



St Luke's News

September 2023

Number 276

Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish



Jesus called out to the disciples, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No", they answered.

He said "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

John 21:5,6

It's great to be back after my study leave of over 3 months. My thanks to all who led services during that time, especially our guest celebrants, Ian Pankhurst, Anne Lovegrove, Vanessa Kerswell and Philippa Maddox. But thanks also to all the home team, especially our Church Wardens, Susan and John, the staff, lay leaders of worship and many others.

The story of Jesus at the lake after His resurrection has lessons for us today.

- Often ministry can seem fruitless – the disciples fished all night and caught nothing! But fruit is nearby.

- As they fished, Jesus was there but they hadn't realised it. We need to discern that Jesus is with us.
- We need to hear Jesus speak into the situation. Notice he didn't say fish on the other side of the lake, but on the other side of the boat!
- The small change (a tweak!) led to a mighty catch of fish.
- Blessing comes from hearing Jesus speak and in obeying.

When a Vicar returns from study leave, there may be fear or expectancy that lots of change will come about. However, I believe that's not what God is saying, but rather to be listening to Him and to make small but God-inspired changes, and then blessing will come.

To see that blessing, firstly our Church life needs increasingly to be undergirded with prayer. It was very encouraging to have around 25 of us at our half-day of prayer in early September. But secondly, we need to be sensitive to the promptings of God – the listening ear – that bring these small but profound changes that will lead us to a mighty catch of fish!

The Autumn is going to be a busy time, needing to be carefully paced, but also an exciting time as we come to many special annual events, including the launch of our Alpha course on a new night – Thursday – from the end of September. Is this a tweak that will lead to even more blessing? Please pray and bring people along. Come yourself if you would like an inspiring refreshment in the Christian faith.

On 1st October we have our Harvest Festival family service at 10:30am, where donations of dry food will be given to New Hope (see advert on page 6) and the Food Bank and cash donations will be given to Tearfund.

On the weekend of 7/8th October, we have evangelist and teacher Revd Greg Downes coming to speak to us at our parish weekend which will be away at Hope Latimer on Saturday 7th and at home on Sunday 8th for our services and lunch together. There will be a special guest Encounter service at 5:30pm when we are encouraged to come with a friend to hear Greg. Please pray about who you can bring.

There will also be a Confirmation service led by Bishop Jane of Hertford on 12th November at 5:30pm. If anyone is interested in being confirmed please see me as soon as possible. There will be preparation sessions in October/early November.

May God guide you as we begin this Autumn season.

***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

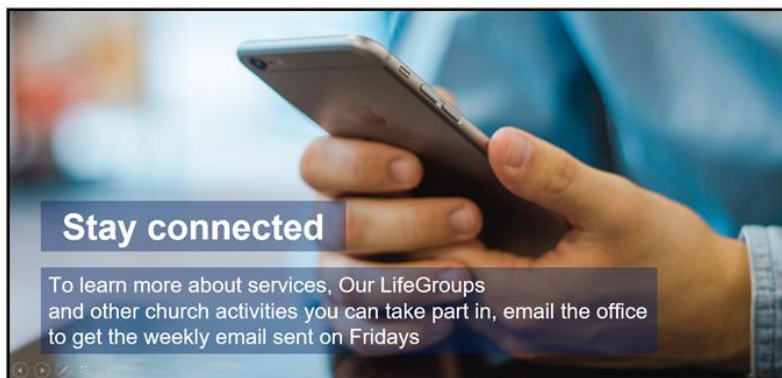
We also have a weekly Communion (or Service of the Word if the Vicar is unavailable) at 10:00am on Tuesdays. This is a lovely, reflective service with a couple of hymns, followed by community tea and coffee.

September	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 17th		Studies in Romans <i>The valley of sin</i>	Encounter <i>We miss you, please come home</i>
Sunday 24th		Alpha Sunday Studies in Romans <i>The crux of salvation</i>	Encounter <i>Breathing the oxygen of peace</i>
October	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 1st		All-age Service <i>Harvest</i>	Encounter <i>Who is key to lighting the beacons?</i>
Sunday 8th	Holy Communion	Studies in Romans <i>The place of peace</i>	Encounter <i>Invitation service with Revd Greg Downes</i>
Sunday 15th		Studies in Romans <i>The ridge of freedom</i>	Encounter <i>Let Jesus coach you!</i>

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

October	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 22nd		Studies in Romans <i>The summit of hope</i>	Encounter <i>Fire quenchers</i>
Sunday 29th		Studies in Romans <i>The cloud of mystery</i>	Encounter <i>What is the battle?</i>
November	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 5th		Studies in Romans <i>The descent of devotion</i>	Encounter <i>Fanning the beacons into flames</i>
Sunday 12th	Holy Communion	All-age Parade Service <i>Remembrance Day</i>	Confirmation Service with the Bishop of Hertford
Sunday 19th		Studies in Romans <i>The return to community</i>	Encounter <i>Stepping into the fire</i>
Sunday 26th		Studies in Romans <i>The onward mission</i>	Encounter <i>Land of light and glory</i>

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



Diary dates coming up

September

16th	Breakfast Club restarts
28th	Alpha Supper, 7:30pm
29th	Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm
30th	Breakfast Club

October

1st	Harvest
7th-8th	Church Weekend (Saturday at Restore Hope, Latimer, with bring your own picnic lunch; Sunday at St Luke's, including Bring and Share Lunch) <i>NB: No Sunday Afternoon Recital</i>
13th	Cameo Film Night
14th	Breakfast Club
27th	Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm
28th	Breakfast Club
	Face2Face Event, 7:30pm
31st	Light Party

November

3rd	World Day of Prayer Planning Meeting at St Luke's, 10:00am–2:00pm
5th	Bereavement Service, 3:00pm
10th	Cameo + visit to Tring Garden Centre
11th	Breakfast Club
12th	Remembrance Sunday Recital, 3:00pm, Yorke Trio Confirmation Service, evening
17th	Christmas Pudding Stir-Up
18th	Alpha Away Day at Latimer Park
24th	Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm
25th	Breakfast Club

December

8th	Cameo Christmas Lunch at The Cock Inn, Sarratt
9th	Breakfast Club
10th	Carols and Mince Pies
15th	Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm
17th	Carols by Candlelight
24th	Christingle, 4:30pm

HELP FEED SOMEONE WHO IS HUNGRY THIS



Here are some things that we need:

Household

Washing up liquid
Dishwasher tablets
Washing powder
Kitchen foil / cling film
Cleaning products
Disinfectant spray
Scourers / cloths
Air freshener

Toiletries

Spray deodorant
(male and female)
Shower gel /
body wash
Shaving gel / foam
Razors
Shampoo
Conditioner
Moisturiser
Pump soaps
Brushes
Combs
Paper towels

Beverages

Coffee
Tea
Long life milk
Instant hot chocolate
Fruit squash
Large cartons long life
fruit juice
Cans fizzy drinks
Individual cartons fruit
juice / soft drink
Small bottles water

Baby and Child

Nappies for all ages
Baby wipes
Aptimal formula milk
for all ages

Groceries

Sugar
Individual chocolate
bars / biscuits
Packets biscuits
Cereal bars
Individual bags crisps
Pot noodles / pasta
Pot porridge
Mug shots
Cup a Soups
Jam
Chocolate spread
Smooth peanut butter
Marmite
Breakfast cereals
(especially porridge)
Mayonnaise
Salad cream
Tomato sauce
Brown sauce
BBQ sauce
Pickle
Chutney
Pasta sauces
Cooking oil (not olive)


Tinned food

Tuna
Corned beef
Luncheon meat /
chopped pork
Ham
Hot dogs / frankfurters
Ready meals
eg: ravioli, macaroni
cheese, chili, stew
Potatoes
Mushrooms
Sweetcorn
Soup
Baked beans
Spaghetti / Hoops
Plum tomatoes
Fruit

WE
WOULD ALSO
LIKE SHOPPING
VOUCHERS

For further details:

 **visit** newhope.org.uk/harvest

 **contact** Rebecca at rpalmer@newhope.org.uk

 **or call** 01923 227 132.

You can also donate money online to our **Fresh Food Fund**
newhope.org.uk/freshfoodfund

New Hope (Watford New Hope Trust) is a registered charity (1080784) and a company limited by guarantee (03969063).
Registered office: 67 Queens Road, Watford, WD17 2QN

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

Every other Saturday, 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



Church Weekend at Home

Come and spend time with all the Church Family and hear Greg Downes speak on how to reach out to friends, neighbours, colleagues and classmates about your faith.

Greg Downes is an international evangelist and director of Kingfisher Ministries.

Saturday 7th October, 9:30am–4:30pm at Restore Hope, Latimer. Bring your own picnic lunch.

Sunday 8th October, 10:30am at St Luke's, followed by Bring and Share Church Family Lunch; 5:30pm Encounter Invitation Service with Greg Downes



Save the date:

Sat 28th Oct 2023 @ St Luke's Church 7:30pm

World Day of Prayer 2024

Do you enjoy planning ahead?

If you do and you have already bought your diary for 2024, please make a note of this date:

Friday 1st March 2024, 2:00pm

It will be next year's World Day of Prayer, written by Christian women in Palestine.

The local committee, led by the Scroll Church, who meet at North Watford Methodist, are organising a Preparation Day for our region. It will be held here at St Luke's on:

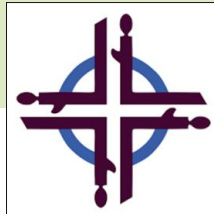
Friday 3rd November 2023, 10:00am–2:00pm

If you would like to help out, we are looking for people who:

- love meeting and greeting
- enjoy serving refreshments on arrival and /or at packed lunch time
- can operate Easy Worship
- like learning new Christian hymns and songs in Arabic.

Please volunteer if you feel you could help in one of these ways.

Mary Bowen



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

Cleaner Energy Working Group

Did you know that there is a working group at St Luke's who are trying to find ways of reducing the carbon emissions of the church building? This is being informed by guidance produced by the Church of England with the aim of making our church buildings much less polluting.



As we are often reminded, the church is more than just the building, it is us, the body of believers. Therefore, we also need to play our part to act as good stewards of God's world by reducing our own carbon emissions in the way we live. Many members sponsor children who live in countries already being affected by our emissions. Our children and grandchildren will soon be affected in the UK, by heat, possibly by bitter cold, by loss of crops and by overcrowding due to mass population movement.

Of course, the Bible does not address the issue of global warming, directly. But it does talk of self sacrifice, responding to a neighbour in need, not running after luxury and not fretting about food and clothing. Below are a few of the many Bible passages that require this of us.

Luke 3:11

[John] answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise."

James 2:14-17

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

1 John 3:17

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

See also: *Matthew 7:12, Matthew 25:35-36, Romans 12:13, Acts 4:32, Philippians 2:4, Hebrews 13:16*

Tearfund has produced guidance to help each of us to act as better stewards of God's world and to be better neighbours to the poor:
<https://www.tearfund.org/-/media/tearfund/files/campaigns/time-to-deliver/climatecampaigning2022daily-choicesdownloadableaw-2.pdf>

Steve J

My Study Leave – A Journey of Discovery

On the evening of Sunday 7th May, I headed off to our house in West Sussex to begin over three months away from the parish. The drive began a journey which saw me travel over 4000 miles: to conferences; on holiday touring the capitals of Great Britain and Ireland; to various weddings – one in Yorkshire, one in Bath, another at home in Watford. I slept in 16 different beds and visited 11 churches or Christian communities. There were struggles, sadness and good times as well. Through it God spoke, I believe, about things concerning my Christian discipleship and our life as a church. This is just a brief summary but I will unpack things over the months to come.



Downs Link cycle track used during my time in West Sussex

Rhythm and balance

It's easy to get out of rhythm in our Christian lives. I found it difficult to keep in rhythm in the last few months leading up to my study leave, with a busy time at Easter and other one-off services and events combined with going down with Covid in the second week after Easter and preparing the church for my absence. With God's help, everything came together. However, it took its toll: there was an urge to keep active so it was difficult to relax or stop, despite being exhausted. It

took a few weeks to unwind and to get into any rhythm. I came to appreciate a more structured week and a determination to pace my life when I returned.



Lee Abbey Christian Conference Centre near Lynmouth, Devon

Resilient discipleship

At a conference at Lee Abbey in Devon I heard Ian Paul, theologian and member of the Archbishops Council, speak about resilience. How important a theme that is for our present time – what with

Covid, climate change, the refugee crisis, the war in Ukraine and threatening situations growing against Christians around our world and at home, making us concerned for the future. However, Jesus, the one to come, speaks to us about a future beyond this world, in a world to come, and He says that in this life it won't always be easy. Resilience is called for and is clearly seen in the suffering church of the early centuries of Christianity and also seen today, elsewhere in our world.



Scargill House near Kettlewell, North Yorkshire, home to a Christian community

The importance of Sabbath

In early June, I attended a conference at Scargill House in Yorkshire. A beautiful setting and lovely weather led to a good week of ministry, receiving much. It was led by the warden of Scargill, Phil Stone, and Roy Searle from the Northumbrian Community. The phrase “the ruthless elimination of hurry”, used by John Ortberg and the title of a book by John Mark Corner, both American pastors, spoke to all of us. The call to return to a true Sabbath, rather than a ‘day off’ was a real challenge, one you will hear more about over the next six months.

The Church as Community

This theme particularly came through to me when visiting Scargill, and also attending our daughter Jenni's church plant in Birmingham and visiting a Celtic monastic site at Glendalough in Ireland set up by a major Irish saint, St Kevin. Even looking at the ruins of Glendalough, clearly it had been a place of community. How that applies to us will be prayed about and developed in the future.



Ruins of a monastic settlement at Glendalough, Co Wicklow, founded in the 6th century by St Kevin

The vital importance of God's presence with us

As I went from conference to conference, from one event to another, the importance of

recognising God's presence, God moments, actually knowing that God was speaking and feeling his presence in a tangible way, grew in importance. The question is how can we take His presence into our day-to-day lives? Again, that is connected with our spiritual daily rhythm and an intention to walk with the Lord and be aware of His presence.

So, that is a summary of some of the major things God spoke to me about and I hope to unpack them in the weeks and months ahead. The visits to Sussex, Devon, Yorkshire, Kent, Wales, Ireland and Scotland made this a busy and, occasionally, a tough time, but also a time of much joy. My thanks go to all who prayed for me, to those who kindly gave money towards my study leave and to those who encouraged and protected that time away. Thank you.

Michael Norman
Vicar



Ffald-y-Brenin, a non-denominational Christian retreat centre near Fishguard, Pembrokeshire

TODDLERS AT ST LUKES

Back on 14th September 2023

THURSDAY MORNINGS
9:30 - 11AM
in the church hall

Donation at the door:
£1 per adult
50p per child
free tea and coffee
but bring your own snacks

TODDLERS AT ST LUKES

for more information talk to Lydia at children@stlukeswatford.org

Friday Club Tea Parties

2:30pm at St Luke's

Sep 29th
Oct 27th
Nov 24th
Dec 15th

*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.*



Cassiobury
and nearby
Community
Choir



Wednesdays from 8pm
@ St Luke's Church, Watford

Anyone welcome of any musical ability to join.

Feel free to turn up on the night, or contact
music@stlukeswatford.org 01923 246161





Alpha Programme 2023

Introductory Supper and Taster Evening (28 Sept)

- **Week 1: Who is Jesus? (5 Oct)**
- **Week 2: Why Did Jesus Die? (12 Oct)**
- **Week 3: How Can We Have Faith? (19 Oct)**
(no meeting half-term week)
- **Week 4: Why and How Do I Pray? (2 Nov)**
- **Week 5: Why and How Should I Read The Bible? (9 Nov)**
- **Week 6: How Does God Guide Us? (16 Nov)**
- **Week 7: How Can I Resist Evil? (23 Nov)**
- **Week 8: Why and How Should I Tell Others? (30 Nov)**
- **Week 9: What about the Church? (7 Dec)**

In addition, there is an Alpha “Awayday” at Latimer Park near Chenies (Saturday, 18th November) where we explore topics such as:

- **Who is the Holy Spirit?**
- **What does the Holy Spirit do?**
- **How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?**

For more information about Alpha and to register your interest, see the next page.



Sign up via the QR Code



Alpha Course 2023

Starting 28th September

Thursdays, 7:30pm
in St Luke's Church Lounge

Alternatively, contact the church
office:

email office@stlukeswatford.org

tel 01923 246161



CREATIVE SPACE
FOR



HARD-WORKING WOMEN

COME JOIN THE FUN!



News from some of our Mission Partners



Dear friends

The summer has flown by, and we are seeing our plans for the 2023/24 academic year coming together. As we reach the middle of September, I wanted to take some time to share how you can pray for me and Friends International Lancaster as we move into the start of the new academic year.

As I look ahead to the new academic year, it is with excitement – and some nervousness! One thing I have learnt over the past couple of years is that what our plans look like at the beginning of the academic year is often very different to the middle and the end of the year! God alone knows what the coming year will bring and which students He is already preparing for us to meet, so we pray that we will make good use of the opportunities He gives us.

One reflection that I had after my sabbatical was that we had not had sufficient focus on helping international students to engage with local churches. Moving into this new year, then, we have made some changes which we hope will lead to more students being connected with local Christians and, therefore, being invited into churches.

International Corner will be back, our social event for international students. However, we have two major changes to the format!

Firstly, we will be meeting in one of the local churches in the city centre in order to connect with students who live off campus or attend the University of Cumbria, as well as making it easier for local church volunteers to attend.

Secondly, we will be including an optional, introductory Bible study at the end of the event to facilitate gospel-centred conversations between volunteers and students.



International Corner where international students can share about their culture, get to know other international students and meet local volunteers

We will also be starting Local Link, our hospitality programme, from the start of the academic year rather than just over the Christmas break. As I met with Z a few weeks ago, a student from a Muslim-majority country who had benefitted from being connected with a local household that she is still in contact with, I was reminded of how important hospitality is for building relationships with international students. This has been our motivation in expanding our Local Link programme so that we can connect students with local Christian households from the start of their time in Lancaster. As they meet together two or three times a term, we pray that there will be natural opportunities for our Local Link hosts to share life and faith with their students.

One truth that I have been reminded of has been that this work is not our own, it is God's work and it is in God's strength that we are able to run these events. It was such an unexpected encouragement to see around 40 students attending our Drop-In Café recently, enjoying free tea, coffee and cake! The vast majority of these were from China, a demographic we have been praying that we would have opportunities to come alongside this year so this was a great answer to prayer. In God's kindness, despite the fact that we were short-staffed for this event, those that were there were able to spend some time chatting to students and they seemed keen to keep in contact. We pray that many of these students will now know who Friends International Lancaster is and will keep coming along to our events in the future!

Please pray for me and the Friends International Lancaster team as we facilitate these events! Please pray that many students will be invited into local churches and will hear the transforming news of Jesus!

Prayer points

- **Please give thanks for the 40 or so students who came to our Drop-in Café.** Pray that we would be able to follow them up well.
- **Please pray for a good start to the term with our events.** Pray that we would meet many new students and that we would be able to welcome them well. Pray for good conversations as we run the social events for them.
- **Please pray for our Local Link hospitality programme.** Pray that many Local Link hosts would sign up in response to our information evening.
- **Please give thanks for the opportunities I have had over the summer to meet with various university staff and ministry partners.** Give thanks for the encouragement of seeing university

staff understand the value of Friends International. Also give thanks for the opportunities I have had to share the vision of our ministry with others and please pray that we would see many Christians in Lancaster get excited about being involved with international student ministry.

Thank you so much for your continued support and prayers!

Sally Miller
Friends International, Lancaster Branch



Dear friends,

Greetings from Malawi! I hope those of you in the northern hemisphere have been able to have a break over the summer.

I have recently returned from a week in Kenya where I had been invited to attend a conference for female theological educators in Africa run by the Overseas Council. There was a great atmosphere all week with conversations and lots of laughter over meals together. There were also lots of discussions during our seminars, and it was good to listen to the experience of others. I particularly valued some of the insights from our morning devotions and teaching from the Bible. One afternoon was free, and I was able to meet up with a fellow SIM Ministry Point Person (MPP), TC. MPPs are scattered around the globe so I have few opportunities to meet them. It was particularly special to meet TC's family and he took me to the giraffe centre, where I fed giraffes by hand, which was an amazing experience!

At the SIM Malawi Spiritual Life Conference in July, we were challenged by talks on the theme of loving one another. As anticipated, I enjoyed early morning walks down the golf course which is part of a mini game park.

The national leadership elections for the Africa Evangelical Church took place yesterday. Please pray for the transition of leadership that will take place over the next few weeks.

On the whole, I have been enjoying going into the Evangelical Bible

College of Malawi (EBCoM), and will now be writing up a report and meeting with the leadership to talk through my findings.

Summary of prayer points

- Praise God for the Spiritual Life Conference.
- Give thanks for safe travel to Kenya and for good connections made at the conference there.
- Pray that the SIM Malawi team will grow in practical love for one another now we are back in our places of ministry.
- Pray for wisdom and grace in my role as Educational Advisor at EBCoM.
- Pray for the Africa Evangelical Church, especially for the transition in leadership.

Thank you so much for your prayerful support. Do let me know how I can pray for you too.

With love in Christ,

Ruth Guinness

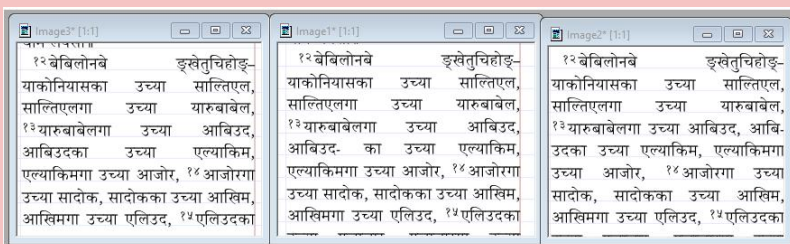
ruth.guinness@sim.org

P.O. Box 136 Blantyre, Malawi

Update from Alastair working for a Bible translation organisation

Dear all,

August was a puzzling month! This wasn't spending time doing puzzles but working on the latest New Testament typesetting, trying to find suitable solutions to the page layout. The translation team wants a font of a



An example of the puzzle: *left*, shows the white space problem. The team say that the third word can't be hyphenated (but it would remove all the extra space); *middle*, the first word of the fifth line (v13) is hyphenated in an approved location, but doesn't work; *right*, changing the split location works in the last image, but is not acceptable.

particular size (larger is easier to read) and two columns on a page because that is what Bibles look like. However, the language has many long words which often means that only two words fit on a line in many places. If this happens on consecutive lines, large white 'holes' and 'rivers' can appear on a page. The puzzle has been to try and find a way around this.

Thanks as always for your prayers and support which are making this happen.

God bless

Alastair

Good news at last!



Lillian arriving at hospital in Nairobi

At St Luke's we have been praying for Lillian for some time and I'm pleased to have good news to share in this update. Lillian travelled to Nairobi in late August with Pamela, now our social worker, for a review of the neurofibromatosis in her left eye.

As a result of the review, Lillian has been offered a further operation on 5th December 2023 to remove the growths on the optic nerve. The hope is to gain prolonged vision in the eye, as the medical

team believe she has stopped growing and this will hopefully slow down any further regrowths.

Lillian has her final school exams in November so will have plenty of time afterwards to recuperate.

Please can I ask you to pray that she recovers well and is able to look forward to her 'new season'. Thank you.



Lillian's review

***Jos Lawrance
PIM***

The Gelsthorpe family are in town



Mark and Sarah Gelsthorpe, who work for OMF leading a church plant in rural northern Japan, are back in the UK on furlough with their family, Grace, Isaac and Caleb, until 16th November. They are based in Watford with Sarah's parents, Philip and Esther Meager.

Apart from having a rest and holiday, they will be visiting their 'sending' churches to update them on their work. Through the summer they have been very evident at St Luke's, attending the Men's Group and contributing to the music worship with Grandad Philip on the piano. They also made themselves extremely useful at the St Luke's Church tidy up in August.

With summer holidays over, Grace, Isaac and Caleb are now studying from home.

They really value everyone's prayers and would love to get to know as many St Luke's members as possible during their stay in Watford. If you would like to pray for them regularly, please speak to them (or email mark.gelsthorpe@omfmail.com) to receive their regular prayer updates.



Left to right: Grace, Mark, Caleb, Sarah and Isaac

Summer Camps and Events Highlights and Reflections

New Wine 2023

At the end of July, a group of 26 from St Luke's attended the New Wine Christian Festival 2023, held at the Kent Event Centre in Detling, near Maidstone. A few of us camped but most of us, including myself, stayed off site in hotels and B&Bs.



New Wine has an extensive programme of activities, workshops and worship for families, individuals, children and youth.

On the first night, after dinner together, we all headed down to the massive main arena tent for welcoming, introductions, prayers, sermons and the amazing worship music. There was a large crèche and children's area at the back of the arena with volunteers on hand to look after the children while their parents joined in with the evening worship. Large screens to the sides and back were erected for those who couldn't see the stage properly. For me, with the great lighting and amazing sound, it was more like a rock concert atmosphere but with the presence of God.

During the evening the speaker encouraged anyone who wanted prayer to come forward to pray with the volunteer prayer team. The men prayed for the men and the women prayed for the women. All I can say is that receiving prayer in that environment is very powerful!

During the day, we were free to visit numerous venues in the village area to listen to talks on subjects such as Climate change, Persecution, The cost of living crisis, Transforming lives for good, Mental health, Faith and evangelism, Sexuality, Answering tough questions about your faith and my favourite: How to talk about Jesus without sounding weird! Each talk considered how these subjects affect us as Christians in today's world. Most talks ended with a Q&A session.

What I got out of New Wine was deep spiritual nourishment which has strengthened me and put me on the next path of my journey of faith. I would say New Wine has been a Christian crash course which I feel has

propelled me forward in learning about our Father God – slowly taking the focus off myself and fixing my eyes on Him.

Would I go again? Yes, 100%! But next year I'll be camping on site!

If you haven't been before, I highly recommend attending and hope to see you there in 2024! You won't be disappointed. For more information visit www.new-wine.org.

LF

Interaction France

This is the 10th year I have been involved in Interaction France, a bilingual, Christian activity camp held in Pays de la Loire. It takes place at a beautiful site: an old chateau that now serves as a horticultural college, meaning that the extensive grounds are always immaculately maintained!

We run a wide variety of activities on site – this year I organised a Biblical Greek workshop and a wide game – but we also make several trips out. A highlight is always our trip to Sillé-le-Guillaume, an outdoor activity centre that offers sailing, climbing, mountain biking and a high ropes course. Our theme this year was 'music through the decades', which was an excuse for plenty of hilarious games and ridiculous outfits (see photo below)!

There are two main meetings a day, which are times of joyous singing and creatively presented talks. This year we worked through *John's Gospel*. We also looked at *Genesis* in dormitory group Bible discussions. I was with an English-speaking group this year and it was a real privilege to get to know the young people and to be available to explore some of their questions.

It was also wonderful to see some of the French campers, whom I've known for several years, come back, and to see many take steps forward in their faith. Some come from churches with few people of their age, or are not involved in a church at all, so there is a real sense of camp being a precious time for them – as it is for leaders!



Interaction runs bilingual camps in

Some of the outfits on 90s day

France, Belgium and Germany, catering for the 10–18 year age range. If you know any young people who might be interested in joining Interaction France next year, do speak to me or visit interactioncamps.org.

Phil Matthews

Greenbelt Festival 2023

On the August Bank Holiday Weekend, I attended the Greenbelt Festival 2023 and camped with the lovely Hill family from St Luke's.

Greenbelt is a Christian-based festival which welcomes anyone and everyone regardless of their faith, ethnicity, gender and culture.

Individuals, couples, groups and families were all in attendance.

Greenbelt was celebrating its 50th anniversary so there was a massive lineup of entertainment in many venues. We had a choice of Christian-based spiritual worship music, talks and workshops. We could listen to various talks on topics such as Climate change, The cost of living and AI. There were also lots of political talks, comedy, drama, circus performances, hands-on craft workshops, sing-alongs and much more.

There were lots of delicious food stalls and alcohol and non-alcohol pubs. One of the pubs was called *The Jesus Arms* which I found amusing!

A Communion service was held on the Sunday morning at the massive outdoor main stage.

For me, camping at this festival was a great learning experience and an opportunity to connect with fellow Christians and non-Christians and to expand my knowledge of the Christian faith and other cultures.

Greenbelt provides a great opportunity to plant seeds!

Would I attend again? Absolutely yes!

For more information and tickets please visit: www.greenbelt.org.uk.



Photo by Jackharrybill for Greenbelt Festival 2023

LF

Keswick Convention 2023

Keswick Convention, the oldest Christian conference in the UK, began in a tent in the vicarage garden of St John's Church, Keswick. It has grown into today's annual 'convention' that welcomes 12,000 people a year over 3 weeks of Bible teaching and celebration in the beautiful Lake District.



Photo by A Wilder

We were there at Week 3, staying in our caravan, seeing relatives, friends of Keshy's from Sri Lanka, and even bumping into the Brookes family! The teaching was on the theme of being human – what's our identity in Christ, bought at a price, given wholeness and purpose.

The conference's aim is to help us to hear God's voice in the Bible, become more like Jesus and to go out serving Him in His mission to friends, neighbours and further afield.

The week provided such rich teaching from the Bible and we loved learning new hymns. For me, this was also spiritually significant as I'm preparing for reader training beginning this month. I struggled a bit in the first few days but became overwhelmed by God's care and interest despite failures and hurts. I felt healed, restored and refreshed and given a fresh perspective as *Genesis 1–9* and *Hebrews 1–4* were opened up to us each day in the morning Bible readings and evening celebrations. The teaching was summed up in these words from a newish hymn:

*Creator God, who shaped the earth and heavens
Your glory shines in all that you have made...*

*And who am I, the lowliest of sinners
That you would pay the price my sin deserves...*

*And who are we, that you would call us children
And raise us up from death to life with you....* (© Ben Slee 2017)

The convention talks are still available on YouTube – just search for Keswick Convention 2023 Week 3. I'd highly recommend listening to them, particularly Ivor Poobalan's five talks on *Genesis*!

Simon T

The Point

For many years I have volunteered for CPAS as a leader on a Pathfinder Camp for 11–14 year olds. It always brings me joy to see young people discover and foster their faith in Jesus. These years are critical to young people as they discover their identity so to have the opportunity to reinforce their identity as a child of God, is a privilege and a precious thing.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

God has a plan for each of us and that plan is for us to thrive and prosper.

Attending a summer camp or festival is a life-affirming experience that will enhance and enable your faith to thrive. A friend described it to me this year as his annual ‘recalibration of his faith’.

Any Christian summer camp will allow those young people lucky enough to grow up in a church to discover their faith independently. For those young people with no connection to our faith or a church, this is a special and rare opportunity to learn about Jesus.



Gunge tactics!

At The Point, this year held at Embley School, near Romsey, the teaching and worship was entirely aimed at the 11–14-year-old age group, and was accessible, fun and refreshing. Alongside this, the activities ensured that everyone had a fantastic week away together, which I hope felt a little bit like heaven.

Jesus said: “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 10:10

I wonder whether a new season awaits you? I wonder whether this season may include attending or volunteering on a Christian camp, festival or conference and whether this would bring you joy?

Katie Llewellyn

Starship Discovery Holiday Club

From 1st to 4th August we ran a holiday club for over 65 children. They travelled through space, following Dr Watt and Ace as they tried to make it home in time for tea, avoiding asteroids and black holes and learning how to follow Jesus through the life of his disciple, Peter.

We learnt how Peter *turned* and chose to follow Jesus; how Peter *trusted* Jesus and stepped out of the boat to walk on water; how Peter *tripped up*, made a mistake and was forgiven by Jesus; and how Peter was *transformed* by God's gift of the Holy Spirit.



Joining in the actions for our Starship Discovery theme song

We had a lot of fun, singing lots of action songs, learning a new memory verse each day, playing balloon games, doing lots of crafts and even launching a rocket or two.

Every day we had lunch together prepared by our brilliant lunch team who also passed a hygiene inspection on the first day, keeping our kitchen's five-star hygiene rating – what pros!

Thank you to all the leaders and volunteers who gave their time to share God's light and love with the kids! There was joy and laughter all week.

At our Sunday service we found out that the alien who had been chasing us around space all week long just wanted to hear our stories of



Experiments!

Playing games!

Sport!

Ice cream!

Food!

Everything!

What was your favourite thing about Holiday Club?

Jesus – how important it is to pass on to others all the good things we’ve been blessed with by God.

Our final memory verse and action song was: “... and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”!
2 Corinthians 3:17

Lydia Davies
Children & Family Team Leader



Team Venus getting stuck in

LADIES CAMEO CLUB

Autumn 2023 Programme

October

Friday 13th
 7 for 7:30pm
 Church Lounge

Film night

'Fisherman's Friends:
One and All'

Includes choc ices!

November

Friday 10th
 10:15am
 Meet in car
 park, St Luke's

Trip to Tring Garden Centre

Cameo + event

Coffee, browsing,
 lunch and chat

December

Friday 8th
 11.45am
 Meet in car
 park, St Luke's

The Cock Inn Sarratt

Christmas lunch
 Cost tba

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

Children's Page

GOD makes the WORLD

PUT THESE IN THE ORDER GIVEN IN GENESIS 1
BY DRAWING LINES TO THE NUMBERS

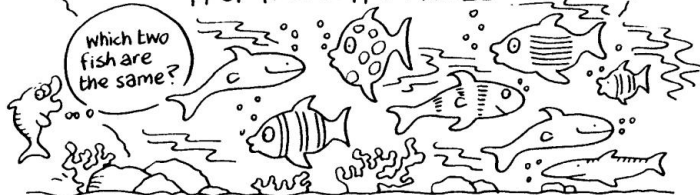
DAY

1
2
3
4
5
6



so God created **ALL KINDS** of creatures
that live in the WATER

Which two
fish are
the same?





URBAN SAINTS

Tuesdays 6:15pm - 7:30pm in Church Hall

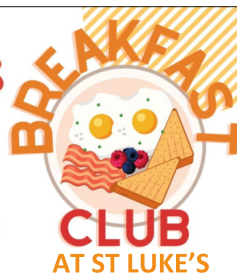
7-11 year olds



Alternate 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!

FREE!

16th Sept
30th Sept
14th Oct
28th Oct
11th Nov
25th Nov
9th Dec

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

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Readers	Dave Clarke
	Pam Norman
	Wendy Somerville
Reader in Training	Simon Trundle
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
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Please leave a message for any of the above on the Church Office answerphone – 01923 246161

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