

January 2024

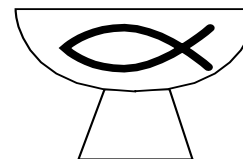
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# Upton-cum-Chalvey Parish News

**St Mary St Laurence St Peter**



**In God alone my soul quietly rests,  
for my hope comes from Him. Ps 62:5**



## 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 Scott Lamb (Team Rector)	01753 529988
Revd Linda Hillier (Associate Minister)	0208 8645728
Barry Marsden (Licensed Lay Minister)	
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Parish Churchwarden: Eddie Ijeomah	07493 304447
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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
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Verger (SL): Allan James	01753 532425
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### Clergy days off:

Revd Scott Lamb            Monday

### Magazine Editor: David Kill

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### Web-sites:

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

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

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

## The Rector Writes:

Dear Friends,

Earlier this year St Mary's took the momentous decision to buy new hymn books to replace the rather tired New English Hymnal. So, the congregation find themselves learning new music on most Sunday mornings and Malcolm and I face a bewildering range of 900 hymns when we choose the music.

A look through any contemporary hymn book reveals songs of every era and tradition of the church. There are the ancient hymns from the church fathers written to ensure that the faithful learned and sang the true faith. From later times in England there is classic poetry set to music, and of course there are the Victorian hymns that have been the basic repertoire of most churches for so long. Then alongside these are more modern offerings from a range of sources. There are songs from the Iona community where the concern is that worship be relevant and authentic in our time. The words reflect current issues like poverty and the music is often a folk tune with deep roots. The simple chants from Taizé are present, bringing a contemplative tone to corporate worship. There are songs by the St Thomas More group which show that 'catholic' doesn't mean 'old fashioned'. These are often responsorial to emphasise that the principal voice in all worship is that of the people gathered.

Through the centuries church music has evolved and changed. One clear shift which can be seen in our book occurred in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century - a move away from more conventional hymns to less formal worship songs. Over the decades of the last century people wanted more than the Victorian hymns where worshippers were Christian soldiers receiving their corporate marching orders. Couldn't Christian music be more personal and intimate? Some churches resisted this development in the name of theology or musical taste but in the end the modern songs have found a lasting place in our church life. The shift was driven not by musical decline, but by a profound and pastoral need to express our individual relationship with Jesus. Emotionally, Christians wanted to celebrate God's love warmly and joyfully.

It is still possible, though only rarely now, to hear criticism of modern songs. Perhaps we are quicker to remember that many of the tunes of the Victorian hymns we love were borrowed from the music hall and were frowned upon in their day. Another complaint sometimes heard is that these new songs won't last. This is true, just as many Victorian hymns were quietly laid aside. In truth there are many more that probably should have been and would have been but for the Victorians' penchant for hard-back hymnals. We should acknowledge that in every age some songs are not written to last. They arrive, spread and are all the rage for a time and then they pass. This is not because they are terrible, but just because they are a word for a particular time and place: a simple sign of life.

I hope that in all our churches, our music will continue to develop, drawing on the full range of resources available to us today. In Christian worship, singing is essential. "He who sings prays twice." *St Augustine of Hippo*.

Fr Scott

### DECEMBER & JANUARY SERVICES & EVENTS

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

#### December

Sun 24th	4.00pm	Christmas Eve: Parish Crib Service (collection in support of Crisis) (SL)
	11.30pm	Midnight Mass (SP)
Mon 25th	9.30am	Christmas Day Family Eucharist (SM) (No services at SL or SP)
Sun 31st	10.00am	Joint Parish Eucharist: There will be "Bring and share" refreshments and extra carols for Hogmanay! (SM) (No services at SL or SP)

#### January

Tue 2nd	1.30pm	"Mulling it Over"; Bible Study, chat & a cuppa (SL) TBC
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### NEXT MONTH'S MAGAZINE

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

Dave

## St Mary's News

It has been a real joy this week to see the church full of singing children. We welcomed Rebecca Richardson and her team from Slough Music Service lead a fun filled concert for choirs from various Slough schools and then the following afternoon Long Close visited for their annual school concert showcasing their choirs and orchestra. The church was full of children, staff and parents.

Christmas Sparkle rounded off the week with Malcolm's organ concert. Again an excellent concert and new and old friends joining the audience.

We are looking forward to the joint service on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December when we are joined by congregations from St Laurence and St Peters for worship and a bring and share lunch which hopefully will include dishes from around the world.

Jean

### "Yvonne's Art Classes"

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

### Sunday School Lesson

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama. Then she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?"

Jenny, a thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd be sick!"

## St Laurence's News

Our Gift Day contributed around £350 to church funds, less than last year, but these are hard times. Thanks to all who contributed.

The Local Management Committee will be discussing next year's budget soon. The Deanery has requested a large increase in our Parish Share payments next year, which go towards clergy costs, and this is likely to require us to dig into our reserves.. While this is possible, once the money is gone, it's gone. The FUNdraising team will be working hard, but there is a limit to what can be achieved by a few people. Can you help?

Dave



"The vicar really is taking all of January off to recuperate, then."

## St Peter's News

On 14<sup>th</sup> December we will be interviewing one candidate for the Team Vicar/School Chaplain vacancy. Please continue to pray that we may find the right person.

### The Vacancy Prayer, compiled by Barry Marsden (LLM):

*Dear Lord,  
call to our Parish and School a true shepherd and pastor,  
a servant of God, a minister of Christ, and make us, with your chosen servant, a  
parish joyful in worship and united in witness, working, nurturing, caring,  
praising, loving, to the glory of your Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

A Big Thank you to everyone who helped with our Christmas Bazaar; the sum of £382.12 was raised.

Looking ahead....

### Vestry Extension Update

We had a really constructive meeting with Libby Watts, our architect on 30<sup>th</sup> November. We have asked her to prepare some new drawings for the LMC to consider. They will combine elements of options 3 and 4 from the feasibility study. The drawings will be available for us all to see very soon and hopefully we can pull together to make this project happen. **WATCH THIS SPACE!**

Sandra

### Why?

A young couple invited some people to dinner. At the table, the mother turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I don't know what to say," the girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mummy say," the father answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said, "O Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

## Bishop introduces Bill to allow humanitarian visas for those seeking asylum

A Church of England Bishop is proposing legislation to provide a safe and legal route to the UK for those seeking asylum, as part of attempts to crack down on illegal people smuggling across the Channel in small boats.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rt Rev Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, has published a Private Members' Bill in the House of Lords which would permit an annual number of humanitarian travel visas to the UK.

The visas would allow people to safely enter the UK where there is a high chance that their asylum claim will be granted. The nationalities currently most likely to travel to the UK on small boats and have their asylum claim granted are Afghan, Syrian, Iranian, Eritrean and Sudanese.

The Bill also proposes that their asylum claim would then be considered in the UK through an accelerated process.

Under the terms of the Asylum Application (Entry to the United Kingdom) Bill, up to 10,000 asylum travel visas would be granted in the first year of its operation with subsequent limits set by the Home Secretary. Nationalities eligible to apply would be named by the Home Secretary.

Bishop Guli said: "I am pleased to bring forward this Private Members Bill on the introduction of a Humanitarian Visa Scheme, which will provide a much-needed opportunity to discuss safe routes into the UK for refugees fleeing conflict, persecution and disasters.

The Bill had its first Reading in late November, and will be timetabled for a Second Reading at a later date.

## Synod backs trial of special services asking for God's blessing for same-sex couples

Special services of prayer and dedication asking for God's blessing for same-sex couples will soon be introduced in the Church of England on a trial basis, following a vote at the last General Synod.

Synod voted in favour of a motion containing an amendment tabled by the Bishop of Oxford, Steven Croft, to bring forward the standalone services based around texts known as *Prayers of Love and Faith*.

*Prayers of Love and Faith* (PLF) is a collection of prayers, readings and other resources for praying with and for a same-sex couple who love one

another and who wish to give thanks for and mark that love in faith before God.

The House of Bishops had already recently agreed that structures for special standalone services based on the PLF could also go forward to be formally authorised under canon law, under a process expected to take about two years.

However, the General Synod motion means that the services could be authorised for use sooner, but temporarily, under separate legislation. That would enable the first standalone Prayers of Love and Faith services to take place in churches at the same time as the process of seeking permanent authorisation is under way.

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, and the Bishop of Winchester, Philip Mounstephen, who have been co-chairing the Living in Love and Faith steering group, said: “During more than nine hours of debate we have heard very clearly what has been said, with passion and deep conviction, from a whole range of different perspectives.

“The truth is – and as we have seen again today – that the Church of England is not of one mind on questions of sexuality and marriage.

“Synod has agreed – narrowly – that standalone church services for same-sex couples should be authorised under Canon law on a trial basis.

“The House of Bishops will now consider how best to implement that call as we also commend the Prayers of Love and Faith for use in worship.

“Yet we must also reflect on all that we have heard from Synod – from across the whole spectrum - and redouble our efforts to find a space where we can live with our current disagreements because we believe that is what God is calling us to do.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: “We have heard loud and clear, through an extensive debate over two days, the depth of feeling across the Church on these hugely important questions.

“In particular, we have heard deep and heartfelt concern about the way the bishops have sought to implement Synod’s earlier decision on the Prayers of Love and Faith.”

“So while this motion was passed, narrowly, we do not underestimate the depth of feeling and will reflect on all that we have heard as we seek to move forward together.”

## Having a religious faith makes you happier

People who have a religious faith are generally happier and more resilient than atheists and other non-religious people.

That is the finding of a new study, *Keep the Faith: Mental health in the UK*, which has been recently published by the Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life (IIFL).

The think tank was set up to study the part that religious faith plays in the UK. It was the first to focus exclusively on the link between people’s faith and their mental health in the UK.

The survey included Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus, with nearly 70 per cent of them reporting a good psychological well-being, as compared with only 49 per cent of atheists.

As for happiness, just nine per cent of people with a faith said they were unhappy, as compared with nearly a quarter of atheists.

It was also found that believers feel they have more self-control, more life satisfaction, and more optimism about their future. Only nine percent of believers were pessimistic, as opposed to 30 percent of non-believers.

But it seems that practising your faith is important. Even among believers, those who regularly attend religious services are far more likely to report positive psychological wellbeing, when compared to those who rarely or never attend such services.

Overall, the IILF has concluded that the rapid secularisation of the UK has left many people with lowered resilience and lowered wellbeing.

As the author of the study, Dr Rakib Ehsan, says: “while the fast-paced secularisation of the British has been cited as a form of social progress, this appears not to be the case from the perspective of mental health.”

### The sermon

A little girl became restless as the preacher’s sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, “Mummy, if we give him some money now, will he let us go?”

## St Wendreda's Church

St Wendreda's church in the town called March is the only known church dedicated to the Anglo-Saxon princess who lived in March village in the 7th century. She was the daughter of an East Anglian Christian king. She became a nun and founded a Benedictine nunnery in that town near Ely. She was famous for healing sick people and animals. When she died her body was brought to Ely cathedral, but later was brought back to March, but no one knows where she was buried. The church is an unusual one because it has 118 angels separately carved from oak wood that are on the ceiling "floating" and "looking" down on the congregation. The largest angel is half the size of a person and their wings are stretched out to the ceiling. This is the finest timber roof in England. The building is a mixture of 13th, 14th, 16th and 19th century styles and is very beautiful indeed.

Alice Sanders



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



## 6<sup>th</sup> January: Gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus

Epiphany is also known as 'Twelfth Night', or the last night of the Christmas festival. According to the song, it is also the day when that over-enthusiastic 'true love' of yours dumps no less than 78 presents on your doorstep, among them a dozen leaping lords of the realm and a final partridge – to go with the 11 you have already been given.

In many parts of the world, 6<sup>th</sup> January is celebrated as Christmas Day. As we Western Christians are packing away our tree, the Greek Orthodox world and Catholic Spain are giving presents and celebrating the wise men, or magi. For what better time to give presents to each other, than on the day the wise men presented gold, frankincense and myrrh to the infant Jesus?

What do we make of these presents? Gold is for kingship, proclaiming a royal child. Frankincense carries a feeling of worship about it: it was used in the temple worship and indicated access to the presence of God. Frankincense is thus for worship and incarnation.

The third gift, myrrh, finds its place at Calvary. After the crucifixion, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea prepared Jesus' body for burial, using myrrh as an embalming fluid. Thus, when the wise men visit the baby Jesus, the shadow of the cross already falls across the crib. But myrrh is also symbolic of love, so you could say that the third gift is about adoration as well as death. And Christ's death on the cross is for love of the Church, His bride.

As for the magi, they were not Jewish grandees, but foreign Gentiles. And so it was clear, from as early as the manger in Bethlehem that Jesus was not just the Messiah for the Jews, but the Saviour of the whole world.

## A Scientist's Letter to Christians: Have power, love and self-control

It has now been four years since the pandemic began to seep into Western consciousness. Dr Francis Collins, a leader in medical research in the US, spoke early in the pandemic about his faith and his hope in God to help us through that time. He expressed the grief that so many were experiencing, and described an intensity of scientific work he had never experienced before. He also shared his conviction that he was in exactly the right place back in 2020 - serving God with science. Throughout the pandemic, he held on tight to the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 1:7, 'for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.'

### Power

In 2 Timothy the apostle Paul encourages his friend to 'fan into flame the gift of God' that is in him. I am thankful that scientists like Francis used their own particular talents to understand this virus, and to help prevent or treat infection. The things they discovered are not just useful, but at times also display the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

### Love

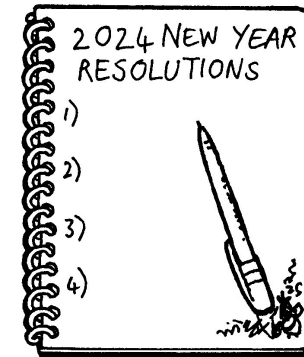
A scientist shows their love for God, for people and for the rest of creation through their work in the lab. One scientist described his experiences to me: "I study God's fingerprints in His creation to learn more of Him and the world He placed us in and to learn how we should take care of it and each other...I pray for inspiration and insight into how His creation works...and that He provides the opportunities to give the glory to Him."

### Self-Control

It is largely our own and others' selfish actions that can turn one animal's friendly virus into our own species' personal nightmare. Thankfully Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection are the solution to evil. Our ultimate and certain hope is that one day all Creation will be renewed. We can also have hope that God is with us in our suffering. When we respond in positive ways to painful events, that is evidence that Jesus is alive and working in our lives.

Science will not solve all our problems, but with God's help and wisdom we can use the tools of science to serve Him and love others.

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz



## New Year Resolutions

Last year (2023) 30 million people in the UK made New Year resolutions, with health (28%), money (27%), family (24%) and self-improvement (21%) topping the charts for the most common resolutions. However, surveys suggest that most people lasted seven weeks before giving them up and 21% only lasted for a month before giving up.

What resolutions can we make that will last beyond January? At the start of a new year, let's remember Paul's words: '*I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings*' (Philippians 3:10). Like Paul, our resolution should be to know Christ deeper in this coming year.

*'But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.'* (Phil 3:13,14). Paul sees following Christ like an athlete running a race in the stadium. As any good runner, we mustn't look back. We cannot live on past successes, get bogged down by past sins and failures, or be bitter over past wrongs we've done, or had done to us!

An athlete strains every muscle to win the race. Like Paul, let's be single-minded in making Jesus our focus during the coming year in everything we do. What practical steps are needed if we are to go deeper in our prayer life and Bible reading? How can we more effectively see Christ working in our workplace and career, or family and children?

In the film *Chariots of Fire*, Eric Liddell says: '*I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run, I feel His pleasure.*' In this New Year, let's find our pleasure in the pursuit of knowing Christ better!

Canon Paul Hardingham

## Reflecting Faith: God's Acre

I thought we'd spend a few months at the start of this New Year considering the outside of a church building, and the gardens around it.

For many churches this will include a churchyard, though not necessarily. If your church does stand in a churchyard, then it may be what is known as a 'closed' one, meaning that burials and interments no longer take place other than within an existing family grave. An 'open' churchyard is one where burials and interments are still able to take place.

The maintenance for open churchyards is the responsibility of the church, whilst once closed (which, for Church of England churches, has to be agreed by Parliament) the maintenance is passed to the local or parish civil council. These days, with the many financial cutbacks, Councils often try to refuse to take on a churchyard. But as it is a statutory obligation, they have no choice, and many will simply reduce the number of grass-cutting sessions to fit their slimmed budget.

Churchyards have not always looked as they do today, with memorial stones of varying shapes and sizes. Originally, they were simply left grassed and in towns this became one of the few green areas. People were buried there without any permanent marker being placed, nor any other official record of placement kept. The thinking was that their life here on earth had ended and the person was now with God in heaven. Only those people in 'God's kingdom' would be allowed to be buried in the consecrated grounds, so anyone who had taken their own life, or unbaptised babies, would not be allowed.

Church buildings are usually built facing east - the place of the rising sun - and the people's entrance is on the south wall. This gives access to the churchyard from the south, and in European countries that means your first experience of entering the churchyard and the building is on its sunny side.

It was common practise to bury to the south of the church, as this was the lighter and warmer side. The richer and more influential folk would request to go as near to the altar - the Holy of Holies - as possible; even if that was outside the building itself. Over the course of time folk wanted - and richer folk could afford - a marker for where their loved one lay. This idea of having a permanent marker reflected the attitudes at the time, of visiting the place of rest specifically marked. Not just to know where to visit and even bring a picnic for the family on a good weather day, especially in working busy town areas; but also, to recognise the importance of their loved one's life.

Revd Dr Jo White



## On how to run your Diary for 2024

The Rectory  
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

So, you have just attended a course on 'Diary Management', to get you prepared for another year. If you had visited me, I could have told you all you need to know in half the time. Allow me to provide you with useful information which was probably not provided in your conference hand-outs.

First, buy the smallest diary you can find. Large blank pages only encourage you to fill them with too many appointments; the smaller the page, the easier it can be made to appear that your days are fully booked.

Second, make sure that it is of a size that will conveniently fit into any pocket. When dates are being arranged for subsequent meetings, you can theatrically start going through jacket, trouser and overcoat pockets. By the time you discover it was in your briefcase all along, all the dates will have been fixed and no one will notice you never got any of them.

Third, adopt your own private code for bookings. This means that any parishioner looking over your shoulder and seeing '1.30pm PLS' or '7.30pm WTD' will assume you are attending important church meetings. The fact that they mean 'Post Lunch Sleep' and 'Walk The Dog' will be known to you alone - although do have alternative possibilities for your acronyms should you ever be challenged. My congregation know I am assiduous in attending the 'Pauline Letters Seminars' and my membership of the 'World Theology Directorate' is of many years standing.

Fourth, record everything in pencil so that once you return home, you can rub most of it out and can then deny you knew anything about those meetings you



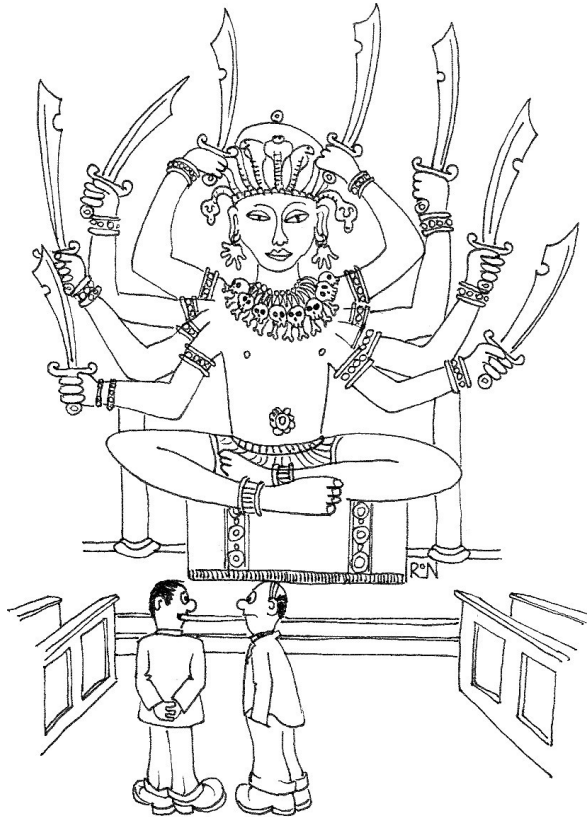
were supposed to attend – and to prove it, you can show the blank page in your diary.

Fifth, put someone else's address inside your diary. Should you ever have to resort to the ultimate act and need to lose it, you do not want some Good Samaritan returning it to you from the churchyard compost heap.

So, you see, your day of flip charts and group discussions were quite wasted – and I would gladly have presented my course for half their price.

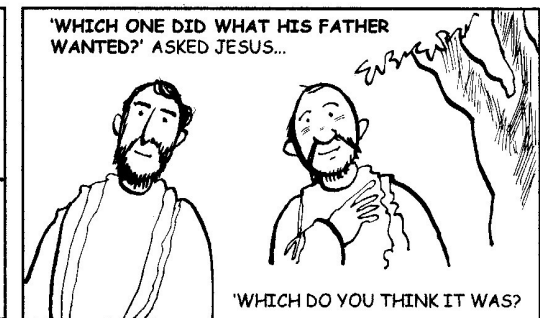
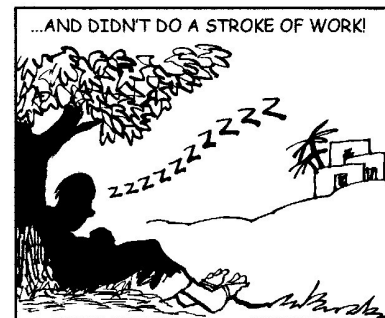
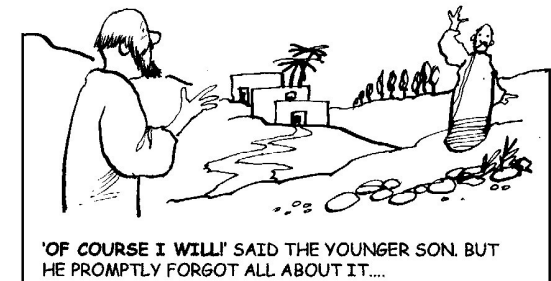
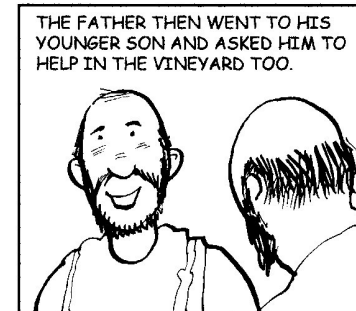
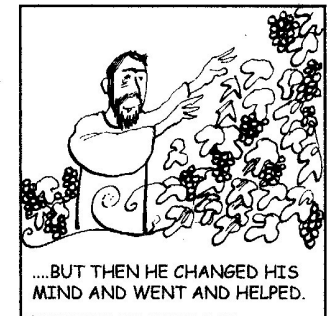
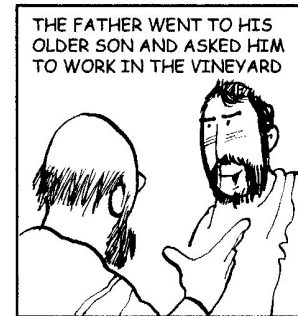
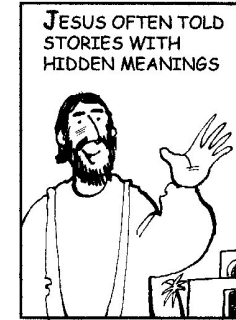
Your loving uncle,

Eustace

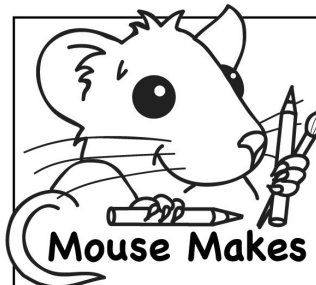


"Strictly speaking", said the Archdeacon  
"You should have applied for a faculty"

## The tale of the Two Sons



# CHILDREN'S PAGE



**MOUSE MAKES**

**EPIPHANY** is the time in the Church year that we remember when the 'wise men' or 'Magi' followed a star that led them to the Christ child Jesus. They bowed down, worshipped him and left *three* special gifts.

Where was Jesus born?  
-----  
Luke 2:1

What three gifts did the wise men give Jesus?  
-----

Who was the king?  
----- and -----  
Luke 2:11

Where did the wise men come from?  
the -----  
Luke 2:1

How were the wise men warned not to return to Herod?  
In a -----  
Luke 2:12

What had the wise men seen?  
a -----  
Luke 2:2

**W** H A C H R I S T H R G  
**S** E E E O S J C H U N O  
**Y** P L A U H R U L E R L  
**G** H I S S I T H E R O D  
**I** E M T E P I P H A N Y  
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 GIFTS • EPIPHANY

Jan24 © deborah noble @parishpump

How many other words can you make from the letters in EPIPHANY?

# Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in Exodus chapter 2 verses 1 to 12

In Egypt the Hebrew people flourished so well that the new Pharaoh grew scared and ordered all their new-born boys to be killed.

Moses' mother hid him when he was born, but he grew too big.

She made a basket from reeds for him and put it in the grass by the river Nile.

She told Moses' sister Miriam to keep watch.

Pharaoh's daughter found Moses.

Shall I get someone to look after the baby?

So Miriam got her mother.

The princess adopted Moses as her son.

When Moses was grown up he went to see where his people worked as slaves.

Perhaps I will be the one to save my people.

Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave.

Moses checked no-one was looking and...

He hid the body in the sand.

Work harder!

..killed the Egyptian.

No-one will know it was me!

## When the bad news on smoking first broke

It was only 60 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1964, that the US Surgeon General published a report that would begin to change medical history in the West. For it concluded that cigarette smoking was very dangerous - causing lung cancer and chronic bronchitis.

This was first official US government report on the health issues of smoking, and many more were to follow. The National Library of Medicine in the USA now states that, worldwide, lung cancer kills more than one million people each year, and that:

“It is estimated that cigarette smoking explains almost 90% of lung cancer risk in men and 70 to 80% in women...”

Compared with non-smokers, smokers have as much as a 30-fold increased risk of developing cancer. And no wonder: tobacco smoke contains more than 60 different toxic substances which are known to be carcinogenic (cancer-producing).

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**24 Hour Service**



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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.  
6.00pm 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: 11.00am 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>