

Sunday Oct 18th. St. Luke the Physician and Evangelist.

St Luke wrote his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. he was also a physician and accompanied St Paul on his travels caring for him. Today's Collect refers to St. Luke being, " an evangelist and physician of the soul" enabling us to reflect on the healing ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sick, the injured. the outcasts and the anxious were everywhere. People were astounded that He did not recoil from such sickness, nor did He say it was God's will. Instead Jesus brought God's healing touch to dis-eased bodies and peace of mind to the distressed.

This ministry of healing was continued by monastic communities founding hospitals and today is maintained through the Medical profession. As we commemorate St.Luke we give thanks for the dedication and skill of all medical staff. The last six months have shown the immense debt we owe all who work across the whole range of the NHS. Today we uphold them in our prayers and ask for God's belong on their lives and work.

The Prayer for St. Luke's day also refers to, " the wholesome medicine of the Gospel" reminding us that healing is a part of the ministry of the Church, the Body of Christ. Every church should be a centre of healing. Our words "health", "wholeness", and "holiness" all derive from the same old English word so the good news of the Gospel is the healing and wholeness which Christ brings to life. The qualities of love, compassion, care, forgiveness, and refreshment are the qualities we all need for a fulfilling life. In the BBC Drama, "Life" the truculent teenager from a broken home said to her aunt that no one cared for her. "Promise you will care for me". May our church fellowship bring care and healing to fractured lives by showing God's love and care for them whatever comes. This care we also extend through our prayers and pastoral care to those who are coming to the end of their earthly pilgrimage. As one person said to me in the local Hospice, "I have sung in the choir many times, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace". Now I can truly say those words and let go."

On this St. Luke's day as we give thanks for his Life as an Evangelist and Physician let us pray for all who work in the Medical Profession. May God bless and sustain them during these testing times. Let us also ensure that all who come to our churches will feel the touch of God on their lives enabling them to live as those who know that they are loved and of worth to God.

A prayer. Lord God, we bring to you for your blessing all who work in the Medical profession, in our hospitals, hospices and medical centres. Give them skill wisdom and gentleness, that they may bring healing to the sick and also shine as a light of hope in the dark hours of distress; this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen