



St Luke's News

August 2026

Number 290

Artificial Intelligence



AI-generated image (Chat GPT) using specific prompts

"I'm your nifty, odd-jobbing robot. Call me Norbot."

Norbot the Gnome in *Vengeance Most Fowl*,
Aardman Animations, 2024

Decades before Pixar decided to question the impact of technology on childhood play in the recently released film, *Toy Story 5*, national icons Wallace and Gromit had been encouraging viewers to embrace innovation, whilst exercising careful discernment and wisdom. The animated duo from Lancashire are longstanding champions of the eccentric and ingenious world of Great British inventors, designing 'cracking' contraptions and building gawky gizmos. The success of these gadgets has been variable but machines and robots have always been an important part of their world. Who can forget Preston, the sheep-rustling cyber-dog from *A Close Shave*?

Vengeance Most Fowl released in November 2024 continued in this tradition, but with nuanced commentary on the infinite possibilities and potential perils of artificial intelligence (AI). In a pivotal scene, Gromit's stunning garden at 62 West Wallaby Street in Wigan, boasting bulging flower beds and mature hedging is stripped back to bare formality, with manicured geometric topiary, by Norbot the robotic gnome. In doing so, Gromit's creative endeavours are destroyed, and the human (or in this case K9) connection with nurturing the natural world is diminished. Thus, the film serves as a comedic yet cautionary tale about the risks of reliance on AI.

Christian debate over the influence of AI is timely—it is after all everywhere now! The image accompanying this article is itself AI-generated to bypass copyright restrictions. So how should we as Christians approach this rapidly developing technology?

There is no question that AI has benefits, streamlining productivity, reducing human error, round-the-clock availability and accelerating scientific breakthroughs. There are also clear dangers, including potential weaponisation, unchecked bias, cyber security threats, job losses and resource consumption. But in all honesty many of these features and fears would probably have been voiced at the time of the invention of electricity. So what sets AI apart? Maybe the critical difference concerns creativity.

In one of my favourite quotes of all time, the Christian poet, writer and thinker Maya Angelou says, "You can't use up creativity, the more you use it, the more you have". She thus likens creativity to a muscle that strengthens with use.

In *Exodus 31:3* it is clear that God has blessed the tabernacle craftsman, Bezalel, with many different creative gifts, and if we credit creativity in all its forms, visual, literary, performing, applied, cognitive, culinary, problem-solving (the list goes on), as a gift from God, then on the one hand we need to acknowledge the creation of AI itself as a creative act. However, the issue is not that simple.

To date there is no such thing as 'AI creativity'. AI remains reliant on the vast reserves of thousands of years of innate God-given human creativity available as a digital resource. And herein lies the key consideration. In drawing down on those resources there is a rapid reduction in time taken for the brainstorming and developmental stages of creative output. The reduced cost of AI thus becomes an economic driver behind devaluing human creativity, and the 'creative' is obviously dependent on demand for his or her work. It also leads to homogenisation of ideas as it is notable

that currently AI can learn, but cannot ‘think’ or ‘create’ for itself. *Genesis 1: 27* speaks of humans being made in the image of God (*Imago Dei*), uniquely reflecting our maker in our ability to think, create and form authentic relationships. As human as AI might seem, to date it stands short of a consciousness that would in turn elevate humans to god-like creators, although that is not to say that this will never occur. However, as we rely more on technology, surely our creative ‘muscle’ will lose some of its strength and potential.

AI development will surely be swift and unstoppable, so as Christians we need to be praying for those in charge of regulation, that ‘checks and balances’ might be implemented early enough to offer protection from the most dystopian of predictions. But we do not need to fear! At the same time, we can be deeply reassured that God remains Lord of all things, the only one truly able to create life from nothing, and our redeemer who through Christ will always cherish us as His dearly beloved sons and daughters, and in turn promise us a secure future in Him.

So like Wallace and Gromit, we should certainly revel in the exciting new possibilities technological advances offer, whilst at the same time exercising deep caution in the form of careful discernment. As *Hebrews 5:14* explains:

“But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

Remember, we are in relationship with the creator of the Universe, not simply limited and derivative as AI is currently, but released to be original and determinant under God. As *Romans 12:2* puts it, not conforming to the world but being transformed by God.

“I can live without inventing, but I can’t live without... me best pal.”

Wallace to Gromit in *Vengeance Most Fowl*,
Aardman Animations, 2024

Neil Brookes
Ordinand and Youth Director

References and further reading

Wade, M. 2024. *Is AI a Threat to Human Creativity?* available at <https://www.oxford-aiethics.ox.ac.uk/ai-threat-human-creativity>

O'Donnell, K. 2025. *Should Christians use AI?* available at <https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/should-christians-use-ai>

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:

July	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 26th		Family Communion <i>Caring Christ</i> <i>Mark 5:1-43</i>	No Encounter service
August	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 2nd		Family Communion <i>In His strength</i> <i>Mark 6:1-13</i>	No Encounter service
Sunday 9th	Holy Communion	All-age Worship <i>Kingdom Builders</i>	No Encounter service
Sunday 16th		Family Communion <i>Passion or compassion?</i> <i>Mark 6:14-44</i>	No Encounter service

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

August (cont'd)	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 23rd		Family Communion <i>Confounded by Christ</i> Mark 6:45-56	No Encounter service
Sunday 30th		Family Communion <i>Tradition</i> Mark 7:1-23	No Encounter service
September	8:00am	10:30am	5:30pm
Sunday 6th		Morning Worship <i>In desperate need</i> Mark 7:24-37	Encounter with Holy Communion
Sunday 13th	Holy Communion	All-age Worship Mark 8:1-26 <i>Who? Me?!</i>	Encounter
Sunday 20th		Family Communion Mark 8:27-38 <i>Summary</i>	Encounter
Sunday 27th		Morning Worship <i>The Transfiguration</i> Mark 9:2-29	Encounter with Holy Communion

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

July

31st Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

August

1st Breakfast Club (see p 16)

4th-7th Kingdom Builders Holiday Club (fully booked but contact the church office to go on the waiting list)

15th Breakfast Club (see p 16)

17th Knitting Club (see p 33)

28th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

29th Breakfast Club (see p 16)

September

2nd Wednesday Morning Life Group restarts (see p 16)

5th Half-day of Prayer, St Luke's Chapel, 9:00am–12 noon

8th Kids Club restarts (see p 30)

9th Taste and Sing Session with CanCC, 7:30pm (see p 26)

10th Toddlers restarts (see p 30)

12th Breakfast Club (see p 16)

19th Creative Space (see p 33)

21st Knitting Club (see p 33)

25th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

October

3rd Half-day of Prayer, St Luke's Chapel, 9:00am–12 noon

4th Harvest Service followed by Church family lunch

17th Creative Space (see p 33)

19th Knitting Club (see p 33)

30th Friday Club Tea Party, 2:30pm

November

14th Tear Fund Big Quiz Night

16th Knitting Club (see p 33)

21st Creative Space (see p 33)

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

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

Celebrating 20 Years of God's Goodness at St Luke's

When the planning committee for the 20th Anniversary celebration of the 'new' St Luke's church building first met in July 2025, the weekend of 8th–10th May 2026 felt a long way off. We gathered "for the purpose of planning, delegating, coordinating and overseeing events to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the new church building," and our early conversations were full of creative ideas. From the beginning, we knew our theme would be rooted in St Luke's foundation stone verse:

"For my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."
Isaiah 56:7

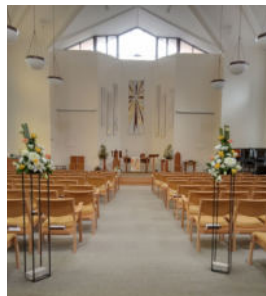
We also hoped to highlight the beauty and meaning of our magnificent stained glass windows.

It took prayer, listening, and plenty of discussion to shape those ideas into something manageable. Eventually, a vision emerged: a weekend of celebration beginning with an Afternoon Cream Tea on Friday, followed by a Community Fun Day on Saturday, and culminating in a Thanksgiving Service and Church Lunch on Sunday.

But plans alone are never enough. We needed the people of St Luke's to bring them to life. As the weekend unfolded, I watched team after team working together, each offering their gifts with joy. It was a living picture of Paul's words in *1 Corinthians 12:12*:



A display of architects' plans and drawings showing the development of the church buildings was installed by Bill and Derek



The church beautifully decorated by Geoff for the 20th Anniversary celebration

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."

And I was reminded too of *1 Corinthians 3:6*:

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow."

Throughout the weekend, God was indeed making it grow.

The building refresh meant that the church and complex were 'spick and span'. Special



The Afternoon Cream Tea in the Gathering Area was a treat. Very many thanks to June and team who made and served the tea and cakes

served on tiered cake stands and attentive servers, all accompanied by live background music played by Jeremy. It became a wonderful opportunity to sit, chat and build connections with neighbours and our local community.

Saturday: Sunshine, celebration and community

The Lord answered our prayers for good weather—Saturday dawned gloriously sunny. A fanfare played by Chloe Harrison and cutting of the ribbon by the Vicar opened the day, drawing a big crowd. One of the most unexpected joys was the ringing



The church hall was packed with community partner stalls — New Hope, Watford Schools Trust, Watford Philharmonic Choir, Code Ninja and more

thanks go to John D and team who managed the upgrade project, to the cleaning team and to Edna and gardening team for tidying up the grounds and garden.

Friday: A cream tea to remember

More people came to the cream tea than we ever expected—and they stayed longer too! Many arrived anticipating a simple cup of tea and a bun from the serving hatch. Instead, they were welcomed to beautifully laid tables with floral arrangements by Val, china cups, delicious homemade cakes



The opening of the Community Fun Day

of the church bell, which prompted passersby to stop and ask why we don't ring it more often!

The hall was buzzing with stalls from community organisations that use our facilities and local mission partners supported by St Luke's, both financially and through church members volunteering. Children delighted in games, crafts, and face painting. In the car park, the Scouts organised outdoor games and activities. The international lunch was so popular that food disappeared almost instantly and there was



CanCC Community Choir provided one of the musical interludes at the Community Fun Day

a big queue for tea and homemade cakes in the afternoon—proof that sharing food is one of the best ways to bring people together. Pop-up concerts in the church added a lovely musical thread to the day.

People were thrilled to receive free goody bags containing St Luke's mugs and Fairtrade chocolate. Our foundation stone verse is now displayed in many homes across the neighbourhood,
For me

personally, it was a joy to welcome families from our outreach groups—Preschool, Coffee mornings, Toddlers, Breakfast Club and more. It was also wonderful to see neighbours of other faiths exploring the building, joining in with the quiz and chatting with our community groups.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this community fun day and worked so hard to make it a success, in particular Mo and Jill and the catering team.



Goody bags to take home

Sunday: A service of thanksgiving and hope



Bill Miller introduced Jane Campbell who designed the stained glass windows on the east wall of the church

Sunday's Thanksgiving Service filled the church and included some familiar faces from across the years. We were honoured to welcome Jane Campbell, the artist behind our stained glass windows, and Revd John Kiddle, whose leadership helped shape the vision for the new building.

A highlight was singing the beautiful anniversary song written by Jeremy Hogarth, 'This is a

house of prayer for all nations' (see page 12). And we all received a keyring memento inscribed with our foundation stone verse (*Isaiah 56:7*)—a reminder to keep praying in our homes.



Revd John Kiddle, in his sermon, reminded us that a church is its people

Geoff Fox created a stunning celebration cake, echoing the design he used for the consecration cake 20 years ago.

The lunch—attended by 140 people—was a triumph thanks to the tireless work of our catering team led by Fran. It was a joy to reconnect with friends not seen for some time, to hear their stories, and to reflect on how God has blessed St Luke's through the dedication of so many over the years. Michael's reminder of God's continuing plans for our church encouraged us to look forward with faith and expectation.



The Thanksgiving Lunch attended by the church family and special guests who steered the building project through its many stages, 1995–2006

weaves them together for His glory. We pray that His light shone brightly throughout our celebrations, that seeds were sown, relationships strengthened, and that God will continue to grow His Kingdom here at St Luke's.

Susan Miller



Geoff with the celebration cake served after the Thanksgiving Service

The celebration drew to a close with a delightful recital in the church by Adrienne and Jeremy Cooke (viola and piano). A fitting conclusion to a special weekend.

A weekend of grace and growth

By the end of the weekend, I was tired—but overwhelmingly grateful. God exceeded our expectations. When we offer our different gifts in unity, He



The weekend's celebration concluded with a recital by Adrienne and Jeremy

A New Worship Song for St Luke's

Jeremy Hogarth was commissioned to write a new worship song based on the St Luke's foundation stone verse, *Isaiah 56:7*, for the 20th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service on Sunday 10th May 2026.

It was an instant hit with a catchy melody.

Thank you Jeremy for a beautiful song.



Jeremy with his composition

This is a House of Prayer for All Nations

Verse 1

*We thank You Jesus, You took the
cross
and made Yourself a sacrifice.
To make atonement for all our sin
so all redeemed can now enter in.*

Verse 2

*You are the Saviour, You are the
light
You are the Way, the Truth, the
Life.
Your name has power, above all
names
It is our hope and joy to proclaim.*

Chorus

*This is a house of prayer for all
nations
that they may know that You are
the Lord.
Declaring freedom found in
salvation
that Jesus You're the Light of the
world.*

Verse 3

*To be Your witness upon the earth
to be Your bride, Lord build Your
church.
A living temple built on Your stone,
You make this house of prayer be
Your home.*

Bridge

*Every knee will bow, every eye will
see
that you alone are worthy.
Every knee will bow, every tongue
confess
that Jesus You are Lord.*



DBS Update Service

Mary and I are grateful to all of you who complete your Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) applications and keep your safeguarding training up to date.

We have always encouraged new applicants to register for the DBS Update Service as it is free and keeps your DBS current indefinitely. Once your DBS has been issued you only have a short period of 30 days in which to register.

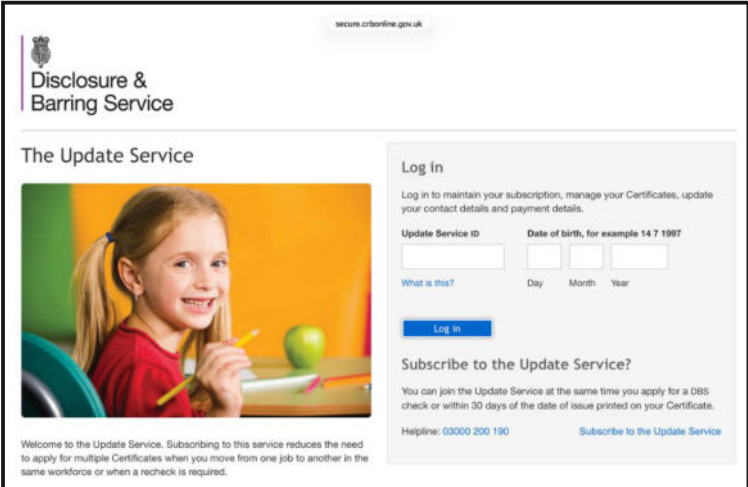
In recent years the DBS Update Service has decided to change the way that they operate to clear out a lot of DBS certificates that were no longer being used. Historically, they would email each person annually and the email stated that so long as you were volunteering in the same role you did not need to do anything.

The new system, however, is that they email each person annually and you have to log on and renew your DBS for the following year. This only takes a minute but has to be done within a short timeframe. If it is not done quickly, unfortunately the DBS falls out of the DBS Update Service and a new DBS is then required when the DBS is over 3 years old.

So as a reminder, if you receive an email from the DBS Update Service please act quickly and don't ignore it.

If you have any queries please ask us.

Mary Bowen and Angela Steed
St Luke's Safeguarding Team



secure.crbonline.gov.uk

Disclosure & Barring Service

The Update Service



Welcome to the Update Service. Subscribing to this service reduces the need to apply for multiple Certificates when you move from one job to another in the same workforce or when a recheck is required.

Log in

Log in to maintain your subscription, manage your Certificates, update your contact details and payment details.

Update Service ID:

Date of birth, for example 14 7 1997

What is this? Day Month Year

[Log in](#)

Subscribe to the Update Service?

You can join the Update Service at the same time you apply for a DBS check or within 30 days of the date of issue printed on your Certificate.

Helpline: 03000 200 190 [Subscribe to the Update Service](#)

Alban Day

Maybe because one of our sons lives in Gran Canaria, famous for having festivals with big puppets throughout the year, Paul and I were drawn to see this year's Alban Day Pilgrimage and Festival on Saturday 20th June in St Albans. It celebrates the city's namesake, and Britain's first Christian martyr, and has been running for over 20 years although we were unaware of it until this year.

The procession started at 11 am and told the story of Alban's arrest, trial and martyrdom through a vibrant celebration and procession. Despite sacrifice being at the heart of the story, the day was joyful with bands and banners filling the streets and giant 12-foot puppets depicting the important participants such as Alban moving through cheering crowds as they proceed through the city. The story was told in three parts, starting at St Peter's Church roundabout where we learned how Alban opened his home to a Christian priest fleeing persecution. The second, outside the Museum/Old Town Hall was about his trial, and the finale, at the west end of the Cathedral, told the story of his execution.



Cathedral clergy joined the procession (spot the familiar face)



The giant 12-foot puppet of St Alban led the procession along St Peter's Street in St Albans

Cathedral services then followed, concluding at 4 pm with evensong, whilst other activities and live music performances continued throughout the day in the city.

Jill Rogers

PS For 'Parkrunners', St Albans has a hilly Parkrun, and the Cathedral café serves delicious refreshments, all of which can be fitted in before the start of the festival.

Toddlers

Toddlers is a group for babies and toddlers and their parents and carers, which happens every Thursday from 9:30 am to 11:00 am during the school term.

Each week, the children enjoy free play with a wide range of toys, as well as creative activities such as playdough and craft.

The craft is linked to Bible teaching, which is shared in a simple and age-appropriate way, helping the children to begin to learn about the people and stories in the Bible and about who Jesus is. This year, we

have been using a resource called *Bibles for Bubs*, which has been a helpful resource to introduce different biblical themes for toddlers, and it also connects them with secular themes, which is a helpful way to engage with the children and adults who attend.

The morning ends with much excitement as the children enjoy bubbles from our frog bubble machine, followed by singing together. It also provides an

opportunity to let parents and carers know about other activities and events taking place at St Luke's.

At the end of each term we have our singing time in the church as we feel this will help children and parents to see the church and feel more comfortable about coming to church services.

We are thankful for the friendships being built through Toddlers and for the joy it brings to so many families each week.

Bekki Hadley





Join us on these Saturdays:
1st, 15th and 29th August, 12th September

Wednesday Morning Life Group

We meet in St Luke's Church Lounge and the Church on Wednesday mornings, 10:15am-12:00pm. We're taking a summer break but will restart on 2nd September. Come and join us.



Update from the Gelsthorpe family on Home Assignment from northern Japan



“God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.” *Ephesians 1:22*

Thank you so much for continuing to pray for our time visiting churches and supporters in the UK. We continue to be encouraged by the generous support of everyone.

Training courses

Praise God for the training courses we have been able to do in recent months—a leadership training course for Mark and a biblical counselling course for Sarah. **Please pray** that we will be able to put everything that we have learnt into practice once we return to Hanamaki.

Summer holidays

Praise God for a good end to the term for Caleb. He returned to the UK from boarding school in India for the summer holidays on 22nd June.

Please pray for a good summer break for Grace, Isaac and Caleb and good family time together. Thank you for praying for Isaac’s A-Level exams.

Please pray for God’s guidance and provision for University for Isaac.

Upcoming events

Praise God for the opportunity to share about Japan while we are in the UK. Please pray for clear communication and for lots of interest in supporting the work in Japan.



We are really enjoying our time in Worthing and getting to know the church and community!

Please pray for Isaac and Caleb as they go to Reconnect Camp, 27–29 July.

Thank you so much for praying for us.

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

Dear friends,

Greetings from the UK where during the heatwave it is much warmer than Malawi!

I came back to the UK to help support Mum and Dad following Mum's fall in mid-May. I had no idea what was in store for us all.



Initially I helped Mum at home, giving 24-hour care with help from my sister Naomi who was able to come for part of the time. Then Mum was readmitted to hospital due to increasing pain and was there for over two weeks. I am caring for her at home again, with some support from a local care service. Pain remains a significant challenge and I'm glad I'm around to help. It's good to see some improvement, though it's slow.

My Auntie Dawn (Dad's sister) and her husband, Michael, were both admitted to the same hospital as Mum within a few days of her admission, both with cancer. Dawn died on 11th June. Michael's condition deteriorated far faster than expected and he died on 24th June. In the midst of our sadness and loss, we are thankful that they are both now with the Lord.

I am so thankful that I am back in the UK for this time, and grateful for some precious times with both Dawn and Michael as I visited them in hospital. As we held hands, I reminded Auntie Dawn, and later Michael, of *Isaiah 41:13*, a verse Dawn had once shared with me when I had cancer:

"For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you."

We held onto God's promise, whilst as a family we prepared for a double funeral and thanksgiving service on July 10th. Dawn and Michael were both so special to us all!

I have not been able to keep up with much other work. I did enjoy joining one full session of the course on Abraham that Volker Glissmann and I led. I will miss the graduation of participants from the Abraham course and another *Story of God and His World* course, and a Facilitator's training course. The Glissmann family left Malawi at the beginning of July, and I was sad not to be there for their farewell.



I have had time to enjoy wildlife in the garden, and saw this Silver-studded Blue at a local wildlife reserve

I have been able to meet online with a couple in Korea who are going through *The Story of God and His World* course with two enquirers. I was delighted to hear that the course has also been used by people in a refugee camp in Botswana.

I plan to stay in the UK for a few more weeks to help at home.

Prayer points

Please join me in giving praise for:

- the timing of my return to the UK to care for Mum and spend time with Dawn and Michael
- successful completion of the *Abraham in the Story of God and His World* course with a group in person and online.

Please pray for:

- my family at this difficult time
- me as I'm physically and emotionally exhausted
- the timing of my return to Malawi.

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

Update from Alastair working for a Bible translation organisation

Dear All,

Having an extra month in Nepal, courtesy of the shutdown of airspace in the Gulf following the outbreak of the American/Israeli war with Iran, turned out to be a blessing as I was able to move flats.

Workshop

During my stay I sat in on a two-week Old Testament (OT) translation workshop. It was encouraging to see 11 different languages represented by

about 50 participants, including the G language team I used to help. Some of the time was given over to geography to help people understand what places in the OT actually look like and to discuss how to translate geographical features, like mountains and hills and how to distinguish between them. What might be considered as a mountain in one part of the world, eg Mount of Olives, would be considered as just a hill in Nepal.



Attending a translation workshop in February

Time was also given to some explanation of how the Hebrew language works and how a root word can be used to derive many other words, all with different, but connected meanings and of course, these don't necessarily translate directly into another language.

A new development is the use of AI in the translation process. It quite definitely does not replace the translator. However, for example, the G project is using AI for initial, 'draft zero' drafting. For a project that has a New Testament (NT), this NT and the source language NT can be used to train the AI system to translate the OT. The translators then check the AI and make changes where necessary. This can then be fed back into the the AI system to improve the training model.

This is still at an early stage but it is anticipated that the OT translation time could be reduced by several years. Once all these teams complete their OTs, there will be a huge demand for typesetting.

EM NT

It was great to finally see the printed EM NT I started typesetting last year which went through numerous changes before going for approval. Even after approval, on my last trip, there were some emergency edits. Improved software certainly produces a better output.

Book for Children stories

It was good to be able to meet BKhR who is from a small people group not far from Everest. When he saw one of the *Book for Children* stories, he liked it so much that he translated all 60 stories into his language.

I have now been able to put all of them in the online Bloom Library. We are looking into adding a daily reading book to the library.

Prayer points

- Thanks that the EM NT was printed and dedicated.
- Thanks for the extra story books that are now available for people to read.
- Thanks that the national elections were peaceful.
- Pray for mother-tongue speakers who are willing to work on translations.
- Pray for me to make the right decision about where to stay in the UK.

Thank you for your prayers and support
God bless

Alastair



Dear Friends and Partners,

Radio 4 and BBC Sounds Appeal

We had such an amazing week at the end of June! It was so emotional to listen to our Patron, Amar Latif OBE, present our appeal on BBC Radio 4 on Sunday 21st June and to receive messages of support from so many of our supporters, who like Amar, felt inspired by Ayiesha's story. In the Appeal listeners heard of the incredible impact education has had not only on Rafiki Thabo graduate Ayiesha's life but also on all the lives of those he has gone on to support—the true ripple effect of education.

Our target for the Appeal was £45,000 to pay for the entire secondary education for 42



Ayiesha with his baby daughter and his latest group of mentees, all of whom are Rafiki Thabo scholars

children in Kenya, giving them the opportunity to escape poverty, provide a dignified life for their family and help support others in their community so that they also have better futures ahead of them. Just like Ayiesa has!

You can watch a video message from Amar on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZF6KDjZQTNs>

With all our best wishes,

Team Rafiki Thabo

News from Clive and Andrea

Dear All,

Thank you for your prayers. We apologise for the long delay in updating you! We got back to the UK in early June and have had to juggle work responsibilities while also dealing with a jungle-of-a-garden, mice in the house, rats in the compost bin and the usual things that seem the break or go wrong while we're away.



We had asked for prayer for our visits to some of International Nepal Fellowship's (INF) work in areas in the west of Nepal. We are thankful these visits went well, especially as things are not always predictable in Nepal. We are particularly grateful that we remained safe, especially Clive as he travelled on some of the most hair-raising roads in the world and worked long, exhausting days in difficult conditions.

Soon after the visits, we returned to the UK via Thailand where we attended a large conference, during which Clive spoke on the Ethics of Visual Storytelling and delivered a 4-day training course. We made many new contacts and were grateful for the opportunity to learn more about an area of ministry that is different to the holistic development work that we're used to. It was also a good opportunity for Andrea to visit the regional offices of partner agencies.

We are currently in the midst of an emotional week of final events at Easneye—All Nations' home for the last 60 years. Yesterday, we raised the roof in worship one last time for the Conclusion of Studies and

Commissioning Service for leaving students. Worshipping alongside an international mission-focussed community is like a glimpse of heaven ... what a privilege! And yet it was tinged with sadness as we said so many farewells.

As students, *and* staff, step into the unknown, the Academic Dean gave a moving and encouraging message on *Ecclesiastes 3:1-14* [A time for everything]: the reality of change, the reality of confusion and the reality of confidence. We hold onto this as All Nations leaves Easneye for our new, temporary location in Muswell Hill, London. Please pray for all staff as the impact on working patterns becomes clear.

We are also mindful of potential change on the horizon for INF as the current 5-year project agreement, under which Andrea's Visa sits, comes up for renewal in April. Please pray for the renewal process, especially for good relationships with all the relevant offices.

Thank you.
Many blessings,
Clive and Andrea



An update on Burundian cross-border mission

In the December 2025 issue of *St Luke's News* I wrote about the work of Paul and Alison, in Burundi helping Burundian Christians develop a 'mission mind-set'. Of course this is something we all need to develop as we live alongside non-Christians wherever God has placed us!

We don't have to go to Burundi... we just have to live authentic Christ-like lives! Not always easy! But being Christians means that we are part of the worldwide family of God through which our Heavenly Father builds us up, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and encourages us with the love of Christ when we feel we fail.



Alison and team with the pilot travelling to South Sudan to meet Moise and Jean Thierry

This is the experience of Paul and Alison, Moise (M) and Jean Thierry (JT), and other Burundians involved in or considering mission themselves—all strengthened and encouraged through our prayers. Already, there is a family planning to go to Chad for two years, with others looking to go on the same one-year ‘Inbound’ programme that M and JT have now completed.

Alison has worked hard on encouraging and arranging support for M and JT (including a contribution from St Luke’s from PIM’s discretionary budget). In fact, she went to visit them in South Sudan recently, before they concluded their first year. For Alison this involved a commercial flight, a smaller light aircraft flight to the border, ending with a final bush flight with Africa Inland Mission (AIM) Air (very like Mission Aviation Fellowship—MAF, flying missions to remote places ... safer and quicker than the dirt roads and tracks).

Both M and JT are now on a team debrief in Kenya (enforced by Ebola quarantine rules in East Africa) before returning to Burundi. There they will have some rest and then start the process of discerning the people groups they will work with back in South Sudan and raising support for a 5-year commitment. M will be getting married in October and a year later will hope to return for an arduous period of language learning whilst working among a remote and illiterate people group. JT hopes to be with another, less remote, people group in 6 months after further language training.

Both young men have written prayer letters which speak of their enthusiasm in sharing the Gospel with these South Sudanese peoples, as well as their commitment to their own lively Christian faith.

JT refers to the need to be well equipped with the armour of God (just as we’ve been reminded in Encounter services in June):

“I was reminded to remain spiritually alert ... and reminded that God is living, faithful and always in control.”

M wrote:

“The Lord reminds me ... how to be effective in mission ... it is all about being humble enough to learn, flexible enough to change and wise enough to let the Gospel speak inside culture not outside it, not about being the strongest or smartest!”

We can learn from these courageous and faithful Christians from a different culture on a different continent.

Simon Trundle

Summer Highlights

Community Coffee Morning

On 2nd June, Mary Bowen and Geoff Fox celebrated their birthdays with a lovely homemade cake in the company of the regulars from the Tuesday Communion Service and the weekly Community Coffee Morning.



The Uniformed organisations joined in with the **Father's Day Service** on 21st June. Youth Director, Neil Brookes, used clips from the film *Despicable Me* to illustrate the power that love has to change people for the better. As Christians, we can rely on the transforming power of Jesus's love to rewrite our stories. God's strength changes us from inside out. After the service, tacos were served as a Father's Day treat for everyone. Many thanks to Neil and the Tacos team.



On Sunday 12th July the **Young People's Takeover Service** was on the theme of 'God never takes a holiday'. We heard that God is always there when you need someone to turn to, especially when facing times of change (see p26). A **church family lunch** followed to bring everyone together before the summer break.

CanCC (Cassiobury and nearby Community Choir) gave their **Summer Concert** in the Church on 19th July which this year comprised songs on a weather theme and included classics like 'Bring me sunshine' and 'Raindrops keep falling on my head' (see p 26).

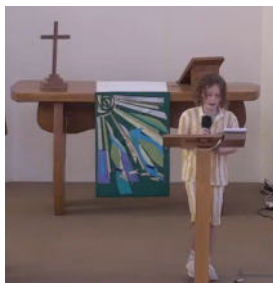


Collect from the Young People's Takeover Service

Reef wrote this lovely Collect prayer which fitted perfectly with the theme for the service.

*Loving God,
Thank you that you're always near,
Bringing hope instead of fear.
You never take a day away,
You're with us every single day.
At home, at school, or far away.
On sunny days or when skies are grey,
You never leave—you choose to stay.
When things are hard and we feel small,
You help us stand, you help us all.*

*You give us courage, strength and cheer,
Reminding us that you are near.
Help us share your love each day,
In all we do and all we say.
And wherever life may lead us to,
Help us remember we're walking with you.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*



CanCC

Cassiobury
and nearby
Community
Choir



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

Anyone welcome of any musical ability to join.

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



Thinking of joining a choir? CanCC invite you to a taster session on Wednesday 9th September at 7:30pm, St Luke's Church. No need to read music and no audition. Tea and cakes will be served too!

20th Anniversary Community Fun Day

“Hundreds of people, both young and old, came and found a warm welcome.”

Revd John Kiddle, in reference to
St Luke’s first Community Day held
in May 2006



The community stalls in the church hall

John went on to recall how that Saturday (20 years ago) had been a wet day, resulting in muddy footprints all over the brand new carpets. Yet somehow, it didn’t matter. The church had instantly become what it was intended for, a centre for the community—somewhere where everyone could find a warm welcome, a place of solace and somewhere to know God.

With that context, how blessed we were to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of St Luke’s ‘new’ church building in glorious sunshine, without a muddy footprint in sight. Yet what mattered most was not the weather but the reminder that St Luke’s remains just as much at the heart of our community today as it was two decades ago.

There was a wonderful buzz throughout the church and its grounds. The Scouts led games in the car park, with much hilarity as Neil refereed sumo battles. The buzz continued (quite literally) in the hall, where Kate led the Brownies in a challenging buzz wire, amongst other games. The hall was alive with activity: Di’s homemade jams, Watford Foodbank, St Luke’s Preschool, Alpha, Creative Space and others, all showcasing the richness of our church community. And of course, a long queue for face painting with Edna and the Watford & Three Rivers Refugee Partnership.



Sumo wrestling in the car
park

The crafty activities continued in the lounge, where June, Edna and Val helped both young and old(er) visitors create gorgeous stained glass window bookmarks and beaded crucifix necklaces. The newly decorated gathering area looked resplendent, decked throughout with Wera’s beautiful homemade bunting.

As Ricky is reputed to have said, “come to St Luke’s and you’ll never go hungry”. Never was that more true than this weekend, when food became the generous heart of the entire celebration. An incredible buffet representing 19 different cuisines was lovingly coordinated by the indefatigable Mo and Jill, followed by tea and sumptuous cakes, with tables quite literally groaning under the weight of so many homemade treats.



The mouth-watering array of dishes served at the international lunch buffet

More than once Wera turned to me and said, “Look at the queue! Will there be enough to go around?”. The line did indeed seem to grow longer by the minute, and I kept thinking of how Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. And yet, there was more than enough for everyone. What a joy it was to see the church so alive with people sharing food, conversation and fellowship.



Delicious afternoon cakes

For me, that was what made the day so special. The sharing of food reflected the generosity of our church family—people pouring so much love into homemade dishes, and giving so freely of their time and energy. The variety of cuisines beautifully reflected the rich diversity of St Luke’s itself—many people brought together as one community.

Finally, I know everyone will join me in thanking Susan and Bill Miller, whose immense hard work and dedication brought the whole event together and made it the joyful and incredibly memorable celebration it was.

Tiffany Pyatt

Mimi's Fundraising Fun Quiz Night!

On the 20th of June, we transformed the church hall into a very competitive Quiz Night to support my upcoming World Challenge expedition to Tanzania in 2027. Thanks to the incredible generosity of everyone who attended and those who donated (even when some couldn't make it to the Quiz), we raised an amazing £700.

I'm deeply grateful for everyone's contribution and encouragement.

The quiz featured a wide range of rounds including all things Tanzanian, a music round and a tricky table quiz to keep everyone on their toes. The general knowledge round kept teams close in points but the music round caused the biggest battle. The younger teams could recognise the recent chart hits, while some of the older teams were left bemused.

After close competition and even closer scores the winners were the Silver Eagles.

The night wouldn't have been the same without the generosity of local businesses that kindly donated prizes for our winners, such as *Gail's* donation of a box of pastries and *Hollywood Bowl's* donation of game vouchers. The night wouldn't have been the same without them.

Beyond the fun, the quiz has made me even more excited about going to Tanzania where I'll be staying in a community, helping at a village school and taking part in other meaningful projects and personal challenges that will create lifelong memories and make a real impact.



I've also been fundraising at summer fetes and Christmas stalls, selling sweet cones which has been a great source of funds as I have also been making them for parties and birthdays.

Thank you again to everyone who came, donated or is helping in this journey. Your kindness made the night a huge success and one I will remember forever. Thank you.



Mimi

July Birthday Cake

To the delight of all, Wendy's amazing strawberry cake was served after the morning service on 26th July to celebrate all the birthdays in July, including Youth Director, Neil's. Thank you Wendy and Wera for all the birthday cakes we've enjoyed.



A colorful poster for 'TODDLERS AT ST LUKES'. It features a QR code on the left, the word 'TODDLERS' in large blue letters, and 'AT ST LUKES' in a semi-circle. Below this, it says 'Thursdays 9:30 - 11am' and 'From Birth to Pre-School All Welcome!'. At the bottom is the website 'www.stlukeswatford.org/toddlers'. A speech bubble on the right says 'No need to book, just come along!'. The background has various colorful brushstrokes.

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



Age 7-11,
Tuesdays,
5:30-6:45pm
Subs are
£2/week or
£18/term

Wine with an Angel in the Vicarage Garden

Did you know that Michael our Vicar is an angel? Not in the Heavenly Host sense, you understand, but an angel for a company called Naked Wines.



Naked Wines is a charitable wine supplier that helps small winemakers to bring their product to market. It supplies their output to its members, and these angels, as the company calls them, pay a monthly subscription to receive wines provided by these small producers.

On 3rd July about 20 of us sat at tables in the Vicarage garden with angel Michael for a wine-tasting session, with most of the wines supplied by Naked Wines.

For those of us who are happy with something from the supermarket, this was a whole new experience. For example, how about a sip of *The Feather Plucker's Daughter* Chardonnay by Nina Stocker or a taste of *The Butterfly Effect* Reserve Shiraz by Sam Plunkett?

There were 12 wines to try altogether, white and red, and just in case you think this was an opportunity to get drunk, each bottle of wine was shared by all 20 of us—so there were no full glasses!

It was great fun. And because you should only drink wine with food, there was shellfish, salmon, beef, lamb, and even sausages to go with the various wines, so we got the full experience. There were quizzes and competitions (eg which country is the main supplier of Gewurztraminer?) but no winners or losers. In addition, the weather was perfect, the wines tasted good, and



Wine tasters in action

Michael kept us fully informed. Thank goodness we have a Vicar whose hobby is wine and not something like antique clocks....

A collection afterwards raised £90 after expenses for the Peace Hospice, and we all walked home, got a lift or took a taxi. A great evening and many thanks to Michael and team.

Chris Webb

**Questions from the 20th Anniversary fundraising quiz
for those who haven't yet tried it (Answers on p 35)**

Find a church-related word for each of the following clues

1. A group of plovers or alligators (12)
2. Bride and groom walk up this (5)
3. John joins heads of Royal Yeoman (9)
4. Angry? (5)
5. Awaits Sledding Snows (anagram 7,5,7)
6. A singular one, rarely rung (4)
7. Some of the Osprey of Scotland gone south (5)
8. Should have gone to Specsavers for these? (7)
9. Many are mustard with Bible rests (6)
10. The hub that connects, where "one" and others meet (9,4)
11. Actors tread these after a portion of tea (9)
12. Those who would sanction? (7)
13. A smaller room with table and cross (6)
14. Fish comes close to Noah's boat (3,4)
15. I fix reset (anagram 4,5)
16. Adapt and change audibly (5)
17. A place where priests & actors change (6)
18. Together sharing a meal (9)
19. Six before a means of transport, they are present except during an interregnum (5)
20. Deck these with boughs of holly (5)
21. Little rooms to rent for kids it's said? (7)
22. I hear you may purchase male cattle! (6)
23. A place for artwork? (7)
24. Rivers or Roses? (7)
25. Space for the teens (5,4)
26. Multiplication aids? (6)
27. You need a certificate to concoct here (7)
28. First of People's Crazy Cats (1.1.1)
29. Cheese is off I censor fridge contents (6)
30. Location of spider's hanging trap (7)
31. Harps noisier! They dwell in the vicinity (anagram 12)
32. Both display ebony and ivory (5,3,5)
33. Initially loved islands boasting rare and ragged yaks (7)
34. Orifices for homing birds. (6,5)
35. Typeface? (4)



**CREATIVE SPACE
FOR**



HARD-WORKING WOMEN

COME JOIN THE FUN!

Saturday 19th September, 9:30am-12 noon

Embroidery

£8 + donation for breakfast

Saturday 17th October, 10:00-11:30am

Informal Bring & Share Craft with crochet lesson (Free)

Saturday 21st November, 9:30am-12 noon

Christmas sweet making

£8 + donation for breakfast

Payment is by cash only on the day

Contact Pam to *book your place*:

whatsapp 07975 748243 or email pam.stlukes@gmail.com

Knitting Group



**Join us in St Luke's Church Lounge on these Mondays:
17th August, 21st September, 19th October, 16th November,
21st December, 10:00am-12:00pm**

Children's Page



DRAW LINES FROM EACH
EVENT TO THE PLACE
WHERE IT HAPPENED...

① Jesus was
baptised

② Jesus was
born

③ Jesus turned
water into wine

④ Jesus ate the
Last Supper

⑤ Jesus calmed
a storm

Cana

Jerusalem

River Jordan

Bethlehem

Galilee

Find the clues in:

1. Matthew 3:13-16
2. Luke 2:1-7
3. John 2:1-12
4. Matthew 26:26-30
5. Mark 4:35-41

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

July 31st

Aug 28th

Sept 25th

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

20th Anniversary Fundraising Quiz Answers

Quiz clues are on page 32

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Congregation | 19. Vicar |
| 2. Aisle | 20. Halls |
| 3. Baptistry | 21. Toilets |
| 4. Cross | 22. Babies |
| 5. Stained glass windows | 23. Gallery |
| 6. Bell | 24. Flowers |
| 7. Foyer | 25. Youth room/club/hall |
| 8. Glasses/Readers | 26. Tables |
| 9. Chairs | 27. Kitchen |
| 10. Gathering area | 28. PCC |
| 11. Cupboards | 29. Office |
| 12. Banners/Wardens | 30. Website |
| 13. Chapel | 31. Parishioners |
| 14. Car park | 32. Piano and organ |
| 15. Fire exits | 33. Library |
| 16. Altar | 34. Pigeon holes |
| 17. Vestry | 35. Font |
| 18. Communion | |

Congratulations to Marion & Roger H and Margaret H who were joint winners. The money raised from the sale of the quiz was given to the 20th Anniversary Thanksgiving Appeal supporting Rennie Grove Peace Hospice and Nireekshana HIV/AIDS & Leprosy Clinic in Hyderabad, India.

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 7th September.

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 (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

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	Pam Norman
	Simon Trundle
Ordinand and Youth Director	Neil Brookes
Music Director	Jeremy Cooke
Children & Families Team Leader	Bekki Hadley
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Churchwardens	Terry Sullivan
	Debi King
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PCC Treasurer	Martin Kirk
PCC Secretary	Pam Norman
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Please leave a message for any of the above on the Church Office answerphone – 01923 246161

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