

January 2021

30p

Upton-cum-Chalvey Parish News

St Mary St Laurence St Peter



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Parish Crib Service, led by Revd Linda (SL)
11.30pm Midnight Mass (SM & SP)

Christmas Day 9.30am Eucharist (SM)
10.00am All-age Celebration (SL)
11.00am Eucharist (SP)

SERVICES & EVENTS

As a result of restrictions put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic, the weekly pattern of worship for the time being is:

Sunday:

9.30am: Said mass and sermon at St Mary's
9.30am: Said mass and sermon at St Peter's
11.00am: Said mass and sermon at St Laurence's

Tuesday:

10.00am: Said mass at St Mary's

Wednesday:

9.30am Said mass at St Peter's
12.30pm: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St Mary's

Thursday:

10.00am: Said mass at St Laurence's

This will be the worship pattern for the foreseeable future. Worshippers are asked to sign into the churches, to observe the one-way system in place in each church, to observe social distancing, and to follow directions given for their own safety.

Communion will be given in one kind only. There will be no collection, but plates/boxes will be available to make a donation. There will be no singing, but there may be some music.

Fr Alistair Writes:

At the time of going to press, in Advent, we are anticipating Christ-mas, but, in the immortal words of Mr Spock, “not as we know it.”*

In particular, there will be no singing in church. I am still hoping that we can have carols in Herschel Park (it has gone to the “silver group” at SBC for risk assessment!), but that will be the limit of it. We have already had harvest without ploughing the field and scattering, and All Saints without “For all the saints” and are going through Advent without “O come O come Emmanuel.” It is all very odd.

We cannot sing our Christmas hymns in church, but we can read them. This is my suggestion. Indeed, so familiar are some of these hymns, that we fail to notice what they are saying. But many of them are packed with meaning of the mystery we celebrate at Christmas-tide.

“God of God, light of light... very God, begotten not created” are, you might think at first sight, words from a rather old fashioned version of the creed,** but are actually from “O Come all ye faithful”. There is a marvellous verse which has never made it into English translation, but we may add: “Father eternal, Thine eternal splendour, Now veiled in flesh our eyes shall see: God as an infant, swaddling clothes about him...” Here, in our hymn, we have the central message of Christmas. Otherwise we might read “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see...” And the title “Sun of righteousness” in the third verse of “Hark the herald” leads us back to the Old Testament, to Malachi, with the statement that “But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.”

Of course, you aren't limited to reading them; you can sing them at home! Mrs Stewart is already getting started, though I will be buying a set of ear-plugs as a Christmas present to myself. But whether you sing them, or read them, consider the message: God and sinners reconciled.

*Someone will no doubt point out that Spock never said this. He did, but didn't mention Jim!

**Indeed, “Once in royal David's city” was one of a series of poems meant to explain the creed to children. We can still read it as that.



Epiphany for today

This month we celebrate Epiphany, when we remember the Magi from the East who followed a star to find the baby Jesus: ‘*Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?*’ (Matthew 2:1).

At the start of a New Year, amid the uncertainty of the pandemic, are we asking the same question? The gifts they offered show us how we can find Him in the uncertainty of the coming year: ‘*they bowed down and worshipped Him...and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.*’ (2:11).

The *gift of gold* reflects that the Magi saw in the baby a king, destined to rule over us all. In this coming year we need to remember that Jesus is on the throne, the seat of power and authority in the whole universe. Will we crown Him king of our lives and dedicate all that we are and do to Him?

The *gift of frankincense* reflects that the visitors saw not just an earthly king, but God in human flesh. Incense symbolises the prayers of God’s people and so this gift reminds us that God is worthy of our worship and prayer. Will we offer our praise and prayer, as we seek God to guide us through the uncertainties of this time?

The *gift of myrrh* reflects that these astrologers saw beyond the baby’s birth and life, to His death which would secure life for all. Jesus was offered myrrh on the cross and was a spice used in His tomb. As we face the sufferings of this New Year, we can be confident that Jesus knows and understands our experience. Are we ready to trust Him?

‘*Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and Sacrifice! Heav’n sings Hallelujah: Hallelujah the earth replies.*’ (‘We Three Kings’).

Canon Paul Hardingham

Where do we go from here?

Perhaps this was a question the Wise Men asked after seeing the infant Jesus. They had come from a distant land to Jerusalem. They had followed a star and expected to see a royal child. Now in Bethlehem, they saw things differently. No doubt, Mary and Joseph shared with these men their recent experiences and knew God was with them. Now the Magi had to have eyes of faith to recognise that this child was God in the flesh.

On 6th January many churches will celebrate Epiphany. On this day we remember the Eastern Men bringing their gifts to Jesus. The word 'epiphany' describes their 'revelation' or 'insight' that this was no ordinary baby. Who could they tell? Not King Herod. They had a dream warning them to return home a different way.

Their return to familiar surroundings was going to be different. They couldn't be silent about what they had experienced. Their lives were now changed. On returning home they faced new circumstances and challenges.

Doesn't this sound a bit familiar to us today? The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all of us in one way or another. Where do we go from here? We have celebrated our Lord's birth, but now we are returning to our previous activities. The festive break is over, and we are returning to changed, very difficult circumstances.

We go into a New Year that is so different from this time last year. While we might be downcast with all the upsets around us, there is one thing that has not changed.

It is almighty God! He is our rock. We can look to Him in this world of confusion and uncertainty. Perhaps, from now on, we shall be worshipping and serving Him in different ways. So, with the challenges that lie ahead, let's continually seek His guidance.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding....and He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Lester Amann

NEXT MONTH'S MAGAZINE

Please let me have articles for the February 2021 issue by **Sunday 17th January** 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.

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 vergers 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

We must become a ‘simpler, humbler, bolder Church’ - Archbishops

The momentous events of 2020 will have a “profound effect” on the future of the Church of England and our wider society, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have said.

In a recent joint address to the General Synod, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell said the Church of England must adapt and put its trust in God to become a “simpler, humbler, bolder Church.”

The archbishops’ comments came as they addressed the first online sitting of the General Synod following a legal change to enable it to meet remotely amid the coronavirus restrictions.

They outlined how the coronavirus pandemic and its economic fallout are providing the backdrop to huge social changes - here and around the world.

They also singled out how the Black Lives Matter movement and the publication of the IICSA report on abuse had exposed the Church’s own failings and the need to change.

Archbishop Justin told Synod: “2020 will be a year that registers in memory and in history. It can be compared with 1929, with 1914, with 1989.

“We are aware that this is a year in which huge changes are happening in our society and consequently in the Church.

“For let us be clear, there is no possibility of changes in society failing to have a profound effect on the shape, calling and experience of mission in the Church.”

Outlining the dramatic events of 2020, he added: “These crises are not signs of the absence of God but calls to recognise the presence of the kingdom and to act in faith and courage, simplifying our life focusing on Jesus Christ, looking outwards to the needy and renewing in our cells our call to wash feet, to serve our society and to be the Church *for* England.”

Archbishop Stephen went on to outline the work of groups set up to discern how the Church of England might respond and change in light of the recent challenges.

He told Synod: “If we put our trust in God, and if we learn to love one another, then I believe we can become a simpler, humbler, bolder Church, better able to live and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Visitor and worshipper numbers to England’s cathedrals grew prior to lockdown

England’s cathedrals continue to play a huge role in the worship, heritage, and civic life of the country according to the latest figures from the Church of England.

In 2019, 1.3 million people attended services at cathedrals across the country and England’s cathedrals also attracted nearly 10 million visitors a year.

In 2019, a weekly total of 37,300 people attended cathedral services - an increase of 13 per cent from 2009. While Sunday attendance remained stable, attendance at midweek services grew by 35 per cent over the decade.

Christmas and Advent service attendance also rose over the same 10-year period, with 2019 showing record high reported numbers for advent events including carol services, concerts and nativity plays.

In all, cathedrals reported a total of 9.7 million visitors in 2019, just below the highest-ever figure of 10.1 million reported in 2018.

Much-needed support grants totalling £17.5 million have so far been received from Government, alongside additional contributions from Charities and the Church Commissioners in 2020. These have helped cathedrals to cope with the shortfall in visitor numbers caused by measures to minimise the spread of Covid-19.

Since Covid-19, cathedrals have found new ways to engage worshippers. Every cathedral able to re-open to the public has achieved the Visit Britain’ standard and consumer charter mark ‘Good to Go’ which means visitors can be confident that cathedrals are taking all the necessary steps to help ensure people’s safety.

Meanwhile, across the Church of England, more than 17,000 online services and events have been provided following the introduction of the lockdown and restrictions on public worship in March.

Left behind

Shortly after the funeral of a local wealthy man, two friends were discussing the Will. “How much did he leave?” wondered one. His friend thought a moment, and ventured: “Well, I suppose, everything!”

Time to prepare for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: 18th – 25th January

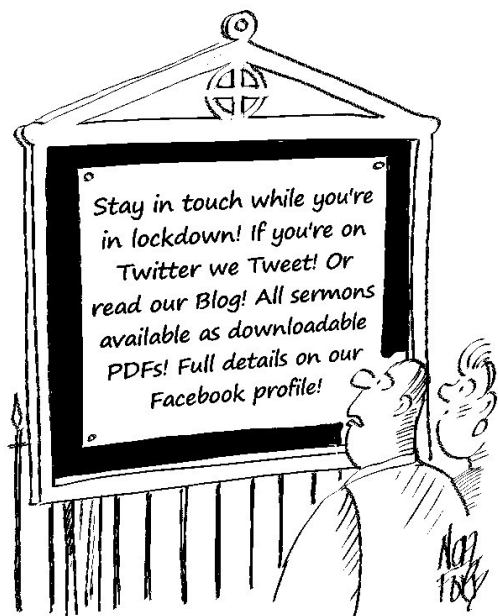
This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme, "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit", is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community's vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family.

For 2021, the sisters are inviting churches across the world to enter into their tradition of prayer and silence that is rooted in the ancient traditions of the Church catholic.

Today the community has 50 sisters, spanning different generations, Church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion.

Each year Christian Aid provides the 'Week of Prayer for Christian Unity' with 'Go and Do' action points for each of the daily reflections – linking into the important work of Christian Aid in the relief of poverty and advocacy of justice.

More at: <https://ctbi.org.uk/go-and-do-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2021/>



"...and we used to grumble about not understanding archaic church language!"

Children

Our children record feelings long before they record facts and rules. They are powerfully attracted by non-verbal communications. Long before they understand words, they can interpret the tone of our voice, or a touch to their bodies.

Children live in the world of senses. They smell flowers and stomp in mud puddles. Children are innately curious and receptive, trustful, spontaneous and non-productively playful. While destined to be independent, they are not threatened by dependence.

Children do not fret about the past or fear the future unless they are taught to do so. They live in the joy of the present. Children live in the world of dreams and visions; they take chances and create. Unless we teach them otherwise, they believe they can paint, act, dance, sing and significantly, they enjoy doing so. Children openly expose their emotions and learn from experience. They find miracles believable and desirable.

Now none of this is intended to give the impression that childhood is without pain or hurt or suffering. But their spiritual awareness is first perceived in the world children know best. Children, therefore, have as much to offer adults as adults have to offer children – perhaps more.

John Westerhoff

I found this while clearing out my school bag and thought it shows the importance children play in our churches and that we should continue to cherish, nurture and learn from them.

Lynda Bussley

14th January: St Felix of Nola, saved by a spider's web

What do you do when you find a large spider web in your house? If you ever feel some sympathy for the spider who went to all that trouble, then Felix is a good patron saint for you. He was saved by such a spider, spinning such a web.

Felix had been born to a Syrian soldier who had retired to Nola, near Naples in Italy. When his father died, Felix gave his property and money away, and was ordained by St Maximus of Nola. Felix went to work with him, ministering to the people of Nola.

Then Decius, the Roman Emperor, began another persecution of the Christians. Maximus escaped to the mountains, but Felix was arrested and badly beaten. Legend has it that he was rescued – and freed from captivity - by an angel. In any case, Felix followed Maximus and found him sick and in need. Felix hid him in an empty building, and prayed for God’s protection. The soldiers were out looking for the two men, but then a spider arrived at the door of the building where they were hiding. The spider spun such a magnificent web across the door that it fooled the imperial soldiers into thinking the building was long abandoned. The spider saved Maximus and Felix that day, and the two men stayed on the run until Decius’ death in 251.

After that, the people of Nola wanted Felix as their bishop. But Felix refused, and returned to farming his lands; giving the poor most of the food that he managed to grow. Though Felix went on to die naturally, he was still thought of as a martyr, or ‘witness’ because he had suffered torture, imprisonment and privations in the persecution. Felix did not mind: he served a King who was not of this world, and he looked forward to a better future life with that King in a new heaven and a new earth.



Ryan was delighted with the cloak, but not so sure about the face mask

Five things I’d like to see in 2021

I keep hearing people say that 2020 was a ‘year like no other.’ Friends have been writing a special journal recording the year, so they can pass it on to their grandchildren. Others just want to leave 2020 behind and look to a happier new year. Both reactions are completely understandable. But I’ve been looking ahead to 2021 and thinking about the five top things I’d like to see in the year ahead. I wonder if you’ll agree with them or not? Maybe you could put together your own list.

Let’s make sure the vaccines are distributed fairly and speedily. Those who need the vaccine most urgently should receive it first, with a fair system for ensuring everyone else can be vaccinated quickly and efficiently. We need to ensure that everyone receives the vaccine wherever they live in the world – from the poorest to the richest. Especially, in those parts of the world where there is war, and people are living as refugees.

Let’s learn the lessons of the pandemic – not just going back to how life was, as quickly as possible. Many of us learnt to appreciate our family so very much more – especially when we could not be with them for months on end. We learnt lessons about how important our neighbours and local businesses are, how precious our NHS, medical researchers, care providers and other frontline workers are. Let’s not forget them.

Let’s value nature. Those of us with gardens, or with parks or fields nearby, have been massively blessed. I’ve learnt to pay attention to birdsong, to the changing colours of the trees, and how unexpected plants have taken root in our garden. Pets have played a major part in helping us endure the lockdowns, especially for people who live alone. May we all learn to value the natural world on our doorsteps in the year ahead and beyond.

Let’s bless technology. Without the use of the internet, meeting people ‘online’ or keeping in touch via email, Facetime or other technologies, 2020 would have been a whole lot tougher. Churches across the country moved their Sunday services online, and soon adapted to a different way of worshipping – not the same, but still helping us to worship together and see familiar faces. Let’s continue to give thanks for the science that made that contact possible in 2020.

Let’s value our church family. Imperfect we may be, like any family. But the months without being physically able to worship with them, share communion with them, sing alongside them have been hard. I value so much how many churches have risen to the pandemic challenge and sought to serve their communities in all kinds of ways. May we take all this experience into 2021 and build upon it.

Whatever 2021 holds for you and all those that you love, I pray that you may know the love of God in your life, and be able to pass it on to others.

Revd Peter Crumpler

A Scientist's Letter to the UK Church: Power, love and self-control

I want to share a message of hope that Christians in the sciences around the world can bring to the church. Dr Francis Collins, who leads medical research in the US, spoke earlier in the pandemic about his faith and his hope in God to help us through this time. He expressed the grief that so many are experiencing, described an intensity of scientific work he has never experienced before, and shared his conviction that he is in exactly the right place just now - serving God with science. He is holding 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 are using their own particular talents to understand this virus, and to help prevent or treat infection. The things they discover are not just useful, but at times they can 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 for today, 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. Let's pray together for the strength to cope, and for an end to this pandemic.

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz



On how to deal with your church's correspondence

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

You may have had several years of intensive training on biblical interpretation, preaching and church history, but that doesn't cover the really important matters in parish life: how to evade disgruntled parishioners, run a brisk Summer Fete and, in your case at present, deal with correspondence, either by letter or email.

My regular practice, which I recommend to you as a New Year Resolution, is to read all the letters/emails you receive and then discard them. If the matter is truly important, you will receive a second message, to which you respond; more likely, the sender will either have forgotten all about his first letter/email after the second month or will write to some other cleric instead. In either case, you will be saved a great deal of trouble.

You only need two folders for your filing system, either for post or emails. The first is for complaints; they are to be filed and ignored, no matter how many duplicates you are sent. Should you be confronted personally, you simply say that the matter has been passed on to the bishop. Those truly dogged complainants who pursue the matter will eventually receive an episcopal reply saying he knows nothing of the matter, for which you then blame the postal system/spammed email. After letters and emails have ricocheted round the country for many months, the person complaining will either have lost energy to pursue the matter, or the will to live.

The second file receives all other correspondence/emails chronologically. The earliest letters and emails will be at the bottom of the pile and the most recent on the top. In my experience, the postal file only needs attention when it reaches a height of about two feet and becomes unstable. The practice then is to discard the lower six inches and allow it to continue its steady growth. If the stack is kept in the church vestry, then mice usually attend to the papers on the bottom of the pile.

Sadly, your own church, with its electronic systems for filing, sorting and retrieving correspondence and with your parish secretaries, removes all of these blessings at a stroke. You have therefore no excuses for not dealing instantly with every note that comes your way. As ye sow, so shall ye reap.

May I also remind you that not even St Paul, that unflagging letter-writer, ever ended one of his letters with a request for a prompt reply. Need I say more?

Your loving uncle,

Eustace



...Rodney, I've been meaning to have a word with you about your carbon footprint!

Introducing 'The Wellbeing Journey'

Lockdown has led to the death of many of the hopes people have had...”but from a Christian point of view, there’s a deeper hope,” says Roger Bretherton, a clinical psychologist and university lecturer, who is one of the experts contributing to ‘The Wellbeing Journey’.

This eight-part video series produced by HOPE Together and KingsGate Community Church, Peterborough, focuses on different aspects of wellbeing. The videos are presented by Simon Thomas (ex Sky Sports/ Blue Peter) and Joanna Abeyinka (CBeebies), with contributions from specialists like Roger Bretherton, bringing expertise from different fields alongside Bible teaching.

As well as the videos there is a book published by Waverley Abbey Resources, ‘God’s Plan for Your Wellbeing’ by Dave Smith, which offers a 50-day devotional – fuel for the journey.

Launching in January 2021, ‘The Wellbeing Journey’ aims to be accessible to people who would not yet call themselves Christians, as well as regular church-goers. Roger described it as ‘bite-sized’, meaning people can access different chunks of it as appropriate. “It’s beautifully biblical,” he said. “It integrates lots of spiritual material into the psychology. I love it as a resource and it’s just my absolute delight to advise on it!”

Roger is convinced of the role of the church in supporting people’s wellbeing. “Whole services in the NHS keep people out of hospital by being their friend, helping them decorate, making sure they eat, making sure they get their benefits – so all those things we naturally do as Christians, the projects that many churches run, they do an enormous job of helping people with their wellbeing.”

Roy Crowne, HOPE Together’s executive director said, “At this time when so many in our national are facing added psychological pressure, churches are in an ideal place to offer ‘The Wellbeing Journey’ to invite more people to experience the life to the full that Jesus offers.”

Find out more at www.wellbeingjourney.org

Not comfortable

The vicar was praying for the sick and said: “We must remember Mrs Goodwin in our prayers. She recently had all her teeth taken out and a new gas stove put in.”

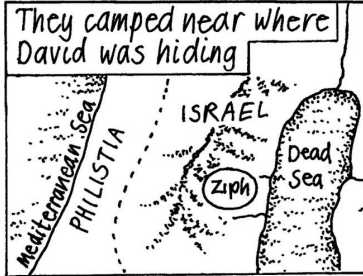
Bible Bite

A short story from the Bible

It can be read in the Bible in
1 Samuel chapter 26 - 27:1

When King Saul wasn't fighting the Philistines to stop them invading Israel he was still trying to hunt down David.

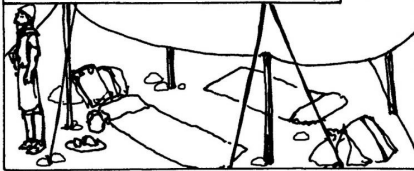
People came to tell King Saul where David and his men were hiding. Saul took 3000 of his best soldiers and went to look for David...



When David heard that Saul was near, he crept up to the camp.



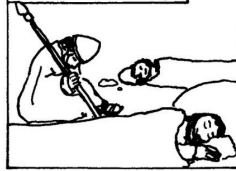
He saw that Saul and his army commander Abner were sleeping in the middle of the camp.



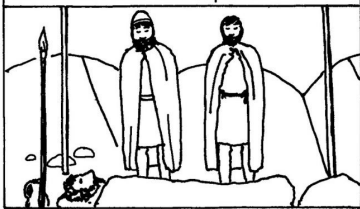
Who will come with me into the camp?



That night God made all the camp sleep soundly.



David and Abishai reached the centre and found Saul



This chance is from God! I'll kill him!



They took Saul's spear and water jar and crept out of the camp.



When they had got far enough away, David shouted

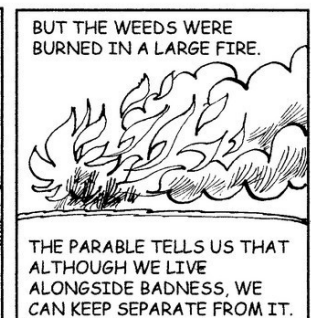
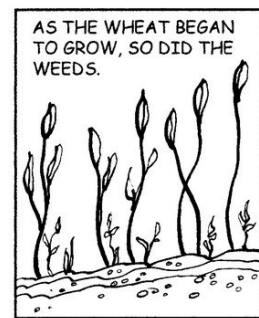
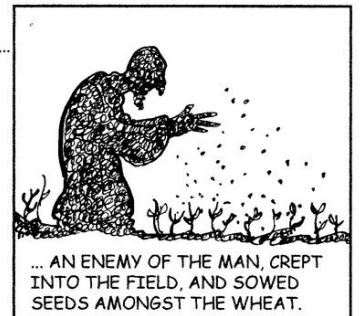
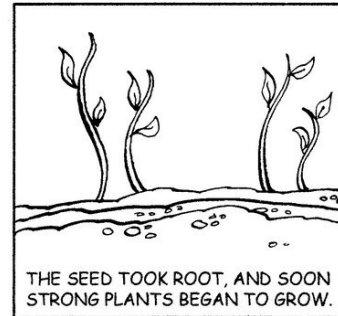


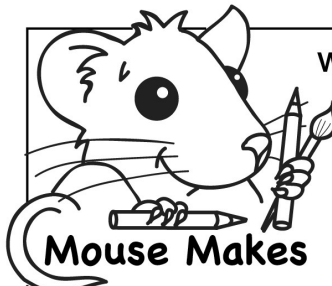
King Saul heard David and shouted back



But David knew that Saul would try again to kill him, so he left Israel and went to Philistia.

The tale of the Wheat and the Weeds





Mouse Makes

What happened after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem?

READ Matthew 2:1-12

Who came from the East? ★

★ Why had they come? ★

What were they following? ★

Who was alarmed by their arrival?

Who had the prophet written about?

Where were they then sent? ★

What were they to look for? ★
..... and why?

Where did the star lead them?

Who did they see? What did they do?

How were they warned to go home another way?

READ Matthew 2:13-23

Who appeared to Joseph?

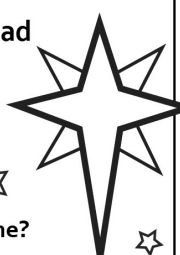

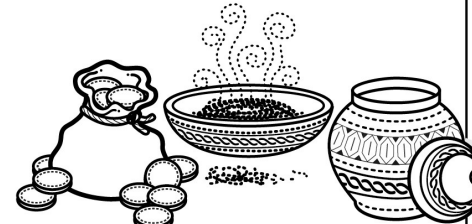
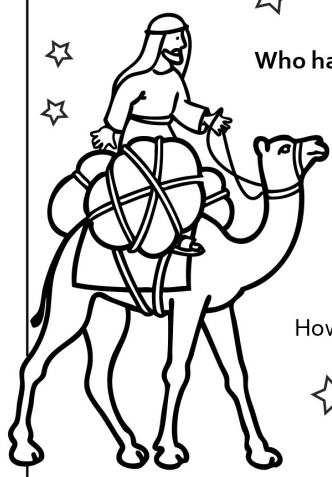
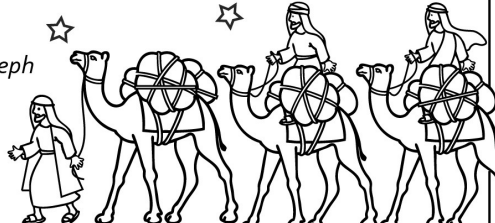
What was he told? Why? What did he do?

Who then became angry?.... and why? What horrible thing did he then do?

★

When Herod died where was Joseph told to take his family?

Where did Jesus finally grow up? ★

UPTON-CUM-CHALVEY / LANGLEY BRANCH PROGRAMME

All are open meetings and are joint meetings unless otherwise stated

2020 Theme: "Building with Confidence"

Meetings with a talk, either:

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

OR

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

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

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

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



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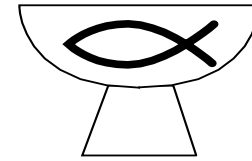
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