



February 2021
Number 264

Season of Lent, the Word of God and spiritual disciplines



Over recent weeks at St Luke's we have been studying spiritual disciplines based on biblical principles, compiled by author John Ortberg in his book *'The life you have always wanted'*.

Jesus said *'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'*

We cannot come to the Father through spiritual disciplines, or following a set of principles, but the spiritual disciplines we read of in the bible can

help us focus on Jesus, receive His love, His teaching and God's presence through His Holy Spirit. Which in turn can help us hold our ground and support each other in times of trial, and even help us to gain ground against a formidable enemy.

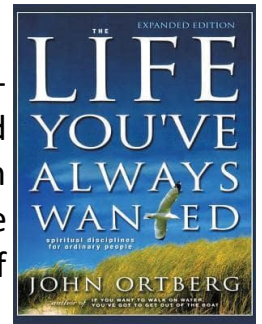
As I write this article, we find ourselves at the beginning of the season of Lent.

What is Lent?

It is, according to BBC bitesize... *'The period of 6 weeks (40 days not including Sunday) leading up to Easter, the most important festival in the Christian Calendar.'*

It is based on the period of 40 days and nights which Jesus of Nazareth spent in the wilderness, fasting and praying, contending one to one with the very same formidable enemy I have already mentioned. This year at St Luke's it will start with our service on Ash Wednesday, February 17th.

Many Christians all over the world take this time as a period of self-examination using many of the spiritual disciplines from the bible and highlighted in John Ortberg's book, slowing down, solitude, meditation on scripture, confession, abstaining from luxuries, and of course fasting, which is the prominent spiritual discipline Christ puts himself through during His trials in the wilderness.



The other main discipline which shines through in this account is the reading, studying and meditating on God's Word and the scriptures. The two accounts we have can be found in the book of Matthew Chapter 4, and in the book of Luke Chapter 4, in which we read *'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.'*

Most of us on this planet are facing the trials and strains of a prolonged lockdown. All of us will at some time face life issues which can weigh us down and hit us hard, many of us find ourselves under direct attack from various directions. Maybe we can learn something from Christ in this particular account of spiritual combat.

Being full of the Holy Spirit and led by the Spirit was essential and a prerequisite, but the full deployment of spiritual disciplines and a thorough knowledge of the scriptures was required when being probed and tested by Satan.

In both accounts from Matthew and Luke, there were no miraculous powers used, no futuristic weapons or any type of Kung Fu martial arts. The weapons used were the scriptures, the Word of God. In the book of Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12 it states *'For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.'*

What is very revealing is that the enemy also used God's word, the scriptures. It is often said that he is a diligent student of scripture. Christ however had a much deeper knowledge of the scripture. He was not only soaked in the scriptures through years of

studying and meditation on God's Word. As we hear from John's gospel every Christmas in the festival of 9 lessons and carols, He was the living Word of God personified. *'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'*

My wife Adrienne and I endeavour to read a Psalm each day before we pray. Sometimes nothing particularly strikes us, but weeks later it can resurface in God's impeccable timing and affect our attitude or decisions, or be the perfect word for someone who needs to hear it. I have even known of a person's life being saved by the recalling of a scripture. In fact, the future of the whole of mankind was in the balance during the psychological combat between Christ and the enemy, praise God that Christ's humility, obedience to the Father and love of God's Word saved the day!

We need to read God's Word daily, it can literally save our lives.

The Angel of the Beach

I came across a powerful picture of this in a real-life situation. You may have already heard the true story of a young girl on a family holiday in Thailand in 2004, who simply remembered what she had learned in her school geography class about the warning signs of an imminent Tsunami. Tilly Smith spotted the signs on the beach. She warned her parents who at first did not take her seriously. However, she was insistent, her father decided to go back and mention it to the beach security guard who in turn shepherded all the other families away from the beach to higher ground. Sure enough a Tsunami struck, sweeping away over 270,000 lives across Asia. Tilly's warning saved over 100 lives on that particular beach, in the nick of time. She maintains the real hero was her geography teacher.

Tilly, an ordinary girl, took 3 life saving steps. She was attentive in her lessons, she internalised what she had heard, 2 weeks later she recalled and immediately relayed the information. She also had one overriding character trait, she stuck to her guns

Do check it out on YouTube, it is very moving.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0s2i7Cc7wA&ab_channel=UnitedNationsOfficeforDisasterRiskReduction



Jeremy Cooke

Children's Sunday Groups

Currently meet at 9.45am on

ZOOM

For Log in details, contact Lydia at children@stlukeswatford.org

Prayer during the week

FOCUS

Tuesday evening 8pm via Zoom

Private Prayer

Thursdays 12pm – 1pm

Hour of Prayer

Fridays 10am Via Zoom

Pre-Service Prayer

Sunday Mornings 8.30am via Zoom

For log in details, contact office

**Do join us on Zoom
for coffee & chat
after services**

*To get the Log in details,
sign up to our weekly email
At office@stlukeswatford.org*



Sermon Series for **February** and **March**

Sunday morning Services at 10:30am - 'The Life You've always Wanted': -

February 7 th	Appropriate smallness: The practice of Servanthood
14 th	Life beyond regret: the practice of confession
Ash Wednesday 17 th	Life with a Well-ordered heart: developing your own "rule of life"
21 st	Interrupting Heaven: the practice of prayer
28 th	The Guided Life: Receiving guidance from the Holy Spirit
March 7 th	A life of freedom: the practice of secrecy
14 th	An undivided life: the practice of reflection on Scripture
21 st	A life of endurance: experience of suffering
Palm Sun 28 th	A Dee Dah Day – The practice of Celebration

Sunday Evening Services at 7pm - 'Questions for God': -

February 21 st	Where is God when I'm feeling lonely?
28 th	What have I done wrong (when tragedy hits)?
March 7 th	Where's God when I'm anxious?
14 th	When is it ok to lament?
21 st	Where's God when I'm in a dark place and it doesn't go away?
Palm Sunday 28 th	Am I kidding myself with this faith business?

Midweek Communions will start on Tuesday 2nd March and continue through March on Tuesdays at 10am. All are welcome – these will be public services in church (Government guidelines permitting).

Other Lenten prayer meetings will be advertised on the Vicar's letter and by email from Friday 19th Feb. If you don't receive the letter and would like to, please contact the church office.



NOTICE OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The APCM will be held in St Luke's Church and via Zoom on Sunday 25 April 2021 at 12.00 noon.

- For the election of parochial representatives of the laity to the Parochial Church Council
- For the appointment of the Independent Examiner.
- For the consideration of reports on:
 - a) changes in the electoral roll since the previous APCM;
 - b) the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish generally;
 - c) The financial statements for the year ending 31st December 2020;
 - d) the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church of the parish;
 - e) the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
- And for other matters of parochial or general Church interest.

Only lay people whose names are entered on the **Church Electoral Roll of St Luke's** as at **6 April 2021** will be entitled to vote at the election of parochial representatives of the laity.

We are planning to revise the electoral roll between 23 March and 6 April 2021.

If you consider yourself a regular member of St Luke's and are not already on the electoral roll, we would really encourage you to complete a form and return it to the office any time before 6 April 2021.

Forms are available from office@stlukeswatford.org

If you would like to give by bank transfer the details are as follows:-

Account name PCC St Luke's Watford

Sort Code 20-91-79 Account No 70687472

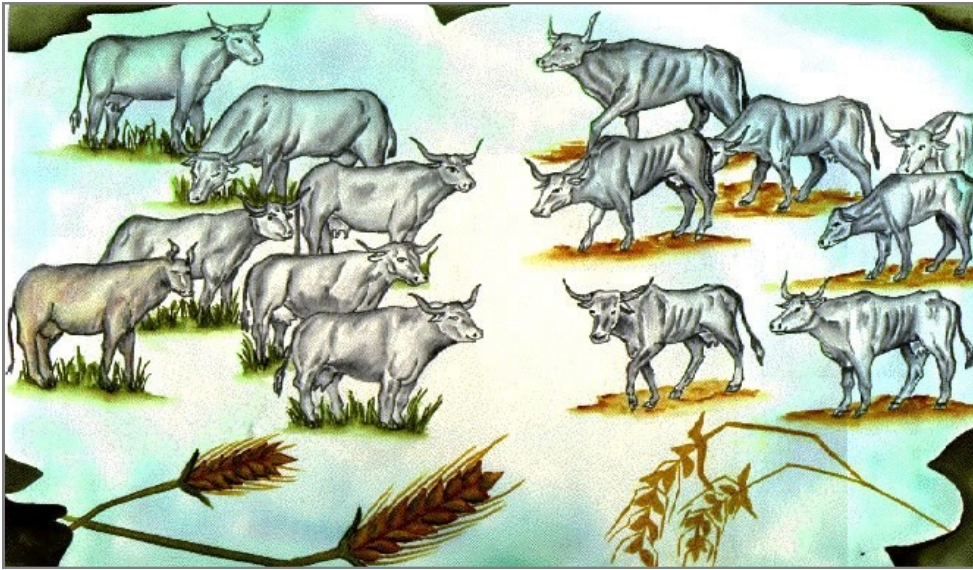
*[Donations to the Thanksgiving Fund have same Account name,
and sort code but the Account number is 13611779]*

Reference state if the donation is for a particular appeal e.g. Santa hampers, Rebuild, Foodbank etc.

Please remember to complete a Gift Aid as well if you are a Tax payer.

“FAT YEARS AND LEAN YEARS”

Those who were at the Annual General Meeting last year may remember that I made reference to the biblical story of Joseph and Pharaoh’s dreams and in particular to Fat



years and Lean years. Because of Covid-19 and its effect on PCC finances I expected to see a financial result in 2020 that was a “Lean” year after a particularly “Fat” year in 2019 and arguably in previous years too.

It is good to be able

to report that 2020 has turned out with a small surplus on the PCC’s operating account, despite the significant drop in income, mainly from letting rooms in the building complex. This is in no small measure due to the generosity of church members who have adjusted their giving or who contributed to the one-off Gift Day that was held in the autumn. There were also some cost savings because of the lower volume of activities carried out during lockdown. It is also good to report that the PCC has been able to support all our staff and Mission partners over the year without resorting to external aid schemes.

The PCC has now approved a budget for 2021 which shows an expected deficit of £14,000. It is particularly difficult to estimate income while lockdown continues but the PCC hopes that letting space in the building will recover some normality sooner rather than later. Giving by church members is likely to continue at a reduced level while lockdown continues without live services in church and because of a number of church families having moved away or become non tax paying.

May I remind everyone that it is possible to give directly to the church, either by standing order which can be reviewed from time to time perhaps annually, or by making direct payments to the bank account (details on the website or on the previous page).

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the ministry at Luke’s in so many ways.

Paul Evans
PCC Treasurer

Walking the Nativity

St Luke's Nativity is always a big hit for the community. On Christmas Eve, the church is packed with people coming to celebrate the birth of Jesus and join in with the re-telling of this incredible story. Weeks of rehearsals take place before hand with some awesome outfits and we must not forget Edna's amazing make up!

This year Neil, Lydia, Jeremy and team stepped the nativity up a notch! They managed to spread the story of the birth of Jesus across the whole of the Cassiobury Estate, making it accessible and safe for all

to participate in.

Lydia welcomed everyone outside the church, explaining what to do and where to go. Then the adventure began! We arrived just as it began to get dark which made the whole experience even more beautiful. Our first stop was the stable scene in the entrance of the church.

Each station had something to look at and a QR code to scan which told us what was happening at each point of the story. After the church we walked on stopping at lots of

different front gardens. We saw glowing stars, sheep's wool on some trees and beautiful music. We learnt that sheep are very important in the bible and are mentioned over 400 times!

Along Cassiobury Drive we came to a grand chair with a crown on. Can you guess who it belonged to? **King Herod!** In one garden we found wrapping paper ready for wise men to wrap their gifts up for Jesus.

Throughout our journey we were being closely watched over by the Angel Gabriel (also known as Jeremy) on his spectacular lit up tinsley bike.



As we approached the final stop on our nativity map, we turned the corner and arrived at Woodland Drive's open-air cinema. Here we watched a short re-telling of the nativity told by different members of our congregation. There was even a real baby Jesus on there!



Such a huge amount of effort had gone into this nativity journey that was enjoyed by well over 50 families on



Christmas Eve. It spread God's love and light across the community showing just how incredibly creative our youth and children's team are. We really had a wonderful evening and hope that all of you that were able to take part did as well.

In the words of Robbie Williams, "you can't take away our Christmas!"

India & Caroline Tearle.

CONGRATULATIONS

To our Youth Director, Neil Brookes
and his wife, Kate
on the birth of their son Reuben.

A bother to Cleo



Whatever is good
and perfect is a
gift coming down
to us from God
our Father *James 1:17*

God Bless You all



Peace Hospice Care...



... is a wonderful charity that provides free specialist care and support for patients and their families living with a life-limiting illness in South West Hertfordshire and the wider areas. Most of their patients have cancer but an increasing number have other conditions; end-stage heart disease, neurological conditions, organ failure and chronic lung disease.

Their care is holistic, looking after the whole person, helping with emotional and spiritual welfare as well as their physical symptoms. The team supports patients at end of life but a vast majority of work focuses on enabling and empowering patients to live their lives to the full, providing the best quality of life when a cure is not possible.

The Inpatient unit provides personalised care for symptom, pain and medication management in addition to end of life care in a friendly, calm environment. A range of Outpatient services are available in the Starlight centre: rehabilitative, complimentary and wellbeing interventions and workshops, including counselling, bereavement, social, spiritual and emotional wellbeing support, physiotherapy groups and creative activities, accessible to people from the earliest stages of illness. Peace community services permit patients to remain at home – supporting them and their families/carers, assessing needs and helping them to manage their illness alongside symptom management.

In December 2016 I lost my husband after a two and a half year battle with cancer. During the final months of his life, we were lucky enough to be welcomed into the family at the Watford Peace Hospice. The Peace Hospice is an environment like no other. The team are fabulous, showing a never-ending abundance of sensitivity, empathy and compassion during what can be turbulent and distressing times. Their wealth of experience is vast, and the understanding and reassurance extends not only to the patient but the whole family.

Peace Hospice Care is a charity which relies on the generous support of individuals and organisations that donate money, fundraisers and those that donate to, and buy from, the charity shops alongside a committed team of volunteers. £5 million a year is needed to deliver the free services. For every £1 income they receive less than 20p comes from the NHS.

St Luke's church donate four times a year which is massively appreciated by the Hospice, especially in this current climate with all face-to-face fundraising initiatives postponed.



A hospice is not just about dying; it is about living, in the best way you can. None of us know what lies around the corner in our personal journey through life and we are fortunate to have such an amazing place on our doorstep, ready and waiting to benefit all when needed. Please do consider personally donating and let's not lose this little gem.

Helen Donnelly

World Day of Prayer



BUILD ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

We join with the Christian women of Vanuatu in praise to you

- for fertile land and fresh air
- for the sweet melody of the birds, for land animals and the mysterious creatures of the deep
- and for the sounds of children playing.

We thank you for the example of the Christian women of Vanuatu

- for their trust in you
- for their fortitude as they struggle to provide food for their families and education for their children – things that we so often take for granted.

We ask for your forgiveness for our thoughtlessness, our carelessness and our lack of foresight which has led to the pollution of the environment and the current climate emergency, which is causing irrevocable damage to Vanuatu and to other low-lying Pacific islands.

We pray that you will help us

- to listen more carefully to you and your Word
- to build our homes and communities on its strong foundations
- and to work together towards a world where resources are used more sustainably; where justice and peace reign; and where all your creatures can live in safety and harmony.

JOIN US for the 2021 WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

BIBLE STUDY 2pm Friday 5th February Matthew Ch.7 v:24-27

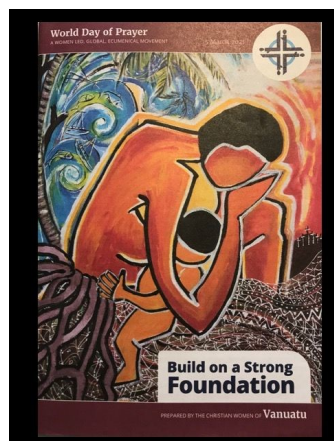
Rev. Joshua Brocklesby (St Mary's Curate) will lead us on Zoom

SERVICE 2pm Friday 5th March - Zoom with St Mary's, Watford

For further details of how to join us on Zoom contact Jackie Mee

When we build on the rock which is Christ, we know that we are on a strong foundation that will stand the tests of life and remain solidly secure. Jesus' word is our strong foundation. We will follow Jesus – the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen.

Jackie Mee



This event has been prepared by the women of Vanuatu for celebration throughout the world across many Christian denominations and by both men and women. The theme will be 'Build on a Strong Foundation'.

Come and hear about the peoples and history of Vanuatu, an island in the Pacific Ocean. They have chosen Jesus' story of the wise and foolish builders in Matthew 7 24:27 as a theme for prayer and worship. They know much about adverse weather conditions, have suffered in the cyclones of 2015 and 2020.

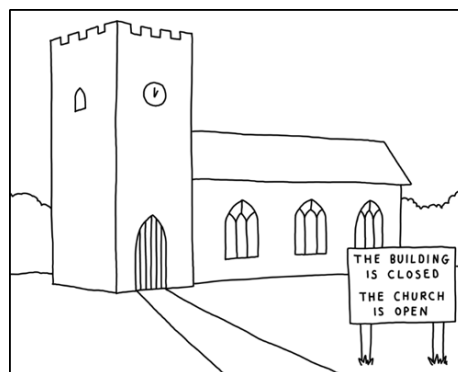
Pastoral Care During the Present Crisis

St Luke's Pastoral Committee has decided the following:

1. **To communicate** regular messages to update all on our Church & Friends' email list. If you are not on our email address list and would like to receive updates then please send your details to office@stlukeswatford.org.
2. **Those not on email** will be contacted by phone to check they are OK and informed of what's going on.
3. **Those church members in need**, either practically or spiritually, please call the Church Office on 01923 246161 and we will try to help.
4. **Members of the local Cassiobury Estate community**; we will be offering help to anyone in need if we can. Please call the Church Office on 01923 246161 if you need help.

A Prayer from the Church of England

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us
from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.



Please pray for the nation at this difficult time.

Notices

Please send your email details to the Church Office at office@stlukeswatford.org if you would like to receive update emails.

Children's and Youth Groups during the lockdown are continuing online! Please refer to the Vicar's weekly email, contact Lydia Davies or Neil Brookes for more information, or email the Church Office.



Marmalade: Di has plenty of marmalade available please contact her and she will leave it on her doorstep to be paid for after the crisis is over.

Report for St. Luke's on our Covid-19 response



As was the case for so many organisations, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic forced us quickly to shift our programmes to respond to the impacts of Covid-19 on the scholars we support and communities in which we operate in Kenya, Uganda and Lesotho. At the same time, our fundraising was hard hit as some people, companies and schools were less able to donate, and several fundraising events were cancelled – including our gala dinner which was to raise the majority of our income in 2020. However, we are pleased to have been able to respond to the requests from our in-country committees and are so grateful to all supporters, including St. Luke's, who so generously enabled us to do so.

Whilst Covid has meant unimaginable interruptions and pressures put upon society here in the UK, for the communities we support in Africa the consequences have been even more severe. The parents of many of our scholars who work in the informal sector (e.g. as market traders) lost their income overnight as strict lockdown measures were introduced swiftly across Africa due to the concern that weak health systems in those countries would be unable to cope with an outbreak. Schools were closed immediately, meaning those parents also suddenly had extra mouths to feed. We were able to provide emergency food parcels to families of our scholars in all three countries to see them through those difficult months. We also supported the entire staff team at our link schools in Kenya and Uganda financially – with no students in class and no government support, the schools simply did not have the ability to pay salaries of teachers, cleaners, cooks and guards, plunging these families into a perilous situation. Many schools in Africa have been forced to close as a result of the financial loss caused by the pandemic: we are so glad that we were able to support our link schools through the difficult months and ensure they were still there to offer a valuable education to hundreds of students when they were able to reopen.

We have been delighted to see schools and colleges reopen in Kenya this year but are still awaiting news of when they will fully reopen in Lesotho and Uganda. Needless to say, we will continue to support our scholars, their families, and our partner schools in whatever way is needed until we finally beat this awful pandemic.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support for Rafiki Thabo Foundation – you are helping us to make a real, transformational difference to the students and schools we support in Kenya, Uganda and Lesotho.

Note: Rafiki Thabo Foundation is one of the PCC's regular Mission partners and more information can be found at www.rafiki-foundation.org.uk.

*Paul Evans
Treasurer*

A Refection On Candles

by Eileen Rawson

GOOD MORNING - TODAY IS WEDNESDAY AUGUST 5TH

Early on in Lockdown when I had lighted my candle
at the beginning of the online Service,
it was threatening to go out

I realised that there was excess wax around the wick making the light very small.
A candle can represent Jesus as the Light of the world and for me the light was very
much reduced.

It occurred to me that this could be a metaphor
of how sin can make us lose sight of Jesus
BUT if we confess the sin
and accept forgiveness
then we can see Jesus more clearly
His light will shine brightly once more.

Which is exactly what happened
When I got rid of the excess wax and relit the candle
the light was as bright as ever.

Also, when I blew the candle out
I was fascinated by the beautiful patterns the dissipating smoke made as it wafted away
It reminded me of the how the Holy Spirit moves in a mysterious way!

SO I STARTED THINKING ABOUT CANDLES

In the daily reflections
it's amazing how many different things have been used
to relate to our present circumstances
Rainbows of course
but also Hermit crabs,
tendrils,
house martins,
golden syrup
boxes of chocolates to name but a few..

NOW FOR THE CANDLE CONNECTION

I'm sure most of you have a stock of candles laid by in case there is a power cut.
The question is – do you know where they are?

There is a Chinese proverb which says
“It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness”
Amnesty International has used those words as a slogan.

Jesus is the Light of the World and darkness cannot put out that light

Many people are in a dark place just now
but knowing Jesus can make a big difference to the way they deal with the situation.

Is your candle threatening to go out at this time of uncertainty

Try lighting a candle and remembering Jesus
who is there for each one of us in our need?

And for those of us who have not really suffered,
- indeed some of us have admitted to quite enjoying lockdown,
- we must remember the example of Jesus

Those of you who like me are getting on a bit,
may remember singing

Jesus bids us shine like a pure clear light
Like a little candle burning in the night

In this world of darkness, we must shine
You in your small corner and I in mine

So in what way can WE shine and bring a little brightness into the lives of those who
are suffering?

Many volunteers are doing just that

– making masks,
making phone calls,
baking cakes or cooking meals,
sending cards,
giving to charities,
raising money,
not forgetting prayer.

A CANDLE CAN BE A SMALL BUT EFFECTIVE ANSWER TO A BIG PROBLEM!!

Let's pray
Loving God,

May more and more people come to know Jesus as the Light of the World
and turn to Him to shed light on their darkness.

May we who profess to be Christian
find ways of bringing some of his light
into the lives of those who are suffering.

Give us guidance and imagination so that we may be your messengers
and bringers of light
like candles in the darkness. AMEN



Raising money for

Barnabas Fund

Prize £5

Get your answers to Pam by

CLOSING DATE: 28th Feb 2021

To enter EMAIL your answers to pam.stlukes@gmail.com

Or FILL IN this quiz paper (legibly) and **send it to**

**Pam Norman, St Luke's Vicarage, Devereux Drive,
Watford, WD17 3DD.**

If you would like to know the answers,

include an SAE for return of your marked quiz, or tell

Pam in the email. If the event of a tie, there will be a
draw for the winner.

Don't forget to DONATE to the Barnabas Fund

Online at <https://barnabasfund.org/> or by enclosing a donation
with your paper entry. Your personal details will not be stored
or used in any way. More details from St Luke's Office weekday
mornings, or contact pam.stlukes@gmail.com

Discover more about Barnabas Fund at

www.barnabasfund.org

Calling all Eggheads!

New Quiz

Help raise money for persecuted Christians around the world.
To get your copy, contact Pam
Closing date 28th Feb 2021


barnabafund
hope and aid for the persecuted church

All answers begin with BA... e.g. Barts

1. Slap-up meal (7)
2. Rubber or musical...? (4)
3. Musical or decorative style (7)
4. Black and white-nosed beast (6)
5. An implement to soothe that itch (4,9)
6. Sheep noise encompasses paper for award (5)
7. Scottish musical noisemakers! (8)
8. King Fahd Causeway connects this to SA (7)
9. Tipple cream from Eire (7)
10. It has a skin to slip on (6)
11. Sweet pastry with nuts (7)
12. Facial disguise for robber (9)
13. Son of encouragement (8)
14. Ninth beams are splintered in exile (10)
15. A pie with ten fruit (8)
16. City of Picasso's youth (9)
17. Town between Coleraine & Ballymena (10)
18. Many troops ready for battle (9)
19. A state of Germany (7)
20. Coereba flaveola (10)
21. One of Potter's many enemies (8)
22. A danger to cars at Longleat
23. America's symbolic bird (4,5)
24. A way of traversing & reversing in H₂O (10)
25. Chewing gum with a dangerous connection (7)
26. Coastal indentation, see, it was on TV. (8)
27. Mirrored places for spinal patients? (9)
28. A relaxing city to lay in? (4)
29. Pre-Trump White House resident (6,5)
30. French writer of La Comédie Humaine (6)
31. Night flyer found on farms? (4,3)
32. Hit by Paul McCartney & Wings as they attempt escape (4,2,3,3)
33. A tarty place up North (8)
34. BaSO₄ (6,8)
35. A rite with water at the heart (7)
36. Rounders equivalent in the USA (8)
37. Hoodwink (9)
38. A level equivalent? (13)
39. A bug with big effect when found in numbers (9)
40. Put crank by divided money problem (10)
41. Push in on the waterways (5)
42. Money establishment makes reserves paper records (9)
43. Panda's favourite food (6)
44. An essential to prevent loss or reversal (6)
45. A porky sandwich (5,5)

COVID QUIZ—closed on 10th January

Congratulations to the winner Lydia - hers was the only entry to get full marks. £220 was raised for the Peace Hospice, plus any donations given online. Thanks particularly to Pat Hancox and her neighbours who raised £185. The answers are below or returned in your SAE. Thank you!

And a big thank you to Pam Norman for organising it

Answers to the quiz: -

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Face Masks | 21. SAGE |
| 2. Social distancing | 22. Track and trace |
| 3. Covid | 23. Livestream |
| 4. Put on Furlough | 24. Swabs |
| 5. Shielding | 25. Vaccination |
| 6. PPE | 26. Testing |
| 7. Gloves | 27. Zoom |
| 8. Wash hands | 28. graphs |
| 9. Wuhan/China | 29. Two metres |
| 10. Hands face space | 30. Working from home |
| 11. NHS/WHO | 31. Travel ban |
| 12. Global pandemic | 32. Air corridors |
| 13. Isolate | 33. Outbreak |
| 14. Rules | 34. Quarantine |
| 15. Lockdown | 35 Super-spreader |
| 16. Bubbles | 36. Gratitude |
| 17. Coronavirus | 37. Transmission |
| 18. Hope | 38. No hugs and kisses |
| 19. Keep/stay safe | 39. Hand gel |
| 20. Rainbows | 40. contacts |



Congratulations to Susie Boxhall and Alex Phillips on their engagement. God bless them as they prepare for their marriage.

News from some of Our Mission Partners



Letter from Ruth Guinness NOT in Malawi

Dear friends,

Greetings from the UK! Yes, I have arrived here safely. I am currently self-isolating at my sister's house in Guildford. The family are being wonderful looking after me. I'm keeping my distance from them, so meals are delivered to the bedroom door! We have been outside in the garden together though – still keeping distance – even having a couple of meals outside (wrapped up warmly). We had great fun in the snow on Sunday!

The weather is a bit of a shock to the system – but I'm nice and snug and warm. I am enjoying time to rest after the last few weeks which were stressful as I packed up and watched the news, wondering whether I'd be able to come back or not. The COVID-19 situation in Malawi has become much worse since the beginning of the year. Over the last week or so at least a third of the coronavirus test results have been positive, with the numbers far higher than they were last year. Quite a number of prominent people have died from COVID-19, including two government ministers. The President declared three days of national mourning on the day they died, and also declared a State of Disaster, enabling the country to seek more international assistance.

After the time of self-isolation is over, I will travel to Wareham to be with my parents for a while. After settling in, I will be starting my sabbatical with a period of rest and recovery. I am grateful to have this time to draw near to God and be restored.

Thank you all so much for your thoughts and prayers. After my sabbatical I will have a time for home assignment, and expect to visit churches either in person or online in the autumn.

Summary of prayer points:

- Praise for safe travel back to the UK;
- Praise for wonderful provision for my self-isolation;
- Pray for the COVID-19 situation in Malawi, where hospitals are full and the health system is stretched;
- Pray for a good time of rest and recovery.

Thank you so much for your prayerful support. I'm praying for you too!

*With love in Christ,
Ruth Guinness*

Sally Miller from Friends International in Lancaster

Hello,

After a difficult and discouraging Autumn term, we saw 10 students sign up for our lockdown/virtual 'hosting' scheme which linked them with local Christian families over

the Christmas break. Some have made good friendships that look set to continue but do please be praying for good follow up with all these students and that this would be an encouragement to us and our volunteers as we keep moving forward this term.

Please do also be praying for more opportunities to get alongside international students. We are so aware that there are many, many international students who are struggling and feel isolated, frustrated, and left behind by the universities, however we have been finding it hard to find opportunities to reach these students to offer support. Please pray that we would be creative in our online presence and that God would be opening doors for us to connect with students in a meaningful way.

***Thank you,
Sally Miller***

The Gelsthorpes in Japan:

Sharing Jesus through video games

Here at Hanamaki Grace Christ Church in Northern Japan, we are passionate about our church being a place of rest and fun. For the children who come to our weekly church café on a Saturday, that means playing the popular video game Minecraft. This game has over 120 million players worldwide and involves building structures and exploring a virtual 3D world. As a church, we've bought a stock of tablets that the children who come can use to play this game together. At the end of each session, we share a video bible story made using either the Minecraft game or a Lego animation.



Playing Minecraft in the church on a Saturday morning.

Recently, we've had seven children come and they listen intently to the story at the end. One of the boys was even asking about the Jesus video which he'd been watching on

YouTube and our son Caleb (10) was able to share the gospel with him. Some of the mums also stay in the café whilst their children play giving us a great opportunity to get to know them too.



Players working together in Minecraft

There are very few Christians in Japan (less than 1%) so the chances of these families hearing the gospel any other way is very small. Please pray

that many of those who come will believe the good news. If you'd like to find out more about the practicalities of running a Minecraft Club, please do get in touch. Thank you so much for all your support.

Mark and Sarah Gelsthorpe with Grace (14), Isaac (12) and Caleb (10) are missionaries working with OMF Japan. They lead a small church plant in the northern rural city of Hanamaki.

Mark.gelsthorpe@omfmail.com

Martin Olando, Principal at Bishop Hannington Institute, Mombasa, Kenya:

Greetings,

We are fine and well. We began our semester physical classes today. It's been along break from physical classes since last March.

We had over 85 percent of students reporting today. We do hope the rest report tomorrow. We are expected to observe tough ministry of health restrictions.

We covet your prayers.

Regards,

Martin

Alastair in Nepal

Thank you for this opportunity to say something about my work 'in' Nepal. On the one hand, very little has changed since last time - still here in the UK, hair getting longer in the third lockdown and working on the same projects. On the other hand, this time has been good to be productive with work being more of the production line kind.

I am still updating the many Bible for Children images. I started on these for the Nepali translation but the organisation was soon eager to use the drawings to update their international versions. Just recently they told they had updated 8000 stories with 20000 images. A real encouragement has been an enthusiastic person from a minority language group in Nepal wanting to record the stories. He has now completed all 60 recordings and has been sending them to me to edit and make into reading app. However, software changes and internet problems has meant that I have not been able to download all the recordings but we are trying to solve that.

The Ancient Path booklet which introduces Christianity and challenges the strong Asian view that Christianity is a modern, western religion has been translated into several of Nepal's minority languages and people have been using them. The pastor I know has been using the Nepali version to share the Gospel with positive results. Going beyond Nepal, I have been able to make an audio version in Vietnamese, which fortunately uses a modified Roman script. The app is awaiting approval for publishing on Google Play Store. I'm hoping that people in Nepal will be able to make some recordings of the booklet so that I can make more apps. At the beginning of December, I was able to join

an online workshop to learn more about the Reading App Builder software that I use to make the apps. This included participants from Canada to New Zealand who had to attend at very awkward times.

It has been good to have a one afternoon a week change of scene to attend an online course (One Truth Project) looking at the origins of Islam and common misconceptions of Christianity.

It is currently impossible to make any travel plans at this time.

Thank you for your prayers for the spreading of the Good News.

*God bless,
Alastair*

Watford Deanery Synod Meeting

Brief Notes on the Meeting on 1st February, 2021

St Luke's representatives, Mary, Cynthy and Wendy S., together with Michael, attended the online meeting. The session started with a brief service for the induction of our new Rural Dean, Peter Waddell (previously the assistant Rural Dean). This was led by Archdeacon Jane with grace, joy, and appropriate humour. The introductory part of the induction helpfully summarises the role of the Rural Dean (and function of the Deanery Synod):

"The Rural Dean shares with the Bishop and Archdeacon the general oversight of the parishes, ministers and churchwardens in the deanery. He is called to encourage the ministers and churchwardens in the building up of the body of Christ. Any minister in difficulty, trouble or sadness should seek his support; in a vacancy, churchwardens should do the same.

The Deanery Synod is charged to bring together the concerns of the parishes it represents, and to encourage interdependence and a sense of community among them. With the Lay Chair, the Rural Dean plays a leading role in enabling the Synod to fulfil its mandate. He also shares with the Archdeacon in the oversight of the buildings and fabric committed to the Church's care."

Archdeacon Jane then made herself available for questions before leaving the meeting, handing over to Peter.

Areas mentioned for potential future Deanery Synod discussions included the 'Living in Love and Faith' consultation on issues relating to human sexuality, and 'post-Covid – what then?'. Issues of mental health; housing and homelessness; how to recover financially and spiritually after this phase, were also raised by representatives. Peter commented that time was quite limited and the issues were big ones!

It was noted that the Administrator at Abbots and Bedmond, Lucy Farquharson is now acting as Deanery Secretary, but a new Deanery Lay Chair is still needed and we were asked to consider taking on this role.

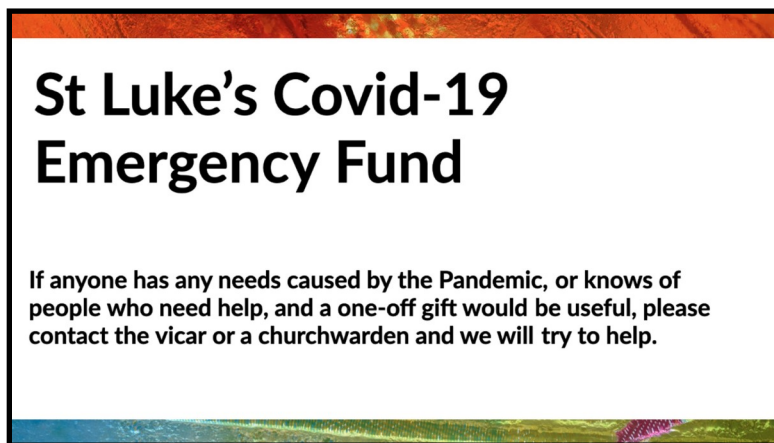
We had been requested to prepare very brief reports from each Parish, and Mary succinctly summarised for us St Luke's recent activities including the decision to worship

online for now. From others' reports, public worship is generally suspended throughout the Deanery. Various combinations of Zoom, Facebook, YouTube; live and recorded, sometimes written materials, were being used for worship and contact. There was awareness of an extended reach geographically to those watching, alongside frequently greater difficulty maintaining in-person contact. Some churches faced particular financial difficulties with the reductions both in giving (particularly of cash) and in rental from other use of facilities. Most were however 'coping', and some benefiting financially from areas like bequest/s or special straightforward appeals to their congregation with good response.

Peter noted uncertainties and local issues for each church about re-opening and emphasised the importance of recognising local differences and needs, and that we need to take care not to judge others who make different choices or have different timings according to their own situation – we don't all need to be in 'lock-step'!

Next meeting: May 26 at 19:45.

Wendy Sommerville



A Brief Pageant of English Verse

I won't arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
I'll sanitize the doorknob and make a cup of tea.
I won't go down to the sea again; I won't go out at all,
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.
There's a green-eyed yellow monster to the north of Kathmandu
But I shan't be seeing him just yet and nor, I think, will you.
While the dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay
I'll make my bit of supper and eat it off a tray.
I shall not speed my bonnie boat across the sea to Skye
Or take the rolling English road from Birmingham to Rye.
About the woodland, just right now, I am not free to go
To see the Keep Out posters or the cherry hung with snow,
And no, I won't be travelling much, within the realms of gold,
Or get me to Milford Haven. All that's been put on hold.
Give me your hands, I shan't request, albeit we are friends
Nor come within a mile of you, until this trial ends.

Author Unknown

Youth Groups on Zoom

RISE

Thursdays 6.30pm

Rock Solid

Thursdays 7.45pm

Urban Saints

Saturdays 6.00pm

Altitude

Sundays 9.45am

Zoom available on request.

For Urban Saints contact Susan
For all other youth groups contact Neil

Toddlers

Thursday mornings

On Zoom 9.45am

For further details and Zoom links,
contact Lydia at children@stlukeswatford

When I say, "I am a Christian"

written by Carol Wimmer, in 1988,
and first published by Hi-Call Gospel Magazine in 1992.

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting, "I've been saved!"
I'm whispering, "I get lost sometimes
That's why I chose this way"

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I don't speak with human pride
I'm confessing that I stumble –
needing God to be my guide

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I'm not trying to be strong
I'm professing that I'm weak
and pray for strength to carry on

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success
I'm admitting that I've failed
and cannot ever pay the debt

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I don't think I know it all
I submit to my confusion
asking humbly to be taught

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I'm not claiming to be perfect
My flaws are far too visible
but God believes I'm worth it

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I still feel the sting of pain
I have my share of heartache
which is why I seek God's name

When I say, "I am a Christian"
I do not wish to judge
I have no authority
I only know I'm loved

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New Wine 2021



Thursday 29 July – Tuesday 3 August



1 Saturday 24 – Wednesday 28 July
2 Thursday 29 July – Monday 2 August

Find out the latest
information on how United
will run this year via their website

Cloud Reflection by Eileen Rawson

Good Morning. It's Monday December 7th

You may not have heard of Luke Howard. He was a Quaker scientist who in 1803 analysed, classified and gave names to various formations of clouds. This excited poets and artists who looked at clouds more intensely with thrilling effects in their poems and paintings

I think clouds are fascinating
I could sit watching them for a long time; ...
light and feathery...white and fluffy...grey and threatening.
They change shape, second by second

With a bit of imagination, the clouds can resemble birds, fish and other animals.
Even sometimes the shapes of maps of countries.

As clouds move, they often obscure the sun
and on a cloudy day we may not see the sun at all,
which makes the day duller and less cheerful,
though storm clouds can be really impressive.

The thing is that even when we cannot see the sun, we know it is still there.

In the same way when the stormy weather of Coronavirus appeared.

When sadness or loneliness or frustration or financial loss
make God seem very far away
in our hearts we know that He is still there
bright unchangeable comforting
giving life loving us.

The other day when the sky was covered with dark grey clouds
I looked out of my window and saw a beautiful rainbow
in fact a double one.

I realised that because the clouds were so dark
the rainbow seemed even brighter!

The symbol of hope and God's promises shone brightly
causing my eyes to concentrate on the beauty of the rainbow

In the same way in these dark days we have to concentrate
on what good things we do have
to try to be positive and hopeful

Incidentally a modern type of cloud is the vapour trail of a jet plane

We hardly ever see one these days
a great advantage for the condition of the air
as was the reduction in car usage
considerably reducing pollution
another positive to be thankful for.

Every cloud has a silver lining.
I hope you can find some at the edge of the Covid cloud!

When we first went to live in Zambia,
The sky was always blue and mostly cloud-free.
I remember making a comment to a friend about the lovely weather
She laughed saying "but it's always like this until the rainy season comes.
We really appreciate the sunshine after a cloudy, rainy day
though we knew the sun was still shining even though we could not see it.

May we appreciate God's presence
even when the cloud of Corona hangs over us

For a prayer
I am going to use a slightly adapted version of one of Matt Redman's songs

Blessed be your name oh Lord
Blessed be your Holy Name
When the sun shines down on me
When the world's all it should be
Blessed be your name
Blessed be your holy name
When the darkness closes in Lord
still will I say
Blessed be your name
On the road marked with suffering
though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be your name
Blessed be your holy name. AMEN

A BIG, BIG THANK YOU to...

- all of our wonderful staff for bringing this service to us each week
- Michael for his leadership and spiritual guidance
- Tim Whittaker and his technical team
- Our wonderful musicians and singers
- The pastoral team who are contacting members of the church family to check on their well being and praying with them over the telephone
- YOU for your faithful prayers, support and encouragement to each other

Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save lives
With God's help we will get through this

Dear God.

Where does one start?

You've been beside me so much over the past two months and I'd love to tell others of how you personalise your care- not just a birthday card with my name on it but constant almost hour by hour care.

On December 21st, I was becoming increasingly short of breath. I had a telephone hospital consultation which informed me that my treatment was to be delayed a week, but the specialist nurse seemed not to realise that I was getting increasingly breathless. Sometimes anger is useful, sometimes tears are useful- my middle class upbringing did not encourage either but can be necessary. Consequently, I was advised to call for an ambulance. (That's one way to entertain the neighbours!) Such efficient caring folk; ambulance people (and neighbours).

Then I had to negotiate Casualty constraints.

'If you cannot admit me then I will go private'.

'Do you know a private respiratory care consultant?'

'No but I can google, or my daughter can.' (telephone calls to said daughter)

'Then we will admit you.'

[Wait in A&E for 10 hours and see the world. I'd only taken a Bible as reading material in with me, so I read Galatians in between being seen. Did just reading Galatians help orientate my thinking whilst I was seriously ill?]

Even more 'entertainment' on the ward but some sleep in my sitting position. The usual shortage of pillows but ask and keep on asking- if that was good enough for Jesus; it's good enough for me! Pillows arrived.

A lovely respiratory registrar drained fluid off my pleura the next day. Then how to work the system to be discharged? It helps to know how to manage and God pulls strings too. Two days later Watford General was closed because of staff shortage: was my admission God's timing?

Would I be able to hang out until 7th January, the date set to rectify the problem? Anxiety hits us all. Fortunately, God does not mind if we bring the same concern to Him, a million times a day. Despite this, I had a great memorable Christmas.

The Nativity Tableau in my garage was a personal distraction, as people going to the park stopped to look at the ancient teddy bear caring for baby Jesus. Did they notice the reverse spiral bandaging as swaddling? I was a district nurse in the days when elderly ladies- my present age, no comment- had weekly leg dressings and bandaging. Rainbow rabbit had several cuddles, before returning to duty. Elephant never left his post. Can we have an Easter tableau?

Friends took me to UCHL for my preassessment and op'. Key-hole surgery is no problem except if the key is about 7cms wide and 5+ litres of fluid are drained off. Nurses can be rather blasé about operations, but I have now recovered. One nurse chose to attend to me so that she could tell me that a year ago she became a Christian. I was feeling too weary to bother but she had been encouraged by seeing my Bible notes.

Helpfully, as a friend said, 'God has not finished with you yet'. Lockdown gives so many opportunities to write letters, phone, call, cook, and even to indulge in personal pursuits. Paul used his two Lockdowns to write letters which affected more people than

his chasing around the Mediterranean.

I'm facing another change as I'll never run a marathon with this breath- (not that sport was ever attractive-only hockey- was that because it could be brutal?) An exciting new sphere dawns. God is in charge and holds us in His Everlasting arms- the Divine Cuddle.

Jesus longs to be our brother beside each one of us. We only must ask and give our lives to Him. The Peace in what otherwise is a tsunami of a storm, is His alone to give. God bless us all.

Joy Hobbs



January 2021

To our Friends at St Luke's,

Christmas Gift Bags for YMCA Residents

I write to express my thanks to all of you for your generosity in giving your time and love to making so many fabulous gift bags for the men and women who spent Christmas in our Watford Hostel. This Christmas has been particularly hard for so many of them as they have been unable to see loved ones.

Our residents come to stay with us for a variety of reasons. Some may have experienced relationship breakdown; others might have poor mental health or addictions. Others have lost their jobs and are looking for work. We welcome them and provide support and care to help get them back on their feet and live independently again.

An unexpected gift coming from a stranger is a sign to them that they are valuable and remembered. Your kindness is also a sign that God has not forgotten their situation and is still active in the world today through his people. One resident said to us 'What? Really, is this for me? Thank you!' Many other residents have expressed joy at receiving their gifts and the difference it has made to their Christmas.

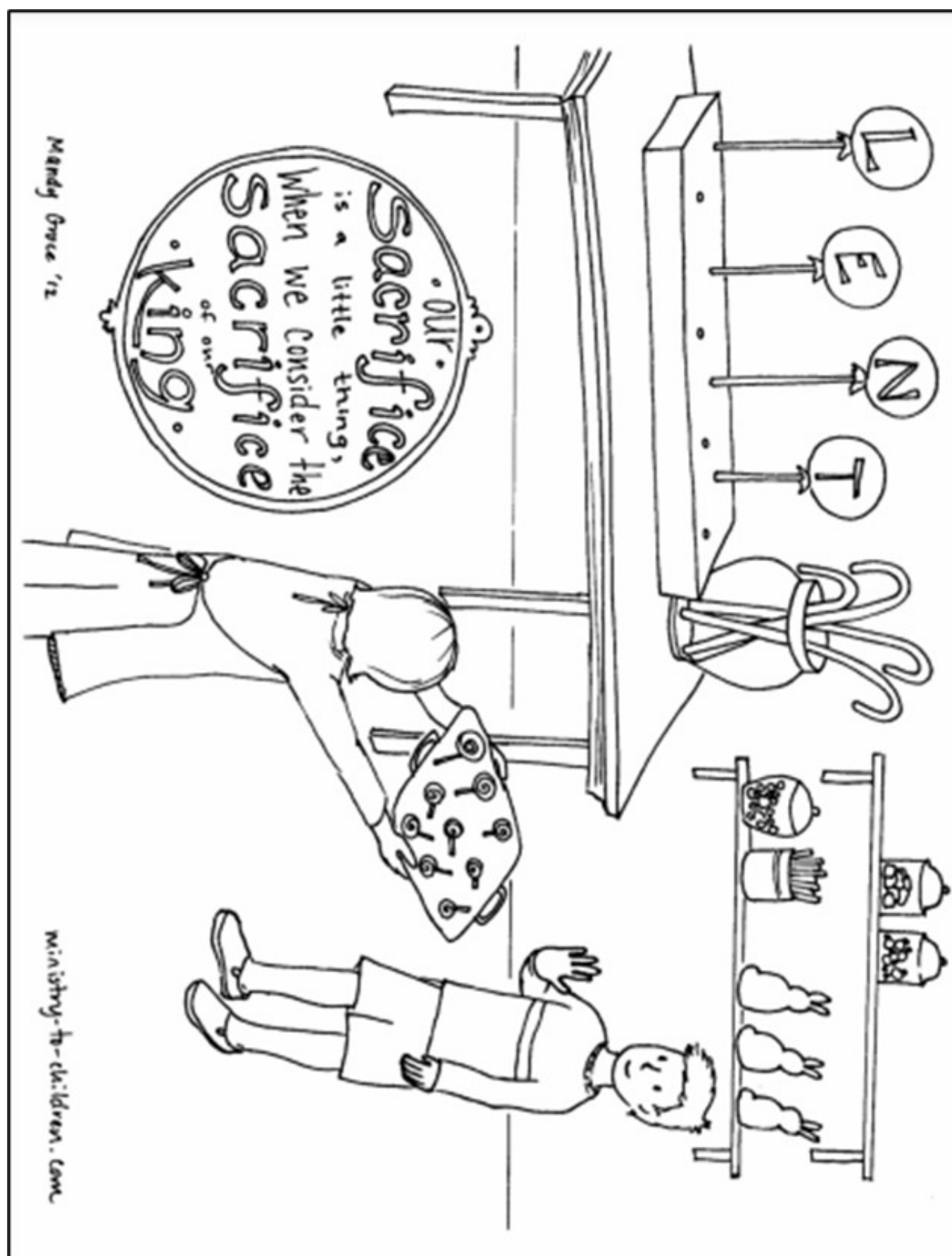
We too as a Chaplaincy team, as providers of spiritual and pastoral care to our residents are blessed and encouraged by your practical and prayerful support to us.

Yours in Christ,

Matt Penny

Matt Penny
Lead Chaplain, OneYMCA

Children's Page



WORD SEARCH

Find these words which are all from the story Jesus's temptation by the devil which can be read in the Bible in the book of Matthew, ch4 v 1 to 11

Lent - Jesus went into the desert to fast and pray before beginning his work for God. Jesus was tempted several times by Satan, but was able to resist. Lent allows Christians to remember Jesus's fasting in the desert. It is a time of giving things up and a test of self-discipline.

angels	forty	Satan	test
bread	high	Spirit	wilderness
devil	Jesus	stones	world
fasting	kingdoms	temple	worship
foot	mountain	tempted	

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

The next edition of St. Luke's News will be for Easter. You are welcome to submit an article, of not more than 450 words, to be considered for the next magazine.

Please email articles to the editor, Margaret Forester or to the church office

If you wish to receive St. Luke's News regularly, either delivered to your door or emailed, please contact the Church Office (246161). Large print is also available. Alternatively, please let us know if you no longer wish to receive it.

The magazine appears on our website, www.stlukeswatford.org

Vicar	Michael Norman
Reader	Dave Clarke
	Pam Norman
Reader-in-training	Wendy Somerville
Music Director	Jeremy Cooke
Youth Director	Neil Brookes
Children & Family Team Leader	Lydia Davies
Administrator	Beth Burns
Assistant Music Leader	Jeremy Hogarth
Church wardens	Susan Miller
	John Williamson
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PCC Treasurer	Paul Evans
PCC Secretary	John Sills
Safeguarding Officer	Mary Bowen

Please leave a message for any of the above on the Church Office answerphone -
246161

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