



St Luke's News

June 2023
Number 274

Laughter



Heavy rain in our house always sets us chortling, mainly due to my lovely daughter's comments about 'chuckling it down' and referring to pouring rain as 'poor old rain'. I simply love the fact that now as we mop up the frustrating leaks in the conservatory or battle sodden through a torrential downpour, humour breaks through. As Victor Hugo once said 'laughter drives winter from the human face'.

On occasion you might read the Bible and find it to be all a bit serious, but increasingly I wonder about the underlying humour in the tone of certain phrases when set in their original context. Whilst the Bible is clear that Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, nowhere does it expressly mention that he laughed, but that does not mean he was always straight-laced and serious. Let's take a quick look and examine the evidence shall we, as I think that even beyond the creation of the platypus, the Venezuelan poodle moth or the naked mole rat, God has a great sense of humour.

Let's start with some *irony*. The book of Jonah is full of it. We see the prophet running at pace in the opposite direction God told him to go, but ultimately even after Jonah's half-hearted delivery and the super-

sulk that follows, the Ninivites eagerly accept God's message! Elderly Sarah laughing out loud in *Genesis 18* when she is told she will conceive is another notable comic moment. There is also no doubt that Jesus recognised irony and was not afraid to call it out. The religious leaders of the day constantly failed to treat other people with dignity and respect, and seemed more concerned about impressing God by ensuring every detail of ceremony was perfect. Jesus' opening comments in *Matthew 23* about blind guides seeking to strain out gnats whilst swallowing camels would have surely brought a smile to the faces of the assembled, and grabbed their attention. In short, Jesus delivered a great comedy starter before he took the criticism to a deeper level.

There's also a fair bit of **absurdity** in the Bible too. How about Balaam and the donkey that God enabled to talk in *Numbers 22:28-30*, or the ill-fated boys who started calling Elisha 'baldy' in *2 Kings 2:23-24*. Whilst these two incidents highlight the need for respect, they also show us that sometimes we are so stubborn that God has to do out-of-the-ordinary things to get our attention!

Whilst there is not much **sarcasm** in the Bible, Elijah was certainly adept. In *1 Kings 18:27* a group of pagan worshippers challenged the prophet of God to see whose deity could perform the best miracle. The worshippers got no response even after a good few hours of shouting and dancing, so Elijah suggested their god had to be asleep or on holiday! These sort of comments could only come from a prophet who was utterly certain of the superior power of the God he worshipped!

There are a good few **pranks** in the Bible too. In *1 Samuel 5:1-5* the Philistines who opposed Israel captured the key artefact that symbolised God's presence – the Ark of the Covenant – and placed it in a temple in Ashdod devoted to a pagan god Dagon. Twice the pagan idol fell face down before the Ark – yes twice – and the second time the idol's head and hands broke off. Who says God has no sense of humour? You also get the occasional moment of **dark humour** such as Paul's epic sermon which bores poor Eutychus literally to death in *Acts 20*! All ends well when Eutychus is miraculously raised to life again.

Finally, Jesus also almost certainly used **hyperbole**. I wonder if his comedy exaggerations in *Luke 6:41-42* concerning ocular specks of dust and the planks in others' eyes, would have made the difficult teaching regarding putting your own house in order before criticising others easier to swallow. Again in *Matthew 19:23-24* he used hyperbole to explain how difficult it is for people to trust Him instead of their wealth.

So there we go, some great humorous moments. And we haven't even mentioned the stalker in *Mark 14*, or the moment Jesus got 'hangry' in *Mark 12*!

Whilst the Bible may not be equivalent to a 'laugh out loud' joke book, there are many moments of real humour. Christ and comedy, jokes and Jesus are not mutually exclusive. It is clear that we do need to be wise about the way we jest and how often, as all of these examples highlight that context really does matter! We are reminded in *Ecclesiastes 3:4*, 'there is a time for laughter and a time for seriousness', and in *Ephesians 5:4* that humour is great but should never be taken too far.

But with that caveat applied, let us seek out the holy humour in scripture, and apply funny faith to our everyday lives, understanding that, used well, it 'is like medicine for our souls' (*Proverbs 17:22*) but also because (as Jesus was acutely aware) humour can be a doorway to understanding and accessing much deeper spiritual truths.

Neil Brookes
Youth Director, St Luke's



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

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.

June	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 4th		Family Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	Encounter <i>Beatitudes: Be a peacemaker</i>
Sunday 11th		Morning Worship <i>Lectionary</i>	Encounter with Holy Communion <i>Beatitudes: Blessed are those who are persecuted</i>
Sunday 18th		Father's Day Family Communion	Encounter with Parade on Father's Day <i>Beatitudes: How to be happy*</i>
Sunday 25th	Holy Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	Morning Worship <i>Lectionary</i>	Encounter <i>Ancient prayers 1</i>

*** NB Change of start time from 5:30pm to 5:00pm**

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

July	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 2nd		Morning Worship <i>Lectionary</i>	Encounter <i>Ancient prayers 2</i>
Sunday 9th		Family Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	Encounter <i>Ancient prayers 3</i>
Sunday 16th	Holy Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	All-age Service	Encounter with Holy Communion <i>Ancient prayers 4</i>
Sunday 23rd		Family Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	Encounter <i>Ancient prayers 5</i>
Sunday 30th		Holy Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	No evening service
August	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 6th	Holy Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	All-age Service <i>Holiday Club</i>	No evening service
Sunday 13th		Family Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	No evening service
Sunday 20th		Family Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	No evening service
Sunday 27th		Family Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	No evening service

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

Diary dates coming up

June

- 9th Cameo with guest speaker
11th Recital, 3pm, Asaph Ensemble (piano, organ, flute)
17th Breakfast Club
18th Father's Day BBQ, 4-5 pm, and Parade Service, 5-6pm
24th The Alban Pilgrimage, a day of events organised by St Albans Cathedral to celebrate St Alban
30th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

July

- 1st and 15th Breakfast Club
9th Recital, 3pm, Krassimira Jeliaskova (violin) and David Newland (viola)
11th Cameo visit to Chenies Manor Gardens
15th Community Choir (CanCC) Concert, Summer favourites for all the family, 5pm
28th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

August

- 1st-4th Starship Discovery Holiday Club (5-11 year olds), 10am-1pm, lunch included (pre-booking essential)
25th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

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.

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

The Alban Pilgrimage

Saturday 24th June 2023

The Alban Pilgrimage is organised by St Albans Cathedral to celebrate one of the greatest stories in the Christian faith. Each year, 12 ft tall carnival puppets, representing figures from the story of St Alban, re-enact Alban's life and martyrdom through the streets of St Albans. The puppets are accompanied by people of all ages dressed as lions, Roman soldiers, angels, chariots and more, resulting in a stunning spectacle of colour and celebration.



Celebrations will be taking place throughout the day and all are welcome.

11 am | Procession starting at St Peter's Church, along St Peter's St, Chequer St, High St, George St, Romeland and finishing at the West End of the Cathedral

12 noon | Pilgrimage Eucharist. Preacher: The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the Bishop of Dover. This service will also be live streamed on the Cathedral's YouTube channel

12 noon–5 pm | Medieval Festival in the Orchard: face painting, entertainment for all the family, food stalls

5 pm | Pilgrimage Evensong. This service ends with a procession to the shrine of St Alban, where red roses are placed on the shrine in an act of celebration

"In so many ways, Alban's story is our story - many in our world today are fleeing persecution and seeking refuge, just as he did more than 1,500 years ago. I look forward to joining the Alban pilgrimage in June, as we travel together joyfully sharing in his story."

The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the Bishop of Dover

For more information, see

https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/Event/the-alban-pilgrimage?dm_i=4B2E,1K5A,4EK5U1,71T6L,1

Watford Foodbank Update

March was our busiest month ever with 686 food parcels given out to clients. Stocks of some items are now running low so we would appreciate donations of:

- Longlife milk and fruit juice
- Tinned meat and fish
- Tinned fruit and vegetables
- Tinned rice pudding and custard
- Instant mashed potato
- Jars of pasta sauce

We have collection points at Sainsbury's, Tesco Extra and Asda, and there is also a collection basket in St Luke's Gathering Area. If you would like to donate financially then please scan the QR code below.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support!

John Bishop



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



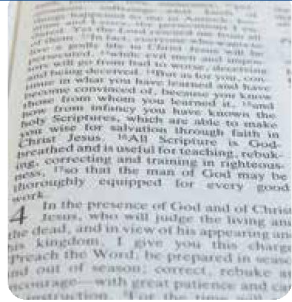
St Luke's Church
Langley Way
Watford
WD17 3EG

- 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



London School of Theology

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

Exploring Scripture, Worship and Christian Living

Saturday 10 June 2023: Celebrating God and his gifts through worship

Members of our Theology, Music and Worship faculty will be bringing their expert knowledge, as we look at this inspiring subject. Sessions will be interactive, allowing feedback from attendees. Workshops will cater to a range of musical abilities, giving the opportunity to experience something new and spiritually refreshing.

Faith Seeking Understanding, is a series of church training days created for Christians who want to grow. Join us, in person or online, as individuals or (ideally) as a church group, for sessions taught by specialists, in a practical and accessible way.

A 3-year curriculum will take you on a journey of theological discovery. [Click here for full curriculum details.](#)

[Book a place by clicking here](#)

At just **£10 per head onsite** and **£8 per head online** for the day (10.00–15.30), Faith Seeking Understanding is a great resource for the Church.



HERE'S WHAT PARTICIPANTS FROM LAST YEAR'S EVENTS SAID:

"Fantastic – I'm so grateful it has really strengthened my faith."

"Truly mind-blowing – I hung onto every word that was said."

NB: If you would like to attend this course contact Jeremy H or Jeremy C as they can book you in.

Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy

The Trustees are very pleased to announce the appointment of Geert Tap as the new Lead Chaplain for Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy. He applied to be a Street Angel in 2020 so has been involved with the charity for almost three years.



Geert was born in the Netherlands. He moved to Watford, via Berkshire and London, in 2016 to become an Associate Pastor at the Stanborough Park Seventh Day Adventist Church in St Albans Road. He has recently worked as a part-time Faith & Community Engagement Officer for OneYMCA and as a volunteer Chaplain for Watford General Hospital.

He is currently studying to become a Clinical Pastoral Education Chaplain.

Geert started with the Chaplaincy on 17th April, succeeding Dave Scourfield who is being ordained as a curate. It will take Geert a bit of time to pick up the reins as Lead Chaplain but he would hope to get to know many of you over the coming weeks and months.

Please pray for Geert and the other chaplains and Street Angels at this time of change.





Images of Birds

Sunday Afternoon Recital

The Asaph Ensemble

Ken Bartels – Flute

Nicola Hooke – Soprano & Flute

Paul Stobart – Piano

David Hooke – Organ & Compere

Programme to include:

The Wren

Julius Benedict

Image

Eugene Bozza

The Nightingale

Leo Delibes

Lo! Here the Gentle

Lark Henry Bishop



3pm Sunday 11th June 2023

St Luke's Church,

Langley Way, Watford WD17 3EG

Entry free - donations welcome



Hosted by
**THE SCOUTING GROUPS
& ST LUKES CHURCH**



**BBQ
4PM - 5PM**

**PARADE
SERVICE
5PM - 6PM**



**SUNDAY
18
JUNE**

**BBQ
AND PARADE
SERVICE**



*please note
the change
in time for
this evening
service*

News from some of our Mission Partners



Ruth Guinness

Malawi

www.sim.org

+265 984 425 575

Dear friends,

Welcome to a Cyclone Freddy update! Many of you have been in contact because of Freddy, which hit Malawi in mid-March. THANK YOU so much for praying and giving to SIM's relief appeal. I thought it would be good to devote this newsletter to an update of the situation.

What happened?

Over a 5-day period someone from the Wildlife Society who lives quite near to me recorded 587 mm (over 23 inches) of rainfall in his garden. His daily, monthly and annual records, kept for more than 25 years, were broken by Freddy.

In Blantyre, where townships are built on hillsides, mudslides swept away houses and their occupants. It is likely that the final death toll will be over 1,000. From my house I can see one of the hills, now with large scars. Many houses in Blantyre townships are built out of mud bricks rather than stronger burnt bricks. Walls were saturated and many collapsed. South from Blantyre is the wide, flat floodplain of the River Shire. Here, people suffered from widespread flooding which destroyed both houses and crops.



People are remarkably resilient and are rebuilding their lives, though it will take longer to heal the emotional scars. My pastor has moved back into his house as the wall that collapsed has been rebuilt. Electricity and water supplies are now much better than they were, and work is continuing to mend roads and bridges.

What is happening with the relief programme?

SIM, together with our partners, the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) and the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM), raised money for relief programmes. I took part in a distribution run by the AEC. They

hired a truck to carry items for 275 households; for each household: 25 kg of maize flour, some beans, salt, a blanket and a mosquito net. We're so thankful for your generous giving which made this possible!

Together with a colleague and leaders from the AEC, we left at 6 am for the 4-hour drive to Nsanje district. A few miles north of Nsanje we stopped at Tengani, where there is an AEC church. Next to the church is the church-owned Mpatsa Primary School. The local pastor, Alfred Banda (a former student of mine), showed us around. The school, for 3850 pupils (including 12 blind students who live on site), was flooded by a seasonal river which broke its banks. The school has been flooded before, but the scale this time was unimaginable. The site is dry

now but the water has left behind tonnes of silt. Many buildings are half-buried; the borehole was completely buried. Wonderfully, no lives were lost, and the AEC is now in talks with the government and community about relocating the school. For now, teaching is taking place in tents donated by UNICEF and under trees.

We travelled on to Khulubvi camp, a few miles south of Nsanje. I was impressed by the organisation. Within a few minutes of our arrival, the truck arrived, and a few items were unloaded. People from the camp gathered and sat on the ground under trees, and soon the ceremony was ready to begin. As is usual here, there were several speeches – from the village chief, the government representative, the church head, and the AEC projects' consultant. Then the local pastor, Elard Tsilizani (another former student) brought encouragement from *Matthew 11:28-30*. He spoke of Jesus understanding our burdens and our suffering and inviting us to come to him. Official photographs were



taken of the giving of items to the first recipient – I was asked to represent SIM alongside the head of the church, the projects' consultant and the government representative. 108 households at Khulubvi camp received items.

During the distribution, I took the opportunity to listen to people and encourage them with God's love. One lady described

how she'd woken up at 2 am on 13th March, finding that her feet felt cold. She realised that it was water. Soon the air was filled with the sound of people shouting, a bell ringing and frantic running. All were saved, taking refuge in a local classroom. Yet they lost everything: houses, possessions, livestock and crops in the field. Pastor Tsilizani explained to me how the people in this area are hard workers, growing sugar cane, rice and beans. All gone.

The next day the AEC went on to a different camp, and went back to Mpatsa to give to families there. Other distributions through AEC and EAM will take place in the coming weeks.

What other opportunities have come about?

As I've listened to people over the last month I've been struck by different reactions. I wonder how you would react to losing your house and possessions? Some have praised God that they are still alive. Some have voiced their questions to God, while others have held back, thinking that to ask questions would be a sin. Some have wondered what they need to do so that God will have mercy on them. Some have simply clung to him. Some have turned to African Traditional Religions, making sacrifices to appease the spirits.

I am very grateful that God has opened up various opportunities for me. On the Sunday after Freddy I preached from *Psalms 22*, talking about lament and pointing the congregation to the Lord Jesus and His suffering for us on the cross. Over Easter I visited the Wheatleys and led a Bible study with the pastors and their wives in the Lakeshore area, contrasting traditional reactions to disaster with faith-filled ones.



It was a delight to meet with three former colleagues and start a discussion with them about thinking Biblically about disasters and suffering. We plan to prepare some resources that they can use in pastors' fraternals and other gatherings to help pastors think Biblically. I've been invited to have a similar discussion with the lecturers at the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi.

Please join me in giving praise for:

- the generosity of churches and individuals in giving for the relief effort;
- opportunities that have arisen after Freddy.

Please pray for:

- healing from emotional scars as people rebuild their lives;
- the most needy to receive help;
- continued opportunities for the on-going training of pastors, helping them to think Biblically and help their congregations.

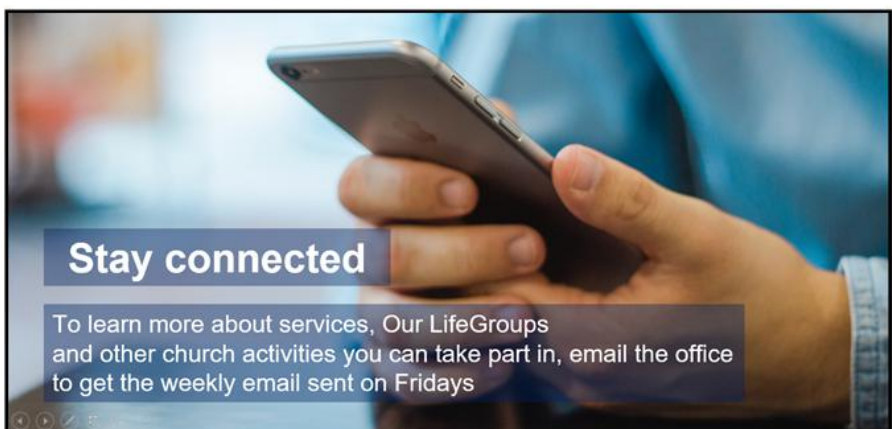
Thank you so much for your faithful support and prayers.

With love in Christ,

Ruth Guinness

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

As a result of the St Luke's Easter Appeal, £1,450 has been given to SIM Malawi's Disaster Relief Project.





*"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live
but Christ lives in me."*

Galatians 2:20

News from the Gelsthorpe family in northern Japan

Baby dedications

Praise God that we could celebrate the dedications of two of our church babies within the last month. Please pray that they will grow up to know and love the Lord. It's been a good opportunity for people to invite their friends. **Please pray** that the gospel messages they heard will lead them to believe in Jesus.

Yuzuki

Praise God for our Japanese intern, Yuzuki Fujita, who arrived in early April and is now settling into life in Hanamaki. She became a Christian after hearing the gospel on a Home-Stay in America and has just finished university in Tokyo. She will be studying part-time through the Samurai Projects bible college in Tokyo (<https://www.samuraiprojects.com/>) whilst living in the church and helping with the ministry here. **Please pray** that she will quickly adjust to life in Hanamaki and that she will do well in her studies and grow in her gifts as she serves in the church.

Annual General Meeting

On May 14th we will thank God at our Annual General Meeting for all his blessings in the last year. **Praise God** that we have been able to share the gospel with many people over the year. We have had many visitors to our Sunday service and met lots of people through different events. New outreach efforts (such as music nights) have allowed church members to become more involved.

Exams

Grace and Isaac continue to prepare for their IGCSE and A-Level exams in May and June. **Please pray** for good concentration and effective study.

Music event

On 15th April, we held a music night where Ben (American short-term missionary) spoke about the love of God. **Praise God** for providing a good crowd of people from outside church including 7 highschoolers. **Please**

pray that we'll see increasing involvement in music nights from church members and non-Christians.

Easter events

Thank you for praying for our Easter events. Many people came and heard the gospel at the American Easter Event and the Easter Craft Event. There were also some visitors at our Family Easter Worship Service. **Please pray** that God will use the seeds sown to draw people to faith in Jesus.



Easter Egg Hunt

Easter Café with craft



American Easter Event
with cookie decorating



The Upper-River family

Mark met Mr Upper-River playing tennis a couple of years ago and he now comes some weeks with his elementary-school-aged son to Minecraft Club. His wife is in hospital suffering from severe depression and his son has stopped going to school. This has led to him to suffer from depression too and he has had to stop work as a result. **Praise God** that he has been open about his difficulties and please pray for us as we minister to him. He is practising meditation in the hope of finding peace. **Please pray** that he will find true peace in Jesus and pray for an open door to study the Bible with him.

English Fun Club (for pre-school children)

From the beginning of March, the Pawsons (colleagues training in Hanamaki from the UK and Germany) will begin an English class for pre-school age children on Saturday every week in the church. **Please pray** for lots of their friends to come and hear the gospel and pray for engagement with this class from church families.

God bless you all. 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

News from Clive and Andrea

Dear friends,

Thank you for your prayers, which are greatly appreciated!

We have much to be thankful for:

- **Expat retreat** - we're so grateful for Jan, our All Nations friend and colleague, for her Spirit-inspired teaching on the ups and downs of the life of Peter which was both challenging and encouraging.
- **Opportunities to meet in person** - we've said this before, and will say it again... there's no substitute for actually meeting with people

face-to-face (though we are enormously thankful for all that can be done through the internet!).

- **Time on the Terai** (border with India) - we had a very fruitful visit to a selection of INF's Self Help Groups (the main conduit for community health and development work). Hearing the groups share about the reduction in domestic violence and human trafficking was very encouraging, as was seeing the very clear confidence and enthusiasm that group members have developed since getting together.
- **Ethical/photo storytelling** - this side of Clive's work is developing apace with growing interest from different sectors.
- **Mission training** - joining in with an All Nations 2-day intensive training event in Pokhara was a treat, especially since there's a possibility that four of the participants will apply for the remote-access Contextual Theology MTh! We thank God that we were able to be here at the same time and will potentially support the students in the future.
- **Visa** - and finally... after a very long time of waiting (and completing a Masters), Andrea has an official visa! The Labour Department phone interview was relatively painless and the processing ran smoothly. Incredible! Although we can't be in Nepal for long periods at this time, an official visa does give both of us more flexibility... and the ability to officially work in the INF office when in-country.

Timings - the current arrangement with our timings in Nepal vs UK is very tiring but is valuable for continuity on 'both sides' - the balance is the best we can do for the season we're in.

Please pray...

- for stamina as we enter the challenging 'transition phase' once again (flights were on 22nd May)
- for two new families who are joining INF in May, and for all that needs to be arranged for their arrival (we will overlap for a few days in Kathmandu to give some orientation training)
- for recruitment needs - both Nepali and Expats (please get in touch with Andrea if you'd like to know more about the latter)
- for a smooth re-connection with All Nations - the final term is in full swing
- for progress with health issues within the family.

Thank you so much and God bless,
Clive and Andrea

A snapshot of time spent in Nepal



A self-help group



A beneficiary



Chatting with a holy man



Visa celebration!



A self-help group



Kapilvasthu



Ethical photo storytelling - staff training



The Easter Experience

The Easter Experience was an all-week-long event from 27th March through to 31st March for all the groups meeting in our building plus others! Six videos performed by members of our very talented church family played all around the church building. These videos were six short monologues from the perspective of six people who were there at the very first Easter: Simon of Cyrene, Barabbas, the Centurion, Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, and Peter. Alongside each video was a short activity and a Bible verse sticker to collect.



Simon of Cyrene tells his story



Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy businessman, gives his eyewitness account

Many hot cross buns were eaten and a lot of fun was had by all!

Please pray for the seeds sown during this time – that the truth of the Easter message heard by so many will sink deep into people's hearts and minds.

If you missed coming along to the event you can watch all six videos in a handy playlist on our St Luke's YouTube channel here:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL_bgbKLop0QDLJX9-y5FGrwaDma4Uqmex.

Lydia Davies
Children & Family Team Leader

Easter Monday Pilgrimage 2023

We knew what the weather had in store for us on Easter Monday, so we were well prepared for a very wet walk to St Albans Cathedral.

Paul, Mary and I set off from St Luke's at 9 am and met Caroline

and India, our youngest pilgrim, in North Watford. The by now familiar route and landmarks were still a pleasure, and we were entertained by horses wildly galloping around the fields on the Munden Estate.



We found a sheltered spot under some trees, by the side of the River Ver, for our coffee and to our surprise, India suddenly spotted Jeremy H who had bravely decided to run to meet us. In Bricket Wood we met Pam, Dean, Mimi and Reef, and as always, it was exciting to wave to motorists on the bridge while crossing the M25 and see them

waving back, flashing their lights and sounding their horns (the children enjoyed that too).

While squelching our way over some very soggy fields we had a precarious bog crossing on a wobbly log, and we were all relieved when the Cathedral came into view at about 1 pm. How grateful we all were to be able to picnic on a pew inside, and see the sun, at last, beaming through the historic windows.

Bishop Alan led the procession around the Cathedral, and we proudly held up our new beautifully painted banner. It was great to meet Jos and Tony there, as well as the Stromberg family. There might not have been quite so many pilgrims this year but everyone sang joyfully, celebrating Easter in a spectacular way.



Please join us next year, at any point along the route.

Jill Rogers

Hope Leadership Conference 2023

Unlike most people enjoying the sun on Bank Holiday Monday 1st May, I spent mine at the Leadership Conference with over 5000 other church leaders. This is the annual Holy Trinity Brompton Church Leadership Conference – a 2-day conference at the Royal Albert Hall in West London.

It was beautiful and affirming to see many Christian leaders from different denominations praying and worshipping together, a taste of what Jesus prayed for, that we may be united in his name.

There were many notable speakers but I was struck most by the Vulnerability and Hope in the people present.

Vulnerability

There were pockets of conversations with various church leaders recognising the uncertainty of life; there is no new normal. Life is uncertain; 'being' church no longer has the traditional structures that felt safe and worked.

It feels like we are in a period akin to Holy Saturday, where the disciples waited, uncertain whether there would be a resurrection. Yet, they could not deny the experience of God in the person of Jesus had been amongst them.

We know what it feels like to have dynamic worshipping communities – we have experienced the Spirit of God amongst us. And yet we now face a crisis where the way we did discipleship, mission and evangelism no longer seems to work. And the detractors ask, "Where is their God?"

Hope

Our God is here with us. He promised He would not leave nor forsake us. He promised that He would be there when we feel shaken on every side. That was the hope I felt at the conference. The structures and the

'how to be' church may change but our hope remains because God is with us. Holy Saturday does turn into Easter Sunday. We have the risen Christ, who works magnificently in uncertain times.



So, we are not in denial of the realities of life; we are sharing and carrying each other's vulnerabilities. Our finances are stretched, our free time is occupied with taking on more paid work, and we may feel overwhelmed about what more we can bear. And yet we hold on to Christ, our redeemer and intercessor, who gave Himself for the hope set before Him. We carry that same hope in us that all will be well. We hope to be the beacon and lighthouse for our parish.



Dear St Luke's family, may I encourage you to share vulnerably with others and to carry each other's burdens – be honest about your fears. God is in the midst of those who gather in His name. And remember that when we share vulnerably with each other, we 'stand in the gap' for others because we place the burdens before Jesus, our Redeemer. We are not called to shoulder the worries and anxieties but to bring them before the God of Hope.

***Tolu George
Ordinand***



Sunday Afternoon Recitals

Every 2nd Sunday of the month @ 3:00pm

Sunday 11th June
Asaph Ensemble – Piano, Flute, Organ

Sunday 9th July
Krassimira Jeliazkova and David Newland – Violin and Viola

Sunday 10th September
Winnie Wu – Piano

Annual Parochial Church Meeting



Our annual church meeting on 23 April gave us an opportunity to remember, with thanks, everything that God has been doing throughout the last year. We elected church wardens, Deanery Synod representatives and our new PCC. We thanked God for providing our buildings, our finance and the expertise within the congregation to keep us both safe and legal.

The following is an extract from the PCC's annual report for 2022, which reflects well the tone of the meeting.

John Sills

The PCC is hugely appreciative of the many, many individuals who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community that it is.

- *Our deputy wardens, stewards, the welcome team, and those who do the coffee and refreshments at services and other events*
- *The musicians who play, sing, compose and record songs to help our worship*
- *The technology and AV team who work to help us see, hear and follow the services - whether we are in the building, or watching on-line, or receiving a pre-recorded DVD*
- *Those who preach, lead prayers or read Scripture at services*
- *Those who prepare, teach and help with our toddler, children and youth groups on Sundays or during the week; including the youth leaders who are so crucial at Urban Saints*
- *The pastoral network team and the prayer ministry team as they continue to phone, visit and pray*
- *Those who lead and support life groups, Alpha, Creative Space, Cameo, CanCC and the various social and outreach activities*
- *Those who provide meals for Alpha meetings and those who wash up afterwards*
- *The Building Group and all who volunteer to do maintenance and cleaning work in the building or garden*

- *Those who prepare the church for services – flowers, communion laundry, cleaning silver*
- *Those who come back late every evening to make sure the church is locked up and lights switched off*
- *Those who ensure that the giving we receive is counted and banked, and that bills are paid on time and properly accounted for*
- *Those who give, often sacrificially, both through regular giving and in response to specific appeals*
- *Those responsible for making sure that we are legal and that everyone is kept safe*
- *People who write to our partners-in-mission, who keep us informed and prompt us to pray for them*
- *Those who write content, edit, print and distribute our magazine*
- *Those who organise and prepare door drop material and gifts; and those who together visit or knock on every door in the parish to deliver them*
- *Those who design and produce our communications including website content and posters*
- *Those who cover everything which happens at St Luke's in prayer – at prayer meetings and privately*
- *Those who notice and take the time to thank and encourage people who serve and worship at St Luke's*
- *Those who have served on PCC, its sub-committees or working groups*
- *Our staff team*

Whenever we prepare a list such as this, we are astonished at just how much is being done, and by so many. We thank each one of you – and give thanks to God for you.

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 Coronation Big Lunch

On Sunday 7th May, to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III, St Luke's held a lunch after the morning service. Over 100 people came and enjoyed coronation chicken (or a suitable adaptation) prepared by our amazing chefs, Wendy and Geoff.

There were activities for children, and the Cassiobury and nearby Community Choir performed some rousing songs. Thank you to all who helped with setting up, catering and cleaning up afterwards. A lovely time was had by all.

Beth Burns



LADIES CAMEO CLUB

Summer 2023 Programme

June

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

Tuesday 11th 1:30pm Meet in car park, St Luke's	Trip to Chenies Manor Gardens Cameo + event	1:30-5:00pm with tea/coffee and cakes
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September

Friday 8th 7 for 7:30pm Upper Hall	Talk on 'Barnabus' Cameo + event	Refreshments at 7:00pm followed by Talk at 7:30pm
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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



Friday Club Tea Parties

2:30pm at St Luke's

June 30th

July 28th

Aug 25th

*Now all you people
At work bench and sink
Stop all your business
Have time to think.
Who else on his birthday
Is put back in a cot
That was only part one
Now read the lot.*



parenting for faith*

Babies and Toddlers

Online course

Four week course:

13th June
20th June
27th June
4th July

**8pm - 9pm
on Zoom**
(or in person in the
church lounge on zoom)

more info and to
sign up scan here:



The Big Help Out

On Monday 8th May the nation was encouraged to get involved in volunteering in honour of the coronation. At St Luke's this was organised in the form of a Big Help Out morning.

Our amazing team of around 30 volunteers weeded, gardened, sorted, tidied and cleaned. The toddler toys were all cleaned and organised, the vestry was cleared and organised, the garden and car park were weeded and tidied. Sellotape debris left on glass doors from Covid notices was cleaned off, blue tac was removed, labels in the kitchen were re-made and the kitchen drawers were organised to make them easier to use! There were many other jobs too, and the church received a well-deserved spring clean. It was a very productive and busy

two hours, and all the volunteers who turned up were much appreciated.

It was also a lovely opportunity to get to know some people that I didn't know so well, as volunteers who are usually busy during the week were able to come, and some stayed for lunch together.

There will be another St Luke's sort out day (we have some areas of the church building that need another look) in the summer.



The Toddler cupboard

Beth Burns

Summer Favourites

For all the family

Saturday July 15th 2023 @ 5pm



An hour of well loved songs followed by refreshments (Sandwiches/Canapes). Free entry, donations welcome.

1st & 3rd Saturdays

8:30 - 10 AM

Bacon, Vegan Sausages, Pastries, and Cereal
Table Tennis, Mini Snooker, Board Games, Crafts, and Fun!



All pre-school
and primary
school families
welcome!

1st April
 15th April
 6th May
 20th May
 3rd June
 17th June
 1st July
 15th July

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

HOLIDAY CLUB

**STARSHIP
DISCOVERY**

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

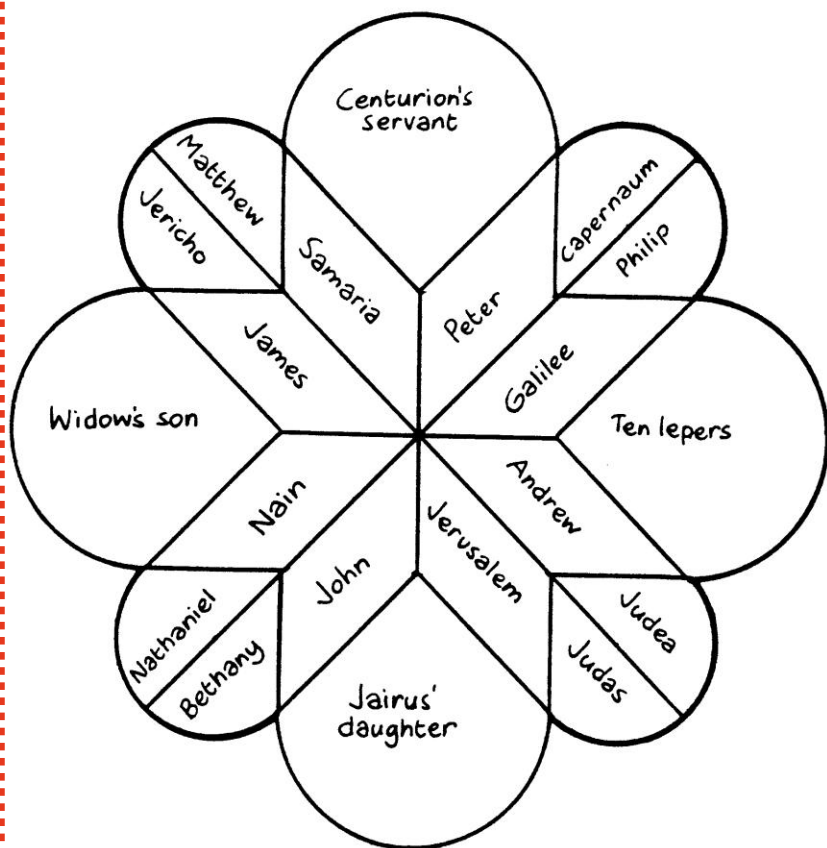
10 AM - 1 PM
WITH LUNCH INCLUDED

FOR 5 - 11 YEAR OLDS

SIGN UP HERE



Children's Page



COLOUR:

RED	<i>all the friends of Jesus</i>
ORANGE	<i>all the people Jesus healed</i>
YELLOW	<i>all the places Jesus worked in</i>

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
Worship Leader and Media Administrator	Jeremy Hogarth
Church Wardens	Susan Miller
	John Williamson
PCC Lay Chair	Richard Waddington
PCC Treasurer	Martin Kirk
PCC Secretary	Vacancy
Safeguarding Officer	Mary Bowen

Please leave a message for any of the above on the Church Office answerphone – 01923 246161

Website www.stlukeswatford.org

Email office@stlukeswatford.org