



ROUNDABOUT

CHRISTMAS 2017



#GOD with US

WELCOME!

Welcome to the latest edition of Roundabout, the newsletter from St Luke's Church in College Road.

You can find information about our links with the local community, details of our services, and important dates for your diary. We hope you enjoy reading it. Revd Patrick Wheaton

WAITING FOR HISTORY

REVD PATRICK WHEATON



In the 'History Boys' by Alan Bennett the character Rudge defines history as 'one damn thing after another.' As we look back on 2017 I wonder if many of us feel the same. Perhaps we consider the events of our world and see simply society and politics lurching from one damn thing to another, apparently without rhyme or reason, to an as yet unknown conclusion. Or maybe we consider the hustle and bustle of our own family and work lives, remembering little of the detail but aware of a pattern of busyness where one thing follows another, without space for reflection or thought. Possibly we even look at the weeks building up to Christmas and recognise only one thing following another in the calendar. Tasks to be completed, preparations to be made and events to attend.

In Advent, the season that leads up to Christmas, we are asked to wait in hope and expectation. Not unknowingly, but rather trusting in the God who has always known where history is heading. Writing centuries before the birth of Jesus the prophet Isaiah declared that 'the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son.' God knew his plan for history, and in Jesus we then see the God who steps into history. The baby born in a manger would grow and live for the purpose of dying to bring life. Isaiah promised that God's servant would endure 'punishment that brought us peace' and that 'by his wounds we are healed.' As Jesus prepared for his death, he promised his disciples that he will also return, 'I will come back and take you to be with me.' God knows where history is going.

Henry Ford, founder of the motor company, declared that 'history is bunk.' His point being that we need only live in the present. Unfortunately, the present is often confusing, seemingly random, and mostly outside of our control. Just one damn thing after another. Advent proclaims that God has guided history through the ages, and knows where history is headed. We wait, but do you know where you are going? Our prayer at St Luke's is that this Christmas you might find peace and healing in the God who stepped into history. Comfort and hope, in the God who guides history onwards.

A GROWING FAMILY AT ST LUKE'S

We continue to celebrate our growing church family at St Luke's. It is lovely to welcome newcomers to the area into our worshipping community, and also both young and older through baptism. St Luke's seeks to be the spiritual heart of our local area and whatever age or background you will always find a warm welcome. Recently we have said goodbye to Kate Smith, our children and families intern, who has moved on to a new post in Oxford. Since September, Simon Phillips has joined us as our Minister in training. Alongside theological study, Simon oversees our youth work and is getting involved in the whole life of St Luke's.





JOURNEY KIDS

Journey Kids is a new group started by Jonathan and Sarah Griffiths at Saint John's Primary School. Jonathan and Sarah are part of the St Luke's family, and serve as missionaries with Foursquare

Missions International (US). The goal of Journey Kids is to help children understand who Jesus is and what it means to follow him.

Meeting on Sunday afternoons at the school, they've been enjoying teaching the Jesus Storybook Bible curriculum. This term has had us learning about God's good creation, the terribly sad story of Adam and Eve believing lies about God, a great big boat, a tall tower, an amazing promise, a forgiving prince, and a showdown in the desert with an ancient king – and how all of that points us forwards to the One King, Jesus.

There has been a terrific team of volunteers made up of St Luke's members and parents from Saint John's and we've thoroughly enjoyed our times of story, songs, prayer and activities. We'll finish this term with a Christmas Celebration on December 10th, then pick up the amazing story of God in January 2018.



ST LUKE'S AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

At St Luke's we seek to be a church family that welcomes everybody. We also hope we can be a blessing to the wider community. In warmer times we gathered with neighbours for our annual Cream Tea on the lawn. Joined by all ages we enjoyed conversation, games and refreshments together on the grounds around the church.

Every Friday morning parents, grandparents and carers from across the community meet in church for Toddlers. This term Simon Phillips has joined our Toddlers team, and bringing his guitar, enhanced the musicality of our youngest singers.

Every month our Tuesday coffee mornings or afternoon teas provide company and delightful cakes for those who come along. Keep an eye on the church noticeboard for the next one. It is always lovely to welcome new faces.

St Luke's Church Hall continues to provide a resource for the community. It is available for private hire at very reasonable rates. Numerous community groups make use of the hall during the week – from puppy training to tea dances. Every Friday at 6.30pm there is a table tennis club. Open to all and completely free why not come along and join in a bit of light ping pong. From Tues-Fri each week the Senior Citizens Welfare Committee hosts a lunch club providing hot food and company. For a reasonable price they provide a meal, activities and transport to and from the hall. If you yourself, or if you know of somebody, who might be interested get in touch with Mike Jaynes on 07895 116040.

Our prayer at St Luke's is that we can both be, and provide, a warm and loving heart to this part of Cheltenham.



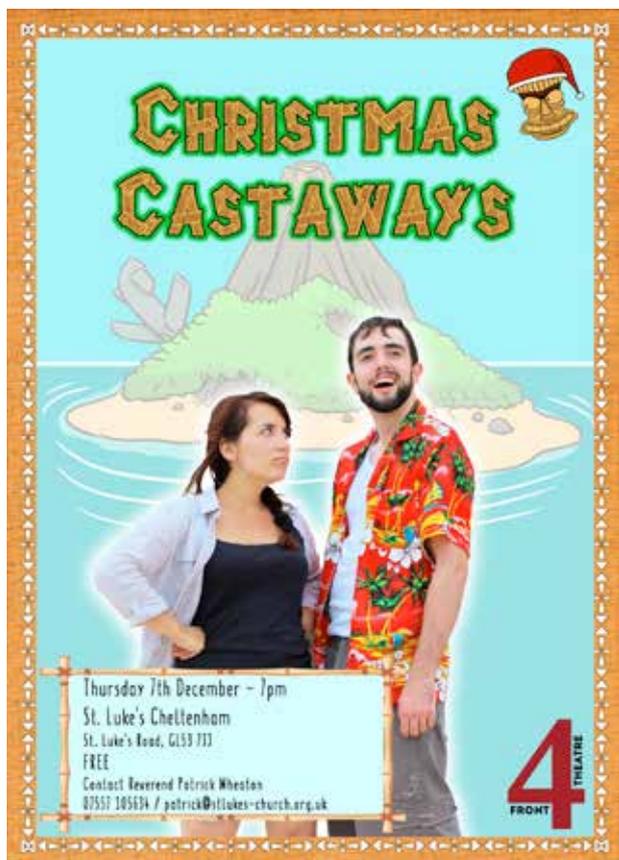
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AT ST LUKE'S

Bishop Rachel joined us at St Luke's on Remembrance Sunday to lead us in our worship. It was an important occasion where the community gathered to honour the sacrifices made by the men and women of our Armed Forces. Pupils from Saint John's School past and present led our prayers, and also read out names of pupils from the school who died in either the First or Second World War. Mike Little of Saint John's led our Act of Remembrance. The memorials in St Luke's record the names of local residents who have died in the service of their country. We paid particular respect this year to all those who died in 1917.





PANTO TIME AT ST LUKE'S



On Thursday 7th December at 7pm we offer an open invite to our 'pantotivity' – Christmas Castaways. It is a one hour blend of pantomime fun, and a reminder of the nativity story. Tickets are FREE so get in touch with Patrick to let us know if you are coming along, just to give us an idea of numbers - patrick@stlukes-church.org.uk OR 07557 105634.

SCHOOLS AT ST LUKE'S



In Sept Saint John's School joined us at St Luke's for a Prayer Day. Each class was given the opportunity during the day to take some time out from lessons, quieten themselves, and to reflect through a variety of interactive prayer stations. Themes explored included hope, forgiveness and love. In October St Luke's hosted the school Harvest service and contributions were made to Cheltenham Open Door. Everyone is looking forward to the school Carol service on Dec. 15th at 2pm. It is an open event for the whole community. We value our close bond with Saint John's but love to see other schools visit us. During Interfaith week, Year 6 pupils from Hester's Way Primary School visited the church to consider its physical layout and key features, and how they communicate the Christian message. All of the pupils were engaged and well behaved, asking interesting questions about the church. At the end of the session we made time to consider how Christians pray by looking at the Lord's Prayer together.



LIFE EXPLORED AT ST LUKE'S

The bakers Greggs caused controversy recently with an Advent calendar nativity image that replaced the baby Jesus with a sausage roll. Now I like a hot sausage snack as much as the next person, but I'm not sure this entices me to buy one. What it does show is an enduring recognition of the Christmas story, but an ongoing confusion over its significance. The shock of the story has always been that God would promise life and light to the world by giving us his son. The whole of our world is looking for happiness in life. The God of the Bible claims it comes, surprisingly not in a sausage roll, but rather in God's gift of himself.

Life Explored is a short course being run at St Luke's where we are investigating the central theme of Christmas - that God offers happiness in life through the gift of his son. It starts on Tuesday Jan 9th at 7.30pm and will run for 4 weeks in total.

Contact Reverend Patrick Wheaton to find out more - patrick@stlukes-church.org.uk / 07557 105634



GIVE SOMETHING BACK FOR CHRISTMAS

As most of us look forward to a Christmas full of celebration, this is not the case for all. Various organisations across Cheltenham seek to provide for those for whom Christmas is a reminder of difficulties rather than cause for delight.

Every year Cheltenham Open Door run a Christmas Shelter at St Luke's Church Hall from midday on Christmas Eve until after lunch on 27th Dec. Hot meals are served 3 times a day and warm drinks and sandwiches are available at other points. Chiropodist, hairdressing, showers, television, games and entertainment are provided. Clothes are also available. They require donations of food, clothing and money. Men's clothing, particularly warm things, men's boots or shoes in good condition, toiletries, pillows and duvets with washable covers can all be donated. They can be dropped off at Open Door premises at 39 Grosvenor Street, GL52 2SQ from 10.30am to 1.15pm Tues-Thurs or 9.45-11.45am Sundays. To find out more visit www.cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk or email christmas@cheltenhamopendoor.org.uk

Cheltenham Foodbank is also looking to receive donations of food for packages made up for their clients. Items particularly needed are;

- Pasta Sauce
- Jam
- Biscuits
- Sweets/Chocolate
- Breakfast Cereal
- Tinned Fruit
- Instant Mash Potato
- Mayonnaise
- Tomato Ketchup
- Toiletries
- Savoury Snacks
- Long Life Fruit Juice
- Long Life Milk
- Pasta
- Rice Pudding
- Tinned Vegetables
- Toilet Rolls



During December they also include some additional items in the packs they give out. These include:

Christmas cakes/cake slices, Tinned Ham, Instant dessert packets, Fancy biscuits/shortbread, Stuffing mix, Gravy mix, Pickles, Hot Chocolate powder, Jars of paste or pate, Small fancy toiletries.

If you would like to help contributions can be dropped off at St Luke's Church on Sunday mornings or at Cheltenham Elim Foodbank on St George's Road 11am-1pm Weds & Fri.

Our Regular Sunday Programme

At St Luke's you will find traditional and more innovative services, old favourites and modern music, the organ and the drum kit. We're trying to give everybody a chance to worship God in a genuine way. Our normal monthly service pattern is:

8am		Holy Communion
10am	1st Sunday	SundayOne*
	2nd Sunday	Holy Communion
	3rd Sunday	Morning Worship
	4th Sunday	Holy Communion
	5th Sunday	Morning Worship

Children's and youth groups meet during the services every Sunday except the 1st.

* A less formal service for all ages and those less familiar with church

CHRISTMAS @ ST LUKE'S

Sun LINC service, in memory of our loved ones	3rd Dec	3pm
Thurs Christmas Castaways 'pantotivity'	7th Dec	7pm
Sun Candlelight Carol Service	17th Dec	6.30pm
Sun Crib Service	24th Dec	4pm
Midnight Communion		11pm
Mon Family Communion	25th Dec	10am



CONTACT DETAILS

Email: info@stlukes-church.org.uk

Address: St Luke's Church, St Luke's Rd, Cheltenham GL53 7JJ.

Church Office: 01242 241910.

Website : www.stlukes-church.org.uk

Twitter: @stlukeschelt