

St Luke's Church News – December 2020

Review:

Things have been quiet in the church over the last few months. We were able to hold our **Harvest festival** (without singing) and have received a certificate of thanks from the Bletchley food cupboard for our donations. The **Gift Day** stand on



the village green for St Luke's day was a great success. Probably owing to the more central location – we received more donations than usual: a total of £1416.80 to which gift aid will be added! Many thanks to all who gave so generously. We managed to hold our **Remembrance service** outside the church, which was attended by a stalwart few. Many

thanks also to Harry Davies for raising £145 through his **Bike ride** to be split between BHCT & St Luke's. We are again able to meet our parish share this year.

Ongoing Activities:

Food Bank: If you'd like to make a donation, please ensure items fit in the sealed boxes in the porch (for hygiene reasons). If you can't get them in, please leave them at Abbotsford at the bottom of Church Rd. Most wanted items include: tinned meat and fish, (tuna, mince, corned beef), prepared tinned meals (chicken casserole, ravioli, beans & sausages, and meat pies etc) tinned fruit and puddings (rice pudding, custard) cereal, biscuits, tea, coffee and sugar.



Toiletries: toothpaste, shower gel and sanitary and sensitive bladder towels. Supplies are topped up weekly, and we are getting more than we can use at the moment, so some food and other items have been passed on to the Bletchley food cupboard. If you've considered using the food bank, even for a one off or on temporary basis until after Christmas, please do!

Prayers: The prayer group has been temporarily suspended, but we are still taking prayer requests either via prayer request card (in the church porch delivered to The Birches, Church Rd or Abbotsford, Newton Rd) or by phone (numbers below). As Christians, we know the power of prayer!



Swap Shop: The Swap shop doesn't seem to have had a lot of use, but we are continuing to leave toys there. If we feel the weather is damaging them in the porch, we may remove them temporarily. But for the moment, there's still a range of children's books, puzzles and games for all ages. Feel free to donate or borrow and swap (no soft toys please). For your own safety please wipe borrowed items with antibacterial spray once you get home.



Services:

Since early November, we've been forbidden from holding church services. Our Rector has been producing a weekly reflection since the start of the crisis, which is published on the **village Facebook** page or can be emailed to you directly upon request (contact any number below).



Both the weekly reflection and a weekly children's bible story (read by the Rector or church member) are now also being videoed and uploaded onto **You Tube**. Links can be found on the benefice website: www.brickhillschurches.org.uk. In place of live services, we've been holding benefice (our "family" of churches which includes Brickhills: Great, Bow and Little), **services on Zoom**. For those who are unaware, Zoom is a free to download app that can be loaded onto your smart



phone, laptop or PC, enabling you to access meetings (or online church services!) using a link provided by the meeting organiser. Links are available a few days before the service and you can register to receive the email link by contacting Phillipa Cook at pjcook6@gmail.com.

Alternatively, "Church at home" is an online service, a link to which can be found by searching Oxford Diocese Church at Home. This can be accessed by phone if you can't get online by calling **01865 920930**. Standard call rates apply.

As we go to press, we're hoping the Government will allow church services to restart from 2nd Dec. We had been running church services, (with strict social distancing rules) rotating through the benefice. However, even if live services can go ahead, it may be that we are still not allowed to sing. We are trying our best to arrange alternatives for Christmas which might include CDs or singing by a few choir members. We hope to issue our usual **Christmas leaflet** with details. At present, the live services we have planned (subject to lockdown release) are:

6th December 11am Benefice service at St Mary's, Great Brickhill (we are hoping that paperwork will arrive in time to allow us to swear in the benefice churchwardens – an occasion that usually takes place in April/May!)

13th December 4pm: 9 lessons at St Luke's church, in Stoke Hammond (hopefully with a choir singing a few carols)



20th December 3pm: Crib service on the village Green. As our church has limited capacity under social distancing, we thought we would hold this on the village Green, although there will still need to be strict social distancing. It is unlikely singing will be allowed.

24th December 11.30pm: "Midnight" Holy Communion at St Luke's church, Stoke Hammond. Again, singing may be restricted.

We have not yet planned services for January. Information will be made available on the Benefice website and the village Facebook page.

Fundraising:

Zoom Pilates and Pamper sessions: Many thanks to Louisa Harris, village resident Pilates teacher, who recently held free Zoom sessions with goodies from her sideline business, Neal's Yard Remedies. Profits from sales generated will be donated to the church. At the time of going to press, the sessions haven't taken place, but I'm sure they'll have been a resounding success! If you're disappointed to have missed out, please let us know and Louisa will run another if there's enough interest.



Christmas market: We are holding this event to which you are warmly invited, in lieu of our Christmas fayre. Stalls will be set up along Church Rd on **5th December** from **12.30** to **2.30pm**. Strict social distancing and hygiene protocols will be applied, but we will have an unwanted gifts stall, cake stall, Christmas tombola, hamper raffle and take-away refreshments. Come and join in the socially distanced fun!

Bible verse of the month: Galatians 6 v9: *So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.* (NRSV)

What does it mean? This Bible reference is about perseverance, which is particularly appropriate for us all at the moment! A vaccine has been announced; rough timescales have even been given; we can see the end in sight so it will be hard to avoid letting our guard down and socialising unnecessarily over Christmas. So let us keep on "doing the right thing" so that in the end we will all be safer.

St Luke's wishes you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Church Benefice Website: www.brickhillschurches.org.uk.



St Luke's usually offers Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals which are now only available under strict limitations. Please contact the Rector if you'd like to discuss any of these. The Rector's contact details are on the website. His phone goes straight to an answerphone but he'll reply as soon as he's able, or contact a Churchwarden. The Rector's day off is Monday.

If you have a prayer request or enquiry, please ring **Churchwardens: Harry, on 07773065271; Diane, on 270409** or **Treasurer: John, on 270202.**

