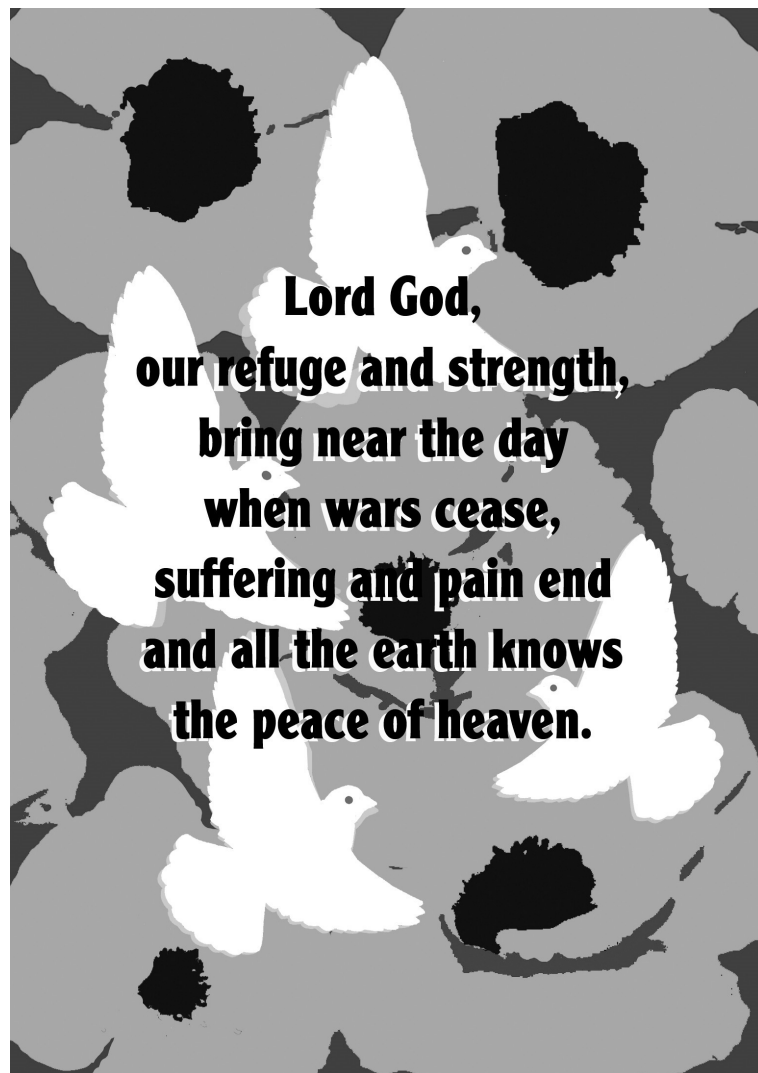
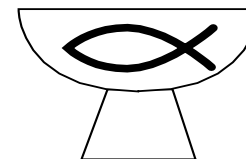


November 2022

30p

Upton-cum-Chalvey Parish News

St Mary St Laurence St Peter



**Lord God,
our refuge and strength,
bring near the day
when wars cease,
suffering and pain end
and all the earth knows
the peace of heaven.**

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 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
Verger (SL): Allan James	01753 532425
Organist (SM): Malcolm Stowell	01628 660651

Clergy days off:

Revd Scott Lamb Friday
Revd Alistair Stewart Tuesday

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Web-sites:

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

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

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

The Rector Writes:

Dear Friends,

Earlier this week, around 300 children and 150 adults came to St Mary's church. It was the week for harvest festivals in our church primary school and this year the Reception Class and Year One and Year Two came to church, just as they have always done with only a break for Covid. All the children were amazing. I thought that Reception did particularly well. They are so young, but they walked all the way to church, sat patiently, listened attentively and sang enthusiastically. They have only been in school for six weeks!

St Mary's school is a wonderfully diverse community truly reflecting our parish. Dozens of languages are spoken as well as English. There are always new arrivals in school and all the major world faiths are strongly represented. The children had been learning in school about harvest celebrations around the world and now they had come to church to for the traditional British version. For many of the children, and some of their parents, this was their first time inside a Christian church so I thought that I would explain why the visit was taking place.

Over 150 years ago, one of my predecessors, the Revd E T Champnes saw the need for a school for the children of the parish and set about opening one. With the support of the churchwardens of Upton-cum-Chalvey, a girls' classroom was built in 1863 followed by one for boys a few years later. The aim of the school was very simple: to provide the best education to local children "in the principles of the established church," whoever they might happen to be. The only condition attached to attendance was that students shouldn't be rich, which hasn't usually been a problem in our area. I was delighted to explain to the parents that while Slough has changed immeasurably over the years and continues to develop, the aim of the church through its schools remains the same. We still provide the best education for local children without selection, favouritism or prejudice, regardless of gender, ethnicity or faith.

We need to remember that the Church of England in Upton-cum-Chalvey consists of three churches and two schools. Our two church schools, St Mary's in Upton and Slough and Eton in Chalvey, provide an excellent education to their students. They are vibrant and diverse communities, full of faith, which make a huge contribution to our town. They remain a vital part of the church's mission in Slough: please remember all the children and all the staff as you pray.

Father Scott



All Souls will be commemorated at each church in the weekday Eucharists during the week commencing 31st October. (A list is available for the names of those whom you wish to remember on this occasion. Please write very clearly!)

NOVEMBER SERVICES & EVENTS

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

Tue 1st	2.30pm	“Mulling it Over” - Bible Study, prayer, chat and a cuppa (SL)
	7.30pm	St Mary’s DCC Meeting (SM)
Thu 3rd	1.00pm	Funeral of Brenda Evans (see page 8) (SL)
Mon 7th	7.30pm	St Laurence’s DCC Meeting (SL)
Sat 12th	12noon	Martinmas Fair (until 2.30pm) (SP)
Sun 13th	9.30am	Remembrance Day Eucharist (SP)
	10.50am	Remembrance Day Eucharist - note early start time! (SL)
	11.00am	Remembrance Day Eucharist (SM)
	3.00pm	William Herschel’s Birthday (15th November 1738) celebration: “Yuletide Ukuleles” presented by the Herschel Ukes. Festive fun with tea and cake. All welcome. (SL)
Mon 14th	7.30pm	PCC Meeting (SM)
Sat 19th	11.00am	“Santa’s Special Christmas Fayre” (until 2.30pm) (SL)
Mon 21st	2.00pm	“The Life and Times of Vincent Evans”: talk by Richard Emerson (see page 6) . All welcome (SL)
Wed 29th	7.00pm	Deanery Synod Meeting (SL)

St Mary's News

This last week has seen St Mary's church full of children. On Monday Start the Week, our mother and toddler group was a busy session with mothers, fathers, grandparents and childminders as well, of course, as lots of very lively children. The parents are amazing at helping to clear everything away but I could do with help setting up. If you have some spare time on Monday mornings in term time to help set up and help with tea and coffee I would love to see you.

On Wednesday Year 1 and 2 from St Mary's came to celebrate Harvest Festival with enthusiastic contributions from all the children. Thursday was the turn of Reception Class who walked to church in pouring rain but they were nevertheless very lively and keen to show off their readings and singing. The church was full on both occasions and it was really good to see lots of parents attending on both days.

At the other end of the scale NHS Elderly Mental Health team have now hosted their second monthly lunch for carers. This time on offer were jacket potatoes and in November there will be fish and chips as well as lots of cake, tea and coffee, quizzes and games.

This afternoon work is being carried out for the installation of the light boxes ready for the art exhibition – "An Imperfect Account of a Comet". This is a very exciting project and it will be the first time the whole exhibition has been on display (many of you will have seen part of it at St Laurence during their Herschel 200 presentations) and will move to Jodrell Bank when it leaves us. I hope many of you will have been able to attend the concert. The music accompanying the exhibition is amazing, maybe not quite what St Mary's is used to but nevertheless an unforgettable experience.

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

William Herschel was born on 15th November 1738 and we'll celebrate his birthday on the nearest Sunday, 13th.

The following Saturday we'll hold our Santa's Special Christmas Fayre, which has proved a major fundraising event in previous years. We hope this year's will be no exception. Details are below.

On Monday 21st, Richard Emerson will present "The Life and Times of Vincent Evans". Evans was Head of Art at Upton/Slough Grammar School and was the father of Audrey Lane, late member of St Laurence's. This will be a U3A open Meeting and all are welcome.

Our Dedication Festival and Gift Day, followed by Christmas Lunch, will be on Sunday 4th December

Dave

**SANTA'S SPECIAL
CHRISTMAS FAYRE**

Saturday 19th November
St Laurence's 11am - 2.30pm



NEXT MONTH'S MAGAZINE

Please let me have articles for the December issue by **Sunday 13th November** at the latest!

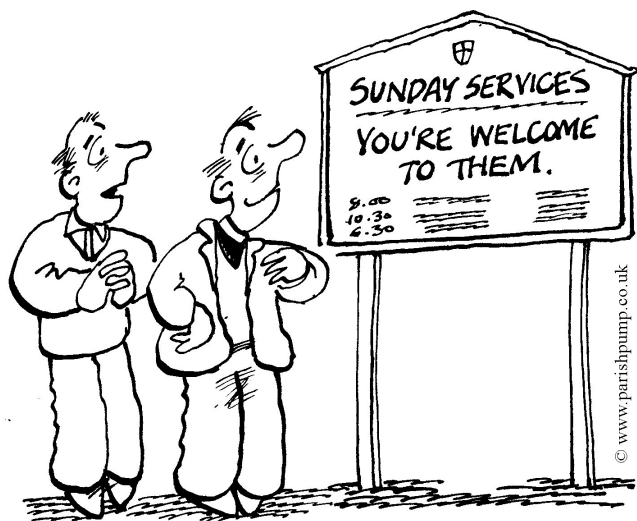
Dave

St Peter's News

October saw harvest, and a bring and share... but still in October St Peter's will anticipate November on October 30th, with a solemn mass and procession for All Saints Day, and with our annual requiem for the departed of the past year on October 31st, at 7.15pm.

Once the month is underway we will also observe Remembrance Sunday by our war memorial, and keep the feast of Christ the King with another procession! And so end the church's year. But we will also observe St Martin! St Martin's day is traditionally a time when animals are slaughtered before the winter, goose is eaten (St Martin is reported to have hidden among some geese to avoid being made a bishop), and when the new beer and wine from that year's harvest is available. And so we will have a Martinmas fair on 12th November...whether there will be any geese or Beaujolais nouveau remains to be seen, but of course we will appreciate the support of people from across the parish.

Fr Alistair



*...love the new notice board, Vicar...
...just not quite so sure about the wording...*



Brenda Mary Evans (née Young) 1926 - 2022, RIP

Brenda Mary Evans (née Young) passed away peacefully in her sleep at Frimley Park Hospital on Wednesday, 5th October with her children by her side. She is survived by her three children: David, Simon and Mary; nine grandchildren and by three great grandchildren. She was excited to know that two more great grandchildren were on the way.

Brenda was 96 years of age and led a full and active life. She was born on 26th July 1926, in the village of Wordsley in what is now the West Midlands, to Charles William Young and Edith Lydia Young (née Franks). Her father was a haulier and her mother the local district nurse. Brenda grew up in Wordsley and always retained close links to it and to her family and many friends from there. She was a teenager throughout the second world war which had a big impact on her life. Brenda was an ardent monarchist and was very close in age to Queen Elizabeth II, who she greatly admired throughout their long lives.

Brenda married Len Evans, a local government officer, on 3rd April, 1948. They were happily married for 44 years. During their marriage they moved around England following Len's career including in Wiltshire, Essex, Nottinghamshire, Buckinghamshire and Slough. Brenda honed her skills as a shorthand typist and worked for most of her married life as a school secretary or personal assistant/secretary.

Among other things, Brenda and Len enjoyed ballroom dancing and ocean cruising together. Brenda enjoyed needlework, embroidery, and was an excellent seamstress. She was a regular weekly churchgoer throughout her life. She always listed her religion as Church of England but for many years regularly attended Slough Baptist Church where she made many friends. As she became less mobile Brenda began to attend All Saints Church in Ascot; she could often be seen walking up the hill from her home to the church on any day of the week for her morning constitutional, rain or shine.

Brenda moved to a new home in Ascot in 2007 and there she was very happy in the final chapter in her life. After retiring, Brenda took up woodwork and the bird table she made remains in her garden. Brenda traveled the world visiting many countries in Europe, America including Hawaii, Canada, Brazil, Australia,

New Zealand, South Africa, Zimbabwe, India, Japan, Hong Kong and China. In her more active years, she enjoyed country walks with friends in the Berkshire Ramblers Group. One such walk was the annual St Birinus Pilgrimage walk to Dorchester Abbey in early July.

In her widowhood, Brenda met and enjoyed the companionship of Dennis Withrington and they were able to travel and enjoy dining and ballroom dancing together. Brenda enjoyed attending organ recitals at St Mary's Church, Slough, was an active member of Upton-cum-Chalvey Mothers' Union and also in the Windsor University of the Third Age Group. Although she outlived many of her lifelong friends, Brenda was always good at staying in touch with the people she came into contact with; her family was always impressed with the number of Christmas cards she continued to receive each year.

Brenda's funeral service will be held at St Laurence Church Upton-cum-Chalvey in Slough. After the funeral service and cremation, Brenda's ashes will taken to the Holy Trinity Church in Wordsley, where she was married. Her remains will be laid to rest in the family grave, alongside those of her husband Len, her brother Geoff, her mother, Lydia ('Lydie') and father, 'Will'.

David Evans

[Brenda was a "Parish" person and regularly attended Mothers' Union, Saturday concerts at St Mary's and church lunch, Christmas Fayres etc at St Laurence's. Although she was 96 and living in Ascot, she last came over "on the bus" to one of our Herschel teas in August. Brenda didn't always stay for dessert at MU lunches as she had to rush off to her U3A meetings. She also enjoyed the annual September MU coach outings and was perplexed when they were halted in Covid. I remember the St Birinus walks and the BBQ which followed. Those were the days. Julie James]

The **Funeral** service will be at St Laurence Church, Upton Court Road, Slough, SL3 7LS on Thursday, 3rd November 2022 at 1pm. Parking at Church is limited, parking is available at Upton Court Road car park, opposite Lascelles Park, 200 yards from the Church roundabout, near Long Close School.

A **Reception** will be held on 3rd November 2022 at 2:00 pm at Ditton Park Manor, Royal Berkshire, Slough, SL3 7JB. Family flowers only, please. If you wish to make a donation, details on line: <https://brenda-mary-evans.muchloved.com> If by cheque, please make it payable to the Macular Society and mail it to E Sargeant & Son, 40 Church Street, Slough SL1 1PJ indicating it is in memory of Brenda Evans. If you will attend the funeral, place in collecting box or pass it to one of the Sargeant directors after the service.



The man who gave us the National Health Service

If you use the services of the National Health Service this autumn, spare a thought for the 'presiding spirit' which led to its founding.

Aneurin 'Nye' Bevan was born 125 years ago this month, on 15th November 1897, the sixth of ten children. The family lived in Tredegar, Monmouthshire, where his father was a miner, and his mother was the daughter of a colliery blacksmith.

When he was 14, Bevan followed his father and older brother in the mines, but in his spare time spent hours in the local library, self-educating himself. At 19, Bevan joined the Independent Labour Party and in 1919 he moved to London to continue his studies and encountered the works of Marx and Engels. In 1925 his father died in his arms of the miners' disease pneumoconiosis.

In 1926 Bevan was appointed a full-time union official and was soon caught up in the miners' strike, which led to the General Strike of May 1926. Bevan became known as a firebrand activist and agitator.

In May 1929, when he was 31, Bevan entered Parliament as Independent Labour Party member for Ebbw Vale. A passionate socialist, he regularly attacked Neville Chamberlain, Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, and even his own party's prime minister, Ramsay Macdonald. Bevan's outspokenness caused the parliamentary authorities to suspend him from the house in 1937, and his own party expelled him for a time in 1939.

When in July 1945 Labour was returned to government with a landslide, the new Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, offered Bevan a Cabinet position. "I understand that you have much experience of negotiation. I am offering you the post where you will deal with health, housing and the local authorities."

And so, at 47, Bevan became the youngest member of that Cabinet. He oversaw the building of over a million new houses before 1950, and in 1946 the government steered through the National Insurance Act, which created the infrastructure of what was to be the Welfare State.

In 1948 the National Health Service Act, which Bevan had seen through Parliament, became law. This allowed people to receive, free at the point of use, medical diagnosis, and treatment at home or in hospital. As the writer Brian

Brivati observes: “It was the decision to nationalise the hospitals that made the profound difference in the... creation of the NHS. This decision was Bevan’s and its implementation was down to his skill, patience, and application as a minister. It is the most significant and lasting reform in the history of the Labour Party, and it was achieved by one man.”

Aneurin ‘Nye’ Bevan was Minister of Health 1945 to 1951. The National Health Service became operational on 5th July 1948.

When Elizabeth married Philip – 75 years ago

Princess Elizabeth (later Queen Elizabeth II) married Philip Duke of Edinburgh at Westminster Abbey 75 years ago this month, on 20th November 1947.

Elizabeth and Philip of Greece, who were third cousins, met in 1939, when the future Queen was only 13 and Philip 18. The match was promoted by Philip’s uncle, Earl Mountbatten, whose name Philip took before the marriage. Philip also converted from Greek Orthodoxy to Anglicanism and was given British citizenship.

The wedding took place in front of 2,000 invited guests and was broadcast on radio to 200 million listeners worldwide. The wedding dress was designed by Norman Hartnell, Princess Elizabeth using ration coupons to obtain the material. More than 2,500 wedding presents and 10,000 telegrams of congratulations were received. Most of the honeymoon was spent at Birkhall on the Balmoral Estate.

Sir William Neil McKie, an Australian organist who was the Master of the Choristers at the Abbey, was the director of music, a role he filled again at Elizabeth’s coronation in 1953. He wrote a song, “We Wait For Thy Loving Kindness, O God”, especially for the wedding.

Elizabeth and Philip had got engaged secretly in 1946, but their engagement was not announced officially until 9th July, 1947.

Tim Lenton

6th November – join the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church

Churches and Christians across the UK are being invited to remember the suffering of Christians persecuted and imprisoned for their faith in countries around the world.

According to Open Doors, the 2022 rankings are as follows. The top 20 countries where it is most dangerous to be a Christian are: 1 Afghanistan; 2 North Korea; 3 Somalia; 4 Libya; 5 Yemen; 6 Eritrea; 7 Nigeria; 8 Pakistan; 9 Iran; 10 India; 11 Saudi Arabia; 12 Myanmar; 13 Sudan; 14 Iraq; 15 Syria; 16 Maldives; 17 China; 18 Qatar; 19 Vietnam; and 20 Egypt.

For the full list of 50 countries, please go to:

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/>

Forty-four Million Struggling with Cost-of-living Crisis

In what has been described as ‘a landmark poll’, CAP (Christians Against Poverty) has found that nearly half of us living in the UK are being impacted by rising costs. The poll, carried out for CAP by YouGov, found:

Impacted - 84% (about 44 million) of us have been financially affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

Rising prices – 49% of us (about 25.9 million) have seen our bills rise by between £101 and £500 a month.

Struggling financially – 15% of us (about 7.9 million) admit we were already struggling financially. But this has risen quickly, until by now it seems that just under half of us, or 48% (about 25 million) are struggling to some extent.

Cutting back – an estimated 61% of us (more than 32 million) of us have reduced our energy use to save money. More than 46% of us (about 24 million) are shopping around more and using cheaper supermarkets.

Desperation — Sadly, about 15% of us, (almost 8 million) people are now thought to be going without heating or electricity completely. A similar amount of us are even skipping some meals. About 37% of us (or 19 million) have cut out socialising and leisure altogether.

Debt & borrowing — About 6.9 million people (13%) are behind on their bills,

and more than 42% of us (about 22 million) have borrowed money to cope with rising costs. Of those who have borrowed money this year, 40% have borrowed £1000 or more, with 15% borrowing more than £3000 during 2022.

Long term impact — Over a third us who owe money expect that it will take us more than a year to pay it back.

As one spokesman for CAP says: *“Living shouldn’t cost everything. But for millions, it does.”*

“We need more targeted help for people living in poverty who have less money coming in than they need just to stay alive and out of serious debt. This could be delivered in discounts of household bills, more one-off grants and increased benefit payments to help people survive winter.”

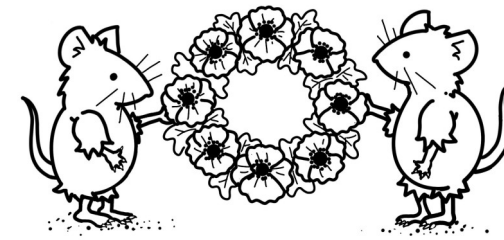
CAP is helping thousands of people become debt free across the UK.

Call on big tech companies to be transparent and ethical

The Church of England’s Ethical Investment Advisory Group (‘EIAG’) has recently published a report advising investors with Christian values how to approach investing in big technology companies. The Church’s National Investing Bodies (NIBs), which received the advice, has published a new policy in line with this guidance.

The report recommends technology companies make public commitments including: a commitment to verifiable transparency; to promoting human-centred design; to enabling the flourishing of children and other vulnerable groups; and to fostering a tech eco-system that serves the common good.

The Bishop of Manchester, Dr David Walker, deputy chair of the EIAG, said: “This report addresses important issues about how technology influences our lives, including the most vulnerable among us. Investors like the Church’s National Investing Bodies can play a role in working with technology companies to ensure they take a human-centred approach, giving users more control and being transparent about their working practices.”



The Poppies of Remembrance Sunday

In late 1914, WW1 erupted across Northern France and Flanders. Great swathes of previously green fields and forests were blasted and bombed, leaving them bleak and barren, with seemingly every living thing destroyed.

But then in the Spring of 1915, something beautiful began to come out of all the destruction. Tens of thousands of bright red Flanders poppies began to put out tentative shoots across the endless vistas of mud. These resilient little flowers had actually flourished in the middle of so much chaos and destruction, because their seeds grow when exposed to sunlight, through disturbances to soil.

We all know that these endless fields of cheerful poppies, growing in the midst of such misery and destruction, were what inspired the Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, to write the now famous poem ‘In Flanders Fields’.

And it was McCrae’s poem which inspired an American academic named Moina Michael to adopt the poppy in memory of those who had fallen in the war. She got it adopted as an official symbol of Remembrance across the United States, and worked with others who were trying to do the same in Canada, Australia, and the UK.

A French woman, Anna Guérin who was in the UK in 1921, caught the same vision, and planned to sell the poppies in London. There she met Earl Haig, the founder of the Royal British Legion, who was persuaded to adopt the poppy as its emblem in the UK.

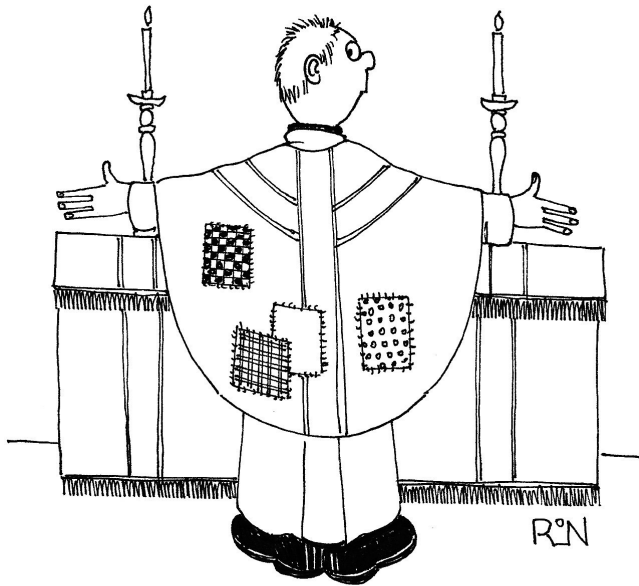
The Royal British Legion, which had been formed in 1921, ordered nine million poppies and sold them on 11 November that year. Ever since then, the red poppy has been a symbol of Remembrance, of support for the Armed Forces community, and also of hope for a peaceful future.

Help your hedgehogs this autumn

With our warmer British autumns, hedgehogs now tend to begin hibernation later – in December or January. In the meantime, it is critical that they build up enough body weight to get them through those lean, bleak weeks of January to April... so now is the time to help them, by feeding them.

The hedgehog is carnivorous and, in the wild, lives on a diet of beetles, earthworms and other invertebrates. But in the winter, the bugs are dead or buried, and the worms deep underground. So – a hedgehog would appreciate your help! But don't put out milk and bread – both are actually bad for hedgehogs. Instead, they will thrive on tins of dogfood or non-fishy cat-food and water.

And while your spiny guests are noisily munching their dinner, you can prepare a bedroom, should they decide to move in. A nice deep compost heap will keep a hedgehog warm. It is also possible to buy hedgehog hibernation nests – ask our local wildlife centre or the RSPCA for details.



Trevor hated asking for money, but he sometimes made subtle hints

The Monarch and the Church

By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just (Proverbs 8:15)

We have a unique system in this country that links the King to the Church.

The new King has made an oath to uphold the Presbyterian Church in Scotland and is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. The sovereign holds the title 'Defender of the Faith'. It was originally given to Henry VIII by the pope for defending the Roman Catholic faith. It was later claimed as a title for defending the Protestant religion.

These are legal roles and titles which bind the Crown, Parliament and Anglican churches together. The King appoints Archbishops, Bishops and Deans of the Church of England, who then swear an oath of allegiance to the monarch.

Some people might ask if the Church or any part of it needs to be so closely linked to the State. Why should Parliament or the government, who may be people from other or no faith, have a say who runs the Church? Some say that the purpose of having an established Church is so that Parliament can protect the Church from itself. Some would argue there has been too much modernisation in the Church which has not led to more people in pews. Meanwhile, though the numbers of people having an allegiance to the Church of any kind is falling, still many people turn to the Church at times of personal and family troubles and celebrations.

God save the King. He has solemnly promised to uphold the Church and spoken of his personal faith. We do not know what the future of this country or the Church will be, but we can influence it by prayer. We should pray for those in authority, whether we agree with them or not. It may not be a perfect system, but it is probably better than all the rest.

David Pickup

Quiet

A Sunday School teacher asked her children: "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One little girl replied helpfully: "Because people are sleeping."

Reflected Faith: Initials That Talk Our Faith Language

We have started to see the new King's cypher on a variety of items, including post boxes. Look at the way 'they' have entwined the letters C R and the Latin numeral III.

Now think about what you so often see in church buildings - letters entwined together. These are either from the Latin or the Greek languages.

Here's a starter for you:

XP – often joined together so the P is standing halfway behind the X. This symbol - called the chi rho symbol - was used from earliest times and was often simplified into a six-pointed figure. You can see it on some silver spoons found at Mildenhall and now in the British Museum dating from about 350 AD.

'X' called 'chi' in Greek is said 'Kh' as in khaki. 'P' called 'rho' in Greek is said 'r'. If you put the two together what do they sound like? Khr

What word connected with being a Christian starts with that sound? Of course – Christ. The original Greek would be 'Christoe'.

Another common set of initials often seen on altar linen and probably the most misunderstood is 'IHC'.

People often suggest it comes from the Latin 'Jesus Hominum Salvator' meaning, 'Jesus, Saviour of the World', or even the English 'In His Service'. But they don't. They are the first three letters of the Greek for JESUS - which in Greek was IHCOYC.

It doesn't help that Greek has two ways of writing the sound 's' as in the middle of Jesus. It can be either a 'C' or what looks like a rather stylised 'E'.

To confuse you more, when you translate the Greek letters IHC into Latin they come out as 'IHS'. So you can see both spellings that mean the same thing.

This month

Have a look around your church building – both inside and outside for initials or even whole words. Would knowing what they represent aid you in your worship, and how much do they reflect your faith?

Rev'd Jo White



Advent Zeitgeist

My late mother was an Anglican all her life. She treasured the thought that the prayers that she had said from her youth, from The Book of Common Prayer, had been said by generations of Christians before her stretching back to the time of Cranmer or, at least, to the time of the Restoration of the monarchy (Charles II – how appropriate!) and the 1662 prayer book. "I do like the old words!" she would exclaim.

At the time the Alternative Service Book (ASB) had just been published and those who wished to be seen as "with-it" promoted it vigorously and rather denigrated the "old words". I used to tease my mother by saying, "Do you mean the old words that Cranmer wrote in the sixteenth century or the words from the new communion services that are actually based on the Eucharistic liturgies from the second and third centuries AD?" "Oh, you *know* what I mean," she snorted.

My father had similar views about the New English Bible. If you remember, the New Testament was published separately first, and I can remember a self-important lay preacher brandishing his newly-purchased copy at Christmas-time and reading from Luke 2: "And Mary was *pregnant!*" at which my father, from the back of the chapel, in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, said: "**Great with child!**"

"O tempora! O mores!" as Cicero declaimed when he was castigating Catiline, or as we used to say in the twentieth century, "Fings ain't what they used to be!" Of course they aren't. How could they be? When my ministry took me to Oxford for six years I made some wonderful friends among the Roman Catholic sisters of the Religious of the Assumption. Sister Helena Eugenie and I often used to show visiting nuns around the sights of Oxford. When she spied a venerable church building, a visiting sister would ask nervously, "Is this *Lost Property?*" In other words, was this a pre-Reformation church that once was part of Catholic Christendom? Fings ain't what they used to be!

I do not hold any particular candle for what might be termed *British Museum Religion*, but I do need to know that what I and we are doing in worship to celebrate the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has a direct and unbroken connection through all the generations back to Galilee's shore. You cannot throw the baby out with the bath-water, especially at Christmas-time (or the shepherds and the wise men will not have any body to visit). Contemporary culture warriors demand that the past should be vilified and that the present zeitgeist is all that matters. This is an immensely dangerous tack to take, even though some Christian denominations are determined to plunge headlong in that direction. Archbishop William Temple once wisely wrote: "Those who wed themselves to the spirit of the age soon find themselves divorced."

Perhaps we should espouse a different strategy to bring the spiritual treasures of past generations into a context that makes sense to folk in the twenty-first century. In Victorian times men like John Mason Neale discovered such a way, using ancient hymns and music in a new setting for contemporary congregational singing. Through his poetic and classical scholarly translations from ancient traditions, both eastern and western, we can sing in Advent "O come, O come, Immanuel" and "Of the Father's Heart Begotten", not to mention "Good King Wenceslas" on the day after Christmas. On Christmas Eve, I always used to choose as the Offertory hymn the haunting words and melody from the ancient Liturgy of St James, "Let all mortal flesh keep silence". In some wonderfully indefinable way the majestic minor chords seemed to bridge the centuries to the generations of Christians who went before us and made their faith real and relevant to us now.

How could I follow or capture the spirit that The Oxford Movement and the Gothic Revivalists managed to achieve? I began with a hymn that means a great deal to me and to all who have been ordained – "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire". It is an invocation of the Holy Spirit, always sung at ordination services, in the translation by John Cosin (in the seventeenth century) from a ninth century text, and borne by the ancient plainchant theme, the "Veni Creator". I wrote the following hymn many years ago for use in Advent in the churches of which I was the minister at the time. You can still sing it to the "Veni Creator" if you wish (or use the words as a December meditation if you don't). You may have it as my Christmas present to you.

Season's Greetings!

Advent Plainchant

Come, God of Jesse, to our aid,
Whom heaven and earth and man has made;
Invade our darkness with your light,
Day-star unto our dark world's night.

Come, Gabriel, from heaven's throne,
Declare God's favour on his own;
An earthly life on earth begun,
Eternally begotten Son.

Come, son of Jacob, Adam's child,
And blessed Mary, virgin mild;
To Bethlehem pursue your way,
This night portends eternal day.

Come, shepherds, down from frosty field,
This night to you shall be revealed
An infant Shepherd, child adored,
Lamb of our God, and promised Lord.

Come, angels, sing with joy and mirth,
Rend the veil 'twixt heaven and earth,
And let the song you sing this night
Inspire each age with its delight.

Come, wise men, journey from afar,
Follow the light of yonder star,
And bring your best unto your King,
Bow low and make your offering.

Salvator mundi, libera nos,
Rex caelorum et sacerdos;
Veni, veni, ad Bethlehem,
Gloria tibi; Amen, Amen.

Revd Philip Morse (submitted by Fr Alistair)

Wonder and Worship

“I was travelling, and out early in the morning: at first there was a vast fog; but, by the time that I was seven or eight miles from home towards the coast, the sun broke out into a delicate warm day. We were then on a large heath or common, and I could discern, as the mist began to break away, great numbers of swallows (*hirundines rusticae*) clustering on the stunted shrubs and bushes, as if they had roosted there all night. As soon as the air became clear and pleasant they all were on the wing at once; and, by a placid and easy flight, proceeded on southward towards the sea”.

How many church leaders today have time to enjoy their surroundings? Gilbert White was a vicar who became famous for his observations about the flora and fauna of his parish. His letters about the local wildlife through the seasons were so beautifully written that they are still in print today, more than 200 years after they were first published as *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne*.*

White is a great example of someone who saw science and faith in harmony. He writes that he hopes his readers will be inspired to “pay a more ready attention to the wonders of the Creation”. His stories are often so vivid that he gets away with packing in quite a bit of scientific detail, painting a more accurate picture of the wonderful events he observed as he travelled around the countryside. White’s book is one of the classics of nature writing, and there’s even an apocryphal story online that this is one of the most printed books in the country, after the Bible and Shakespeare.

White may have been one of those people with a capacity for endless activity, or perhaps he took rather more care over natural history than his vocation. Either way, I do think that anyone - from the parish priest to the youngest member of the congregation - could learn from his appreciation of creation. It is well worth spending ten minutes every now and again staring into a bush, pond or tree - especially in winter when it’s easy to hurry indoors and put the kettle on. Experiencing wildlife first-hand is wonderful fuel for our worship of God and care for His creation. As Psalm 111 says, “Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them” (NIV).

*(White’s book can be downloaded for free at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1408>)

Dr Ruth Bancewicz



On the challenge of hitting 11 o’clock precisely....

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

It is a great shame that your church doesn’t have chandeliers – although in your low-ceilinged converted cinema, any chandelier more than a few feet tall would also be embedded in your floor carpeting. But I find that there is nothing like watching the standard bearers on Remembrance Sunday parading up the aisle with their flags and getting them caught up in our brass candelabra.

One year, the procession ground to a halt while a bearer fought to retrieve his flag, and was obliged to leave it flying in the centre of the church while he presented me with an empty pole. I always feel obliged to tell parishioners that, since all the candelabra will inevitably be sent spinning, not to stare at them, or they may leave the church hypnotised. On the other hand, Miss Simpson generally leaves the church looking like that.

Major Hastings always arrives bejewelled with so many medals that every time he kneels for prayer, it sounds as if he is taking the collection. Their weight increases his stoop by at least ten degrees, to the point where some feel we should support him with a personal flying buttress.

Since the trumpeter playing the Last Post can be of varying quality, your idea of broadcasting it from London into your church is inspired. However, your worries about whether your radio will be good enough need not trouble you. If you tell your congregation that they are about to hear the broadcast silence and you then simply not switch the thing on, no one will be able to tell the slightest difference whether the silence is being broadcast or not. In fact, they will even congratulate you on hitting 11am at exactly the right moment.

I always use subterfuge; I have the church clock disconnected and then when we reach the time for silence, irrespective of the true time, I get a churchwarden to toll the bell eleven times. This way, I have apparently come to the exact moment without a hitch for the last 30 years.

You will also find that preaching about warfare and of man's inhumanity to man will give you greater insights into the working of your church council. The only difference is that on committees – sadly – the use of machine guns is rather frowned on.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Religious Symbols in the Water

The fish is the symbol of Christ, used in early Christian art and literature. It is also used as a symbol of Baptism because the fish cannot live without water and man cannot live except through the waters of Baptism. A Crocodile represents Hypocrisy but the Dolphin is for Faith, Love, Society and Resurrection, because dolphins swim beside ships symbolizing Christ guiding the Church. When a Dolphin is pictured with an anchor it represents the Catholic Church.

The Frog has two opposite meanings. First because it reappears after its winter hibernation as Jesus reappeared in the resurrection and secondly because it was one of the plagues of Egypt it is a symbol of heretics.

Last of all the Whale. In the Bible it is mentioned swallowing Jonah. When the Whale opens its mouth the ancient people thought of it as the Gates of Hell, so it was used as a symbol of the Devil!

Alice Sanders

Purring

Little George was visiting his aunt. He found the cat in a sunny window purring cheerfully. "Oh Auntie, come quick," cried George. "The cat has gone to sleep and left his engine running."

Live Forever?

German billionaire, Peter Thiel, has registered to be cryonically preserved: his body will be deep-frozen when he dies, then thawed out and resuscitated if medical developments make it possible. Likewise, mega-rich Jeff Bezos has poured cash into anti-ageing research, which means more than inventing an improved wrinkle cream.

These 21st Century entrepreneurs may not know the Memorial Service read on the Jewish Day of Atonement, which considers the implications of their fictional world. It leaves us to speculate,

"If the existing generation were given the chance to live forever, but on the clear understanding that never again would there be a child, or a youth or a girl, or adolescent love, never again new persons with new hopes, new ideas, new achievements; ourselves for always and never any others . . ."

Actually, most people don't want to live forever. A recent survey revealed only 19% of non-Christians and 11% of Christians "would like to live forever if scientists were able to engineer it."

Dame Deborah James, who died earlier this year aged 40, showed the world how to live with incurable cancer. Although she didn't want to die, as she approached the end, discovered,

"My appreciation for the little things in life has only increased: walking from the kitchen into the garden and enjoying the sunshine; listening to the birds; having something to eat. I've realised that nothing else matters beyond the simple things and the love of your family and friends."

Christian belief in eternal life isn't about an endless extension of the here and now. We shall be changed, insists St Paul:

"... in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."

We aren't given all the details. Instead, Jesus invites us now to establish such a trust in His unseen presence, that when our time comes, we will be carried out of sight into something greater:

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love Him."

Ven John Barton

The message of Advent? – history is going somewhere!

‘And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger...’ (Luke 2:7)

‘They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.’ (Matthew 24:30)

What a contrast between the humble birth of Jesus in Bethlehem – and His eventual return! No one knows when that day will be, but it will be earth-shaking. In the meantime, Advent reminds us of the last of six great saving actions of God in Jesus Christ.

The Birth of Jesus at Bethlehem was to inaugurate our salvation. The Death of Jesus at Calvary established it – forever. The Resurrection of Jesus at Easter confirmed it. The Ascension of Jesus to heaven celebrated it. The Gift of the Spirit at Pentecost drove it worldwide. And sixthly will come the Return of Jesus at the world’s end – to consummate and complete it.

The message of Advent reminds us that history is not circular or locked into an unending stalemate. Neither can we ever accept a notion of successive reincarnations, for the Bible is clear that *man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment* (Hebrews 9:27).

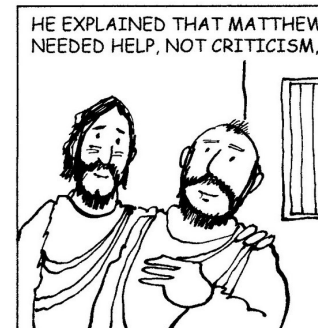
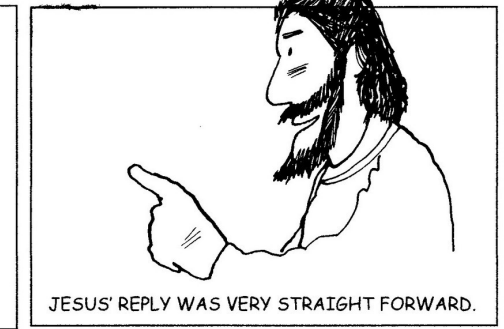
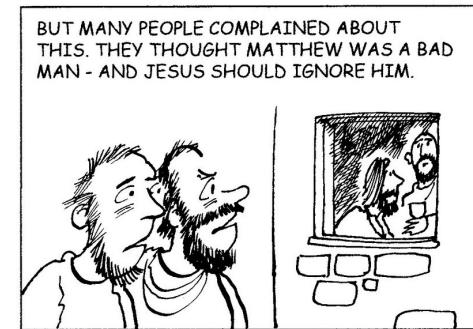
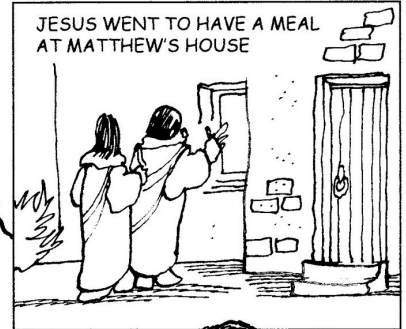
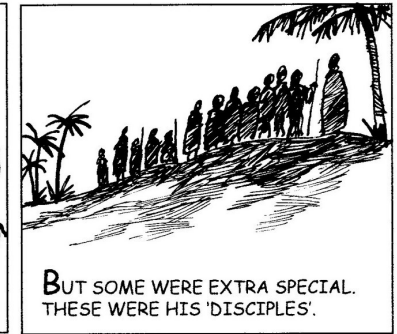
The Bible has had many pre-runs of that final ‘Day of the Lord.’ Noah’s flood, the overthrow of wicked Babylon; these and other upheavals were but pointers to the final ‘Day of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Corinthians 1:8), when all wrongs will be stopped, and the Lord shall reign with justice.

For the Bible is clear that world history is leading to a *Conclusion*, to the new heaven and the new earth. That will be inaugurated when ‘He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.’ Christ’s return will usher in the final triumph, bringing about the dismantling of the whole apparatus of Evil that has so harassed us across the centuries.

The Cross and Resurrection secured the victory over evil. Christ’s return will make it final! Believers echo Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 - ‘And so we will be with the Lord for ever.’ If we have a *strong view of the future, we can be sure it will energise us in the present!*

In the meantime, Advent is coming round once again. It’s time to celebrate the first of God’s six mighty acts that secured our salvation – and look forward to the future.

The Doctor and the Patient



It can be read in the Bible in
Lk 5:1-11, Mt. 4:18-22, Mk 1:16-20

On the shore of Lake Galilee, Jesus was trying to teach people but there were so many that he couldn't be heard.

What did he say?
I can't hear him!
Peter and Andrew had spent the previous night fishing
Can I use your boat?
Jesus sat in the boat and taught everyone
I can't even see him!
Alright.
When he had finished...

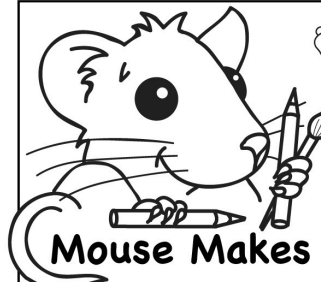
Now let's go fishing!
We fished all last night and caught nothing.
So they threw their nets out
What an idiot! The fish don't come near the surface in the daytime.
but I'll do what you say.

Then they started to pull the nets up
The nets are breaking!
The boats nearly sank but they got the nets on the beach.
What!?
James, John, come and help!
That's the biggest catch I've ever seen

I was an idiot to talk to you like that, Lord, just leave me alone.
Only God could do something that amazing.
I've got a job for you, so come with me
so they left everything and went with him.

THE COMING OF A KING

The birth of Jesus is told



God sent a messenger to Mary
What was the angel's name?

Luke 1:26-28

Mary was frightened,
what did the angel say?

Luke 1:30

What was Mary to
name her child?

Luke 1:31

What is her son
going to be?

Luke 1:32-33

What happened
to Elizabeth
when Mary
went to
visit her?

Luke 1:41

What does the angel
say about God?

Luke 1:37

(LEARN this verse)

Mary praises God, what does
she say God has done?

Luke 1:46-55

ETHOLYSPIRITOJSKS
MBHCBIGTWLBZLORDA
ELOHPRAISEOJESUSV
SELIZABETHRONEDI
SSYLKWREIGNETPMEO
ASCDIKINGDOMPHABU
GESONREJOICEWORDR
EDANGELZDOABABYLU

Find the words
in the word
search and
the ___
words too.

ANGEL • MESSAGE • GOD • JOSEPH • MARY • BABY • SON • BORN
CHILD • THRONE • KING • REIGN • KINGDOM • HOLY SPIRIT • LORD
HOLY • WORD • ELIZABETH • BLESSED • SAVIOUR • REJOICE • PRAISE

‘Support Ukrainian refugees’ – Tearfund

Tearfund is calling on British Christians to help support the many displaced and desperate Ukrainian refugees that have fled their country since the start of the brutal war. Since February, more than five million people have been displaced, their families scattered, their homes and cities destroyed.

Tearfund’s partners in Ukraine have been working around the clock to meet the immediate needs of these refugees – providing support such as food, bedding, and temporary accommodation. If you can help, visit:
www.tearfund.org/campaigns/ukraine-crisis

Wife

A Sunday School teacher was teaching how God created everything, including human beings. One little boy seemed especially intent when she explained how Eve was created out of one of Adam’s ribs. Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill. The little boy explained worriedly: “I have a pain in my side. I think I’m going to have a wife.”

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

Websites:

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

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

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