



St Luke's News

April 2023
Number 273

Easter greetings, Easter rejoicing



Image by kipageter on Freepik.com

In *Matthew 28* Jesus meets the women who were visiting the tomb, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary in the garden with the word, "Greetings". This could be translated as hail or even rejoice. The women were already stunned by angels giving them the amazing message, "He is not here, He has risen", and they were now running to tell the disciples they had met Jesus. A time of fear, grief, and now shock, becomes a time of rejoicing.

A few weeks ago, Arsenal Football Club won a home Premier League match on virtually the last kick of the match, 9 minutes into extra time, against Bournemouth. The fans, players, management, reserves all went into incredible celebration, real rejoicing, something that could not be contained, hopes incredibly fulfilled! So big was the celebration and

rejoicing, that in some newspapers it was reported the Football Association were going to look into it!

If winning a football match causes such an incredible outpouring of rejoicing, how much more have we to rejoice about in the Christian Faith – Jesus Christ has Risen from the dead!

We live in a difficult time of uncertainty, with war in Ukraine, nations grouping together, global warming and possibly an economic banking crisis on the horizon. But as the hymn *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* states in the final verse:

“the Lord gives strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow”.

The strength comes from the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead releasing strength and joy into the lives of those who welcome Jesus in. In *Philippians 3:10* St Paul states:

“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the power of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.”

This Easter, let’s truly know that “rejoicing” is not only over human things like football matches, but even more over Jesus’ resurrection from the dead! As we come up to Easter, it’s been a sad time of loss of long-term church members. We pray for their families who grieve. However, our loss is heaven’s gain because Jesus has risen from the dead.

This afternoon I prayed with someone who has only a couple of days to live. It was a powerful conversation with someone who has faith. Jesus was very present with us, the Lord was waiting to welcome this person home.

The challenge of Easter is to live in the power of the Resurrection of Jesus, thereby receiving spiritual strength for today and a bright hope for tomorrow beyond the grave.

Hallelujah! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed, Hallelujah!

I look forward to celebrating with many of you this Holy Week and Easter.

***Yours in Christ
Michael
Vicar of St Luke’s***

Services at St Luke's Church

Sunday

8:00am Holy Communion Service

This is a said Communion and is held once a month in the Chapel at St Luke's. All are welcome.

10:30am Morning Service/Holy Communion Service

This is our main morning service, and is currently available live-streamed on YouTube. All are welcome, and there are usually children's groups and a crèche for younger ones. The details in the calendar below may change.

5:30pm Encounter - Informal Evening Service

This service includes worship, a talk and opportunities to be prayed for. There are activities for children and young people.

Tuesday

10:00am Holy Communion Service

We also have a weekly Communion (or Service of the Word if the Vicar is unavailable) at 10:00am on Tuesdays. This is a lovely, reflective service with a couple of hymns, followed by community tea and coffee.

April	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 2nd		A city rejoicing! (Palm Sunday) <i>Matthew 21:1-11</i>	<i>The Holy Spirit</i> with us in difficult times
Sunday 9th	Holy Communion	Easter Sunday	Beatitudes: Are you happy?
Sunday 16th		Lectionary	Beatitudes: Be poor in spirit
Sunday 23rd		APCM address	Beatitudes: Be mournful!
Sunday 30th		Lectionary	Beatitudes: Be meek

The sermon titles may change at the discretion of the preacher.

May	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 7th		Lectionary	Beatitudes: Be righteous
Sunday 14th	Holy Communion	Lectionary	Beatitudes: Be merciful
Sunday 21st		Mission Sunday	Beatitudes: Be pure in heart!
Sunday 28th		Lectionary	Pentecost

The sermon titles may change at the discretion of the preacher.



Prayer

FOCUS 8pm Tues

Zoom (Chapel 2nd Tues of the month)

Prayer for Children & Youth

Thursdays during term time
3pm in the Chapel

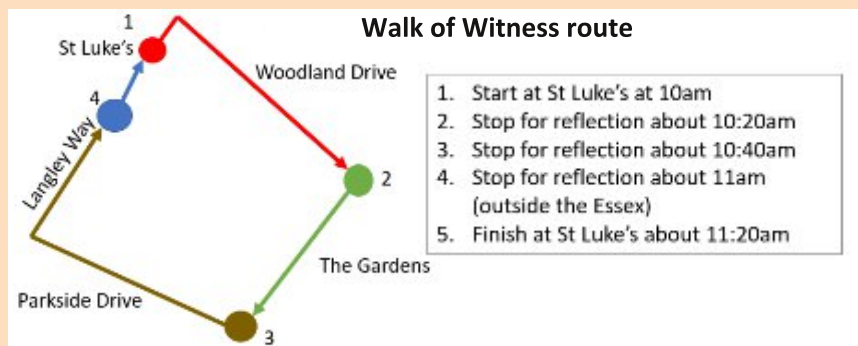
Hour of Prayer

Fridays 10am in the Chapel

Holy Week at St Luke's

Most of the readings are taken from St John's Gospel, and most of the weekday services are the short liturgical service of Compline (daily evening liturgy said by monks and nuns). The Compline service is a peaceful, reflective service of around half an hour, with a reflection on Jesus' journey to the cross and beyond.

Monday 3rd April 7:30pm	Compline, in the Chapel <i>John 12:1-11</i> 'The anointing at Bethany'
Tuesday 4th April 7:30pm	Compline, in the Chapel <i>John 12:20-36</i> 'Jesus predicts His death'
Wednesday 5th April 7:30pm	Compline, in the Chapel <i>John 13:18-32</i> 'Jesus predicts His betrayal'
Maundy Thursday 7:30pm	Holy Communion, in the Church <i>1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-13</i> 'The Last Supper'
Good Friday 10:00-11:30am 2:00pm 7:30pm	Walk of Witness (see route map, below) Hour at the Cross, in the Church (Jesus' words from the cross in <i>Luke 23</i>) Compline, in the Chapel <i>John 20:31-42</i> 'Jesus in the tomb'
Easter Sunday 8:00am 10:30am 5:30pm	Holy Communion, in the Chapel Family Communion with children's activities, in the Church and online Encounter Service in the Church



Diary dates coming up

April

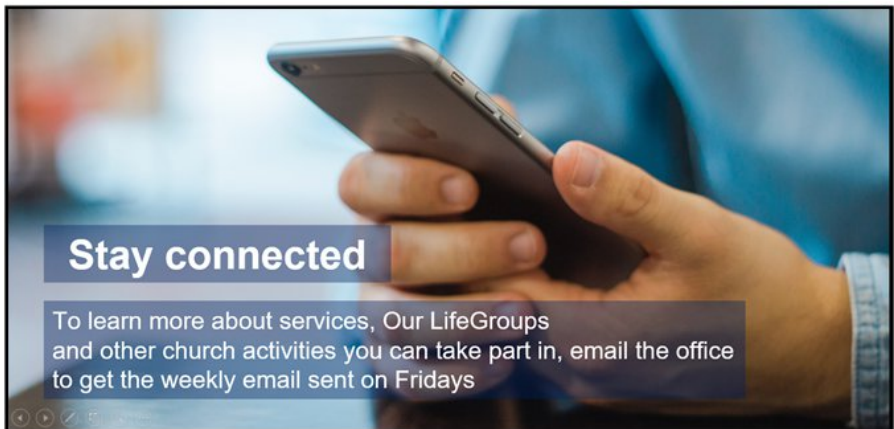
- 1st and 15th Breakfast Club
10th Easter Walk to St Albans Abbey + Bishop of
 St Albans Open Garden (2:00-4.00pm) in aid of
 Herts and Beds Historic Churches Trust (£4/adult)
14th Cameo film night
23rd Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

May

- 5th Cameo Bluebell walk
6th and 20th Breakfast Club
7th Big Lunch (Church lunch, contact St Luke's office to
 sign up)
14th Recital, 3:00 pm, Charis Sykesud (violin) and
 Jack Redman (piano)
18th Ascension Day Service (details to come)

June

- 3rd and 17th Breakfast Club
9th Cameo with guest speaker
11th Recital, 3:00 pm, Asaph Ensemble (piano, organ,
 flute)



Regular groups at St Luke's Church

Children/Youth Groups (evenings, term-time)

Urban Saints	Tuesdays	6:15–7:30pm	7–11 year olds
Base	Thursdays	6:15–7:30pm	11–14 year olds
K2	Tuesdays	7:45–9:00pm	12–15 year olds
RISE	Thursdays*	7:45–9:00pm	14–18 year olds

* Meeting intermittently so check with Neil and Lydia for dates

Breakfast Club

1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month, 8:30–10:00am

For more information, speak to Lydia

Cassiobury and Nearby Community Choir

Wednesday evenings, term-time, 8:00pm in the church

For more information, speak to Jeremy C

Come And Meet Each Other (Cameo)

Friday evenings, monthly (usually 2nd Friday of the month)

For a programme, speak to Jos or Pam W

Creative Space

Craft activities for women, monthly

For more information, speak to Pam N

Friday Club

Monthly, last Friday in the month

For more information, speak to Janet G

Knitting Group

Monthly on a Monday morning

For more information, contact Di via the church office

Prayer

FOCUS, Tuesdays, 8:00pm: every 2nd Tuesday of the month meet in the chapel, all other Tuesdays meet on Zoom (for log-in details, contact the church office)

Prayer for Children & Youth, term-time, Thursdays, 3:00pm

Hour of Prayer, Fridays, 10:00-11:00 am

Toddlers (term-time)

Thursday mornings, 9:30–11:00am

C S Lewis and The Chronicles of Narnia

Later this year in November will be the 60th anniversary of the death of C S Lewis. He died on the same day John F Kennedy was shot.

However, March this year was the 62nd anniversary of a letter Lewis wrote explaining the allegory in his series of seven books, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was first published in 1950. The girl (Anne Waller) to whom he wrote this letter was born in the same year as that book was released.



Image by wirestock.com on Freepik.com

For those who only know of Lewis through these works, written so that children can enjoy them, it may come as a surprise to learn that he was an incredibly intelligent, learned and eminent academic. For the last nine years of his life he held the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Magdalene College Cambridge, previously he had been at Magdalen College Oxford (and yes, the two universities do have different spellings for that college name). Lewis received many accolades during his lifetime but he declined the appointment to the Order of the British Empire.

So coming back to the explanation of the books, what did he write to that 11 year-old girl as a partial response to her question? He says he imagined a world of talking beasts that, like ours, had gone wrong. He wondered how Christ would enter such a world and the chronicles are the answer.

"The whole series works out like this:

The Magician's Nephew

tells the creation and how evil entered Narnia.

The Lion etc.

the crucifixion and resurrection.

Prince Caspian

restoration of the true religion after a corruption.

The Horse and his Boy

the calling and conversion of a heathen.

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader the spiritual life (especially in Reepicheep).
The Silver Chair the continued war against the powers of darkness.
The Last Battle the coming of of the Antichrist (the ape). The end of the world and the Last Judgement.

All clear?"

C S Lewis

Maybe the approaching anniversary or this article will stir you to read some of the chronicles? Although some depictions may be considered dated and of their time, the books, more-so than the films, have a wealth of messages within them for both adults and children.

Steve J

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of Peace and Justice, we pray
for the people of Ukraine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down
of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort
would draw near to them.

God requires . . .

Cob web busters
Lectern dusters
Toilet flushers

Coffee makers
Wafer breakers
Communion takers

Lesson readers
Home group leaders
Baby feeders

Baby hushers
Emulsion brushers
Seating ushers

Organ players
Table layers
Fervent prayers

Thumping drummers
Chorus hummers
New church comers

Intercessors
Flower dressers
Robed processors

Hymn book givers
Gospel liverers
Those not with us

Collection takers
Friendship makers
Garden rakers

Notice typers
Sermon writers
Candle lighters

Candle snuffers
Washer uppers
Dummy suckers

Football kickers
Visiting vicars
Lighting riggers

Balloon blowers
Flower growers
Message sowers

Choral singers
Tower ringers
And green fingers

The young and old
Hairy and bald
All are called
To serve the Lord.

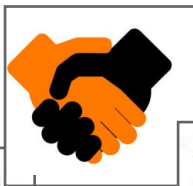
Austin Janes © 1999




Image by rawpixel.com
on Freepik.com

Volunteers urgently required for...

- Coffee after 10:30am service
- Children's groups (Sundays and Tuesdays)
- Welcoming (hopefully once a month maximum)
- Security rota (about one week a quarter)



Please get in touch with Beth in the church office if you can help.

A poster for an Easter Monday Walk. The background is a photograph of a large crowd of people walking through a city street, with a church visible in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

EASTER MONDAY WALK

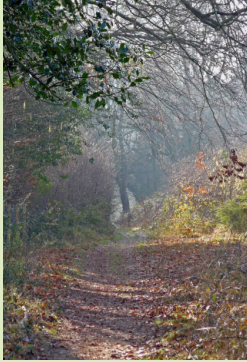
**STARTING AT 9AM
MONDAY, 10 APRIL**

**MEET AT ST LUKE'S
OR JOIN US ALONG THE ROUTE**

Pilgrimage to St Alban's Abbey to arrive for the picnic at 1pm, then a procession and service at 3pm

ALL WELCOME

Spring, North West Somerset, April 2015



Barking breaks the night's silent fast,
And badgers morosely pad these ancient paths
On fractured leaves that litter the fragile forest's
tracks
Homeward to muffled tunnels.

A primal silence haunts the bracken'd woodland
hermitage
Whose ghosts, in a dawning shroud,
Have spoken through dark's weasel words,
Through rodent rumours heard.

Russet-brown streaks in upright strokes, canvas the frame,
And down-lit shafts of flashing specks draw steam from the mulching
ground.

There, shadows of waving hands dance,
Enticing those fronds of spring's warmth.

Tokens of wakening life with subtle strength
Begin to feel their way sun-wards;
Then, forcing through earth's sodden clutch,
They splash the vernal welcome in vivid
lemon-gold.

In this sensing place –
That levers, prizes open
The vault of winter's smothering,
– Now, warmed and resurrected – are fairer,
lighter days.

Simon Trundle © 17.4.2015



News from some of our Mission Partners



Dear friends,

It was a mixed start to the term, with some challenges but lots of encouragements, many of which came from unexpected places! Over the past term, it has been a joy to come alongside some students from the University of Cumbria, as well as supporting the Lancaster University Christian Union in their events week.

This term has continued to be a challenge in terms of the numbers of students attending events, but there have been plenty of opportunities to get alongside the students that have come along to our events. One thing that has been really encouraging has been the increased contact with students from the University of Cumbria, especially since so many of our events happen on Lancaster University campus! A German international student came along to a walk last term and since then has been enthusiastically telling other international students about our activities: at our pancake event, she brought four more students from the University of Cumbria, who came from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Taiwan. Please do be praying particularly for this German student, who we have recently discovered lives with a Christian and has visited a local church during her time in Lancaster. As she draws into her final few months of studying, please pray that we and her flatmate would be able to challenge her to think more deeply about what Christians believe and that she would come to know Jesus!

I also had the privilege of taking a group of students to Kendal. We had a great afternoon exploring the town together, walking around the castle (see photo), and introducing some of the group to carrot cake for the first time! It was great to see students from the University of Cumbria and Lancaster University mixing,



and I was encouraged by the opportunities that came up naturally to share my faith and the reason that I am doing my job!

During Lancaster University Christian Union's events week, I was able to support the students as they sought to share the good news of Jesus on campus. It was great to see many international students coming into the events through the week, and I was particularly encouraged by the fact that students I had met at Friends International, church, or chaplaincy events had come along and were getting to know more Christians as a result.

As some of you may be aware, I was due to take a sabbatical last year after having worked for Friends International for seven years. However, for a number of reasons I made the decision to postpone it, with the agreement of my supervisor and others at Friends International. With the ministry in Lancaster in a stronger position this year and our Staff Worker, Skyler, having completed his first year, the timing feels right for me to be able to take a step back and take my sabbatical over the summer term this year.

My sabbatical will be for three months, running from Monday 3rd April to Friday 30th June. I will be primarily based in Lancaster for April and May, with visits to other Friends International centres around the country to see how international student ministry happens in other places. In addition, I will be visiting a supporting church for a Mission Sunday. When I am not visiting other places during this time, I will be studying some resources which may be helpful in our future ministry to international students in Lancaster.

In June, I am planning to be outside the UK. I will be attending the Leadership Matters course taking place in the Philippines between 18th and 28th June and am hoping to tie this in with a visit to friends or former students overseas.

Around the North West

As a North-West Cluster, some of us had the privilege of meeting together in person at the recent Friends International January Conference, spending some time sharing how our previous term had been as we reached out to international students in our different cities and praying for each other.

One particular prayer point from around the North West comes from Manchester: over the past year, one of our Staff Workers in Manchester, Harmienke, has been working hard to establish a Globe

Café at Salford University, a university which had 4,325 international students in 2021/22. Despite enthusiasm from the international students and a dedicated volunteer team, it has been an uphill battle as they have consistently found themselves unable to book rooms consistently and now are unable to meet on the campus. The great encouragement through all of this is that there has been a group of international students who have shown up to the Café wherever it has been, even on weeks when the venue has had to change at the last minute to be somewhere far away from the campus.

- **Please give thanks for our busy events programme through the term and all the students we have got to know**, particularly for the group of students from the University of Cumbria who have been coming to our Lancaster University outings and International Corner.
- **Please pray for wisdom** in the face of our weekly Conversation Café launched at the end of January being very low on numbers.
- **Please pray for Harmienke and the Globe Café team in Manchester** as they try to build relationships and share the gospel with international students in Salford in the midst of trying to find a permanent home for the Café.
- **Please pray for my sabbatical.** Please pray particularly for plans for June to come together quickly and that I would be able to use my time abroad usefully. Please pray that my sabbatical would be a time of refreshment and an opportunity to think through how we can better reach international students in Lancaster. Please pray too for Skyler as he builds on contacts and relationships and runs events while I am on my sabbatical.

Thank you so much for your continued support and prayers!

Sally Miller

Friends International, Lancaster Branch

Dear friends,

In mid March, the President of Malawi, Lazarus Chakwera, announced 14 days of national mourning following Cyclone Freddy. It is the Southern Region (which includes Blantyre) that has been most affected. Malawi's Department of Disaster Management Affairs published figures on 17th March:

- 345,183 people displaced,
- 505 camps established,
- 438 deaths,
- 918 injured and
- 282 people still missing.

It is likely that these figures will continue to rise. Some have chosen to stay in the ruins of their houses, others are being accommodated in relief camps based in schools.

Schools in the most affected districts remain closed for pupils until April. Other than those being used as camps, many schools were damaged and are structurally unsafe, and for some the authorities fear that pupils cannot safely get to school because of damaged roads and bridges. Using lessons learned from Covid, the national radio will be broadcasting classes.

Electricity and water supplies continue to be intermittent, although the authorities are working hard to restore these.

Cholera is a big concern, as Malawi was already experiencing a widespread cholera outbreak. In Blantyre even before Freddy we had around 10 hours without electricity each day due to the ongoing effects of damage to the hydroelectric power plants by Cyclone Ana in January last year.



The collapsed end wall of my pastor's rented house

I went to church yesterday and talked with people there about how they are. Many say that their houses are still very vulnerable, with

saturated mud brick walls. They fear too much sun, which would dry out the mud too quickly, leading to cracking and collapse. The church has approximately 60 families, and 13 of those have had major damage to their houses. It's amazing to see their incredible resilience in spite of all that has happened. Yet many have questions: why did God allow this to happen?



The wall around a property rented by SIM just down the road from me has collapsed

Please continue to pray:

- For the church to reach out with God's love and compassion. Give thanks for many churches already doing this.
- For those who have been devastated by the effects of the cyclone to receive practical help and to come to know God's comfort, and to know that he is the only Rock and Refuge.
- For coordination between government and relief agencies, and for the distribution of assistance to those most in need. Pray against corruption.
- For the rebuilding of houses, repair of schools, and replacement of broken infrastructure – roads, bridges, electricity, water.

It will take a long time for things to return to anything like normal, and many people will need support over the long term. A message from SIM Malawi's director concerning its response to this disaster is given on the next page.

Thank you so much!
In prayer,

Ruth Guinness

ruth.guinness@sim.org
P.O. Box 136 Blantyre, Malawi

A message from SIM Malawi's director:

SIM Malawi is launching a response to this disaster by providing care for victims. Right now, SIM Malawi is working with our partners in location to provide a coordinated response which will likely include provision of food, basic utensils, clothing, temporary shelter, counselling, and transport. More information on SIM's specific role in the relief effort will be posted in the coming days. Please pray for the people of Malawi and for SIM Malawi and our partners demonstrating the love of Christ at this difficult time.

Your financial support and prayers are greatly appreciated.

There will be an opportunity to give to SIM Malawi's Disaster Relief Project via St Luke's during Holy Week.



*"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered."*

Romans 4:7

News from the Gelsthorpe family in northern Japan

Praise God that Mrs Firstflower became a Christian in mid-March. She was recently introduced to the church by one of our regulars and had attended another church for about five years. On that particular Sunday the sermon was an overview of *Romans* and a Christian friend challenged Mrs Firstflower as to whether she would become a Christian. We prayed with her and she accepted Jesus as her Saviour. **Please pray** that we will be able to find a good time to study the Bible with Mrs Firstflower and encourage her to be baptised.

Short-term workers

Praise God for the Haddixes (a short-term missionary couple from the US) who arrived on 13th March. They will be living with Zara in the

second-floor church apartment and will be here until 1st May. Their ministry will include English classes for beginners, English Bible Study, youth events and helping practically around the church. **Please pray** that God will bring people to attend these events and that He will use powerfully the opportunities they have to share the gospel.



Celebrating Zara's Birthday - Zara and Grace

Zara continues to meet lots of people through skateboarding. **Please pray** for good opportunities to share the gospel with them. She is building good relationships with the ladies in her Intermediate English class and one of the ladies was sharing her fear of death with us last week. **Please pray** that this lady and the others will find hope in Jesus Christ. Recently, Zara started a new English class attended by one of Grace's friends. **Please pray** that this high-school girl too will listen to and respond to the gospel messages that Zara is able to share.

Struggling people

In this update we'd like to introduce some people connected to the church who are struggling in different ways. Please pray with us for them.

Young men and suicide

Suicide is very common in Japan. One of our regular Christian young men was deeply affected by the suicide of a colleague some years ago and had to leave a good job because of it. Another non-Christian friend has had mental health difficulties and has struggled to hold down a job since a family member killed himself. As we, as a church, try to encourage and reach out to young men like this, **please pray** for wisdom and grace for us.

Trouble at work

Recently, one church member ran into difficulty when they had to isolate because of Covid so couldn't go to work. Another Christian was bullied because, every time he went to visit family near Tokyo, colleagues would say he was "bringing Corona into the office". Another church member was falsely accused of making a mistake at work. These things could happen to anyone but **please pray** that, as Christians, our church members can be bold witnesses through the way they respond to these situations showing grace and love.

Exams

Grace and Isaac's exams begin in May. **Praise God** for the provision of lots of good places in Tokyo for them to stay during their exam time.

Please pray for good concentration and hard work during revision time and for results that reflect their ability and hard work.



Tea ceremony - Caleb with our friend Mrs S

Dedications

On 26th March and 16th April we will be holding a Dedication service for two baby boys, Kaison Anderson and Daniel Pawson. The Andersons are American church members and the Pawsons are our OMF colleagues in training in Hanamaki. **Please pray** for a joyful celebration and that the service will be a good witness to non-Christian guests. Also pray for God's blessing on Kaison and Daniel and wisdom and grace for their families.

Easter

Praise God that we can celebrate Jesus Christ risen from the dead.

- 1st April An American Easter (with evangelistic talk and cookie decorating)
- 8th April Easter Craft Event (with evangelistic talk)
- 9th April Hot Cross Bun Breakfast
 Easter Family Service
 Easter Egg Hunt (with children's talk)
 Lunch

Please pray that lots of people will come and hear the Gospel through these events and that many will be drawn to find salvation in Jesus.

God bless you all in this Easter season. Thank you for praying for us. Please let us know how we can pray for you.

***Mark, Sarah, Grace, Isaac and Caleb
OMF, Japan***

The Gelsthorpes are working for OMF leading a church plant in rural, northern Japan.

Matsuzono Cho 1-11-40, Hanamaki Shi, Iwate Ken, Japan 025-0066
mark.gelsthorpe@omfmail.com
sarah.gelsthorpe@omfmail.com



Good Friday

Hour at the Cross

Fri 7th Apr 2pm

Readings, Reflections
and Hymns

In the Church

Not livestreamed



EASTER SUNDAY 9TH APRIL

HE IS RISEN!

8am Holy Communion (In the Chapel)

10:30am Family Communion
(In Church & Online)

5:30pm Encounter Service
(In Church)

Watford Deanery Synod Meeting

All Saints Leavesden hosted the recent Deanery Synod meeting on 23rd February. It was good to catch up, over a cuppa, with other members of the Deanery for the first time since July. Worship was led by their Vicar, Rev Eddie Green. It was evening prayer with some new (to me) worship songs, aided by their Audio Visuals and recorded music, and a real sense of the presence of God as we used oil for anointing.

We were not able to have the anticipated talk from Andrew Tranter about the Watford Food Bank so we shared ideas for making an effective contribution to its work. We also had a summary of the recent General Synod from Rev Jon Stevens, the Executive Pastor of Soul Survivor.

By the time of the next Deanery Synod meeting, St Luke's will have had its Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) to elect representatives for the next three-year term. Do volunteer as a new representative if you enjoy keeping in touch with members of other Anglican churches in the Watford area and if you are interested in developments within the Church of England.

Mary Bowen

Urgent plea from the Food Bank

We're low on donations at the moment, especially these items:

- Longlife fruit juice
- Tinned rice pudding and custard
- Jars of pasta sauce
- Bags of sugar
- Tinned tomatoes
- Instant mashed potato

If you can, please consider adding a few extra items to your weekly shop to donate to the Food Bank. We have collection points at Asda, Tesco Extra and both Sainsbury's. Thank you!

There is also a collection basket in the Gathering Area at St Luke's



Church in a Changing World

What is the Spirit saying to the Church at this significant moment in history?

Some personal thoughts from the Harrogate New Wine National Leadership Conference 2023



Being recently retired has its benefits! This year I was able to join most of our church staff team at the New Wine leaders' conference held in Harrogate. The first worship session on the first afternoon was incredible – 1800 people committed to the Lord and worshipping Him in a big auditorium. The highlight for me was when the music faded and all those people continued softly singing and worshipping and there was an almost tangible presence of God in the place.

Paul Harcourt who is stepping down as National Leader, led the keynote talk, based on *Isaiah 43*:

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. ¹⁹ See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.”

In a world of turmoil, he reminded us that even though we don't know how things will be in the future, God knows the beginning and the end, He is in charge, He holds all things together. Holding onto the unchanging nature of God is a sure anchor for our lives. It is also the source of joy. He is doing a new thing with us, His Church. It could be that coming to the end of our own resources is the best thing that could ever happen to us, the new season is about rediscovering God's sufficiency. It's remembering God's holiness, His faithfulness, His glory, and majesty.

“We might again tremble at his word, be pierced by the awareness of our own sin, and be moved by genuine and sacrificial love.”

Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster, basing her talk on *Psalms 24*, identified two barriers (ancient doors) to the entry of the King of glory in our lives – Repentance and Pain.

“Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? ⁴ The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.”

“⁷ Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”

Repentance comes when the Spirit shines His light and reveals our sin. But repentance is a joyful experience! Look at how Zacchaeus throws a party when he repents! Look at the Samaritan woman who runs to tell everyone when she repents! It's like a ship that is lost and how the sailors rejoice when they turn around and see the lighthouse guiding them to safe harbour.

Jill compared sin to shards of broken glass that get mixed in us and are hard to separate; we need God to pick them out gently and unravel them. She named the shards as PRIDE – when we need Faith, DESPAIR – when we need Hope, and JUDGING – when we need to Love.

I was most struck by what she said about Pain. There are many in our Church who are experiencing pain right now, and for whom it is a hard time. Jill told of how the disciples on seeing the empty tomb gave up and went back to where they were staying, going back to work to keep busy. Mary stayed with the pain by the empty tomb, and that was when she saw two angels, and that was when she met Jesus.

There will be pain, Jesus suffered on the cross and calls us to share in His suffering. By saying yes to enduring the cross with Jesus, our faith can grow, whilst our pain is tenderly held within the will of God knowing what each of us can bear. How overjoyed we will then be when glory comes.

Jill spoke of Jean Darnall's vision in 1967 of the British Isles lit all over by fiery beacons, lit to carry a message. God is penetrating the darkness with His power, strategically placing us to be His lights everywhere so no one will be without a witness. I think this resonates with the vision of St Luke's lifeboats, going into the stormy seas from the bright lighthouse to witness and rescue where he leads us.

John McGinley spoke from his book *The Church of Tomorrow – being a Christ centred people in a changing world*. He named the church of the past as the Collaborating Majority, where everyone in the land called themselves Christian. This has led us to a distorted relationship with the world, a mixing with the culture of the world that does not allow for us to bear the pain that the world may hate us as it hated Jesus. John calls this the Conflicted Middle.

But there is good news!

“The Church emerging into our culture of uncertainty is alive and dynamic, diverse, Spirit-filled, more confident in the gospel and in calling, equipping and sending people to make disciples in all nations.”

John McGinley

We are to be the Creative Minority, that is to stay in the world, but stay true to the faith. We are not friends with the world, Jesus is Lord. Numbers are not as important as making disciples. We cannot do this in our own strength but by being wholly dependent on the power of God working in us through the Holy Spirit. The Church of England has a vision to plant 10,000 new churches in the next 10 years, to reach new people, in new places, in new ways. How amazing would it be to be a part of that!

This is just a snapshot of the three days – I went to seminars and workshops, browsed the resources and organisations area and talked to many exhibiting there. I have come away with many of my own ideas, some pictures and thoughts that may have been given by God, but above all a new peace, and a renewed hope and energy to keep going. The Church is not dead, God is doing a new thing with us!

“I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

Psalm 27:13-14

Recommended books:

Lighting the Beacons – Jill Duff

The Church of Tomorrow – being a Christ centred people in a changing world – John McGinley

Susan Miller



World Day of Prayer

"I have heard about your faith"

Ephesians 1:15-19



Chatting to a friend last month, I discovered that their way of preparing for the World Day of Prayer is to meet together a few weeks beforehand and plan their event. Not so in Watford! It took almost a year of planning – attendance at the National Link Day at St Martin's in the Fields in July, holding the Regional Preparation Day in November and taking an afternoon to study the Bible passage from *Ephesians* in February – all this in order to be ready for the main event on Friday 3rd March 2023.

The Watford committee members have variously surmounted the challenges of bereavement, illness, caring duties and a house move so we were pleased to welcome two new members to replace the five who could no longer help. The 11 of us came from six different Watford churches, both Anglican and Free Church. It is the responsibility of the host church (this year St Luke's) to take the lead through the year.

On the afternoon of the service, it was encouraging for the host team to be joined by helpers from previous years, including Lorna. Our Mayor, Peter Taylor, joined us, as did our MP, Dean Russell, whose morning had been spent in the House of Lords hearing amendments to his Private Members' Bill.

This year's service was written by an ecumenical group of ladies from Taiwan. They had overcome church divisions within Taiwan and the start of the Covid-19 pandemic to send us a message of encouragement. Only 6.6% of Taiwan's 23 million population is Christian. Many in Taiwan follow a mixture of Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism and traditional religion.

The postcard pictured was painted by Hui-Wen Hsaio and shows women praying silently and looking up into the dark. Despite the uncertainty of the path ahead, they know that the salvation of Christ has come. Two endangered species, the Mikado



pheasant and the Black-faced spoonbill are featured. They have unique significance to the Taiwanese. The green grass represents the Taiwanese as simple, confident and strong and under God's care. The Phalaenopsis (butterfly orchids) are the pride of Taiwan, the Kingdom of Orchids.

We can continue to pray for their country: it remains unrecognised by the United Nations and the political tensions with mainland China are increasing.

Afterwards there was plenty of time to chat and reconnect with others over refreshments.

Thank you to all the St Luke's folk who helped us at the service and throughout the year, especially Jeremy Cooke, Pam Norman, Tim Whittaker, Beth Burns and Susan Miller's Lifegroup.

Next year's service, on Friday 1st March 2024, has been written by the Christian ladies of Palestine – another interesting and concerning part of the world. Please keep them in your prayers.

For more information go to www.wwdp.org.uk.

Mary Bowen

Creative space for hard-working women



Come together for continental breakfast (Sats), drinks and cake (Mon), a short talk and then spend time enjoying learning a new craft.

Creative space

venue



St Luke's Church
Langley Way
Watford
WD17 3EG

- learn a new craft skill
- chat with friends

Places are limited
Please book yours by contacting Pam:
07975 748243 or pam.stlukes@gmail.com
www.stlukeswatford.org/creative-space

Cassiobury and nearby Community Choir

Wednesday evening is the highlight of the week for many of us who sing in the Cassiobury and nearby Community Choir (CanCC) at St Luke's. Still less than a year old, we are open to everyone and there are now 22 singers on the books. Under the compassionate and capable direction of our leader, Jeremy C, and our conductor/accompanist, Jeremy H, our singing group is going from strength to strength.

Having done songs from musicals, our new theme is gospel music. In March we performed a medley for a fundraiser at the Essex Arms for victims of the Turkey/Syria earthquake and are now working on a concert of gospel songs to swing along to in June/July.

We were excited that some of our number were able to come along to Sunday morning services when over seven weeks we performed songs from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* and provided a singalong to accompany the play and sermon series on the story of Joseph (see photo below). Particularly memorable weeks included Pharaoh's rendition of his dreams in the style of Elvis and the song about the famine in Canaan sung in a French style.

If you would like to come to a CanCC rehearsal and give us a try (no audition or music reading needed), we meet at 8:00pm every Wednesday at St Luke's. Subs are only £10 per quarter (free to try for a couple of weeks) and for that, you will enjoy a warm welcome, laughter, and friendship, and I guarantee exercising your vocal chords will warm the cockles of your heart!

Pam Norman



LADIES CAMEO CLUB

Spring/Summer 2023 Programme

April

Friday 14th **Film night: *Quartet*** Includes choc ices!
 7 for 7:30pm Starring Maggie Smith
 Church Lounge and Pauline Collins

May

Friday 5th **Trip to Dockey Wood** The bluebell walk
 9:30am Coffee at Ashridge Lunch at The
 Meet in car Cameo + event Greyhound pub,
 park, St Luke's Aldbury

June

Friday 9th **Cinnamon Square** Entertainment by Paul
 7 for 7:30pm The Artisan Bakery a multi-award winning
 Church Lounge of Rickmansworth! baker

Bring your friends and neighbours!

For more information, email:

Jos (jocelyn_lawrance@hotmail.com) or Pam (pamela.willis@btinternet.com)

Cameo + events = men are welcome too

Donation for Club evenings - £4

If you would like to give to St Luke's by bank transfer, the details are as follows:

Account name PCC St Luke's Watford

Sort code 20-91-79

Account no. 70687472

Reference Please state if the donation is for a specific appeal,
 eg Santa's hampers, Foodbank, etc.

Please remember to complete a Gift Aid form if you are a tax payer

The Story of Joseph

Congratulations to all the people who made up our unique production of *The Story of Joseph*, portrayed on seven consecutive Sundays during the morning services in January and February (still available to watch on St Luke's YouTube if you missed any!).



Highlights for me were the enthusiasm of the children, begging me to write in new parts for them, and the enjoyment of reading *Genesis 37-46* and converting it into a drama. As I trawled the congregation for talent, I wondered if there would be enough actors to cover the parts, but in the end, they all came out of the woodwork. And what talent! Sticking in my mind, are Susan playing the flirtatious Zuleika, wife of Potiphar – played by Colin with his wonderful Welsh accent (see photo above). Also Chris S from God's own country, Yorkshire, who played Babu the Baker and held the audience spellbound as Babu came to a sad end. We had five Josephs (Mimi, Bill, Olu, Jeremy H and Marina) who brought out the emotion of our hero, and we had plentiful brothers, wise men, magicians, guards, servants, cupbearer/butlers and stewards, not forgetting Jacob and his wives – well done Fiona!



Of the 40 people involved, 14 were children/youth and the line "we are always interested in diversification" by Midianite Sophie had us giggling. Terry ensured that Pharaoh came across as powerful and witty – thank you to Wendy D for making his eye-catching costume.

Thank you also to Steve, a steadying hand supporting me with props and stage direction, and to the costume makers. Many thanks to everyone involved in this production on and off stage. A list of credits is given below.

I so enjoyed being at the heart of things (and bossing people about!) and am planning a similar series for early 2024 on the book of *Esther*. It will be supported again by the Cassiobury and nearby Community Choir, and with the musical talent around St Luke's I hope to include some original songs to accompany the play. Anyone interested in being involved, just ask!

Pam Norman

Narrators	Zebulun	Butler	Additional wisemen	Props
Adrienne	Belle	India	Neil	Steve
Pam R	Gad	Cairo the Cupbearer	Reuben	Pam N
Pam N	Kate	Dean	Cleo	Artwork
Michael N	Benjamin	Pam N	Paul the Magician	Jeremy H
Joseph	Bethan	Sophie	India	Sound and broadcast
Mimi	Judah	Potiphar	God	Catherine N
Bill	Pam N	Colin	Andrew	Chris W
Olu	Chris	Potiphar's wife	Singing	David T
Jeremy H	Steve	Susan	The Can	Dean
Marina	James	Servants	Community	Fiona
Jacob	Midianites	Priscilla	Choir	Martin
Dean	Sophie	Kate	Clive	Mary B
Bill	Ivor	Guards	Conductor	Olu
Richard	Bethan	Zuriela	Jeremy H	Pamela W
Jacob's wives	Pharaoh	Kate	Musical Director	Tim
Fiona	Terry	Archer	Jeremy C	Assistant Director
Reuben	Steward	Caydance	Wardrobe	Steve
Edna	Warder	Jacob	Jan	Writer, Director and Producer
Kate	Lydia	Joshua	Gill	Pam N
Zuriela	Babu the Baker	Winston the Wiseman	Pam N	
Simeon	Chris S	Steve	Wendy D	
Simon				
John S				
Asher				
Steve				
Ivor				

Editor's note: A big thank you to Pam for this production which put a smile on our faces through the dark months of January and February.

Pancake Party

Tuesday 21st February was Shrove Tuesday, and we had an amazing Pancake Party! A dedicated team mixed, flipped and drizzled over 200 pancakes for the Rainbows, Guides, Urban Saints and youth groups, plus the church family. Everyone who came was welcomed and all consumed a delicious flat treat! Maple syrup and lemon juice seemed to be an unexpected winner for best topping. We had activity sheets, a scavenger hunt, and a Neil and Lydia video extravaganza.



It was a great start to Lent and wonderful to see the Gathering Area being used as a hub for all of our communities.

A big thanks to all who helped cook, serve and clean up!

Lydia Davies

Children & Family Team Leader

A vibrant space-themed poster for a 'Starship Discovery' event. The background is dark blue with various celestial bodies: a large yellow sun at the top, a green planet with a purple ring, a blue and white striped planet, a purple planet with a ring, and a yellow planet at the bottom. Several rockets are shown in flight. In the top left, there is a small illustration of a lighthouse on an island with the text 'HOLIDAY CLUB' and a 'GUIDES' logo. The main text 'STARSHIP DISCOVERY' is in large, white, pixelated font. Below it, 'TUESDAY 1ST - FRIDAY 4TH AUGUST' is in white, '10 AM - 1 PM WITH LUNCH INCLUDED' is in white, and 'FOR 5 - 11 YEAR OLDS' is in white. In the bottom right, there is a QR code with the text 'SIGN UP HERE' above it.

HOLIDAY CLUB

STARSHIP DISCOVERY

**TUESDAY 1ST -
FRIDAY 4TH AUGUST**

**10 AM - 1 PM
WITH LUNCH INCLUDED**

FOR 5 - 11 YEAR OLDS

SIGN UP HERE

URBAN SAINTS

7-11 Year Olds

Tuesdays 6:15 - 7:30PM

25th Apr – Loneliness

2nd May – Hurt

9th May – Doubt

16th May – Worry

23rd May – GAMES IN THE PARK*

Half Term

13th June – Lost Sheep

20th June – Two Builders

27th June – Tale of the Farmer

4th July – GAMES IN THE PARK*

11th July – Returning Son

18th July – Big Banquet

Summer Holidays

Handling Hard Emotions



Stories Jesus Told



URBAN SAINTS

children@stlukeswatford.org

1st & 3rd Saturdays

8:30 - 10 AM

Bacon, Vegan Sausages, Pastries, and Cereal

Table Tennis, Mini Snooker, Board Games, Crafts, and Fun!



CLUB

1st April

15th April

6th May

20th May

3rd June

17th June

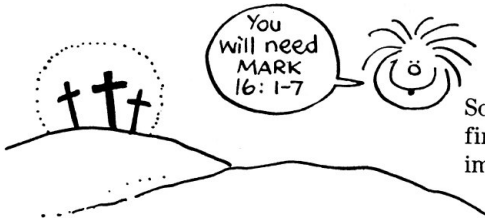
1st July

15th July

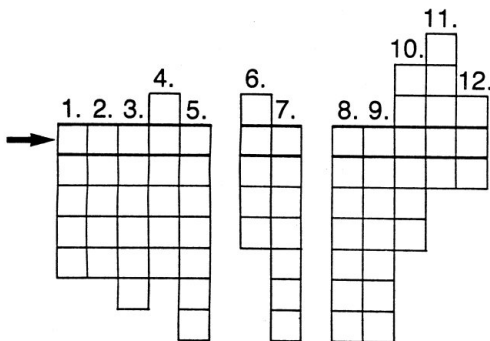
All pre-school
and primary
school families
welcome!



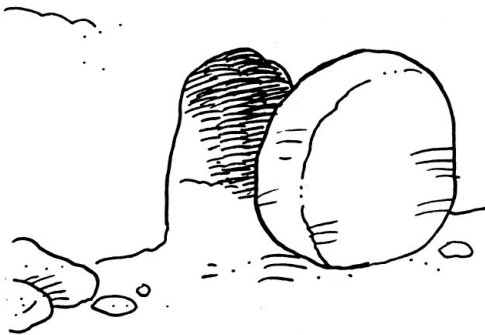
Children's Page



Solve the clues DOWN and you will find a secret message which seems impossible — but it is true!



1. One Mary was the mother of ----. (*verse 1*)
2. What time of day was it? (*verse 2*)
3. What had the women brought? (*verse 1*)
4. Which day of the week was it? (*verse 2*)
5. What day was just over? (*verse 1*)
6. Which side was the angel? (*verse 5*)
7. What was he doing? (*verse 5*)
8. How did the women feel? (*verse 5*)
9. He said, 'I know you are ----- for Jesus.' (*verse 6*)
10. 'He is not here — he has been -----!' (*verse 6*)
11. Then the women knew Jesus was not dead but -----.
12. The angel said they would --- Jesus in Galilee. (*verse 7*)



GOOD
NEWS

TODDLERS AT ST LUKE'S

30th Mar - Easter 🏰

Easter Break

20th Apr - David & Goliath 🗿

27th Apr - Jonah 🐟

4th May - Daniel and the Lions 🦁

11th May - Road to Emmaus 🕯️

18th May - Goodbye At Last 🙋

25th May - Pentecost 🔥

Half Term

8th June - Road to Damascus 🌟

15th June - Prison Escape 🗝️

22nd June - Baby Moses 🍼

29th June - Burning Bush 🌿

6th July - Parting of the Sea 🌊

13th July - A New Land 🐾

20th July - Jericho 🏰

Summer Holidays

14th September - New Term

For more information talk to Lydia
children@stlukeswatford.org

You are welcome to submit an article for the next edition of St Luke's News which should be no more than 450 words. We may edit articles for clarity.

Please email articles to the Church Office: office@stlukeswatford.org

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
Readers	Dave Clarke
	Pam Norman
	Wendy Somerville
Ordinand	Tolu George
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
PCC Lay Chair	Richard Waddington
PCC Treasurer	Martin Kirk
PCC Secretary	John Sills
Safeguarding Officer	Mary Bowen

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

Website www.stlukeswatford.org

Email office@stlukeswatford.org