

## ST. MARY OF NAZARETH /ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI – WEST WICKHAM

18<sup>th</sup> October 2020: St Luke

### Hazel writes:

It was great to have some live music at a service from the choir at St Mary's on Sunday. Over the next few weeks we will be experimenting with live streaming and recording our in-person services, so that others can see and hear a service directly from the churches. The timing of when on-line material is available may change as a result. Additionally, the provision of a full sermon in writing may not always be possible and it may be subject to change before it is delivered on a Sunday morning. The changes in how services are run have also required alternative rota arrangements, which are likely to continue until further notice.

Please remember that under the new restrictions when you are inside the church, you should only be talking to those who you share a household with. Any other social interaction can only take place outside.

Thank you for all the **harvest donations** to Bromley Borough Foodbank. Here's a picture of what was taken there on Monday this week. Please do continue to bring donations for the Foodbank, which can be left either at the Vicarage, or in a box outside the main door at St Francis' Church.



Currently the **Bromley Food Bank** need cold meat, custard, small bottles of squash, jelly, instant whip, long life fruit juice, sponge puddings, sweets, washing detergent (non-bio), shaving gel & razors, children's toothpaste & toothbrushes and Christmas food dated 2021 onwards. At the moment there are large stocks of pasta, beans, soup, UHT milk, rice, cereals, tea, toilet rolls and tomatoes and these items are politely discouraged at the present time. Thank you for your continuing support.

On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October, **Midweek Communion** will be at St. Mary's at 10.45am. Next Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> October, there will be services of **Holy Communion** in St. Francis' at 8am and at 10am in St. Mary's. There will also be a service available **on-line** from 9am.

Our annual **Memorial Service** to remember loved ones who have died will be on Sunday 1st November at 3pm in St Francis' Church and also available on-line through Zoom (an invitation will be circulated nearer the time). If you would like the name of a loved one read out at the service, please write it clearly on a list in either of the churches, or send an email to Hazel at [hazelos58@gmail.com](mailto:hazelos58@gmail.com).

From November, our **Wednesday morning communion** services will move to only being held at St Francis' Church in those weeks following a 10am Sunday service at St Mary's. This will allow additional time for planning our Christmas services, as well as making the changes to the Sunday provision outlined above in Hazel's message.

**Resources and updates for the week ahead** – All files have been combined and posted as a pew sheet which has been sent on paper to those who have told us that they are not on-line. Other worship and resources that you might want to listen to or look at on Sunday:

- The Church of England's national virtual service will be available on their website at [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org).
- The BBC have the following programmes to watch and listen to:
  - Sunday Worship at 8.10am on Radio 4 live from Croydon Minster celebrating St. Luke Patron Saint of Physicians.
  - Choral Evensong at 3pm on Radio 3 from Canterbury Cathedral
  - On BBC 1: Sunday Morning Live at 10.30 a.m. and Songs of Praise at 1.15 p.m. from Cheddar Gorge with Aled Jones and Gemma Hunt meets new worship band Bright City.

Each week our **“coffee/tea & chat”** on Thursday at 2.30 pm is an opportunity to share with others. It is just 40 minutes and you don't need to commit to joining each week. Please let Rowena ([rowena.griff19@btinternet.com](mailto:rowena.griff19@btinternet.com) /020 8777 6112) know if you would like the log-in details.

Any items for the joint pew sheet to Beryl [bbolton@ntlworld.com](mailto:bbolton@ntlworld.com) and items for the websites to [brian.griff19@btinternet.com](mailto:brian.griff19@btinternet.com).

**Collect**

Almighty God, you called Luke the physician, whose praise is in the gospel, to be an evangelist and physician of the soul: by the grace of the Spirit and through the wholesome medicine of the gospel, give your Church the same love and power to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**First Reading:**

**2 Timothy 4: 5-17**

As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.<sup>6</sup> As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come.<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.<sup>8</sup> From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.<sup>9</sup> Do your best to come to me soon,<sup>10</sup> for

Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.<sup>11</sup> Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry.<sup>12</sup> I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus.<sup>13</sup> When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.<sup>14</sup> Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will pay him back for his deeds.<sup>15</sup> You also must beware of him, for he strongly opposed our message.

<sup>16</sup> At my first defence no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them!<sup>17</sup> But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.

**Gospel: Luke 10: 1-9**

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go.<sup>2</sup> He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are

few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.<sup>3</sup> Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.<sup>4</sup> Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road.<sup>5</sup> Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!"<sup>6</sup> And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.<sup>7</sup> Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house.<sup>8</sup> Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you;<sup>9</sup> cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

**Post Communion Prayer**

Lord God, the source of truth and love, keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, united in prayer and the breaking of bread and one in joy and simplicity of heart, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## **REFLECTION for St Luke's Day - Ken Bryan**

Today we celebrate St Luke. So what do we know about St Luke the man? He was probably a Greek and more than likely a gentile. We know he was a doctor, a physician. He was also a recorder of events, a diarist if you like and he was a historian concerned for what had happened in the past and for writing a detailed account of the life of Jesus and of how the early church was growing.

He was a companion to Paul on parts of his second and third missionary journeys and he stayed with Paul in Rome during his captivity there at the end of his life. In Colossians chapter 4 verse 14 Paul refers to those who had stayed with him including 'Luke, the beloved physician', and Demas.

He was a member of the first church to call themselves Christians at Antioch. He remained unmarried and died at the age of eighty four.

It is interesting what you find out when researching a person. I discovered that he was also a painter, and is the patron saint of artists and tradition holds that he was the first one to paint a picture of the Virgin Mary as he spent a lot of time with her at St. John's house, where he got to know her story and about Jesus from her perspective. Thus, he was able to write about Jesus' birth and early years.

Luke in his writing demonstrated that he believed salvation was for all – gentile and Jew, women and men, outcast and Pharisee. He frequently mentions children and women by name and Jesus's compassion towards them. Luke's universalism is seen throughout his gospel, he is inclusive of all no matter who.

He also majors on prayer, telling us that Jesus prayed before choosing his disciples, at his baptism, at the transfiguration. He is clear that the disciples are guided by the Holy Spirit. He alone writes of the significance for everyone in the world of Jesus the Messiah, who comes as God's answer to the faith and expectation of the people.

He alone records the hymns Zechariah's Benedictus, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them, Mary's Magnificat, My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour, and Simeon's Nunc Dimitis. 'Lord now let your servant depart in peace according to your word for my eyes have seen your salvation. These are poetic and speak deeply of what the Jews expected of the Messiah and are used by Christian churches in services to this day.

In his second book, the Acts of the Apostles, is a real history book indicating events and their times and places. How Jesus comes up against the Roman Empire. And how the good news spread all over the Roman Empire, especially from Jerusalem to Rome itself.

It would be easy to read the opening of our gospel passage as a gentle request for a group of his followers to be sent out in twos to spread the gospel message. But this would be to miss the point of the urgency of the moment. It is not just to wander off almost aimlessly but to go urgently to wherever you can to prepare people for the visit of Jesus. He will be passing that way shortly and this will be the last time that they will have an opportunity to see him and hear him and talk to him, He knows that he is going up to Jerusalem and he is well aware of what will happen to him there. If they fail to take this opportunity it may be too late.

The choosing of seventy as well as needing helpers to prepare people for his visit he may well have been referring back to Moses as it says in Numbers chapter 11 verses 16 and 25 so the LORD said to Moses, 'Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you'.<sup>25</sup> Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

This shows that it was for a one off event when God came down and spoke to Moses and this enabled the seventy to prophesy, but just this once. And so the seventy who are being sent by Jesus are being sent for a one off event of his passing that way.

The Israelites had been opposed to Moses as they were in exile and were unhappy and didn't want to follow where Moses was leading them. Moses needed extra help from his closest followers. And so Jesus also needs the help of a chosen few as despite all that he had said and all his healings and miracles most people were fickle and soon forgot and just went on their own way as before and ignored Jesus and his call to them to turn to God.

Jesus told the seventy to be focussed on their task and when entering a house they should share his message of peace by saying 'Peace to this house'. However this was at a time when people were looking for a strong response to defeat of any opposition whether it was the Samaritans or the Romans. They could only see an answer which was warlike. Jesus was saying that the way of violence and war was not the answer in

the long term. God did not want war but peace among all peoples. God is a God of peace, of healing of wholeness.

For us now what would Luke the doctor be saying especially as we enter a further time of restriction to our movements if not a complete lockdown.

I am sure he would approve of all the things we do to maintain our wellbeing.

We won't be able to do as much gardening as in the summer but we can still enjoy the natural world. Perhaps for us it is cooking or baking, trying something new. Or it may be making things or sewing. It could be writing prose or poetry or reading or listening to music. Even jigsaws or crosswords or puzzles like Sudoku. But it is good to talk so chatting to neighbours to see how they are, to phone or send emails or keep in touch by FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype or other online programmes.

And of course we can read and we can pray for ourselves and for others.

At all times we can thank God for our blessings and spread God's peace to others. Especially those who are struggling at this time.

In reading the epistle I noticed along with the beloved Luke, Demas is mentioned as someone who had stayed with Paul during his imprisonment. Yet here in the second letter to Timothy, Demas is said to be weakening in his faith as he is in love with the present world. That thought brought me up short. Is my faith too weak, I know I am distracted by things of the present world? Even writing this sermon I am easily distracted by TV, reading the paper or a conversation with others when I should have been getting on with listening to the promptings of God and writing down the words. These other things are all well and good and keep us rounded and in touch with the world around us but there is a time and place for all.

Maybe Demas did go away to Thessalonica leaving Paul sad at his departure but maybe his faith survived and he brought others to faith there. So if we weaken in our faith may we not forget all we have learned and continue to serve God wherever we are.

Those seventy who did serve Jesus by going out before him returned joyous and in verses 17 to 20 it tells of on their return and how they felt and how effective they had been. I leave you to follow that up yourselves.

May God's peace be with you now and always. Amen

## Prayer Pointers

Almighty God, you inspired St. Luke the Evangelist and Physician to show us in his gospel the love and the healing power of your Son and His genuine compassion for all human beings. Help us to deepen our understanding of the gospel and grow in compassion for everyone. May we bring healing to our community here in West Wickham

Continue to pray that our two churches may learn to serve our community together as one body. May we be people who build gates and stiles over fences that have been put up over the years. May we help each other and those outside our churches to take down our boundary markers and barriers.

For those areas of our country that have had harder restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid pandemic. Pray for students confined their university accommodation and for the people in Northern England where there are high numbers of cases. For all those working to control the virus especially local public health professionals.

As St Luke was a physician and is the patron saint of doctors, pray for all those who work tirelessly in our NHS. We may have stopped clapping them, but we have not forgotten them. Pray that all health professionals may be granted skill, wisdom, understanding and compassion. Pray for all in the health service who are tired and stressed, yet they are still offering their care and expertise in treating and healing the sick. Thank God for their strong sense of vocation.

For all who are ill in hospital or at home, especially those whom we know and love. Pray especially for families of those in hospital and who are unable to visit them at present. For all who have been bereaved and who have not been able to celebrate the life of their love done in the way that they wanted. For our bereavement support group and all who facilitate the group – may they be able to reach out in compassion to those in need.