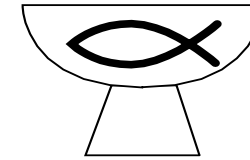
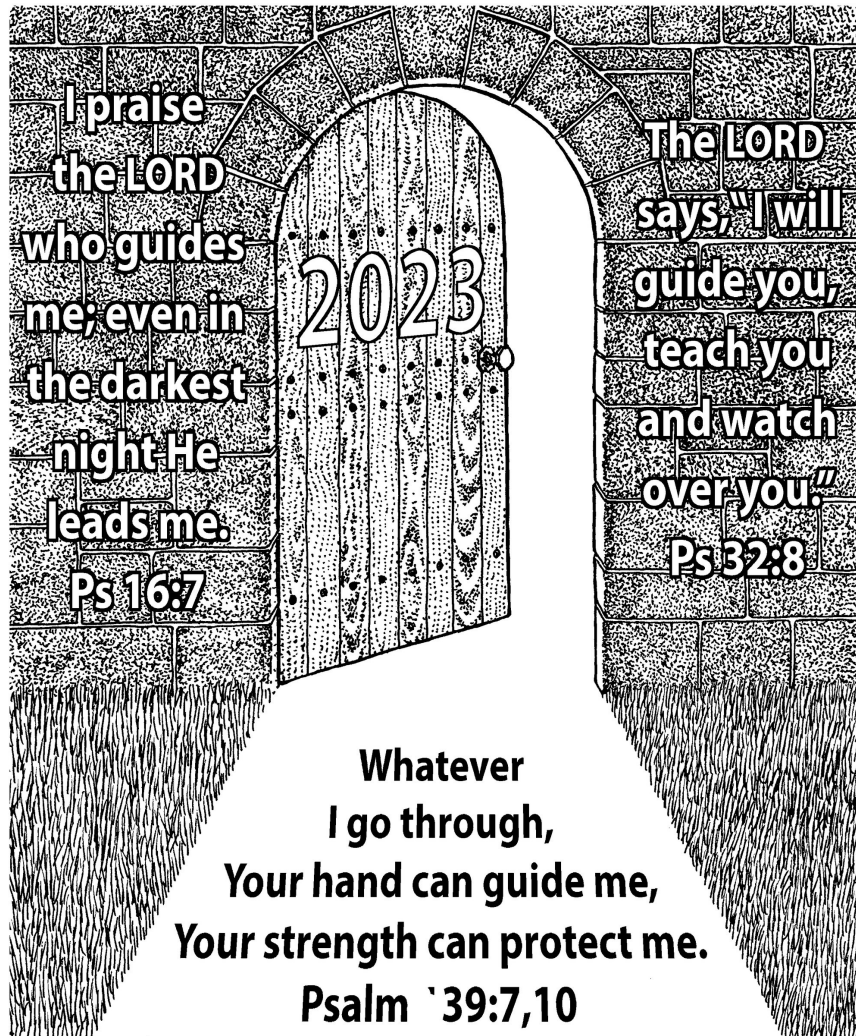


January 2023

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.

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Revd Alistair Stewart (Team Vicar)	01753 520725
Revd Linda Hillier (Associate Minister)	0208 8645728
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): Allan James	01753 532425
District Churchwarden (SL):	
District Churchwarden (SP): Peter Clarke	07388 832233
District Churchwarden (SP): Frank Gerrish	07970 537572
Vergers (SL): Allan James	01753 532425
Organist (SM): Malcolm Stowell	01628 660651

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Revd Scott Lamb Friday
Revd Alistair Stewart Tuesday

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

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

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

The Rector Writes:

Dear Friends,

So, 2022 has passed and 2023 begins. And with the turning of the year, we naturally wonder what the next twelve months will bring. We do that every year of course, but I wonder if recently we have pondered these things with more trepidation than in the past. The last few years have certainly brought us some unexpected and unwelcome events. Who of us expected Covid and the enormous changes and losses it gave us? War in Europe was something we never imagined, and this year we are being warned of economic woes to come. Many of the everyday plans we made a few years ago now seem pretty fragile and we may well be rather nervous for the year ahead.

Such tribulations, while increasing for us at the moment, are nothing new. Jesus spoke to his disciples of times of trouble he could see coming on the horizon. "Wars and rumours of wars," "famine and pestilence," a natural world out of kilter, misfortune and persecution all lay ahead. (Mark 13, Luke 21) However, amid it all Jesus's advice to his friends is very clear: "Do not be alarmed... Do not be led astray... Don't panic."

How can he say that? Is it because Christians won't face the same trials as others? No, we know from experience that there are no exemptions from the suffering that can come to all human beings. Is it because we can somehow predict the future? Again, the answer is "no", we live with the uncertainties of a fragile world filled with people making free choices.

The reason for Jesus words lies not in a different experience of life but because as Christians we possess in him a security that surpasses any possible threat on earth. Life will sometimes bring losses, but while this may be hard to bear, we have a deep security in God that cannot be altered by circumstances. "Not one hair of your head will perish."

In the days of the 1914-18 war the poet Rupert Brook, out of his faith and in the midst of terrible losses wrote these words:

We have found safety with all things undying,
The winds, the morning, tears of men and mirth,
The deep night, and birds singing, and clouds flying,
And sleep, and freedom, and the autumnal earth.
We have built a house which is not for Time's throwing,
We have gained a peace unshaken by pain for ever.
War knows no power. Safe shall be my going,
Secretly armed against all death's endeavour:
Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall;

And if these poor limbs die, safest of all.

In 2023 we won't face what he faced but we may know a loss of income or a decline in our lifestyle. We will all know some losses that come with age. Strength or abilities may decline, friends may pass. However, as Christians, our deepest security lies not in anything of this world but in God alone, a basis for living which cannot be shaken.

We do not know what the future holds but we know that whatever may come, we will not lose our souls or step outside God's love.

Fr Scott

JANUARY SERVICES & EVENTS

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

Tue 3rd	8.00pm	St Peter's DCC Meeting (SP)
Sun 8th	6.30pm	Parish Epiphany Carol Service (SM)
Mon 9th	7.30pm	St Laurence's DCC Meeting (SL)
Tue 10th	2.30pm 7.30pm	"Mulling It Over" - Bible study, chat, tea (SL) St Mary's DCC Meeting (SM)
Mon 16th	7.30pm	PCC Meeting (SL)
Sun 22nd	12.30pm	Church Lunch (Robbie Burns) (SL)
Sun 29th	11.00am	Candlemas Christingle Family Eucharist (SL)

St Mary's News

Christmas Sparkle Concert with Malcolm Stowell on the organ started our Christmas season. We were pleased to see several new faces as well as old friends in the audience.

Slough Music Centre filled the church with children from several Slough primary schools together with many parents for their carol concert. It was a joy to hear the laughter and chatter of excited children as well as their excellent singing.

By the time the magazine is published, we will have held our Carol Concert with Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus accompanied by the donkey and we hope to have a full church with our neighbours from the surrounding area. We will also have had a visit from Long Close School with pupils and parents for their Carol Service.

For the first time we will have held a Christmas Worship for the carers and toddlers from Start the Week and we are hoping for a lively session with singing and stories as well as building our Nativity scene.

It is now over 16 years since Church Street Contact Centre opened in St. Mary's and unfortunately it is as busy as ever, Unfortunately, because it means more families are still in disagreement over when and if children can meet with their estranged parent. It is the one of the occasions when we do not like to see the church full.

2022 has been a busy year and we hope our congregation will continue to grow during 2023 and that we are able to welcome community groups and our neighbours into our building.

Jean

"Yvonne's Art Classes"

These free art classes are held in St Mary's, every Thursday from 12.30pm to 3.30pm and are open to all.

St Laurence's News

We celebrated our Dedication Festival on 4th December, which was also our Gift Day. Thanks everyone who donated so generously: we raised £520 for general funds.

At the time of writing, we are looking forward to the visit of Nursery children from St Mary's Primary School and their parents to sing Christmas songs on 12th and 13th December. This is always a very happy occasion, enjoyed by all.

We look forward to our Christingle Service on 29th January, at which we will be collecting for the Children's Society.

Dave



"That's two t's in Matthew", said Osric

St Peter's News

As we start 2023, we are working on getting the vestry extension project underway. Serious discussions have been held with the DAC resulting in a very comprehensive report following a site visit a few weeks ago. Now it is up to us to follow it through. It includes producing a revised feasibility study, including considering what other facilities are available in Chalvey.

Meanwhile the vestry has been tidied and re-arranged and is now a very usable meeting place for small groups, at a modest charge. Of course it is used regularly for Sunday school, so now the youngsters have more space to sit.

Those of you who used to support our book fairs, will be sad to know that we no longer have a store of books. They have been sold or given to other charities. They were a great source of income for some years, but fewer and fewer people seem to buy books, so we had to make the decision to close the store. Our thanks to Alyson, a member of the congregation, for her hard work in achieving the clearance.

Margaret

Stocking up because of the war

The sales of portable generators, torches and candles have soared in recent months, amid concerns that Britain may face power cuts if it cannot import enough energy to maintain supply this winter.

As the National Grid warns of possibly tight supply levels, generator sales have tripled, torch sales are up by 43pc on 2021, and sales of candles have risen by 114pc in a year, according to Toolstation and John Lewis.

How the Pope can help the planet

If the Pope made a decree that reinstated meatless Fridays across the Roman Catholic Church, it would save millions of tonnes of carbon a year.

So say researchers from the University of Cambridge. The researchers also said that if only a quarter of Catholics in the UK went meatless on Fridays, it would save the equivalent in terms of carbon emissions to 82,000 fewer people taking a return trip from London to New York over a year.

Church aims to double number of UK Minority Ethnic Head Teachers in England

The Church of England is seeking to double the number of UK Minority Ethnic (UKME) Head Teachers in all its schools in England over the next five years.

The *Leaders Like Us* scheme (<https://www.cefel.org.uk/leaderslikeus/>) launches this month (January 2023). Applications are now open to teachers from all schools. The scheme aims to equip UKME teachers with the skills for headship, and it has funding to train more than 450 teachers by 2027.

Around one in every three students in schools in England are from UKME backgrounds, but there are fewer than 400 headteachers from the same backgrounds in total, out of more than 20,000 schools.

Research shows that the impact of teacher and school leader representation on students is significant; their attainment and likelihood of progressing to tertiary education is exponentially higher when students see leaders like them. Their exclusion and suspension rates decrease, and future aspirations are also measurably lower.

As with all Church of England programmes and networks, 'Leaders Like Us' is open to anyone who would like to learn and develop within a values-led environment built upon Christian foundations. The course is fully funded for teachers through a Racial Justice Grant from the Church of England's Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC).

A very hard winter for many: the bishops respond to recent Autumn statement

The Bishop of St Albans, Alan Smith, convenor of the Bishops in the House of Lords, and the Bishop of Durham Paul Butler, who speaks on poverty issues in the Lords, have recently responded to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn statement.

They said: "It is heartening to hear the Chancellor single out the needs of the most vulnerable as a principle behind his Autumn Statement. We recognise that he has had to make some very difficult choices.

"Ahead of the Autumn statement, one of our key concerns was to see benefits keep pace with inflation. So we welcome the Chancellor's commitment in this regard, but continue to call for the end to the two-child limit on Universal Credit, which hits some of the poorest families hardest.

“This is going to be a very hard winter for many. Our churches, in communities across the country, are already reporting alarming rises in demand for foodbanks and other services which have become a lifeline. It is heart-breaking to hear of people who just a year ago were donating to food banks, but who are now using them themselves.

“Many of our churches are among the more than 3,700 public spaces which are opening up this winter as a Warm Space for people amid surging energy bills.

“While we recognise the intense economic pressures on this country, as the Chancellor acknowledges, it is a global situation, and we will continue to hold the Government to its commitment to return to giving 0.7 per cent of national income on international development.”

Millions of people in touch with church community action amid cost-of-living crisis

More than seven million people have had contact with their local church for community support services such as food banks, parent toddler groups and lunch clubs, new figures recently published suggest.

Polling by Savanta ComRes for the Church of England shows that nearly half the population reports having been in contact with their local church – at 46% - with the most popular reasons for doing so being attending weddings, baptisms, and funerals (50%) worship and services (42%) and carol services (39%).

But the figures also show that 30% of those in contact with their local church – or 13.7% of all UK adults – have done so through community services such as parent toddler groups, lunch clubs and food banks.

The figures also show that twice as many agree (47%) as disagree (23%) that the local church is an important part of their community and just over a half (52%) agree that the Church is an important part of British society.

The findings come after Church of England statistics from 2019 show its churches running or supporting 35,000 social action projects.

This includes 8,000 food banks and more than 4,000 parent/carer toddler groups. More than 5,000 churches run or support lunch clubs, coffee mornings or similar hospitality for older people.

The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, who speaks for the bishops in the House

of Lords on welfare issues, said: “These figures show the extent to which the Church of England is providing not just spiritual and pastoral support, but practical help to communities throughout the country.

“Jesus’s commandment to love your neighbour as yourself is evident in the care and service provided by churches in so many ways.

“The biggest source of practical support provided by the Church of England currently is through running or supporting around 8,000 food banks throughout the country and many of our churches are now opening up as ‘warm spaces’ through the ‘Warm Welcome’ campaign, as people struggle to pay their energy bills.

“Sadly, we anticipate that these services will come under increasing pressure this winter.”

More than one million people pray online with Church of England podcast and app

The number of people using the Church of England’s Daily Prayer audio service has recently passed a million, as the podcasting revolution begins to reshape how people worship.

The podcast, also available as audio on the Daily Prayer app, follows the Church of England’s traditional cycle of Morning and Evening Prayer, with a range of voices and music.

The short atmospheric services feature prayers and readings following the pattern set out in the Church of England’s Common Worship services, recorded by volunteers across the country.

They are edited together with music from the St Martin’s Voices choir at St Martin-in-the-Fields in London, by the Church of England’s Digital team.

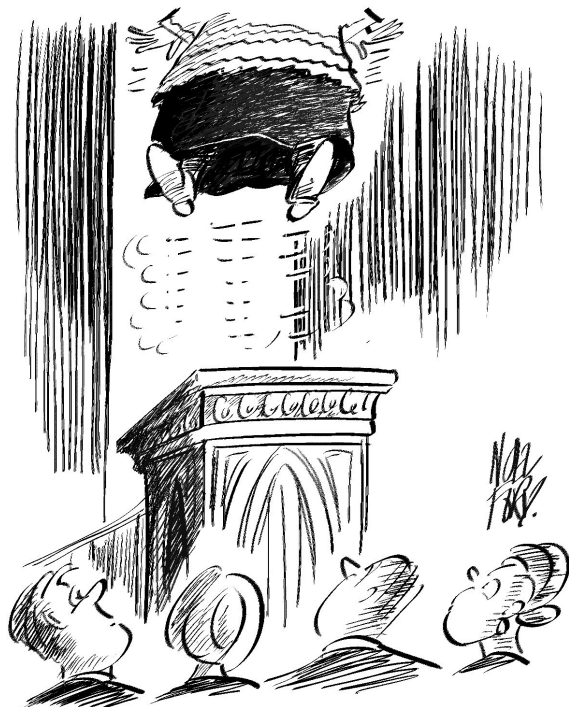
It was launched in March last year after churches across the country reported large numbers tuning into prayer services broadcast online during Covid restrictions. It comes amid signs of a resurgence of interest in the ancient monastic cycle of daily worship.

Thomas Allain-Chapman, Head of Publishing for the Church of England, said: “Adding audio to the existing Daily Prayer app has transformed a useful resource into something truly inspiring and enriching.”

So far, the Daily Prayer podcast has reached one million listeners, with around

8,000 listening every day. In total there have now been five million downloads since its launch in March 2020.

Daily Prayer is one of a series of prayer and discipleship apps and podcasts available from the Church of England, including 'Time to Pray', which won Gold for Best Use of Audio at the 2021 Digital Impact Awards.



The fan-heater under the cassock idea proved not to be such a good one

NEXT MONTH'S MAGAZINE

Please let me have articles for the February issue by **Sunday 15th January** at the latest!

Dave



Wise Men Seek Him

'A cold coming we had of it. Just the worst time of the year. For a journey and such a long journey.' (Journey of the Magi, T.S. Eliot).

In this poem, T.S. Eliot imagines the journey of the Magi to worship Jesus, as told in Matthew 2. This story is at the heart of our celebration of Epiphany, as we remember the astrologers from the East following a star to find the baby: *'Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the One who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.'* (Matthew 2:1,2).

The Magi provide a powerful picture of the journey we make in searching for God in our lives. Like them, it requires time and effort (they travelled for months) and will not always be easy! As they followed the star, so we are called to pursue God's light in our lives.

What does this say to us at the beginning of a New Year? Are we ready to go deeper in our relationship with God? Are we looking for new ways to use our time, treasure and talents for Him? It is a great time to offer these things to Him, and like the Magi, commit ourselves to pursuing Him. His light, through prayer, worship and His Word, will be our guide on the way.

T.S. Eliot used the imagined journey of the Magi to reflect on his own spiritual journey. It reveals the pain and doubts he experienced on his long and troubled journey to find the light of Christ. He describes finding Christ as a *'hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death'*. Are we prepared to make this journey for ourselves?

Canon Paul Hardingham

Word Search

Can you find all of the UK cathedrals in the grid?

Answers on page 25.



Are you a cold-water swimmer? Then beware.

The current fashionable middle-class lifestyle trend of cold-water swimming is putting thousands of new converts in danger, as they swim in cold water for longer than their bodies can take.

One lido in London recently reported that they were having to deal with cases of hypothermia every day, as some people insisted on staying in the water until they collapsed. Instead, as the water temperature drops, so people should shorten their swim.

When a person's body temperature drops, their heart, nervous system, and other organs cannot work normally. Hypothermia sets in, and can lead to heart failure, respiratory system collapse, and death.

The man who made the first-ever vaccine

Two hundred years ago, on 26th January 1823, Edward Jenner, the British physician and immunologist who created the first vaccine (for smallpox), died of a stroke.

He was the son of a Gloucestershire clergyman and the brother of another – who brought him up when his father died. He was also a violinist, a poet and a naturalist, but he chose medicine and became the pupil of a distinguished surgeon, John Hunter, at St George's Hospital in London. Hunter also had wide interests, and the two kept in touch for many years.

Jenner, a committed and sincere Christian, married a near neighbour, Catharine Kingscote, in 1788. He was described as amiable and quiet, but his work in creating a smallpox vaccine was said to have saved more lives than any other man on earth, though his treatment in making inoculations using cowpox lesions, initially from a dairymaid in 1796, was laughed at by some to start with.

The word 'vaccination' (relating to cows) stems from this experiment. Previous smallpox inoculation attempts were known as variolation and were both less successful and dangerous to health. Jenner himself had received this treatment as a child.

Jenner was a member of the Royal Society, primarily because of his work as a naturalist. He published valuable observations and interpretations on, for instance, the life of the cuckoo, which was little understood at the time.

But in the end, he gave so much time to vaccination work that his personal affairs suffered badly, though he was voted a total of £30,000 by Parliament.

His wife died of tuberculosis in 1815, after which he retired from public life. In 1980 the World Health Organisation said that smallpox had finally been eradicated from the world, though a few lab samples were kept.

Tim Lenton

Explaining birth

An expectant mother let her four-year-old place his hand on her tummy and feel the baby kick. The little boy was amazed and wondered aloud how the baby would ever get out. To keep it simple, the mother just said, "The doctor will help."

Her son's eyes widened: "You've got a doctor in there, too?!"

Science and Miracles

We live in a world where we can expect the sun to rise tomorrow and the milk to pour out of the bottle when we tilt it over our cereal. But for God, the properties of matter and the biological processes that we know and read about in textbooks are simply the usual ways He works. If He chooses to do something unexpected to demonstrate something about His character, His relationship with us, and His purposes, then He will.

A group of 14 UK-based science Professors wrote to the Times in 1984, saying that “We gladly accept the Virgin Birth, the gospel miracles, and the Resurrection of Christ as historical events. We know that we are representative of many other scientists who are also Christians standing in the historical tradition of the churches.” For the non-believer, I would suggest a thought experiment: if God exists, why should He be bound by the same laws of physics as us?

Professor Christine Done is an Astrophysicist at the University of Durham. In the book *True Scientists, True Faith* (Monarch, 2014) she writes: “Even when I was an atheist I used to get cross at discussions...on how all Jesus’s miracles could be physically explained. To me, once you have believed in a God, a supernatural being, then it’s obvious that supernatural stuff could happen, since any God who can make the physical universe and its laws can presumably suspend those laws in any time and way He chooses.”

There are also miracles which appear to be a case of wonderful timing. The wind blew all night, and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land, for example. The biblical writers don’t seem especially interested in distinguishing between wonders that seem to break the usual rules of how things happen and those that don’t.

Many in Jesus’ audiences were not won over by His wonders. Most of the people in the crowds who ate the food He produced out of nowhere were quite happy to turn on Him when the religious authorities decided He was dangerous. We can only make sense of something unexpected, such as an answer to prayer for healing, in the context of a growing relationship with God.

The exciting task for a Christian is to explain what this interaction looks like, and to demonstrate what ‘your kingdom come’ looks like in our communities. God works through us in words, works *and* wonders.

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz

Think happy thoughts to help your immune system

A stressed mind can put your body at risk. If you constantly think about negative things, and dwell on stressful events in your life, you could weaken your immune system and make yourself more susceptible to illness.

A recent study has found that simply thinking about negative events, even if they are only imagined, can increase the levels of inflammation in your body. This inflammation, associated with the body’s response to trauma and infection, can weaken the immune system and has been linked to a number of conditions such as heart disease, cancer and dementia.

St Paul urged a better way of coping with the threats in our lives: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Phil. 4:6)



...the good news is - I've found a way of heating the church on unwanted chip-fat!...

Spiritual Practices

January is a time for thinking about New Year Resolutions, even though we can struggle to keep them very long! However, this month is a good time to re-set our spiritual disciplines. These practices, which engage our whole person, help our spiritual growth as disciples of Christ.

If we want more of Jesus' presence in our lives, we often find ourselves thinking, *'I'll have to try harder: to pray, listen to God or read the Bible'*. Paul makes the important distinction between training and trying in the Christian life:

'Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever'. (1 Corinthians 9:24,25).

Paul insists that runners undergo strict training if they are to win the race. It would be foolish to enter a marathon without adequate training. The runner wouldn't complete the course despite trying hard! The same principles apply to the Christian life: God wants us to train by developing spiritual practices: *'to train means to arrange my life around activities I can do that will enable me, over time, to do what I cannot do by direct effort alone'* (Dallas Willard).

In his book *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster lists the following spiritual disciplines:

Inward Disciplines: Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Study

Outward Disciplines: Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service

Corporate Disciplines: Confession, Worship, Guidance, Celebration

Over the coming year we will be looking at some of these. Effective discipline is not drudgery, but delightful! Richard Foster insists that we can *'celebrate' these disciplines which can help us grow.*

Canon Paul Hardingham

The Grace of Giving

Money can be a sensitive subject in church, especially when it comes to giving. Paul describes the support given by the Macedonians to the impoverished Christians in Jerusalem as evidence of the *'grace of giving'* (2 Corinthians 8:7). They were following the example of Jesus: *'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich'* (9). How does he describe their giving?

Sacrificial giving: *'Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity'* (2). In giving, our first response can be *'How much?'* For Paul, *'rich generosity'* is always a response to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. How serious and sacrificial is our giving?

Regular giving: *'they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability'* (3). The Macedonians were thoughtful in their giving. Is our giving regular and planned, or do we simply put our loose change into the collection plate? How can we give regularly to God's work in our local church and beyond?

Willing giving: *'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'* (2 Cor 9:7). It's not often that we find ourselves laughing when putting money on the plate! Let's prayerfully review our giving (as well as our spending), and ask God to help us to respond appropriately.

God doesn't just want our money; He wants all of our lives: *'they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us'* (5). Is God the sole owner or simply a shareholder in our lives? Let's seek to *'excel in this grace of giving'*!

Canon Paul Hardingham

A Bible quiz – of sorts!

Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he married?

A. Ruthless

Q. What do they call pastors in Germany?

A. German Shepherds.

Q. Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A. Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Happy New Year

I will stop all her celebrations: her Yearly Festivals, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed festivals. - Hosea 2:11

He sounds a bit of a party pooper, old Hosea! Actually, he wanted to make a point that if God's people were not faithful to Him, then things would get really bad. God wants loyal, faithful worship.

I am not sure why we celebrate New Year. It is too soon after Christmas, although it is a good way to finish up the cooking sherry you opened in September, those orange flavoured soft-centred chocolates no-one wants, and the last mince pies. I think we would do better to go back to having New Year in March, like they did centuries ago.

We start each year with such high hopes and resolutions to drink and eat less and be kind and nice everyone. We console each other by saying that last year was tough and let us hope for a better one. Often one year is much like another. But wait a moment, Hosea goes on to talk about a change for the good. It is like a family being reconciled.

*I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.'
I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people';
and they will say, 'You are my God.'"* (Hosea 2:23)

Last year I reflected on the passing of H M Queen Elizabeth II, and looking forward and feeling that we *can* make the future better. We cannot guarantee a life without problems: bereavement, shortages and calamities, but we can, as a church, work together to pray for the Church, to lead the world back to God. To pray in our difficulties and for our leaders.
Happy New Year.

David Pickup

Thought for Food

John Paton brought Christianity to the people of the Pacific Islands. He taught them about the love of God and faith. Years later some Communists arrived and told the people they had been listening to mere fables and lies. "There is no God."

"Well, you should thank the God that you do not believe in," the Chief retorted. "For if you had arrived before John Paton, we would have eaten you!"



On the art of ringing in the New Year

The Rectory
St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

I am sure I had warned you about church bells. They are simply not to everyone's taste. And the idea of switching on your recorded bells - no matter how digitally enhanced - at midnight for an hour, in order to welcome in the New Year, may have seemed inspired at the time, but considering that most of your inner city parish is Moslem, that you are surrounded on one side by a hospital and another by a care home for the elderly, it is not too surprising that the joyful sound was not well received.

But to be fair, we too had a small misjudgement on New Year's Eve. Our bell-ringers, who practise the art of campanology, and don't use electronic equipment, have always been something of a trial. They ring with great enthusiasm for half an hour before our services each week, but then as we are singing the first hymn, they emerge from the church tower, putting on hats and coats while loudly discussing who made the error in the middle of that morning's grandsire triples.

This New Year's Eve they met in the bell tower at 11pm to have some champagne, and then a period of ringing before further refreshment became necessary. By midnight, the champagne had so refreshed them that they somewhat exceeded their accuracy, and the village heard the New Year being joyfully welcomed by a set of eight bells being rung in an entirely random order.

I still managed to drift off to sleep, only to be woken three hours later by one bell being mournfully but persistently tolled. Finally, I felt obliged to go and find

out why. I discovered Colonel Bradshaw alone in the bell tower. When the party had ended and the ringers trooped out, the Colonel had dashed back in to retrieve his hat. The others, ignorant of his absence, then locked the church and went home to their beds. That lone bell was his way of announcing his predicament.

At least I was able to reassure him that his six-hour vigil in the church tower partially made up for his absence from Mattins for the previous 12 months.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Religious Superstitions

Touching wood is supposed to bring good luck, and knocking wood comes from the Bible in Matthew 7:7 - Ask and it will be given unto you, knock and it shall be opened unto you.

Cutting your nails or hair on a Sunday is bad luck because it's the Lord's Day and you should rest.

Walking under a ladder has its roots in Christian Symbolism of the Holy Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit making a triangle with its three sides. A ladder forms a triangle against a wall so to walk under it would be to destroy the Sanctity of the Trinity and thus is unwelcome.

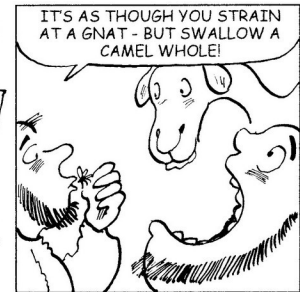
Fingers crossed is from the practise of early Christians who would greet and identify one another in secret with various signs, such as crossing their index fingers or touching thumbs.

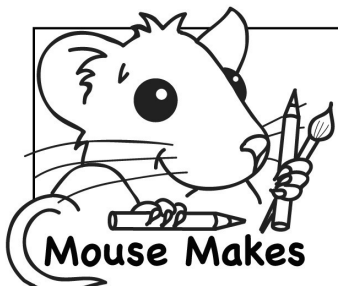
Tucking Thumbs inside a cemetery in Japan or China when a person visits one of their relatives is supposed to protect one's parents from death!

Lucky Horse Shoe is from the famous story of St Dunstan who worked as a blacksmith before becoming a saint. The story goes that the Devil rode into Dunstan's shop asking for new shoes for his horse. Dunstan recognized he was the devil, so instead of nailing the shoe to the horse he nailed one to the Devil's foot! In agony the devil agreed to never enter a house with a horse shoe above the door if Dunstan would remove the shoe from him!

Alice Sanders

"Some tough talking"





A JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

When the **Magi** (wise men) came to **Bethlehem** where had they travelled from?
The _____

Why did they make the journey?

What did they follow to get there?

A _____

What did they see?

Read *Matthew 2:1-12*



Why did **Joseph** and **Mary** travel to **Bethlehem**?

Read *Luke 2:1-4*

When **Samuel** came to **Bethlehem** who sent him? Who did he go to see?
_____ and his sons.

Who had he come to anoint as king?



Naomi and **Ruth** came to **Bethlehem** where had they travelled from?

_____ and why?

When did they arrive?

At the _____ harvest.

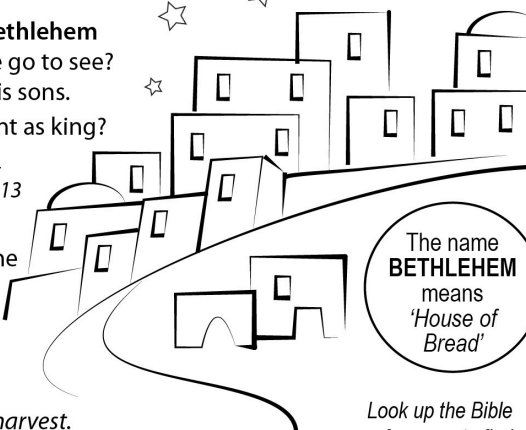
Read *Ruth 1:22*

E B A O F O O D K J E S S E S
M O A B A I J E I T J I A M E
R R M R A N O I N T O D M E A
U N J E S U S B G N U A U S S
T P B A R L E Y H A R V E S T
H G O D O S P F O O N I L I A
M A R Y B E H N Y M E D I A R
B E T H L E H E M I Y M A G I

The name **BETHLEHEM** means 'House of Bread'

Look up the Bible references to find the missing words, find them and these words below in the wordsearch

- JOURNEY
- BETHLEHEM • GOD
- JOSEPH • MARY
- JESUS • BORN
- MAGI • MESSIAH
- NAOMI • RUTH
- FOOD • HARVEST
- SAMUEL • ANOINT
- KING • BREAD



Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in *Genesis 12:1-9, 17:1-22, 18:1-15, 21:1-7*

About 6000 years ago, God told **Abram** and his wife **Sarai** to leave their home and go to a new land that He would give them

Panel 1: This Land will belong to your family, but not yet

Panel 2: and I am changing your names to **Abraham** and **Sarah**

Panel 3: You and **Sarah** will have a son, **Isaac**

Panel 4: But **Sarai** and I cannot have children

Panel 5: 'Abraham' means 'Father of many' 'Sarah' means 'Princess'

Panel 6: We are too old to have children. Ha ha ha!

Panel 7: It was noon, and everyone was resting from the heat...

Panel 8: He recognised the Lord

Panel 9: He ran to tell everyone

Panel 10: When **Abraham** saw three men coming to his tents.

Panel 11: Please stay and have something to eat.

Panel 12: Quick, we need a feast cooked for special guests

Panel 13: Sarah was in the tent, listening

Panel 14: Why did Sarah laugh?

Panel 15: I didn't laugh

Panel 16: By this time next year, you will have a son

Panel 17: At our age? Ha ha ha!

Panel 18: Yes, you did.

Panel 19: Soon afterwards...

Panel 20: Sarah and **Abraham's** baby boy was born

Panel 21: They called him '**Isaac**' which means 'laughter'

Panel 22: I'm pregnant!

Panel 23: I'm so happy, I can't stop laughing

Panel 24: Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha!

Word Search Answers

See page 13

Canterbury	Rochester
Christ Church	Salisbury
Coventry	Southwark
Durham	Southwell
Ely	St Pauls
Exeter	Truro
Gloucester	Wells
Hereford	Westminster
Lichfield	Winchester
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<https://www.saint-laurence.com>

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