



# St Luke's News

May 2026  
Number 289

## Did You Know?



April 7th marked the 20th Anniversary of the Consecration of the new St Luke's Church, and we will be celebrating in style over the weekend of 8th–10th May with events on all three days, culminating in a Thanksgiving Service on the Sunday morning followed by a celebratory lunch.

In preparation for the celebrations, I have been researching the history of St Luke's for a booklet (see page 3) outlining the story of the Building Project for the new church, but also looking further back at the history of the original church building.

As part of this research I have come across lots of interesting facts that you might not be aware of! Did you know, for example:

- that St Luke's started life as a daughter church of St Mary's?
- that the original site purchased for the church was on the corner of Cassiobury Drive and The Gardens?



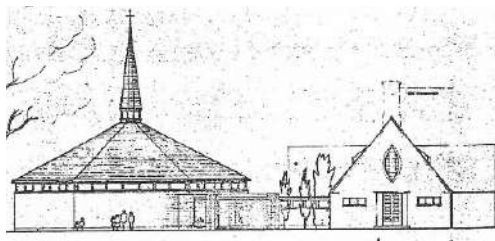
The proposed St Luke's Church in 1931 with bell tower

- that plans were drawn up in 1931 for a grandiose church seating 300 people with a tall, exotic-looking, bell tower?
- that the old church was only ever intended as a temporary building until funds could be found to build a bigger church?
- that in 1964 plans were drawn up by the architect who designed St Peter's, Bushey Mill Lane, for a hexagonal church building along the same lines as St Peter's?

- that our bell was given to us by St Mary's and used to belong to the Old Free School in St Mary's churchyard? (And do you even know where it hangs?)
- that the whole Building Project for the new church was over 10 years in the planning?
- that the total raised to build the new church was £1.75 million? (the majority of which came from church members)
- that most of the wooden furniture in the sanctuary area (communion table, lectern, chairs, etc.) was from an old but diseased oak tree that had to be cut down to make way for the new building?
- that the Thanksgiving Fund set up to raise 10% of the cost of the church (a tithe) to give to Christian building projects at home and abroad, raised £175,000 by 2017?

What I hope you do know is that our new church building has been used to reach out to many people in our community in many different ways over the past 20 years.

The vision for the new church was set out in 2000, six years before it opened. The three priorities were to be: Worship, Community and Mission, and these have continued to be priorities in our church life together. Our beautiful stained glass windows create a lovely worship area full of light and space, and our music, led by Jeremy, is at the heart of our weekly worship. Our whole



The proposed hexagonal St Luke's Church in 1964

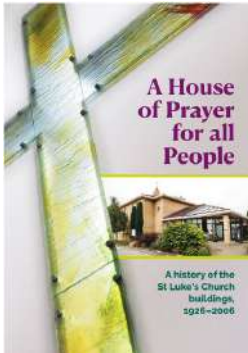
building is used every day of the week by both church and community groups — someone from the local community once described our Gathering Area as being the heart of Cassiobury, a place where people come together, both from the church and the wider community. Mission also continues to be one of our core activities: Alpha, Holiday Clubs, youth and children’s work, prayer visiting, midweek groups and many other activities help to draw people in but also send St Luke’s members out into the parish with the Good News of Jesus.



The beautiful stained glass windows on the east elevation of the church

Do come and join us for the Anniversary Weekend. We would like this to be a celebration both for the Parish and the church family, with the Cream Tea on Friday afternoon, the Community Fun Day on Saturday, and the Thanksgiving Service and lunch on Sunday. We have invited past clergy and former members to join us, and our previous Vicar who was the driving force behind the new church, the Venerable John Kiddle (recently

retired as Archdeacon of Wandsworth) will be preaching on Sunday morning. We still need lots of folk to help over the course of the weekend and also to spread the word to make sure the building is full on all three days.



The foundation stone, laid six months before the church opened, quotes *Isaiah 56:7*: “my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people”.

Let us pray that St Luke’s will continue to be a church for all people, and for all nations, for many years to come.

Copies available for the 20th Anniversary\*

**Bill Miller**  
**Lay Leader of Worship**

\* Suggested donation of £2. All proceeds to the Thanksgiving Appeal supporting Rennie Grove Hospice and Nireekshana AIDS & Leprosy Clinic, Hyderabad, India

## 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.

### Plan for Sunday Services:

May	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
<b>Sunday 3rd</b>		Family Communion <i>Romans 8:34-39</i>	Encounter <i>Jehovah Shama: The Lord is There</i>
<b>Sunday 10th 20th Anniversary Weekend</b>		Service of Thanksgiving with <b>the Venerable John Kiddle</b>	Encounter with Holy Communion <i>Jehovah Nisi: The Lord is Our Banner</i>
<b>Sunday 17th</b>	Holy Communion	Morning Worship with APCM	Encounter <i>Jehovah Raah: The Lord is my Shepherd</i>
<b>Sunday 24th Pentecost Sunday</b>		Family Communion with Mark and Sarah Gelsthorpe from OMF (see p 24)	Encounter
<b>Sunday 31st Trinity Sunday</b>		Morning Worship with Baptism	Encounter with Holy Communion

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

June	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 7th		Morning Worship	Encounter
Sunday 14th	Holy Communion	Family Communion	Encounter
Sunday 21st Father's Day		All-age Worship with Parade	Encounter with Holy Communion
Sunday 28th Trinity Sunday		Family Communion	Encounter
July	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 5th		Morning Worship	Encounter with Holy Communion
Sunday 12th	Holy Communion	Children and Young People's Take Over Service	Encounter
Sunday 19th		Family Communion	Encounter
Sunday 26th		Family Communion	No Encounter services through the Summer (26th July–30th August inc.)

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



## 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

Half-day of Prayer

One Saturday in the month 9:00am-12 noon in the Chapel (check Diary dates on p 6)

## Diary dates coming up

### May

- 8th 20th Anniversary Celebrations — Church Open Afternoon with Cream Teas, 2:00-5:00pm (see p 8)
- 9th 20th Anniversary Celebrations — Community Fun Day, 12 noon-5:00pm (see p 8)
- 10th 20th Anniversary Celebrations — Thanksgiving Service, 10:30am, followed by Celebratory Lunch, 12:30pm (book in advance)
- 12th Sunday Afternoon Recital, 3:00pm (see p 33)
- 14th Prayer Walk in the Parish, 7:00pm from St Luke's main entrance
- 16th Ascension Day Service, St Peter's, Bushey Mill Lane, 7:30pm
- 17th Half-day of Prayer, St Luke's Chapel, 9:00am–12 noon
- 23rd Creative Space (see p 43)
- 29th Annual Parochial Church Meeting, 10:30am
- 29th Breakfast Club (see p 11)
- 29th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

### June

- 6th Breakfast Club (see p 10)
- 13th Half-day of Prayer, St Luke's Chapel, 9:00am–12 noon
- 14th Creative Space (see p 43)
- 20th Sunday Afternoon Recital, 3:00pm (see p 33)
- 20th Breakfast Club (see p 11)
- 21st Alban Day: Pilgrimage and Festival (more information at [www.stalbanscathedral.org/Event/alban-day](http://www.stalbanscathedral.org/Event/alban-day))
- 26th Father's Day Barbeque, 12:30pm
- 26th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

### July

- 3rd Wine tasting with wines from the southern hemisphere, Vicarage Garden (more details to come)
- 4th Breakfast Club (see p 11)
- 12th Half-day of Prayer, St Luke's Chapel, 9:00am–12 noon
- 18th Watford Symphony Orchestra, 7:30 pm, St Luke's Church (see p 37)
- 25th Sunday Afternoon Recital, 3:00pm (see p 33)
- 31st Breakfast Club (see p 11)
- 31st Creative Space (see p 43)
- 31st Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

### August

- 4th-7th Kingdom Builders Holiday Club

## Regular groups at St Luke's Church

### **Children/Youth Groups (evenings, term-time)**

Kids Club	Tuesdays	5:30–6:45pm	7–11 year olds
Rock Solid	Mondays	6:30–7:45pm	Years 7–9
Base	Tuesdays	6:30–7:45pm	Years 9–11
K2	Tuesdays	8:00–9:15pm	Years 11–13

### **Badminton and Table Tennis Club**

Friday evenings (except 2 weeks at Christmas and Good Friday),  
7:30–10:30pm, in the Church Hall and Gathering Area

For more information, speak to Fiona Craigie

### **Breakfast Club**

Every other Saturday, 8:30–10:00am

For more information, speak to Bekki Hadley

### **Cassiobury and nearby Community Choir (CanCC)**

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

For more information, speak to Jeremy Cooke

### **Creative Space**

Craft activities for women, monthly

For more information, speak to Pam Norman

### **Friday Club**

Monthly, last Friday in the month (except in December when it will be on 18th)

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 login 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, in the Chapel

Hour of Prayer, Fridays, 10:00-11:00 am, in the Chapel

Half-day of Prayer, 1st Saturday in the month, 9:00am-12 noon, in the Chapel

### **Toddlers**

Thursday mornings, term-time, 9:30–11:00am

For more information, speak to Bekki Hadley

# 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations

Sat 9th May



You're invited

## Music

### Chloe Harrison

Opening Fanfare  
12pm  
French Horn & piano:  
2 - 2.20pm

### Watford Philharmonic 'The Voices'

3 - 3.20pm

### CanCC Choir

4 - 4.20pm

## Food

### International buffet

12.30 - 2pm

### Savoury snacks

from 2pm

### Tea & cakes

3 - 4.30pm

## Children

### Outdoor games

12.15 - 4pm

### Face painting

### Crafts for all

12.15 - 2pm &  
3.30 - 4.30pm

- Stalls from community groups
- Story of the building project display

## Fri 8th May

### Church Open Afternoon

...with cream teas  
2 to 5pm

## Sun 10th May

### Thanksgiving Service

10.30am

Follow us   

From our foundation stone: "...a house of prayer for all people". Isaiah 56: 7

Keep updated: [stlukeswatford.org/20-years](http://stlukeswatford.org/20-years)

Free entry

Donations to Thanksgiving Appeal Partners:

Nireekshana Aids & Leprosy Clinic, Hyderabad, India



Rennie Grove Peace

## What St Luke's Means to Us



I started attending St Luke's Watford in 2015 through the Alpha course and it was such a friendly and welcoming group. Initially, I struggled to find my voice as I grew up as a Hindu and this was very much out of my comfort zone. However, I asked many questions and discovered a great deal about Jesus and Christianity as a whole. The Christian ethos of "love thy neighbour" had never seemed so evident to me. I may be biased but I cannot imagine other churches delivering Alpha so well.

Soon after the Alpha course finished, I decided to be baptised and committed myself to following Jesus for the rest of my earthly life. Since then, I have occasionally visited other churches in the area, either when invited or simply for a change, but I have found St Luke's to be the warmest, most welcoming and inclusive church community I have come across.

Since I joined St Luke's, there have been numerous changes, including a change in leadership a few years ago. It is safe to say that Michael, our Vicar, and Pam, his wife and one of our Readers, are extraordinary leaders with a genuine heart for Jesus.

I joined the Alpha team in 2016 but in 2017, I started a new job in Canary Wharf and thought it would be difficult to continue helping with the Alpha course. However, I was eventually persuaded to stay on and it proved to be a clear example of how "God works for the good of those who love Him" (*Romans 8:28*). Had I not taken part that year, I might never have truly got to know my wonderful wife and best friend, Nikki.

Nikki and I were married at St Luke's in August 2020. It is truly special to share your life with someone who is as committed to the Word of God as you are, and to walk this journey together in such a fruitful place of worship. We have been very happy at St Luke's and have gained so much from the volunteering we do — Nikki with the children's group, and me with the worship band.

We were not members of St Luke's when the new building was being developed. However, it is safe to say that it feels like a second home to us. The wonderful fellowship and teaching, and the knowledge that neither of us would, quite literally, ever go hungry here, have made it a truly special place for us both.

***Ricky Shome***

## Building Refresh for the 20th Anniversary Celebrations

Following the Easter weekend, the contractors arrived at St Luke's and, under the watchful eye of John D, continued work on refreshing our church complex. The team of decorators who had repainted the Gathering Area, Coffee Lounge and upstairs Youth Lounge below the dado rail over the February half-term, now erected a tower to the upstairs landing to start

their works there and continued down the stairs and along the corridor. Subsequently, they were asked to redecorate the toilet, stage wall and front main doors to the Church Hall.

The carpet tiles to the Gathering Area were removed and replaced with new ones whilst another contractor removed the worn Kitchen vinyl

flooring to level it with screed and fit a new non-slip vinyl floor.



All the works required volunteers to help in advance by clearing the space and moving all portable items, including the gas oven and dishwasher from the Kitchen, and moving them all back after the flooring had been laid. Volunteers also removed the old settee from the Gathering Area in preparation for the delivery of a new one, together with new tables and chairs.



All is now ready for the 20th Anniversary celebrations starting on Friday 8th May.





Thank you to the building team, especially John D, for planning and managing the project, the volunteers who helped move equipment and furniture, and everyone who gave so generously to the Appeal to finance the works.

*Paul Rogers*

**RISE & SHINE! IT'S**  
**Breakfast Club**  
Start your family weekend with a  
tasty breakfast and fun activities  
**Saturday Mornings 8.30 to 10am**

Join us on these Saturdays:  
23rd May, 6th and 20th June, 4th and 18th July

## What St Luke's Means to Me

Just over 20 years ago, my father, Malcolm Barker, passed away quite suddenly whilst holidaying on the island of Samos. He got into difficulty while snorkelling and his death was attributed to 'misadventure'. He had a strong faith and I take comfort in the knowledge that he is with his Father God in heaven.



At that time, Malcolm and his wife Pam had been members of St Luke's Church for 29 years and had taken on various roles within the Church ... including Sunday school, PCC, Deanery Synod, choir, Mothers Union, Phoenix, Life group leaders, to name a few. However, one of their long-standing commitments was the St Luke's Badminton Club. Malcolm will no doubt be remembered by those former regular members. His competitive spirit, quick wit and Basil Brush like laugh ensured a good time for all those present. Not forgetting his portable chess set which he brought, ever ready to play between badminton matches.

It came as no surprise therefore when the building work for the new St Luke's Church was well under way that Malcolm sought a means to keep the Badminton Club going. He enlisted my help to approach Cassiobury Junior School to ask if we could temporarily move the Club there. It was therefore agreed that, as a parent of a child at the school, I would be the named person responsible for hiring the hall.

It was during this period, that Malcolm met his Maker and knowing how much the badminton club had meant to him, I felt the least I could do was to keep it going.



In 2006, once the building works on our new Church were complete we started preparations to move the Badminton Club back to St Luke's Church.

What a joy to find ourselves in the former church building now turned into a hall. With its pitched roof it was a great contrast to the original church hall and was perfect for the

high shots loved by badminton players!

A working party including Francis Goode, Robert Carnaghan and myself set about preparing the new court. I remember much angst and determination to achieve the exact measurements and to fix the sports tape in place. A real labour of love and a rather wobbly, albeit unique set of line markings as a result!



The larger building and increased number of meeting rooms also allowed us to meet more regularly with fewer cancelled sessions due to other demands for the hall.

Here we are, 20 years on and I am happy to report that we not only have a beautiful varnished court with professionally marked lines underneath (removing the labour-intensive maintenance) but also a thriving group of regular members.

Table tennis is always available 'whilst waiting to play on court'. However, this has become of equal importance to badminton and some of our members come specifically for that.

Always open to new suggestions or ideas, we trialled pickle ball on occasions but this was greeted with mixed feedback.

The numbers have fluctuated over the years and at times, I have been close to giving it all up. However, amidst the difficult and surreal moments (I have many stories and am happy to share with anybody interested) I believe God has used this club as a place of outreach, friendship and sanctuary.

As we celebrate 20 years of our new church, I give thanks to our Lord for His unwavering grace and faithfulness.

New members to Badminton and Table Tennis Club are welcome: families, young or old, novice or expert. All are welcome, Fridays 7:30–10:30pm.

For more information, please contact:

Fiona Craigie: 07759024409 (Sept-April) or  
Vicky Jarman: 07747429618 (May-Sept)

*Fiona Craigie*

## Around the World in 70 Days

Several members of St Luke's kindly took an interest in my travels at the end of last year, with some following my blog or attending the presentation I gave after church a month after my return. I was asked to share a few thoughts for the magazine, so here's as much as I'm able to say in a short article!



Machu Picchu, Peru

The trip was possible because I took a sabbatical from Watford Boys Grammar School, where I've now been working for almost 18 years! I felt I needed a change of scene and a chance to gain perspective given the stage I've reached in life: content in many ways but lacking direction in my career, relationships and to some extent in my walk with God.

With half a term off work and 3 weeks of school holiday, I managed 10 weeks of travel, heading west (easier for jet lag!) from Watford in October and arriving back, having circumnavigated the globe, at the start of January 2026. I spent time in Peru, Argentina, Brazil, New Zealand and Australia, managing to fulfil many dreams and having some extraordinary experiences.

I hiked through the Andes to Machu Picchu, ventured into the Amazon, explored the glaciers of Patagonia and the Iguazu Falls, saw the largest geyser in the southern hemisphere, dived in the Great Barrier Reef, travelled along the Great Ocean Road and experienced a taste of the



My route heading west

Outback. And on the way, I attended a football match at Boca Juniors in Buenos Aires, Ashes Test matches in Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne (with an England win in the latter!) and heralded in 2026 with the iconic firework display at Sydney Harbour.

The variety of landscapes, wildlife and cuisine was quite spectacular, but the greatest pleasure was in meeting people. Whether in tour groups, at hostels or at the variety of (mainly Anglican!) churches I visited, it was a joy to connect with people from such different backgrounds. I also met up with family in Argentina (my brother's wife is from Buenos Aires) and reconnected with precious Aussie friends I made whilst doing student ministry in Paris before becoming a teacher. I also paid a trip of great personal significance to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, and found the service record of my great-grandfather, who emigrated to Perth before the war and served with the Anzacs at Gallipoli.

The trip wasn't always easy: the altitude and cliff-edges in the Andes were outside my comfort zone, having to leave a Queensland highway to sleep before I fell asleep behind the wheel was scary, and at times it was hard to be travelling alone. These experiences fostered a real sense of reliance on God though and it was quite remarkable the way in which He provided at every point when problems big or small arose.



Meeting Ben Stokes during the Ashes Test matches in Australia



Iguazu Falls on the border between Argentina and Brazil

Such was the generosity of His blessing that I even came to a point of expecting it. My brief stay on Lady Elliot Island in the Great Barrier Reef was a real feast of delights, but I harboured a small (unhealthy) envy of other guests who'd swum with a shark. After several hours of snorkelling, I finally reached the platform where I would surface a final time. As I had a final glance beneath me, I detected a fish much larger than



Lady Elliot Island from the air

others I'd seen, with the unmistakable fin of a reef shark. I followed it for a minute or so, gasping thank-yous to God into my snorkel, but not entirely surprised that He had come up trumps yet again. I certainly didn't need that experience but it meant a lot to me in the moment and left me with an overwhelming sense of God's kindness.

The trip was full of such 'ebenezers'.

Moments I will look back on, as the Israelites did, to remember God's goodness and blessing at future times when these seem less tangible. And to do that is such a great antidote to the despondency that can be brought about by difficult things in our lives or in the world around us.

I am grateful to all who prayed for me while I was away. One friend told me she was praying my journey would afford me moments of peace, wonder and connection. It was replete with all three, and I am so thankful I was given the opportunity to undertake it.

*Phil Matthews*

To find out more, Phil's blog is at: <https://aroundtheworldin70days.blog/>

## **Beautiful bunting for sale**

Wera is making lots of bunting to decorate the church and gardens for the 20th anniversary weekend. It's in colours found in St Luke's stained glass windows. Wera would like to sell the bunting after the weekend with the proceeds going to our Thanksgiving Appeal Partners, the Rennie Grove Peace Hospice and Nireekshana AIDS & Leprosy Clinic, Hyderabad, India.

The bunting will brighten up any space, indoors and outside, especially if you are having a party! It comes in 2m lengths and the suggested donation is £12 per length. Please speak to Wera at church to reserve and buy your bunting or contact her on 07904191352.



## What St Luke's Means to Me

In January 1983, aged 23, I started teaching in Borehamwood. I didn't know the area, or anyone living nearby. I had recently experienced God in a profound way whilst teaching and travelling in India which led me to make a fresh commitment, so I was keen to find a church to attend.

I went to three lovely churches in Borehamwood but didn't feel called to stay in them. My Vicar at home in Twickenham suggested St Luke's in Watford, so I turned up there one Sunday morning and introduced myself. Immediately folk scooped me up (Di Gibbs and Janet Gibbon, I think!) and sat me near them. When I introduced myself to the Vicar (Garry Guinness), he invited me to lunch there and then, much to his wife Jeanette's consternation! I immediately felt at home and welcomed.



At lunch, Garry and Jeanette told me that most young adults came to the evening service and met afterwards as a group called *Quo Vadis*. Apparently, it was run by a young man called Bill Miller... I began attending regularly and joined a Home Group. There were a lot of young adults at the time, and I soon made good friends. When there was a reshuffle of Home Groups, I was put in a group where that same young man, Bill, happened to be! We married in St Luke's Church on 2nd August 1986, 40 years ago. Garry preached on *Ephesians 5:2* "Live a life of love. Love others just as Christ loved us."

We have been blessed with deep friendships and three daughters who were christened and confirmed, and for two of them, married at St Luke's. We have been blessed with a house nearby, enabling us to live in the local community and take a full part in serving and worshipping here. We have had joys and sorrows during this time, and the love and support of the church family have helped us through the difficult times. Several people within the church have patiently helped me grow in my understanding of God's Word and enabled me to experience the Holy Spirit in deeper ways.

Bill was Churchwarden when the girls were young (yes, it can be done!). Never did I think I would find myself in that position! Yet when God called, I was aware of how much I had received from St Luke's and knew it was time to give back and support the new Vicar through the unprecedented times of Covid. In the process, I have learnt so much about everything and everyone who is needed to keep the church running smoothly: "As it is,

there are many parts, but one body" *1 Corinthians 12:12*. I have had to lean on Him, not on my own understanding, and learnt the importance of covering everything in prayer.

St Luke's has always been my family — the people who have walked with me as brothers and sisters in Christ. Some have moved away, some are now with the Lord, new faces have joined us, and many faithful friends remain. Three more vicars have come since Garry, and the building itself has changed so much since our wedding.

Yet through all of it, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. I am deeply grateful for every person who has been part of St Luke's, each one helping to draw me closer to Him — including my dear husband.

*Susan Miller*



## **Annual Church Meeting**

### **Sunday 17th May after 10.30**

### **service in church**

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in church on 17 May 2026 at around 12 noon, following straight on from the 10.30 service. The Vicar's and Treasurer's report will be given during the service.

The meeting will elect representatives for deanery synod and for PCC; appoint an independent examiner; and consider a number of reports including the PCC annual report and financial statements (copies available on the weekly email). The meeting will be preceded by a meeting of parishioners to elect churchwardens.

#### **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**

## Run 4 Rony

In early October last year I shared with the morning congregation the sad story concerning my neighbour, Rony, who had a serious accident whilst climbing a tree in Uganda. In August last year, Rony suffered a serious fall that resulted in him being paralysed from the chest down. He was flown to Italy (where his wife's family live) and received treatment in hospital there until he was fit enough to make the return flight home to the UK.



My children (Sophie and Ivor) are good friends with Rony and Anna's four children and we wanted to do something to help. We decided to open a *JustGiving* page and I signed up to run the Yorkshire Marathon. The Yorkshire Marathon took place on 19th October (see photo). Together we raised a whopping total of £4,965!

At St Luke's we prayed for Rony's condition to stabilise so that he could be flown back to the UK and we also prayed that his right arm and hand would regain strength and movement. I am delighted to share that these two prayers have been well and truly answered.

Rony came home at the beginning of April and has made significant progress in the use of his right arm and hand, which is absolutely wonderful news, praise the Lord!

Rony and Anna are truly grateful for all the prayers, support and generous contributions from the St Luke's church family, friends, neighbours and other well-wishers.

The money raised from the Marathon will go towards house adaptations and additional Occupational Therapy and Physio sessions. Ongoing prayers for the tough times ahead would be much appreciated; for strength, comfort and hope that one day Rony might be able to walk again. We do, after all, believe in a God who can perform miracles!



Rony with his son in hospital in the UK

***Katie Ostrowski***

## New Wine Leaders' Conference 2026

In February, nine staff and leaders at St Luke's went to the New Wine Leadership Conference in Harrogate. It was a really refreshing few days.

From the start, it felt like God was doing something quiet but deep in people's hearts. A theme that came up often in the talks, worship and conversations was *passion*. Not just 'strong feelings' but the original meaning of *passio*, a Latin word meaning suffering, ie being willing to suffer for God.

The teaching was strong and helpful. The speakers shared practical advice about leadership and building healthy churches, but they also challenged us spiritually. They spoke about leading with integrity, depending on the Holy Spirit and staying close to Jesus. What stayed with me most was the call to steady commitment; not trying to impress people but choosing to follow Jesus faithfully, even when it is difficult. At times we were invited to physically kneel before God as a sign of surrender. That simple act felt powerful. It was a reminder that revival in the church does not start on a stage, it starts when we humble ourselves.

There was also talk about a quiet revival among the younger generation. It was encouraging to hear that many young people are searching for something real, not just excitement or a big show. They want honesty, truth and depth. It gave a sense that God is gently stirring hearts in a way that is steady and real.

Worship was a highlight of the conference. With around 2,000 people, it felt smaller and more personal than the Summer festival. There were powerful moments, but also quiet ones. At times the whole room felt still, like everyone was focussed on God. In those moments, the idea of *passio* made sense. It was about offering ourselves to God, not just singing songs. The seminars were useful and practical, covering discipleship, mission, church growth and leadership health. From a personal perspective, I was disappointed that there were no seminars focussed on leading worship, as that would have been particularly helpful for me.



We also had a lot of fun and laughter together. Of course, fellowship is a big part of this type of conference. One moment we won't forget was during a prizegiving. A prize winner was called to the front and missed a step, falling down in front of everyone, legs in the air! Thankfully, he was not hurt, just embarrassed, and once we knew he was okay, we all laughed.

With lots of opportunity for prayer ministry, we came home feeling renewed and encouraged. It was not loud or dramatic but it felt like a steady reminder to kneel before God and say yes to him, whatever that might mean.

***Ricky Shome***

## **Symbolism in Baptism**

As a student worshipping at Alfred Place Baptist Church in Aberystwyth, I witnessed many baptisms by full immersion and all were extremely moving. The candidates, mostly students though some were townsfolk, first gave their testimonies which were inspiring and a powerful witness to God's goodness.



It was thrilling therefore to learn that a baptistry was in the plan for the new St Luke's Church and as the 20th Anniversary approaches, it has been wonderful to see the baptistry in use on three occasions in the past month.

I have always been struck by the amazing symbolism of baptism by full immersion: death to sin, resurrection to new life and a public commitment to follow Jesus.

“Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” *Romans 6:3,4*

As a believer comes to baptism with penitence before God and asks for forgiveness for sin, he or she is immersed in the water, symbolizing the death and burial of the old self. The water of baptism represents a washing away of sin and inner cleansing of the believer's heart and mind. As the believer is raised from the water, symbolizing the resurrection of Jesus, he or she is raised to a new life in Christ, being reborn and empowered to live, according to His teaching. Alleluia!

***Yvonne Wilder***



Dear friends,

### **A new start**

The past four months have been a new start and a time of transition for me as I took on my new role in Birmingham and moved to Tamworth. I am currently based in Lancaster until my flat sale and purchase are complete, but much of my life and work has already moved ahead of me!

I was recently asked what advice I would give to someone starting a role in international student ministry for the first time and, as I was reflecting on this question, I kept coming back to these verses from *2 Corinthians 4: 5-7*:

“For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”

In this time of transition, with limits on how much I am able to do to connect with international students day to day, it is good to remember the truth that God is continuing to work, shining light into the hearts of international students in Birmingham. Just last week, I heard the encouraging news of an international student from the city centre who has become a follower of Jesus and is now being discipled by colleagues! Give thanks for her and for all of those who have been walking alongside her throughout the year, faithfully sharing the treasure of the Gospel with her.

These verses are also a humbling reminder that it is in our limitations that God’s glory is even more clearly seen. Please pray that, in some way, this time of life being in two places would be a witness to others of God’s faithfulness and the great hope we have in Jesus.

### **Birmingham City Centre**

I joined the Friends International Birmingham team in January, taking on my new role working with the Birmingham city centre universities.



Birmingham city centre

Although I am not currently in the Midlands, I have had the opportunity to travel down several times to see what is already happening for international students and to start to think about what Friends International might be able to offer in the city centre.

Birmingham city centre is a very different context from Lancaster. For starters, there are many more universities which we could potentially see students from: as well as Aston University, Birmingham City University and University College Birmingham, there are also branches of other universities in the city centre, such as Arden University, University of Law, Ulster University and University of Wales. However, I will be primarily working with Aston and Birmingham City universities, which have around 9000 international students between them.

Working with these city centre universities will also look different to working with a campus university like Lancaster. Some of the students live in accommodation blocks which include students from multiple universities, while many others live further out from the city centre and travel in only for lectures. Over the past couple of months, I have had the opportunity to speak to several people involved in ministry in the city centre and it has been really helpful to gradually introduce me to the context in which I'll be working. There are some definite challenges ahead but overall there is a real need and desire for reaching out and supporting international students in the city centre.

In February, I had the opportunity to meet the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) staff worker, Aston University chaplains, some local church leaders, and the Aston and Birmingham City Universities' Christian Union. It has been great to start connecting with people in the city, and I was particularly privileged to join the Christian Union for their events week in mid-February. I enjoyed meeting the students there and seeing what it looks like for them to reach out to their friends and classmates at their universities.

Looking ahead, the next few months are going to be full of following up on some of those conversations, getting to know the context on a deeper level, and working out what we may be able to offer international students in the city centre in the new academic year. I look forward to sharing this journey with you!

Thank you so much for your partnership in prayer; it has been such an encouragement to know that people are praying for me, particularly in this time of transition.

### **Prayer points**

- Give thanks for enthusiastic initial responses from contacts in Birmingham
- Pray for trouble-free property transactions and for the move to Tamworth
- Pray for me as I seek to build a team of volunteers from local churches

**Sally Miller**  
*Friends International, Birmingham City Centre Branch*

### **Update from the Gelsthorpe family in northern Japan**

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.” *John 10: 14*



#### **Moving house and then country**

**Praise God** for His help in moving all our belongings into the church in mid-March. The church will keep all of our things in the upstairs apartment while we are in the UK.

On 19th March, Mark returned to the UK for Home Assignment, while Sarah went to India for 2 weeks for Caleb’s half-term break and Parents’ Week.

**Please pray** for Caleb as he continues his schooling at Hebron School.

Mark, Sarah and Isaac are now staying with Sarah’s parents, Philip and Esther, and will be at St Luke’s when not on other engagements. **Please pray** for mutual encouragement and good building of relationships as we reconnect with supporting churches.

#### **The Church Eldership in Hanamaki**

**Please continue to pray** for the Church Eldership who, praise God, have taken on lots of extra responsibilities while we are away. They have already decided to plan a sermon series on the *Psalms*.

**Please pray** for God’s guidance for



Isaac and Mark in the UK



Grace enjoying student life in Southampton

them and for visiting preachers as they work their way through this series.

### **Spending time with family**

We are thankful to see our family again and are enjoying spending time together. At the end of March, Mark picked up Grace from university for the Easter holidays and enjoyed going to her church (St Mary's in Southampton). Isaac is working hard on his A-Level revision. Please pray for good concentration for him and wisdom in narrowing down his university offers.

Philip and Esther joined Sarah on the visit to India to see Caleb and enjoyed seeing his school for the first time. Mark and Isaac visited Mark's parents in March. **Please pray** for a happy and encouraging time seeing family for the first time in a while.

### **Preparing to share about Japan**

We are now working hard to prepare talks and publicity materials to share about the work in Hanamaki. **Please pray** for helpful materials that encourage people to pray and support the work. **Please pray** for us to be able to communicate the passion we have for reaching the Japanese people for Jesus.



Esther, Philip and Sarah visiting Caleb in India

### **Upcoming events**

**Praise God** for the opportunity to share about Japan while we are in the UK. We have already been to the OMF Day Conference at Gunnersbury Baptist Church and to an evening service at Emmanuel Church Canterbury. **Please pray** as we share about our work at the Hudson Taylor Tour in London on 9th May, at St Michael and All Angels Blackheath on 10th May, at Glendale Church Newbury on 17th May and at St Luke's Watford on 24th May.

**Please pray** for clear communication and for lots of interest in supporting the work in Hanamaki, northern Japan, in each of these places.

Thank you so much for praying for us.

With love from  
**Mark, Sarah, Grace, Isaac and Caleb**  
**Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) Japan**



Ruth Guinness

Malawi  
www.sim.org  
+265 984 425 575

Greetings from Malawi! Today I've been out in the garden for the first time in a few days, as we have had a lot of rain – steady, not heavy – over the last week. It was good to get outside, and I found my favourite garden creature, a flap-necked chameleon.



In March I returned from Ethiopia, where I had been for 11 days with the Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA). I first came to know ACTEA when I was asked to be the Accreditation Officer for the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi (EBCoM) in 2002. I helped to lead EBCoM through the accreditation process with ACTEA and welcomed a team from ACTEA who came to see us. I helped with accreditation about 10 years later as well.

When I arrived back in Malawi at the beginning of 2022, I was reconnected to ACTEA by Steve Hardy, who was a theological consultant for SIM when I first joined EBCoM. Through him I was invited to join a working group revising ACTEA's standards. Then last year I was asked by ACTEA to join them part time in their accreditation team, and I started at the beginning of this year.

So, I planned to go to ACTEA's General Assembly and to arrive a few days early in order to have meetings about accreditation and get to know the staff team. Little did I know how those 11 days would work out! It did not get off to a good start as my binoculars were confiscated at the airport. Thankfully I still managed to spot lots of birds during the week and was able to get the binoculars back on my way out of Ethiopia.



ACTEA General Assembly

One other member of the ACTEA staff, with whom I had hoped to work during the first week, was unable to come at the last minute. This meant that I had time to work with other staff preparing for the conference. We had good conversations as we prepared name tags and conference



With Ryan Hannah and Steve Hardy

bags for delegates, put gifts for speakers in gift bags, and sorted out logistics for arrivals and registration. I was pleased to be able to go to part of a training session for women in theological education – the speakers and the discussion were really good.

I had not anticipated that this helping behind the scenes would continue into the actual General Assembly. But it did. I helped to man the registration tables (which is a great job – an opportunity to greet most delegates, including Ryan Hannah, my former neighbour and former SIM Malawi Director).

I have learned how hard it is to organise a conference in Africa for people from many different African countries. There were various crises related to travel, passports and visas. We relied on WhatsApp to communicate and for two days during the Assembly there was almost no internet due to a problem with the provider. So, I did a lot of running around trying to find people and ensure the right notices were given by those leading the meetings. This was a good workout as the hotel was perched on the rim of an extinct volcano, looking down into Lake Bishoftu and had no lifts. There were stairs everywhere! My room was 72 steps up from the reception, which was 80 steps up from a small patch of garden. The conference room was upstairs, and the restaurant down more stairs. Halfway through the Assembly, work began on the departure schedule which presented its own challenges.

So, it was not what I had anticipated. Yet, it was an answer to prayer! It was the best way of getting to know the ACTEA team. I loved the supportive teamwork, mutual encouragement and unity which I experienced. I also enjoyed conversations over meals with many others including some from SIM. We did have an accreditation meeting before the Assembly, and I felt that I belonged and that we were able to work together. We plan to have an accreditation workgroup meeting later in the year.

Back in Malawi, it's full steam ahead on the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) courses. Just before I went to Ethiopia two groups 'graduated' from the two different courses.

Volker and I have been working on Facilitators' guides, revising *The Story of God and His World*, and editing the course on Abraham. I just have two meetings left on *The Story of God and His World* in Chichewa, after which I'm looking forward to discussing how this might best be used in the Church. I

was asked to lead one of the sessions at a Church Easter conference.

Thank you for praying for other meetings which I was involved in leading, and which went well – an in-person workshop for SIM Malawi on Creation Care, and an online meeting about ministry reporting and evaluation.



‘Graduation’ at Blantyre Baptist Church

Thank you too for praying for my car to be fixed. I’m very grateful to a wonderful car mechanic who got it sorted for me while I was in Ethiopia – coping with various stresses on my behalf and managing to get it ready for me to pick up on the way back from the airport.



Damage to my car and the repair to the wing

Over the last couple of months Dad has had a lot of pain from his hip. He’s waiting for results of an MRI scan. It’s difficult to be so far away at times!

#### **Prayer points**

Please join me in giving praise for:

- Safety in travel to Ethiopia and back (and the return of my binoculars!)
- God’s answers to my prayers to get to know the ACTEA team better
- A God-given car mechanic and repaired car.

Please pray for:

- The revision of *The Story of God and His World*, and editing of the Abraham course
- Finishing well *The Story of God and His World* course in Chichewa, and ongoing discussions of how this might be used
- Dad — for helpful MRI results and a clear way forward to bring relief
- Malawi — pray that there will be a good harvest in many areas, and pray for areas that have been affected by flooding.

Thank you so much for your prayerful support.

With love in Christ,  
**Ruth Guinness**  
*ruth.guinness@sim.org*  
**Serving in Mission (SIM)**  
**P.O. Box 136 Blantyre, Malawi**

## Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy

### What's been happening?

A big thank you and congratulations to Chaplain John Anselm. John joined us over a year ago and served our community at the top end of the high street, together with chaplain Stephen Chitty. In his search to minister to our Watford community, John has now joined the Watford General Hospital chaplaincy team and we wish him God's grace and love for the patients and staff there. He has agreed to join us in the near future during one of our chaplains'



Some of our Chaplains and Street Angels were among the many on the Walk of Witness through Watford on Good Friday, finishing at St Mary's

Saturday meetings, and share about his experiences there. And congratulations and blessings are in order as he recently tied the knot with Ruth. Together they will make a powerful team, bringing comfort, compassion and Christ to those in need at the hospital.

Our Street Angels (including Chaplain dog Chipo) joined the many football supporters during one of their home games. They were blessed with good weather and we know their presence in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus always has an effect on the hearts and minds of those they meet. Feeling inspired by these possibilities to meet our community? Do join us as a volunteer Street Angel and share comfort, compassion and Christ to our fellow people in Watford. More info can be found at [www.watfordtcc.org](http://www.watfordtcc.org).

On Saturday 7th March our Chaplains and Street Angels joined together at Wellspring Church for an inspired and educational morning. We have been organising these quarterly meetings for a year now, to pray, share and learn. As we meet as day Chaplains and weekend Street Angels it has brought more cohesion and an understanding that we are one team serving our town community.

For this meeting, we invited David Kelly from Rennie Grove Peace Hospice to share about their service of caring and healing, and explore how we can partner as we care for those in need of support. We also spent time in prayer for our team, our community, and our mission.

Together with other dignitaries, I joined the official planting of the Peace Pole in Cassiobury Park's Peace Garden on Wednesday 25th March. The pole was donated by Watford Rotary Club to express our joined prayers and hope for peace in our town and world. The words on the pole are 'May Peace Prevail On Earth', and are printed in six different languages representing our main cultures in Watford. On behalf of WTCC I shared our desire for peace on earth and Christ's peace in everyone's heart and life. I invited the attendees to experience the peace that comes with the Easter weekend.



At the Peace Pole planting

During April and May we welcome placement student Chris O'Hara who is preparing for ministry. He has been shadowing a few of our day chaplains and will continue with a few more, and also join at one of our Street Angels' shifts. We love to support those who are going through their ministry studies, and welcome anyone else who would like to use this opportunity to experience this outreach ministry in a town centre setting. Please do contact us for more information on [office@watfordtcc.org](mailto:office@watfordtcc.org).



We are thankful for the donation of £1000, which we received on Monday 23rd March at Mayor Peter Taylor's office. Each year NSL, Watford's parking enforcement service provider, chooses a Watford charity for their donation, and this year they chose WTCC!

Please pray for:

- John, in his new ministry with the hospital chaplaincy team
- Chris, as he comes to the end of his initial training and is ordained in St Albans Cathedral
- the Street Angels and their earlier shifts, including on match days — keep them safe and give them opportunities to speak to people
- those who care for family members suffering from illness
- those battling with addiction of any kind.

**Geert Tap**  
**Lead Chaplain WTCC**

We are so grateful to Seema, all the team and the lovely customers at Tesco Extra Watford for their incredible donation drive! The team collected toiletries, clothes and other essential items to fill our Baby Baskets. We are blown away by the sheer volume of items donated and every item will be gifted inside one of our Baby Baskets that are given for free to new mums in need.



## Baby Bank Alliance

Alternatives have joined the Baby Bank Alliance (BBA). The BBA support and advocate for

Collecting donations from Tesco Extra Watford



UK baby banks and

families, to ensure babies and children have the essentials they need to thrive. Our membership of the BBA increases our visibility for those in need, helping families in our area access our life-changing services.

## Ever wonder what a difference we make?

This year we noticed a new monthly donation arriving in our bank account. Keen to understand the generosity and story behind it, we contacted the donor. This is what they said...

*"My wife received counselling 7 years ago following a miscarriage, we were so grateful for this support but at the time could not afford to contribute. The counselling was such a big part of our healing journey that now, all these years later, we are in a different position financially and wanted to pay something back to Alternatives, thank you for all you do and keep up the good work!"*

Isn't it wonderful to hear about the long-lasting impact of our services? Just £25 covers the cost of our much-needed counselling sessions.

We'll have a stand at the St Luke's Community Fun Day on Saturday 9th May where you can find out more about what we do.

We are so grateful for all those who support us financially, donate items for our baby baskets, volunteer in the shop and pray that we continue to meet our clients' needs.

**Alternatives Watford**

## Amazing Miracles!

In January and February six plays on miraculous events in the New Testament book of Acts were performed in the morning services. The plays involved 45 actors, a Costume team, Props team, AV team and the Cassiobury and nearby (Can) Community Choir. They brought these amazing stories to life and brightened up those dreary winter months. A huge thank you to everyone involved, especially Pam Norman who wrote, directed and produced the plays. For a list of credits, see page 34.



**1 The lame beggar healed:** Acts 3:1-4:31



**2 Ananias and Sapphira:** Acts 4:32-5:16



**3 Paul's conversion:** Acts 9:1-22



**4 The Philippian jailer:** Acts 16



**5 The shipwreck:** Acts 27



**6 A Maltese welcome:** Acts 28

**1** Peter healed a man crippled from birth who was begging at the temple gate, saying to him “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk”. In the temple people recognised him as the beggar by the gate and were amazed!

**2** Ananias and Sapphira were struck down and died for lying to Peter about giving all the proceeds from the sale of their land to the church when they had retained some of the money for themselves.

**3** Saul, a persecutor of the early Christians, was struck to the ground and blinded by a flash of light from heaven. His sight was restored when Ananias, a believer, laid his hands on Saul. Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit and baptised.

**4** In Philippi, Paul and Silas drove a fortune-telling spirit out of a slave girl. While they were in prison, an earthquake shook the prison, the doors flew open and the prisoners’ chains fell loose. The jailer woke up fearful for his life and asked what he must do to be saved. Paul told him to believe in the Lord Jesus. The jailer and his family were baptised and filled with joy.

**5** Paul, a prisoner in Jerusalem, was put on a large ship bound for Rome to stand trial before Caesar. A storm blew up and raged for days. An angel of God told Paul everyone would be saved and only the ship would be lost. In sight of land, the ship ran aground and was wrecked. All 274 people on board reached land safely.

**6** The land they reached was the island of Malta. As Paul put a pile of wood on a fire, a snake gripped his hand. He shook it off and suffered no ill effects. The chief official’s father was gravely ill so Paul prayed for him and he was healed. All the sick on the island came to Paul and they were also cured.



## **Sunday Afternoon Recitals at St Luke's**

3:00pm

**10th May**

Adrienne Cooke, Viola, and Jeremy Cooke, Piano

**14th June**

Piano recital, Natalie Bleicher, Hannah Gill and Tim Pryce

**12th July**

Miranda Westcott, Mezzo Soprano, and Mark Packwood, Piano

Recitals are about 40 minutes. Free entry, donations welcome.

Tea & coffee afterwards



## Acts Plays (January and February 2026) – Credits

### Cast

#### Alexander

Helen

#### Amy

Fiona

#### Ananias 1

Bill

#### Ananias 2

Gill

#### Angel

Helen

#### Annas

Andrew C

#### Aristarchus

Annabelle

#### Asher

Orla

#### Blind man

Simon

#### Body carriers

Mitch, Melody,  
Ophelia, Emma,  
Mark

#### Caiaphas

Chris Su

#### Caleb

India

#### Captain

Ricky

#### Dan

Chris Su

#### Derek

Margaret

#### Disciples

Mitch, Melody,  
Ophelia

#### Elder

Mitch

#### Friends

Orla, Caroline

#### God

Andrew C

### Guards

Ophelia, Melody

### Ikky

Andrew R

### Jacob

Kate

### Jailer

Colin

### Jailer's daughter

Fiona

### Jailer's wife

Edna

### Jane

Edna

### John

Sophie, Terry

### Judas

Jordan

### Julius

Terry, Chris St

### Lydia

Chris Su

### Magistrates

Andrew R, Maria

### Men

Jordan, Gill, Ciara,

Simon, Leah

### Narrators

Pam R, Pam N,

Chris Su

### Noah

Mitch

### Oppy

Ophelia

### Pan

Melody

### Peter

Chris O

### Plants in the audience

Ciara, Leah

### Priest

Carl

### Prisoners

Emma, Mark

### Publius

Kate

### Publius' dad

Michael

### Publius' servant

Reuben

### Publius' wife

Cleo

### Reporter

Chris St

### Ruler

Jordan

### Sadducee

Dean

### Sailors

Chris O, Sophie,  
Carl, Maria

### Sapphira

Susan

### Saul/Paul

Terry, Chris O,  
Bill, Fiona

### Secretary

Cleo

### Ship's captain

Andrew C, Colin

### Ship's owner

Ricky

### Sick woman

Edna

### Silas

Sophie

### Slave girl

Fiona

### Slave owners

Carl, Terry

### Soldiers

Kate, Cleo, Reuben,  
Chris Su, Margaret,  
Stephanie

### Stephen

Jordan

### Susan

Margaret

### Theo

Jordan

### Timothy

Ivor

### Tina

Leah

### Tom

Ciara, Maria

### Understudy

Edna

### Women

Sally, Edna

### Production Team

#### Costumes

Charlotte, Alice,  
Pam N, Wera

#### Props and Scenery

Neil, Pam N, Gill  
and thanks to many  
St Luke's members

#### Dressers

Wera, Gill, Charlotte

#### Audiovisual

Olu, Dean, Debi,  
Tim and AV Team

#### Make-up

Edna

#### Music

Jeremy  
Can Community  
Choir Members

#### Lyrics

Pam N

#### Written and

#### Directed by

Pam N

## Lent and Easter Highlights

### Holiday Club Short: Pancake Party

On 13th February 43 children enjoyed playing games, making things and eating no less than 150 pancakes! They learned about having the right ingredients in life, based on pancake ingredients and how God would want us to live. Thank you to all the helpers and cooks.



The **Ash Wednesday Holy Communion Service** on 18th February marked the start of Lent. The Service included making the sign of the Cross, in ash, on our foreheads as a sign of penitence.

### Mothering Sunday

Our children, youth, Brownies and Scouts did a wonderful job as they took over the Mothering Sunday morning service. They led the worship, gave the talks and presented all the ladies in the congregation with daffodils to take home.



On Sunday 22nd March we were joined by Bishop Jane of Hertford and members of Christ Church & St Mark's for a joyful evening service of **Confirmation & Baptism**. Kate was baptised and confirmed, Sophie, Mimi and Ben were confirmed and Gill reaffirmed her baptismal vows.

### School visits

In the last week of the Spring term, Bekki and team welcomed three schools to St Luke's: Nascot Wood Infants, Year 1, Cassiobury Juniors, Year 3, and Lanchester Primary, who brought 90 children in Years 2 and 3. For each school visit, teaching stations were set up around the church to help the children learn about the Easter story.



## Holiday Club Short: Easter Party

Our Easter Party on Friday 27th March was lots of fun, with 43 children enjoying games like egg and spoon races with bouncy eggs, Easter crafts, food and learning about Easter as

they looked inside giant plastic eggs which told the Easter story. Thank you to all who helped.



The **Easter Eve Service of Light** on 4th April started outside the main entrance with singing praise around a firepit before going into the church for a service of renewal of baptismal vows in which Katie renewed her vows by baptism with full immersion.

## Good Friday Cross and Easter Flowers



Our grateful thanks to Geoff for the beautiful Easter flower displays and to Wendy for a poignant Easter garden

## News Snippets



On 19th March an announcement was made from the Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street:

The King has approved the nomination of The Right Reverend Dr Andrew Paul Rumsey, Suffragan Bishop of Ramsbury in the Diocese of Salisbury, for election as Bishop of St Albans, in succession to The Right Reverend Alan Smith, following his retirement.

On his appointment the Right Revd Dr Andrew Rumsey said:

*"The good news is that whoever you are, and wherever you're from, Jesus calls you too to set out on the rest of your life following his path."*

The Bishop of Bedford quoted the Bishop of Sheffield (1997-2008), Jack Nicholls, in his Christm Communion Service on Maundy Thursday (2nd April):

"Three important things for the Church today are:

- to proclaim the glory of God
- to serve the pain of the world
- to renew God's church."

**Mary Bowen**

Image designed by catalyststuff on [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)



## Concert at St Luke's Church



**Saturday 4th July, 7:30pm**

**Watford Symphony Orchestra**

*Richard Strauss: Festmarsch Opus 1, Oboe Concerto (Soloist Henrietta Cooke),  
Tone Poem 'Aus Italien'*

Tickets £18 (accompanied child free)

Book in advance at [ticketsource.co.uk/watford-symphony-orchestra](http://ticketsource.co.uk/watford-symphony-orchestra)  
Also available at the door (debit/credit cards accepted)

## Charity Badge Cake Sale

On Sunday 15th February, Melody and I had a cake sale at church as part of our charity badge for Brownies. To complete our charity badge we had to do three things:

**1. Research a charity** and find out who they help, what the money goes to and find out if it is a local, national or international charity. All the Brownies in our unit had to stand up and present what we had found out.

**2. Choose a charity to support and raise as much money as we can for it.** Melody and I chose to work together to hold a cake sale. I was raising money for Mencap and Melody was raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

We advertised the cake sale in church the week before. On the day before, we spent all day baking and, with the help of our mums and Nanny Mitch, we managed to make a variety of different treats including stained glass window biscuits, rocky road, chocolate brownies and lemon and raspberry cupcakes.

We raised £254.04! Thank you so much to the St Luke's congregation who so generously supported us by buying these treats.



Meeting Michelle from Mencap



Melody, me and Ophelia with some of our cakes on the day of the sale






**3. The third bit of our badge was to write a letter to the charity** to thank them for what they do for the community and to tell them how much we raised. I was really surprised because they sent me a letter back thanking me and inviting me to The Hub on Langley Road to see where the money raised would be spent.

During the Easter holidays, I went with Mum, Dad and Reuben to meet up with Dean Tearle and Michelle, the Fundraising Manager at Mencap. We sat in the beautiful garden and Michelle explained the plans to build a soft play barn, a fire pit with accessible wifi for the teenagers as well as an allotment area so

they can grow their own fruit and vegetables. I was excited to hear the money would go towards building the soft play area because Reuben and I love soft play and I am sure the children there will love it too.

Thank you all so much for helping us to get our charity badges. This badge means a lot to us, and the money will really help Mencap and Macmillan to continue their important work.

*Cleo with input from Melody*



**St Luke's  
WATFORD**

**CanCC** Cassibury  
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](mailto:music@stlukeswatford.org) 01923 246161



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

**May 29th**  
**June 26th**  
**July 31st**

*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.*

## HOPE!

### 80th Easter Monday Pilgrimage to St Albans Cathedral

Summing-up this year's pilgrimage in four words would be sunshine, bluebells, eggs and of course HOPE.

On 6th April six pilgrims and 'Chester' the spaniel set out from St Luke's on a new route of approximately 8 miles to St Albans Cathedral in the most glorious Spring sunshine. We were joined at the top of Gammons Lane by six more pilgrims and then made steady progress through Leavesden Green to Chequers Lane, where at the very moment of our arrival a taxi pulled up and like celebrities, three more pilgrims joined us. So now we were a joyful party of 15, and Chester.

The route took us on beautiful country lanes through Holt Farm, woods carpeted with bluebells, Noke Farm, and a house offering the sale of fresh eggs, which a member of our party could not resist. This inspired much conversation on the happiness of the hens who supplied our eggs, and onwards we went, with an elevated view of the open countryside.



After walking through a magnificent field of head height tall golden rapeseed, we approached the Cathedral, and had plenty of time to enjoy our picnic. We were delighted to be joined by four more members of St Luke's, and were so grateful that they were able to offer transport home for several weary walkers after the service. This was such a blessing, thank you.

Maybe it was because it was the 80th anniversary that children were invited to the front by Bishop Jane during the service, and asked how far they had walked, and given Easter eggs. There was even a doggy prize and of course

Biggleswade were once again the church who had travelled the furthest — 30 miles over two days.

Leah Bucko, the youth Pastor from Soul Survivor, gave a profound and touching reflection, with hope at the heart of the message, and the final song, as always, was the uplifting 'Thine Be the Glory' before we all walked back into the sunshine to make our way home.

There might have been some disappointment from our younger pilgrims that there was no mud this year and when asked if they were enjoying the view remarked 'well I've seen grass before', and from our older pilgrims who would have liked a coffee shop en route, but overall everyone was very happy with the new pilgrimage route to St Albans.

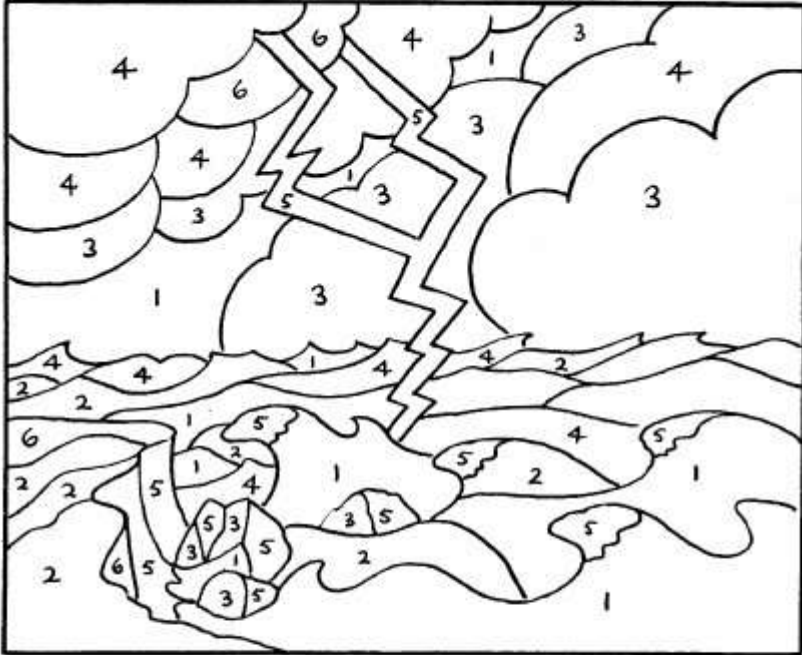
The 81st Easter Monday Pilgrimage will be on 29th March 2027. Do join us!

*Jill Rogers*



# Children's Page

## STORM PAINTING <sup>by</sup> NUMBERS



1 = BLUE

4 = PURPLE

2 = GREEN

5 = WHITE

3 = GREY

6 = BLACK

"The storm makes my heart beat wildly."

"Lightning flashes from the clouds, as they move at God's will."

*Paraphrased from Job 37: 1 and 3*



**CREATIVE SPACE**



FOR

**HARD-WORKING WOMEN**

**COME JOIN THE FUN!**

**Saturday 16th May, 10:00-11:30am**

Informal Bring & Share Craft (Free)

**Saturday 13th June, 9:30am-12 noon**

Printing workshop

£8 + donation for breakfast

**Saturday 25th July, 9:30am-12 noon**

**10:00-11:30am**

Informal Bring & Share Craft with crochet lesson (Free)

**Payment is by cash only on the day**

Contact Pam to *book your place*:

text/whatsapp 07075 748243 or email [pam.stlukes@gmail.com](mailto:pam.stlukes@gmail.com)

The poster features a central circular logo with a rainbow at the top, the word "TODDLERS" in large blue letters, and "AT ST LUKES" written around the bottom of the circle. To the left is a QR code. To the right is a blue speech bubble containing the text "No need to book, just come along!". Below the logo, the text "Thursdays 9:30 - 11am" is written in a light blue font, followed by "From Birth to Pre-School" and "All Welcome!" in black. At the bottom, the website address "www.stlukeswatford.org/toddlers" is displayed in blue. The background is white with various colorful brushstrokes and shapes.

For more information, scan the QR code above  
or contact the church office  
(email [office@stlukeswatford.org](mailto:office@stlukeswatford.org) or phone 01923 246161)

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. The delivery date for contributions to the next issue is Monday 13th July.

Please email articles to the Church Office: [office@stlukeswatford.org](mailto: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 (01923 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](http://www.stlukeswatford.org)

Vicar	Michael Norman
Readers	Dave Clarke
	Pam Norman
	Simon Trundle
Ordinand and Youth Director	Neil Brookes
Music Director	Jeremy Cooke
Children & Families Team Leader	Bekki Hadley
Administrator	Dorothy Englert
Publicity Officer	John Williamson
Churchwardens	Susan Miller
	Terry Sullivan
PCC Lay Chair	Melanie Sills
PCC Treasurer	Martin Kirk
PCC Secretary	Pam Norman
Safeguarding Officer	Mary Bowen

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

Website      [www.stlukeswatford.org](http://www.stlukeswatford.org)

Email          [office@stlukeswatford.org](mailto:office@stlukeswatford.org)