was an important age for a baby boy: it was when they made their first ‘public appearance’. Mary, like all good Jewish mothers, went to the Temple with Jesus, her first male child - to ‘present Him to the Lord’. At the same time, she, as a new mother, was ‘purified’. Thus, we have the Festival of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

So, where does the Candlemas bit come in? Jesus is described in the New Testament as the Light of the World, and early Christians developed the tradition of lighting many candles in celebration of this day. The Church also fell into the custom of blessing the year’s supply of candles for the church on this day - hence the name, Candlemas.

The story of how Candlemas began can be found in Luke 2:22-40. Simeon’s great declaration of faith and recognition of who Jesus was is of course found in the Nunc Dimittis, which is embedded in the Office of Evening Prayer in the West. But in medieval times, the Nunc Dimittis was mostly used just on this day, during the distribution of candles before the Eucharist. Only gradually did it win a place in the daily prayer life of the Church.



14th February: Valentine’s Day

There are two confusing things about this day of romance and anonymous love-cards strewn with lace, cupids and ribbon: firstly, there seems to have been two different Valentines in the 4th century - one a priest martyred on the Flaminian Way, under the emperor Claudius, the other a bishop of Terni martyred at Rome. And neither seems to have had any clear connection with lovers or courting couples.

So why has Valentine become the patron saint of romantic love? By Chaucer’s time the link was assumed to be because on these saints’ day -14th February - the

birds are supposed to pair. Or perhaps the custom of seeking a partner on St Valentine's Day is a surviving scrap of the old Roman Lupercalia festival, which took place in the middle of February. One of the Roman gods honoured during this Festival was Pan, the god of nature. Another was Juno, the goddess of women and marriage. During the Lupercalia it was a popular custom for young men to draw the name of a young unmarried woman from a name-box. The two would then be partners or 'sweethearts' during the time of the celebrations. Even modern Valentine decorations bear an ancient symbol of love - Roman cupids with their bows and love-arrows.

There are no churches in England dedicated to Valentine, but since 1835 his relics have been claimed by the Carmelite church in Dublin.

Love Is...

As we mark Valentines' Day this month, it's good to ask the question: *what does real love look like?*

The Apostle Paul says: *'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.'* (1 Corinthians 13: 4-8).

Love is unconditional:

At heart, love is not just feelings but action! Paul talks here about unconditional love, using the word *agape*, which demonstrated in God's love for us: *'We love, because He first loved us.'* (1 John 4:19).

Love is forgiving:

According to the film Love Story, *'Love means never having to say you're sorry.'* This is rarely true in our experience! According to Paul, love is being ready to forgive others and *'keeping no record of wrongs'* (5). We can only forgive others because we know God forgiveness in our own lives.

Love is sacrificial:

Paul says that agape love is not selfish or self-seeking, but selfless and self-sacrificial, putting the needs of other people first. This is modelled by Jesus giving His life for us on the cross. Take the words from 1 Corinthians and instead of the word *love*, substitute your own name. Now substitute the word *Jesus*. This is the Jesus who is available to you to make your love for others grow and flourish.

Someone once compared love being like a group of porcupines huddling together

on a cold night. The closer they get, the more they jab and hurt each other. *'To love at all is to be vulnerable.'* (C S Lewis).

Canon Paul Hardingham

Have you done something which haunts you?

Do you ever worry that your past failings mean that God will not accept you now? Some of us have done many things which we regret, things that have caused us, or others, great pain.

We've given our children short shrift, we've betrayed our marriage partners, we've been dishonest at work, we've been ruthlessly greedy and ambitious, no matter what the cost to anyone else. And now the memory of the wrong we've done lingers, and makes us ashamed. Our past failings make us very reluctant to turn to God. Why should He forgive the damage we have done?

If you think this way, then you have a big surprise waiting for you: God isn't like that. You haven't yet encountered His GRACE. God knows all about you, and most of all He knows you need His help. Jesus said that He came into the world to reach sinners, to help anyone who turns to Him in true repentance to find forgiveness, and a new start.

You can't do anything to turn yourself into a good person. But you don't have to. All that God asks of you is that you turn to Jesus in prayer, and say you are sorry, and ask Him to forgive you, and to put His Spirit within you. Then you find His GRACE – which means His loving-kindness, beginning in YOUR life. Just try it.

Today let God begin to set you free from the past!

Pray with Grannie

A small boy went to church with his grandmother and joined her when she quietly slipped off the pew to kneel and pray. He even copied her example of burying her face in her hands. But after a few seconds his curiosity got the better of him. "Who are we hiding from, Grannie?"

Hope for 2021: Celebrating the now and future creation

I find that watching buds swelling on trees and plants during the winter months gives me a tremendous sense of hope. We may all need some extra hope for 2021, after the events of 2020. By the time you read this a number of us may have been fortunate enough to receive a COVID vaccine, but all of us will probably still be under various kinds of restrictions. After creation's winter shut-down, the sight of tiny flowers poking out of brown earth may be more important than ever.

Getting outdoors during daylight hours, enjoying green spaces and getting some fresh air and exercise are great ways to keep ourselves healthy at any time of year. A psychologist colleague wrote, "Attending to the details of nature can also inspire awe, which has been linked to positive mood and increased life satisfaction." I expect it is this sense of awe that makes it easier for many of us to connect with God outdoors.

Helping ourselves and others to thrive is a good start to 2021, but it is also vital to have hope for the future. The COVID-19 pandemic was caused by an animal virus jumping into the human population. Diseases like this are not 'natural disasters', but are almost certainly caused by environmental destruction and poor farming practices - either from greed or the desperation born of poverty. Part of the answer to the current crisis is for us to care for all of Creation, both human and everything else, with God's help.

Our ultimate hope is in God's promise that He will bring about a new heavens and new earth. We can look forward to the day when Creation will be fully redeemed and liberated from evil. The Greek word used to describe the new creation is the same as that used to describe someone who becomes a Christian, whose humanity is restored and renewed. There will be continuity between the old and new earth as it is cleansed and purified, surpassing and perfecting what has gone before. There will also be some discontinuity, as there will be no more suffering or death.

So, one source of hope for 2021 is that we can enjoy both caring for and meeting God in Creation. But the parts of Creation that we find most beautiful, giving us a sense of awe and helping us to worship, are also a reminder that there is something much better to come.

Dr Ruth Bancewicz



On why our church does not need health or safety...

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

I appreciated your recent concern when you heard one of our parishioners had slipped on a gravestone. Your desire to help was entirely commendable, and I do know that sending your own church's health and safety officer to give us some advice was kindly meant. But the 200-page report was not welcome. If we implemented even half of your officer's suggestions, life would become unbearably safe.

St James the Least of All has survived perfectly well for the last 600 years without gutter cleaning inspections, path degreasing and electrical safety certificates, so I think we may survive a little longer without them. As far as I am aware, the only disaster to hit us was when Cromwell's soldiers stabled their horses in the nave - which I suspect a few of our oldest members still clearly remember.

The shock the sidesmen sometimes get when switching on the lights occurs only occasionally, is relatively mild and soon over - and if it happens when preparing for the 8am Service, helps to wake them up. The weight of the Duke of Clumber's marble sarcophagus *is* slowly detaching the south aisle from the rest of the church, but it is very slow - and the pews in that area are used only once a year when his relations visit from America to commemorate his death at Agincourt - which is probably just beyond

remembrance of the oldest of our congregation.

Leaks from the ceiling in the north aisle are solved with a row of buckets – and even you must concede that the fungi on the oak beams look really rather attractive when the sun catches them. The sapling growing out of the spire is certainly an issue – although it looks so attractive in Spring when in blossom. As for our fire extinguishers, they were serviced when my predecessor-but-two was in office, and I have the certificate to prove it.

So, do thank your health and safety officer for all his work and tell him we will bear his recommendations in mind. Also tell him I was so sorry he slipped and broke his leg in our choir stalls while he was with us. But that bit of floor has been out of alignment since 1748, and it seems a shame to disturb it now. If only he had arrived encased in bubble wrap, it would never have happened. Perhaps you could put that on the agenda of your next health and safety meeting.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

**Saint Mary's Church
Church Street,
Slough,
SL1 1PJ**

Situation vacant: Custodian

The churchwardens of St Mary's Slough would like to appoint a custodian. This is a part-time post, for five hours per week. The standard rate is £9 ph. The main duties are cleaning, furniture moving, basic maintenance and opening/closing building for groups using the building.

The person appointed would also be expected to act as verger at funeral and weddings, for which generous additional payment will be made.

As the post may bring you into occasional contact with children and vulnerable adults a DBS disclosure is required.

For full details please contact Jean Smith 0771 752 3744

Do your days rush by at a hectic pace?

Have you ever stopped to think that your mobile phone and emails have not given you *more* time? Just *more things to do* in the same amount of time.

We leave our messages in one place while we take our bodies elsewhere. Instead of doing one thing after another, we shoot out a variety of tasks, and then swoop down on them later, needing to deal with them all at once.

In a four-minute clip from a street scene from an old Orson Welles film and a similar clip from a more recent film, you will see an amazing difference. In the early film, the camera records 'real time' – people get out of their cars, walk across streets, wait for lights, speak to other people, enter a bank. In the more recent film, a similar sequence was reduced to a half a dozen quick cuts. Transition time was eliminated.

Modern life teaches us that 'down time' is wasted. Time is money. So mobile phones, emails, etc, enable us to 'waste' less time. The tempo of cultural life picks up, the heartbeat of daily life races, and our own body rhythms respond with adrenaline, cramped muscles and heart attacks.

To take time out for daily prayer, for a quiet walk that is not to the next meeting, for daydreaming or for Bible study becomes a cross-cultural act. Following Christ, waiting on Him, is a countercultural act.

One lovely biblical phrase is 'in the fullness of time, it came to pass'. This suggests four things: that time crests like a wave; that there is a right moment for things to happen; that it's not ours to plan that moment, but to recognise it; and that we are not the primary agents of what happens in the world.

So, feel free to accept God's offer of rest when you are weary; receive each moment of your life as a gift from God's hand; pray to discern what each new encounter you make requires of you, and freely entrust everything else to God's care.

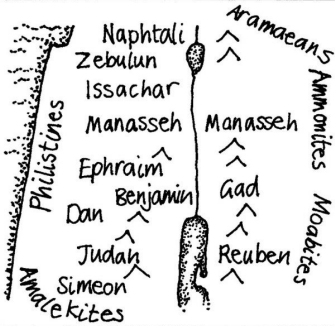
Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle

Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Josh 13:8-20:48
1 Sam 31:1-5, 2 Sam 2:4-24, 3:12, 17-27, 4, 5:1-5

When the Jews reached the place that God had promised them, each tribe was given land to live in. But they were surrounded by enemies.



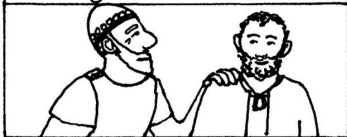
King Saul and two of his sons died fighting the Philistines.



David was made king of the southern tribe of Judah.



But Saul's army commander, Abner, took Saul's last son, Ishbosheth, north and made him king of the rest of Israel.



Joab was David's commander. The two armies fought and Abner killed Joab's brother.



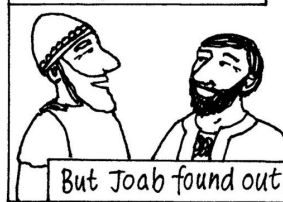
Ishbosheth was a poor king and Abner decided to join David.



Abner persuaded all of the northern tribes to have David as king.



Abner came for a secret meeting with David.



So Joab tricked Abner into another meeting and killed him.



Then two men sneaked into Ishbosheth's house and killed him as he had a nap.



They expected a reward from David but he was very angry because they had murdered Ishbosheth.



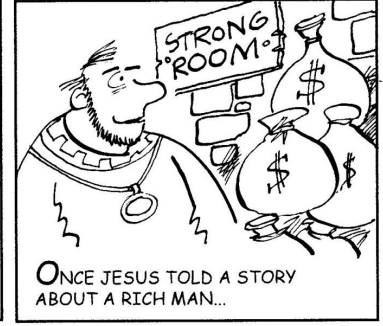
So David became king over all of Israel.



The parable of the Shrewd Manager

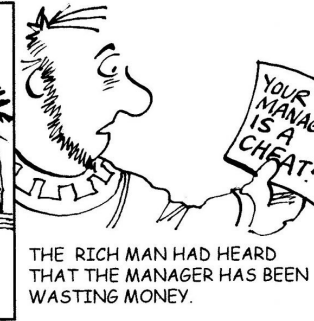
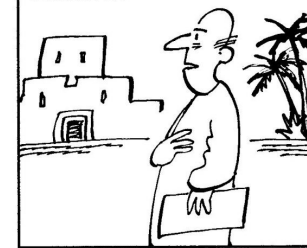


JESUS OFTEN TOLD STORIES WITH HIDDEN MEANINGS

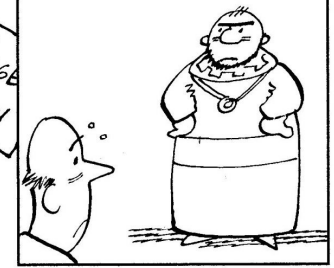


ONCE JESUS TOLD A STORY ABOUT A RICH MAN...

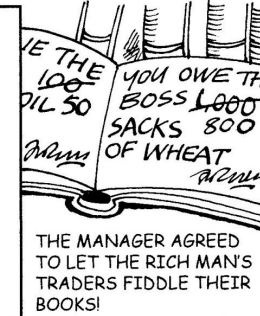
...AND HIS SERVANT, WHO MANAGED THE RICH MAN'S PROPERTY.



SO HE CALLED THE MANGER TO ACCOUNT FOR HIMSELF!



THE RICH MAN HAD HEARD THAT THE MANAGER HAD BEEN WASTING MONEY.

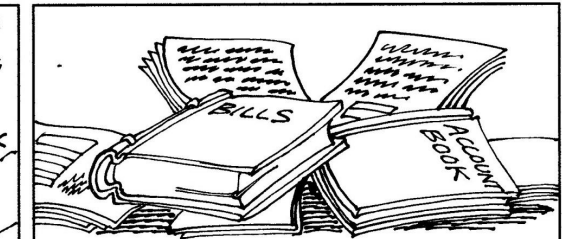
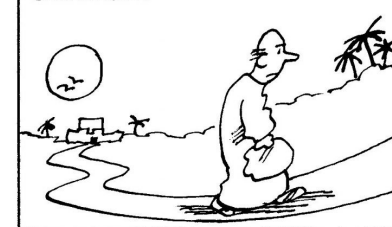


THE MANAGER AGREED TO LET THE RICH MAN'S TRADERS FIDDLE THEIR BOOKS!

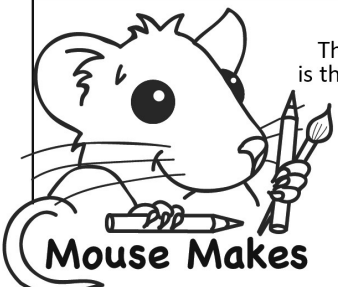


SO THEY ALTERED THEIR DEBTS - AND STAYED FRIENDS WITH THE MANAGER.

JESUS EXPLAINED THAT THE MANAGER HAD BEEN WISE IN MANAGING HIS FUTURE... EVEN THOUGH HE WAS BEING DISHONEST.



JESUS WAS TRYING TO ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE TO THINK ABOUT THEIR OWN FUTURES TOO. BUT IT'S A HARD PARABLE TO UNDERSTAND!



Mouse Makes

WHAT AM I?
The last letter of one word is the first letter of the next

E				H
• What two things did God create first? Genesis 1:1				
	S			
F				
• What was the Earth without? Genesis 1:2 • What came before morning? Gen 1:5				
				G
				D
S				
• Who is the creator? Genesis 1:1 • What was separated from light? Gen 1:4				
				H
• Who moved over the water? Gen 1:2				
L				S

FIND THE CREATION PAIRS
from Genesis 1 and 2

EARTH	MORNING
LIGHT	FRUIT
DAYS	SEA
TREES	NIGHT
LAND	FISH
EVENING	YEARS
ADAM	HEAVENS
DAY	DARK
BIRDS	WATER
SKY	EVE

DID YOU KNOW?
The first word of the Old Testament in Hebrew is **bereshith** which means "in the beginning". The Greeks translated this word as **GENESIS** which means *creation, origin and generation*

Can you find these words in the word search?
GOD • HEAVEN • SPIRIT
FLY • DEEP • EARTH
DARK • DAY • LIGHT
NIGHT • STARS • SKY
SEA • LAND • BIRD
CREATURE • HUMAN
TREE • PLANT • SEEDS
FRUIT • GOOD • TWO

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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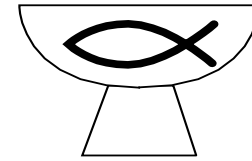
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