



St Luke's News

June 2024
Number 280

Running Your Race



It's a pleasant early morning on Sunday 21st April 2024. All is calm at 7am. Conditions outside are favourable. The overnight oats and blueberries have been consumed, all kit prepared and devices charged up, apart from, that is, the human who is about 60% charged due to patchy sleep from 'maranoia'.

This was me just 4 hours before I set off for what would be the most arduous run of my life (so far!). The marathon would encompass a circuitous route resembling spaghetti of 26.2 miles around the streets of London, with over 50,000 runners taking part, just shy of the Guinness World Record for the largest ever participation in a marathon. I was taking part as a member of Team Alzheimer's Society in memory of my Grandma Pauline and Auntie Eileen who both sadly passed away from Alzheimer's disease.

From start to finish, the cheering was continuous, and people were constantly calling out my name, which was inscribed on my Alzheimer's

Society shirt, as if they knew me personally. As I began the first 3 miles, I approached it like a gentle Parkrun, knowing that I needed to keep fuel in the reserves for later. At around 12 miles into the run, I arrived at Tower Bridge to find the crowds beckoning me on as if there was this invisible force pulling my legs forward.

And that's when it all went wrong ... the hamstring that had been niggling away at me during my 4-month training period had suddenly decided to complain and cramp, as well as every other muscle fibre in my body. Plus, due to all the distractions and heavy sweating, I had forgotten to stop for water for a whole hour. Even though I wasn't thirsty my bladder began to complain as well.



With my body flashing warning lights at me I had to slow down to walking pace until I had replenished my fluids. Journeying through Canary Wharf my morale was low. How could I have let this happen? What a stupid mistake! My naive and overly ambitious finish time of 4 hours was now just a pipe dream.

Ten bottles of water later and when the pain had ceased, I was able to press on without hindrance. And what a joy those final 6 miles were! For many runners, being at mile 20 of a marathon is equivalent to being halfway, but I felt all the energy come back and like a Super Mario I flew on to the finish.

With my family and friends at various checkpoints to give me that boost (and the occasional banana), I endured to the finish at Buckingham Palace. What made this part of the marathon so memorable was knowing my only goal was to finish it, and not to be concerned about the time, even if I had been overtaken by Scooby Doo! I finished in 5 hours 9 minutes and thanks to all my sponsors have raised just over £2000 to support The Alzheimer's Society as they work to provide help and hope for people affected by dementia.

Many people were in tears as they crossed the finish line, each runner having their own personal journey and their own special cause driving them to the finish. It reminds me of the verses in *1 Corinthians 9:24-25*:

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for ever.”

The elite runners were running in such a way as to gain their gold, silver or bronze medals. But with the many other thousands of crazy, yet admirable, athletes, they were running for a more life-affirming reason ... for the love of someone else near to them. I know now that it didn't matter whether I ran the race in 4 hours or 8! All that mattered was running the race as best I could, regardless of the finish time.

I and countless others, ran for a crown of completing a marathon and getting the medal for it and a guarantee of a glass of prosecco at the post-race reception in Whitehall. We, together with all the other followers of Jesus around the world, are running our own races, for the crown we receive from God of a guarantee of everlasting life.

Lord Jesus, we pray we would be able to run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on you, the author and perfecter of our faith. Amen.

Jeremy Hogarth



Prayer

FOCUS

Tuesdays 8:00pm every week by
Zoom (details from the church office),
apart from 2nd Tuesday in the month
which is in person, in the Chapel

Prayer for Children & Youth

Thursdays 11:15am in the Chapel
(during term time)

Hour of Prayer

Fridays 10:00-11:00am 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.

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 2nd		Family Communion <i>The Word of God 2</i>	Encounter <i>The ruthless elimination of hurry: Slowing down</i>
Sunday 9th	Holy Communion	Morning Worship <i>Spiritual warfare</i>	Encounter <i>Practising the Way: Apprentice to Jesus</i>
Sunday 16th Father's Day		All-age Worship <i>Discipleship and the simple lifestyle</i>	Encounter with Holy Communion <i>Practising the Way: Be with Jesus</i>
Sunday 23rd		Family Communion <i>The cost of disciplesip 1</i>	Encounter <i>Practising the Way: Become like Him</i>
Sunday 30th		Family Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	Welcome for Tolu and family follow- ing Ordination <i>Note: Time tba</i>

Note: The forms of service and sermon titles may change.

July	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 7th		Family Communion <i>The cost of disciplesip 2</i>	Encounter <i>Practising the Way: How? A rule of life</i>
Sunday 14th	Holy Communion	All-age Worship <i>Abounding in Hope 1</i>	Encounter <i>Practising the Way: Take up your cross</i>
Sunday 21st		Morning Worship <i>Abounding in Hope 2</i>	Encounter <i>Practising the Way: Extras</i>
Sunday 28th		Morning Worship <i>Lectionary</i>	No evening service
August	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 4th		Family Communion <i>Lectionary</i>	No evening service

Note: The forms of service and sermon titles may change.

Friday Club Tea Parties
2:30pm at St Luke's

June 28th
July 26th
Aug 30th

*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.*

Diary dates coming up

June

- 1st, 15th & 29th Breakfast Club
- 4th Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy AGM, 7:00pm
- 7th Big Help Out @ One YMCA, Charter Place,
Watford (see p 11)
- 8th Big Help Out @ St Luke's, 9:00am-2:00pm (see p 11)
Creative Space, 10:00-11:30am, Informal bring &
share craft and chat
Men's Fellowship Skittles Evening, 7:30pm, contact
Bill M to book your place
- 9th Sunday afternoon recital, 3:00pm, Amy Naddermeier &
Jeremy Cooke (Flute/Piccolo & Piano)*
- 14th Cameo + talk by Gerard Casale on Water Aid
- 19th Big Parenting Questions run by Care for the Family,
7:30pm (see page 15)
- 21st-22nd St Andrew's Literature Festival, Great Missenden
(see page 16)
- 22nd Alban Pilgrimage and Festival (see page 12)
Viola and Piano Recital, 2:30pm, in aid of the Peace
Hospice (see p 26)
- 28th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm
- 30th Tolu's Ordination, St Alban's Abbey, 2:00pm (see p 11)

July

- 6th Creative Space, 9:30am-noon, Mosaics + Breakfast
(Book in advance; cost £8)
- 12th Cameo + Evening of song and a Russian story of faith
with Nina Cook of Face2Face
- 13th Breakfast Club
- 14th Sunday afternoon recital, 3:00pm, Miranda Westcott
& Mark Packwood (Mezzo soprano & Piano),
Barber's *Hermit Songs**
- 21st CanCC Summer Concert, 5:00pm (see p 29)
- 26th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

August

- 6th-9th Desert Detectives Holiday Club, 10:00am-1:00pm
- 30th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

* *Sunday afternoon recitals: Free entry, donations welcome, followed by light refreshments.*

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 week by Zoom (for log-in details contact the church office), apart from 2nd Tuesday in the month which is in person, in the chapel

Prayer for Children & Youth, Thursdays, 11.15am, term-time

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

Toddlers (term-time)

Thursday mornings, 9:30–11:00am



St Luke's Vision

A Lighthouse - with small boats going out to rescue people.
A place that shines the Father's light, love and safety into the world.
Reaching out with the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit to rescue those drowning in the sea of life.

Rediscovering & developing corporate worship

- Half days of prayer
- Fresh expressions of worship
- Use of scripture in prayer and worship
- Building worship and prayer ministry teams
- Extended worship

Growing our children, youth and family ministry

through faithful bible teaching and the outward working of our faith

Provide "bridges" for outreach groups to become involved in Church life

Reaching out in obedience to scripture,

to those on our estate and beyond with the good news of Jesus Christ found in God's living word.

- Mission Week
- Prayer visiting
- A welcoming community
- 2 Alpha courses

Pre-school coffee
(for pre-school parents)

Mission in Action

Friday Club
(afternoon tea for retired people)

Alpha

Creative Space
(For women)

Men's Outreach

Toddlers

Breakfast Club
(for parents and children)

Life Groups

Prayer visiting

Cameo
(for women)

Prayer Groups

Cassiobury and Nearby Community Choir

Holiday Club

Youth

Urban Saints

Badminton

The graphic above illustrates the PCC's vision and goals for 2024 and the activities that feed into achieving these goals. This forms our Mission Action Plan (known as MAP) which the Diocese of St Albans asks us to draw up and review progress on regularly, as shared in the Annual Report for 2023. It helps us to "prayerfully journey forward together and be effective in Living God's Love". Please pray for this vision and join with us as we work together to fulfil God's purpose for our church.

Francis Goode turning 100 years old

Francis's confirmation (8 days before turning 100!)

Confirmation of young or old is such a celebration in any family but on Sunday 5th May, the confirmation of dear Francis was quite unique, being so near to his centenary! Our Vicar, Michael, had made frequent visits to dear Francis at his home and we were all so thrilled to hear he had finally declared he now wished to give his life to Jesus and wanted to be confirmed!



Francis on Remembrance Day

Since that decision, he had been taken to the Peace Hospice for special care in his final days so on Sunday 5th May a few relatives and church friends met in the Starlight Room for a quiet service led by Michael and Jane, the Bishop of Hertford. Francis's frailty was clear but Bishop Jane when leading, was so sensitive to his declining health and spoke so clearly and slowly so that he could understand and little by little respond accordingly to her questions. After confirmation, dear Francis took Holy Communion which was offered to him with such spiritual gentleness by Bishop Jane. The service was closed by Michael with Francis's favourite hymn, 'Father hear the prayer we offer' – such a perfect ending to a memorable service.

May Francis rest in Your arms, dear Lord.

Jos Lawrance

Amazing – that's the word that used to crop up endlessly whenever we talked about Francis.

As the years ticked by Francis just kept going: alert, interested in all sorts of things, and still planting fruit trees in his garden last year at age 99.

With his family, he made preparations for his 100th birthday on 13th May. In the event, he became unwell in the last few weeks of his life so he wasn't able to attend the birthday celebration lunch at St Luke's, or the party held in his honour at the Peace Hospice on the afternoon of his Birthday, complete with cake, balloons and pictures from the past. But he did make the day, dying peacefully surrounded by family that evening.

Francis and Oonagh moved into their house in Cassiobury Drive over 60 years ago in a snowy 1963 and brought up their four children there. Oonagh was a keen St Luke's supporter of New Hope when it began and after Oonagh died in 1990 Francis continued to gently and consistently attend St Luke's on Sunday mornings, always happy to chat over coffee, and if asked would offer an informed opinion.

One Sunday morning he told me that his paternal grandfather had been born in 1819. I used to tell him he had to live to at least 2019 to make it 200 years since his grandfather's birth. Which he duly did, and more.

We used to marvel at how, well into his 90s, he would cycle to our home group, only driving when it was too wet or cold to cycle. Even as his eyesight failed and he had to give up driving he was not to be defeated, taking to a fold-up mobility scooter with gusto. We remember one time when he blithely told us he had only come off the curb twice on the way to the group.

On Remembrance Sundays, Francis would come to St Luke's wearing his war medals with pride (see photo on previous page). He had many sobering stories to tell from that time, from landing in France shortly after D-Day, to visiting concentration camps in northern Germany as they were liberated at the end of the war.

Many at St Luke's also knew Francis from his long-standing participation in Watford U3A, running a Money Matters group, and a Shakespeare group until his eyesight deteriorated to the point that he frustratingly could no longer read the text in the last few years. He was equally at home in the sciences having studied natural science at Cambridge after the war and used to regularly attend the annual science festivals of the British Science Association, sometimes taking his grandson too.

It was a real privilege to know Francis, his friendship, and many stories spanning 10 decades, and we shall miss him – all the while remembering him as ... **Amazing.**

Tim Robson

Tolu's Ordination

Sunday 30 June

Tolu is being ordained deacon at St Alban's Abbey on 30 June at 2:00pm. All are welcome to attend the service.



Please pray for Tolu and her family as Tolu prepares for the next stage of her training as Curate at St Luke's. Tolu and family will be welcomed at our evening service that day.



This year **The Big Help Out** takes place at the end of National Volunteer Week, from 7 to 9 June and everyone can get involved! Here are two ways.

Big Help Out @ One YMCA

On Friday 7 June, One YMCA needs the help of the local community and friends to redecorate their Charter House hostel in Watford, so it really feels like a home to be proud of. They'll

be working from 9:30am to 4:00pm but if you can only help for part of the day, that's OK!

If you can lend a hand, see <https://forms.office.com/e/s6gSrTJCT5> for more information.

Big Help Out @ St Luke's

On Saturday 8 June St Luke's will be having a Help Out day from 9:00am to 2.00pm to keep our church and grounds clean and tidy. Drop in for a bit to clean toys in the Toddler cupboard or help with gardening or do general tidying. There's a sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area.

Alban Day: Pilgrimage and Festival Saturday 22 June



Witness the awe-inspiring spectacle of 12 ft puppets weaving through the streets of St Albans, retelling the story of St Alban – from whom the City gets its name. The procession begins at St Peter's Church at 11:00am, and its magnificent journey will take it down St Peter's Street and onto the High Street, culminating with an eye-popping spectacle at the West End of the Cathedral.

After the Pilgrimage procession, the fun continues from the Orchard all the way up to the High Street, as the St Albans Festival gets under way. There will be a hive of activity on the Orchard with re-enactments, crafts, food and more, all being bridged by a stage at the Clock Tower with live music.

In the Abbey:

12 noon Pilgrimage Eucharist (with children's worship and activities).

Pilgrimage Preacher is The Right Revd Dr Guli Francis Dehqani, Bishop of Chelmsford

4:00pm Pilgrimage Evensong ending with a procession to the shrine of St Alban where red roses are placed on the shrine in an act of celebration

For further information, visit:

<https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/alban-pilgrimage>

My Life in Flowers

A chat with Myrtle Paterson over coffee and cake

I come from a family of growers in Worthing, West Sussex, so I didn't really have much choice but to grow up with green fingers. It wasn't for nothing that I was given the name 'Myrtle' (see *Isaiah 55:13*).



The church garden in Langley Way developed by Myrtle and the gardening team after the new church was built

My grandfather started the business and passed it to my father. We grew grapevines and specialised in tomatoes and cucumbers for the market garden and in carnations and chrysanthemums for selling as cut flowers.

As it was a family-run business we all mucked in after school, at weekends and during school holidays. One of my jobs was to roll up newspapers for packing the flowers into boxes to be sent to Covent Garden Market. I also had to shovel manure which was laid on top of the soil and watered in. One day I found a diamond ring in the manure, which I wear to this day. I had it valued some years ago and it's quite valuable!

Initially, I was going to train as a teacher and had an offer of a place on a 3-year teacher-training course. I was Head Girl and my headmistress told me that there would be a job for me at the school once I'd completed my training. However, God had other plans and spoke to me very clearly one night and told me that I was going to work with flowers. My parents weren't happy about my change of mind as teaching was a highly respected profession but I wanted to follow God's direction and I took up an apprenticeship in a florist's shop with on-the-job training.

Flowers have to be kept cold to keep them fresh for longer so I remember having cold hands and feet all the time and developing terrible chilblains from standing on cold tiled floors for hours. I made a lot of shower bouquets using orchids, stephanotis and lily of the valley which all keep well. I would stay up all night preparing wedding bouquets for the following day. I was West Sussex champion at one time.

When Walter and I married I left my job and we moved to Oxhey. This was our first garden and it was full of thistles which we had to dig out.



The Golden Rain Tree lovingly nurtured from a cutting by Myrtle

Our next garden was in Garston where we had to remove old fruit trees. When we moved to Cassiobury, Walter, with his engineering skills, built a terrace and a pond, and in designing the garden we decided to be radical and leave out the straight lines!

I feel so privileged to have had the job of looking after the St Luke's gardens for over 20 years and to have been able to plan and establish the gardens after the new church building was completed. I

don't remember having a budget but I was given the opportunity to purchase shrubs to give all-year-round colour to the gardens. Among the shrubs I chose were a Winston Churchill Fuschia developed in 1942 by my grandfather which has a long flowering season from late summer to early November, a purple-leaved Berberis, a Mahonia which has yellow flowers in winter and early spring, a variegated Euonymus, and a Wild fig which is the centre-piece of the main bed at the front.

There is one particularly special tree in the garden – the Golden Rain Tree (also known as the Pride of India Tree) near the corner of Langley Way and Devereux Drive. It came from a cutting which John Bate (former headmaster of Langleybury School and long-time member of St Luke's) took from a tree in the gardens of Emmanuel College Cambridge. I think John gave it to me as a challenge to see what I could do with a twig the size of a wooden spoon. I nurtured it in a pot for a few years, planted it out in 2008 and it has grown into the beautiful tree that you see today. In summer it is covered in clusters of bright yellow star-shaped flowers.

I also feel blessed to have had the opportunity to use my professional floristry skills to the glory of God in St Luke's Church for many years. Helped by a team of flower-arrangers, the flowers were bought from a wholesaler in Sarratt on a Thursday, given a good drink of water on Friday and arranged on Saturday.

My top tip for a healthy happy garden? Get lots of manure into the soil! My favourite garden tool? My trowel and later, my kneeler!

Edna Williamson and Yvonne Wilder

Big Parenting Questions

Wednesday 19 June, 7:30 pm, St Luke's

As our children approach adolescence, it can be a minefield to try and negotiate the everchanging landscape of their lives as they want more independence and are beginning to ask complex questions that can leave us as parents feeling bewildered.

Big Parenting Questions is a brand new event from *Care for the Family* designed to offer mums, dads and carers hope through this transitional time in a child's life. It's packed with practical advice and strategies to help parents feel better equipped to come alongside their child as they and establish their identity, assert their independence and find their place in the world.

To book your place, please use the QR code below.

The poster features a vibrant yellow and green background. On the left, the text 'BIG PARENTING QUESTIONS' is displayed in large, bold, purple and green letters. Below this, a list of event locations and dates is provided: Woking (30 April), Gravesend (1 May), Lisburn (2 May), High Wycombe (18 June), Watford (19 June), and Aylesbury (20 June). A QR code is located in the bottom left corner, with the text 'Book now cff.org.uk/bigparenting' next to it. On the right side, there is a photograph of a woman and a young man smiling. The woman is wearing a purple headband with question marks, and the young man is wearing a purple headband with a question mark and a rainbow. A purple circular logo with the text 'Care for the Family' is in the bottom right corner.

BIG PARENTING QUESTIONS

Woking 30 April	Gravesend 1 May	Lisburn 2 May
High Wycombe 18 June	Watford 19 June	Aylesbury 20 June

Book now
cff.org.uk/bigparenting

Care for the Family



ST ANDREWS LITERATURE FESTIVAL

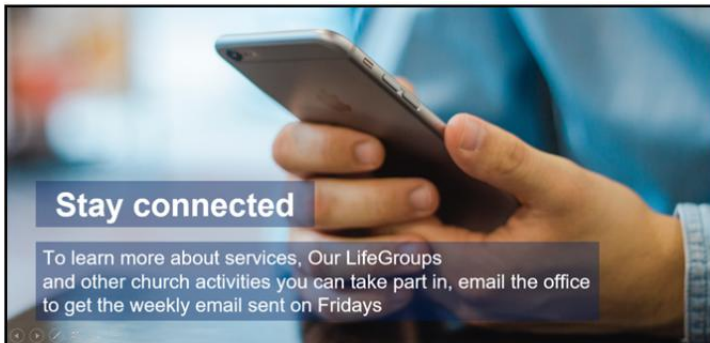
20+ Authors
21-22 June 2024
Great Missenden



St Andrew's Bookshop, Great Missenden, is holding its first annual Christian literature festival on 21 and 22 June. It will be hosting a range of events at church venues around the village.

This celebration of Christian literature aims to showcase some of the UK's most loved Christian authors in thought-provoking conversations, Q&A sessions and book signings, and will culminate in an evening with Fiona Castle.

To see the full programme of events and speakers over the two days, and to book tickets, visit: <https://stalitfest.co.uk/>



URBAN SAINTS

Tuesdays 6:15pm - 7:30pm in Church Hall
7-11 year olds



News from Partners in Mission

Mission Sunday

Sunday May 19th was our annual Mission Sunday at which we featured news from some of our Mission Partners, either in person or via video. This year we heard from partners in various countries, not all of which we can mention in great detail.

We heard first from Lesley Inward from St Peter's Church, Bushey Mill Lane, who had just returned from a trip to Malawi to visit our partner organisation, St Luke's Hospital, Malosa, and specifically the maternity clinic in the village of Nkasala. Together with St Lawrence's, Abbots Langley, we funded the construction of the maternity clinic through the Thanksgiving Fund in 2012 and 2014. Lesley showed us pictures of the clinic and some statistics as to the number of babies the clinic sees delivered every year. It was a joy to hear that our support is still enabling mothers to have safe birth experiences in a country sadly lacking many basic healthcare facilities.

Via video, we heard from the HIV/AIDS and Leprosy Clinic that we support in India, and a first-hand report from Adrian Booth who had the opportunity to visit the clinic on a recent business trip and who brought greetings and thanks for our support. (See also the update from our Partnership Fund Appeal on the next page.)

Nearer home, we heard an update from Gill Strevens who is a trustee of Alternatives, a Watford and Hemel Hempstead based charity providing support to women both pre-, during and post-pregnancy through counselling and practical support. Gill shared the challenge of having to relocate their Clarendon Road shop, which sells second-hand maternity equipment, to a smaller unit, and how consequently St Luke's is aiming to help by loaning space within the church building for storage of their Moses Basket scheme through which free baby supplies are supplied to struggling mums.

Finally, Alastair Paterson told us about his work supporting Bible translation work in Asia. This includes the production of traditional printed Bibles in local languages, but also Bible for Children booklets translated into different Asian languages suitable for use in Sunday Schools and for evangelistic work. Alastair also shared how he is trying to utilise technology to help spread the gospel, including posting recordings of Bible readings on the internet and using QR codes to

make access to Christian materials easy for anyone with a smart-phone.

Thank you to all those partners who participated in the service, not all of whom we can name. For more information about these and our other partners, please talk to any of the Partners in Mission group members: John Bishop, Jos Lawrance, Bill Miller, Michael Norman, Richard Waddington and John Williamson.

Bill Miller
Chair, Partners in Mission Committee

Partnership Fund Appeal 2024 Update

Our appeal, launched at Easter, is now drawing to a close. We set a target of at least £15,000 to go towards the completion of the new HIV/AIDS and Leprosy Clinic that we support in India. At the latest count, the total raised is over £14,000. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. **It's not too late to donate!**



The new purpose-built clinic building, currently an empty shell

If you would like to make a gift to this project, please either:

- use one of the Church envelopes, marking it for the Partnership Fund (sign and date it if you are a tax payer) or
- make an online bank transfer:

Account name PCC St Luke's Watford
Sort code 20-91-79
Account no. 70687472
Reference Partnership Fund

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

Update from the Gelsthorpe family in northern Japan

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases."

Lamentations 3:22



New team members

Praise God that Rachel has now arrived in Hanamaki to begin her training at the church. God willing, she will be working here for at least two years. She studied Japanese at Secondary School and has just graduated from a language school in Tokyo. She has very little furniture for her apartment so please pray for a smooth process in getting everything she needs. Lisa (a short-term worker who will be with us for six months) joins us on Friday and will be living in the church. **Please pray** that both of these ladies will settle in quickly and will be used mightily by the Lord here in Hanamaki.

Meeting people in the community

One thing we'll be asking Rachel and Lisa once they are settled is to go out into the community and meet as many people as possible. Yuzuki (church intern) is involved in a dance class and we also meet people through groups like football, school events and community events. Mark and Isaac are looking for a new community group to join (which might be table tennis). **Please pray** that God will guide us to those open to the gospel and give us boldness in sharing the Gospel. Some groups are very keen to have new members and some are less open. **Please pray** that we will be wise in knowing what opportunities to pursue.

A new church member

On 19th May, Mr S became a church member. He is a faithful believer who prays every day for the salvation of his friends and colleagues. He became a Christian at another church in Hanamaki that is now closed and, more recently, has struggled with mental health problems. Praise God that he is making great progress in his health and gives the credit to God. **Please pray** for continued healing for him and for warm fellowship with other church members as he formally joins our church.



Praise God for a safe trip to Tokyo, Isaac's exams, a good break and celebrating our 20th wedding anniversary

Loving the Bible

On Sunday 19th May we began a new sermon series on *Love in the Christian life*. The first sermon was about love for the Bible (based on *Psalms 119*). We are concerned to encourage all our church members to be disciplined in reading the Bible daily. **Praise God** that we have already been able to hold a seminar on daily Bible reading.

Please pray that through this sermon, individual pastoral meetings and Bible studies that people will be encouraged to read the Bible every day.



Please pray for Grace and Isaac as they take their Japanese A Level over the next few weeks

School and homeschooling

Thank you for praying for Caleb as he undertook a trial period at the Middle School for two weeks in the afternoons. **Praise God** that this went well and he didn't want to miss school to go to Tokyo in the recent holiday. Many of his old classmates from Elementary School remembered him. He will now join the school more permanently and go in every afternoon from Monday to Friday. He won't be expected to do tests or homework but he will join the Handball club which practises almost every day. **Please pray** that he will continue to enjoy school and to make friends and that the new connections we have with students and parents will be fruitful for the Gospel.

Our church building

Praise God that, with the help of a loan from OMF and generous giving, we were able to purchase our current building in 2020 and reform it into a wonderful, public space for worship and sharing the Gospel. Thank you to all those who have given generously to the church building fund. **Please pray** for God's continued provision in this area.

At the end of April, OMF bought the land behind the church (an abandoned house with a generous garden plot). The house will be renovated to provide a storage space for the furniture of missionaries while they are on Home Assignment and the garden will be cleared to make a car park. The church will pay for the work on the car park and, in return, will be able to use the parking space indefinitely. **Praise God** for this provision. For many of our events, the current parking area is insufficient so **please pray** for God's provision for the work on the car park too.

New ideas for evangelism and fellowship

Praise God for the church members who are involved in evangelism and enjoy regular fellowship. At our recent AGM, we asked everyone two questions:

1. If we held an evangelistic event, what would your friends come to?
2. If we have a social event for church members, what would like to do?

Please pray for wisdom as we collate the answers to these questions and plan evangelistic and fellowship events. **Please pray** for church members to be involved in running these events.

Thank you for praying for us, please let us know how we can pray for you.

With love from

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



Dear friends,

Greetings from Malawi! We're entering the cold season here – although the days are warm if you're out in the sun. I'm inside, and wrapped up in a few layers!

The last time I wrote I shared about working with Volker Glissman on a resource to help people to understand the whole Bible story. We have now finished developing material for piloting the six-week course. In fact, two pilot groups have started in the last week! It's exciting to see how people are responding to the material, and although adjustments will inevitably be needed, it's a positive start. The first group are leaders from an organisation called Young Life. The second comprises members of Blantyre Baptist Church, a large church in town which

Volker attends. And the third group, which will start at the beginning of June, is a group of lay leaders and the pastor from the Africa Evangelical Church which I attend. I'm particularly interested in how this one goes.

Following the report I did as Educational Advisor last year for the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi, the Academic Dean has asked me to do some training with teaching staff in mid-June, which I'm looking forward to.



Sad news came recently of a former colleague at EBCoM who died last night after a short stay in hospital. Pastor Mercy Mkwezalamba was one of my first students. When she graduated in 2003 she was asked to take on the role of the Wives' and Nursery Programme Coordinator at the college, a position she held until she left in 2020. During that time she impacted the lives of all the families at college, and would often tell us of student wives who had become Christians during the programme. I attended her funeral the next day.

I was glad to do a series of three teaching sessions at church in the last month. Also, I was encouraged by the prayer meetings which I led for most of the days between Ascension Day and Pentecost, a time that SIM sets aside as a special 10 days of prayer.

Next week I'm going to take a break, travelling with a missionary family (not SIM) to a Forest Reserve in Malawi that I've not been to before. They are avid bird watchers, and it will be great fun to share this experience with them – we're hoping to find birds that none of us have seen before!

Prayer points

- Give thanks for the pilot version of the short course on the Bible story and pray for the 3 pilot groups, that all participants would learn and grow as Christians, and also give helpful feedback.
- Pray for the family and friends of Pastor Mercy Mkwezalamba.
- Pray for Malawi, with tough economic challenges and poor harvests for many.
- Pray for refreshment and fellowship on my holiday next week.

Thank you so much for your prayerful support.

With love in Him,

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



Dear friends,

We are now well into the summer term in Lancaster, and our ministry looks very different from the way it did the last time I wrote to you! As we head into the second half of the term, I wanted to share some of the encouragements of the past two months, as well as some stories of students to pray for.

Since my last prayer letter I have had the privilege of following up several students individually and I am now meeting regularly with two of them, as well as others I am meeting on a less regular basis. It has been such an encouragement to meet with these students, in different stages of discovering and growing in the gospel, and I would welcome your prayers for me as I share the good news of Jesus with them.

One student I have been speaking to about the gospel is J, a visiting researcher who is particularly interested in finding out more about Christianity while she is here. She has been reading the Bible regularly in her own time and we have had some interesting conversations about grace, mercy and justice. Please pray for continued conversations with her and particularly that her interest in the gospel would move from academic to more personal.

One change this term has been that we have been preparing and leading Bible studies for Globe which is run by the Christian Union. This has been a great encouragement as we have been able to get to know the group of students attending week by week as we study the book of *John*. Even just from the first few weeks, we have been seeing some of the students becoming more open to God's word so please pray that God would continue to be working in their hearts to bring them to trust Jesus for themselves!



We have had two International Dinners so far this term, with one more planned at the end of June. We had a great time last night at our second of the term, with food from Bangladesh suggested by one of our students who also helped to prepare it. I had a great opportunity to chat to S as we cooked

together, including sharing why Christians find it so important to regularly read the Bible and pray.

It was such an encouragement to see a mixture of new and returning students at International Dinner, and especially to see interest from students in suggesting future recipes from their cultures! There were lots of conversations happening around the room and students signing up to events run by both Friends International and the Christian Union. Please pray that some of the friendships begun last night would continue throughout the term and that we would particularly see many coming along to the Globe Bible study.

Prayer points

- **Please pray for a student I am currently meeting with who is struggling with her mental health.** Please give thanks that we have been able to regularly have walks around the campus and please pray that I would be wise in listening to her and sensitively sharing the good news of Jesus with her when appropriate.
- **Please pray for conversations that I and others are having with J.** Please pray that she would see that the justice she is longing for can only be found in God and pray that she would continue to enjoy reading God's word.
- **Please pray for our upcoming events in the second half of the term, particularly our meal for Christian international graduates in which we will be thinking about keeping going as a Christian.** Please pray that we prepare those who are leaving for whatever they might do after graduation.
- **Please pray for the training I will be receiving on ministry partnership development (MPD) in June.** Please pray that I learn well and have more focused time to spend on MPD after the training course.

Thank you so much for your continued support and prayers!

Sally Miller
Friends International, Lancaster Branch

Some Highlights from Spring 2024



Cameo Bluebell Walk on 3 May – glorious bluebells, mud and rain!



Rogation/Beating the Bounds on 7 May – the Vicar and Church Warden led church members around parts of the Parish to pray for its protection



Men's Breakfast on 11 May – Bill M with the speaker, Stephen Moore, recently appointed Strategic Programme Manager for St Alban's Diocese



Easter Monday Pilgrimage on 1 April – A few of the St Luke's pilgrims outside St Albans Abbey. See pages 27-28 for the story of their pilgrimage

Garfield Jackson (Viola)

Winnie Wu Bethel (Piano)

Bach, Schumann and Brahms

Sat 22nd June 2.30pm

St Luke's Church

Lasting an hour with refreshments after.
Collecting for the Peace Hospice.



TODDLERS AT ST LUKES

**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

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

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

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

Easter Monday Pilgrimage 2024

Spring sunshine, with no rain forecast until late afternoon, perfect! At 9am on Easter Monday Jill, Paul, Mary, Sheena, Mimi TO and Mary B set off in good spirits. Onwards to North Watford where we were joined by Caroline, India and Reef (aged 7 and a first timer!). We walked on to the beautiful, but waterlogged, Munden Estate, where conditions deteriorated after we crossed a bridge



by the river Colne and encountered a deep stream across a flooded field. It was while contemplating our options (basically none) that we met a strong, steady stranger by the name of Stuart who without hesitation offered to give us a piggyback much to the excitement of his dog. One by one, he carried us to the other side, and this exceptional kindness will, I am sure, stay forever in all our memories. What a blessing he was.

Whilst enjoying our coffee near Park Street we met another group of pilgrims from St Mary's who were running the route, and it was obvious their journey would be much quicker than ours! Feeling refreshed we set off again, shortly to be joined by Dean and Mimi T, near Bricket Wood. However, ahead was another flooded path so we took a detour beside the ruins of a Roman villa. We made good progress and were excited to be met by Tiffany and Stanley (aged 4). They had miraculously tracked us down but then announced that it was "a bit muddy up ahead". This turned out to be an understatement, but we were able to navigate our way around the worst of it, giving the young pilgrims piggybacks, but at times we had no option but to wade through the River Ver. Our feet were wet and muddy by now.

Nothing, however, could have prepared us for the notorious 'boggy field' near Hedges Farm. It was more like a rice paddy field and there was no way around it. Mary B took her chances by wading through the stream in the centre of the field, whilst Dean managed to get the boys over the barbed wire fence into the next field, which was



drier ground. The rest of us waded through the water, up to our calves in places, and miraculously no one fell in.

Once across, Stanley handed round chocolate, some of us tipped the water out of our shoes and wrung out our socks, a picture was taken and we smiled in the sun having overcome the flood challenge.



There was more mud ahead but we were delighted to be joined by John, our Church Warden, and before long the magnificent St Albans Abbey came into sight. What a bedraggled bunch we were, squelching our way up the hill, watching the hundreds of other pilgrims holding their banners high, already filing in at 2:30pm, and we hadn't even had our picnic!

We rested, ate a quick sandwich, Stanley handed round some 'rocky road', and then we entered the Abbey as the last processional hymn was being sung... "When through and forest glades I wander, and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees"... On an ideal Spring day this would have been our experience, but not today. God so richly blessed our walk in other wonderful ways and a great sense of achievement was felt by us all.

The sermon led by Bishop Jane was a series of reflections given by three Christians, one of whom had been greatly encouraged by the following Bible reading before taking part in a triathlon, and worrying about the swim:

'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you'. *Isaiah 43:2*

This was meant for the St Luke's pilgrims that day, who might have been weary, wet and muddy but were without doubt feeling loved and cared for by God every step of the way.

Jill Rogers

Footnote: St Mary's 'running' pilgrims were in St Albans eating lunch in a pub by 12:30pm, in plenty of time for the service!

LADIES CAMEO CLUB

Summer 2024 Programme

June

Friday 14th
7 for 7:30pm
Church Lounge

Water Aid
Cameo + event

Talk by Gerard Casale

July

Friday 12th
7 for 7:30pm
Youth Lounge

**Nina Cook from
Face2Face Christian
music group**
Cameo + event

Evening of song and
a Russian story of faith

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



Summer Concert

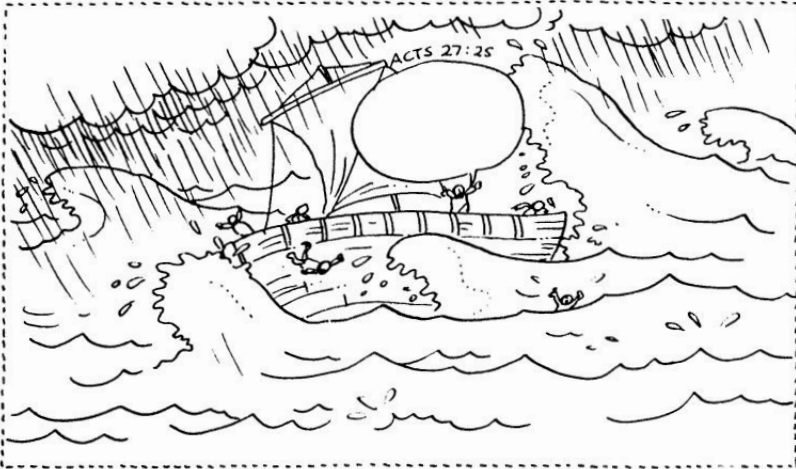
13th July 2024 @ 5pm in the Church

Free Entry, donations welcome.
With Light Refreshments afterwards.

Children's Page

SHIPWRECK!

THERE IS AN EXCITING STORY OF A SHIPWRECK IN ACTS 27:13-44. ASK SOMEONE TO READ IT TO YOU. (OR READ IT YOURSELF!) HERE'S A PICTURE TO COLOUR—WHAT IS PAUL SAYING?



Word Search

Genesis 8:6-11

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

Find the words in **bold** type:

'After **forty** days **Noah** opened the **window** he had made in the **ark**...and sent out the **dove** from the **ark**. When the dove **returned** to him in the **evening**, there in its **beak** was a freshly **picked olive leaf**. Then Noah knew that the **water** had **receded** from the **earth**.'



Note: *Desert Detectives* Holiday Club is fully booked. If you would like to add your child to the waiting list, please email Lydia (children@stlukeswatford.org).

A poster for 'Alternate Saturdays Breakfast Club'. The top left features the title 'Alternate Saturdays' in large orange letters. To the right is a circular logo with a fried egg, bacon, and a waffle, with the words 'BREAKFAST CLUB' around it. Below the title, a pink box contains the text '8:30 - 10 AM'. Underneath, it lists 'Bacon, Vegan Sausages, Pastries, and Cereal' and 'Table Tennis, Mini Snooker, Board Games, Crafts, and Fun!'. The bottom left shows a breakfast spread with toast, jam, cereal, fruit, and orange juice. A yellow sticky note in the center says 'All pre-school and primary school families welcome!'. A red box at the bottom left says 'FREE!'. On the right, an orange box lists the dates: 23rd Mar, 6th April, 20th April, 4th May, 18th May, 1st June, 15th June, 29th June, and 13th July.

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
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	Vacancy
PCC Treasurer	Martin Kirk
PCC Secretary	Margaret Forester
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