



**THE UNITED BENEFICE of ST LUKE'S,
ENDON with ST CHAD'S, BAGNALL**

Encounter, Encourage, Enable ... Committed to Sharing God's Love

www.endonstlukes.org.uk

Vestry (church office): 01782 502166



March 2022

INTERREGNUM Month 21

**CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENDON
Lent Groups**

You are invited to join the course

**'A River through
the Desert'**

From the geography of the Holy Land
we explore our faith through
**desert, water well, mountain,
sea, road and garden.**



Using Bible readings, videos and
conversation, we hope that the course
will water our faith in the way that a river
causes the desert to flower and flourish
in unexpected ways.

*Do consider joining this ecumenical
Lent group. You will be very welcome.
We look forward to enjoying your
company!*

**Thursdays at 7.30pm at
St Luke's Church,
Church Lane, Endon
starting
3rd March**

Please contact Barrie Jackson
for the course booklet

MARCH at ST LUKE'S

SUNDAY March 6th

First Sunday in LENT

9.15am HOLY COMMUNION

led by Rev Barry Wilson

11.00am CONNECTIONS

SUNDAY 13th

9.15am MORNING WORSHIP

led by Barrie / Roger

11.00am CONNECTIONS

SUNDAY 20th

9.15am HOLY COMMUNION

led by Rev David Nicol

11.00am CONNECTIONS

SUNDAY 27th

MOTHERING SUNDAY

9.15am MORNING WORSHIP

led by Barrie / Roger

11.00am CONNECTIONS

MIDWEEK SERVICES

Wednesday Holy Communion
every week at 9.15am

2nd March Ash Wednesday at the
Methodist Church

9th March at St Luke's

16th March at the Methodist
Church

23rd March at St Luke's

30th March at the Methodist
Church

ST LUKE'S PCC

Our next PCC meeting is being
re-scheduled due to a clash with
the Lent course.

MARCH at ST CHAD'S

Mar 6th 10.45am FAMILY SERVICE

led by KH and team

13th 10.45am

PRAISE & PRAYER led by MF

20th 10.45am

Holy Communion led by Rev Barry
Wilson

27th MORNING WORSHIP led by KH



*Don't forget
CLOCKS GO
FORWARD
ONE HOUR
Sat
26th March*

ST LUKE'S CHURCH OFFICE

Unless involved with funeral duties, Barrie will man the church office in the vestry on Mon, Wed, Thurs and Fri from 10.00am to 1.00pm using tel: **07517 653370**. At these times the church is also open for private prayer. All enquiries relating to baptisms, weddings and funerals should be directed to Barrie.

ST LUKE'S CHURCH FUNDS

Please bring your gift or envelope to church or issue a cheque and post it to Sheila Hurst or set up a monthly standing order or use the 'Just Giving' link on St Luke's website. If you bank on-line you could pay directly into the church account by setting up Endon St Luke's PCC as a new recipient. (*Bank details from Steve Dale or Sheila H. Phone nos back page.)*

THANK YOU to all our regular givers!



24 February 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.

John 14.27

Many of us will have troubled hearts as we watch with horror the attack by Russia on Ukraine. As we have already said, this attack is an act of evil, imperilling as it does the relative peace and security that Europe has enjoyed for so long. The attack by one nation on a free, democratic country has rightly provoked outrage, sanctions and condemnation.

We lament with the people of Ukraine, and we pray for the innocent, the frightened and those who have lost loved ones, homes, and family.

We continue to call for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Russian forces as well as wide-ranging efforts to ensure peace, stability and security.

These events remind us powerfully that peace is precious and it is fragile. In Chapter 14 of John's Gospel, Jesus speaks to his disciples at the Last Supper and he leaves them his peace. This is not a mere greeting, but rather something deep and abiding. This peace is something that only Jesus gives; for it is a gratuitous gift, a way of living, something to be received for the gift of peace is the gift of Jesus himself. That is why the Lord is able to offer reassurance to our hearts, why those who receive the gift of the peace of Jesus Christ at the deepest of levels should not be afraid.

Peace, therefore, is so much more than the absence of war. It is a gift, and it is also a decision, a gift that must be received. It is a choice we make that shapes the way we live well alongside each other. It characterises our relationship with God. It comes into being by seeking justice.

In these days of uncertainty and fear, we pray that each of us might again turn to the Lord and receive God's gift of peace, work for God's justice, know God's reconciliation and love, and choose paths not of hatred or destruction, of violence or retribution, but God's way of justice, mercy and peace.

As Christians, our response to a crisis must always be rooted in prayer. And so we invite you to join with us in praying most earnestly for an outpouring of the Spirit of God, that the world may once again choose peace, strengthening those international bodies that enable us to work and live together as one humanity inhabiting one world.

We pray for those in Ukraine who suffer grievously, for all who take decisions around the world and for the people and leaders of Russia too.

In practical terms we invite you:

- to make this **Sunday, 27 February**, a day of prayer for peace;
- on Tuesday 1 March at 6pm (GMT) to pray with the Diocese in Europe for the chaplaincy in Kyiv and the churches that serve Ukraine; and
- to participate with the wider church in Pope Francis's call to make Ash Wednesday, 2 March, a day of prayer and fasting for peace.

You can find liturgical resources on the Church of England website at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/praying-peace-world>

However and whenever you pray, pray that the world may choose peace, and be assured of our prayers for you.

With every blessing,
The Most Rev'd & Rt Hon Justin Welby The Most Rev'd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell
Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop of York
(see also Archbishop Welby's message on p16)

Holy and Gracious God

We pray for the people of the Ukraine and the people of Russia, for their countries and their leaders.

We pray for all those who are afraid; that your everlasting arms hold them in this time of great fear.

We pray for all those who have the power over life and death; that they will choose for all people life, and life in all its fullness.

We pray for those who choose war; that they will remember that you direct your people to turn swords into ploughshares and to seek peace.

We pray for leaders on the world stage; that they are inspired by the wisdom and courage of Christ.

Above all, Lord, today we pray for peace in Ukraine.

And we ask this in the name of your blessed Son.

**Lord have mercy.
Amen**

Prayer borrowed from the Methodist Church.

TALK TO US
If things are getting to you

Talk to us any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you.

116 123 FREE
This number is FREE to call

✉ jo@samaritans.org

🌐 samaritans.org

SAMARITANS

A registered charity

Roger's Talk

Samaritans Sunday

6th Feb 2022

The first sign of trouble at t'mill was that the kettle had gone missing. In the first days of lock-down, a year or so ago, one of the safety measures brought into play at Alexandra Mill,

where Leek Samaritans live and move and have their being, was that we would no longer have free and unlimited supplies of biscuits and coffee. How would we survive?

You may remember in those early Covid days, it had been moved in parliament that Samaritans counted as key workers. This was a vote of confidence in a group of people possessed by the crazy idea that armed with nothing more than a phone they could sometimes do some good to some people. Somewhere in the depths of the glove compartment of the car I still have an official letter, giving me free passage through road blocks. I've never needed it. Things didn't turn out that way.

Like the Windmill Theatre in London during the blitz, we never closed. Within the branch there was, and still is, a lot of sanitising at the end of each shift. If you get too enthusiastic with the spray, it lifts the numbers off computer keyboards, as we soon discovered. We were encouraged, for the first time, to leave our shifts early, if possible, and to arrive late, to minimise contact between volunteers on successive shifts.

Today is, within a few days, the 68th anniversary of the day when the first trained Samaritan volunteer took the first call.

Although the Samaritans movement was breaking new ground in 1954, it is now only one of a score of help-lines giving advice and support, all doing their best to stem the black tide. Most of these are devoted to one kind of problem, such as mental health or childhood abuse. Where it might be helpful, we refer callers to a relevant service.

It's not particularly useful to make comparisons, and different organisations work and count in different ways, but to give you a rough idea, Gambling Aware handles around 40,000 calls a year, Mind handles some 180, 000 calls a year, and Child-line about 250,000. Samaritans takes 3.6 million. We're not in competition; there is more than enough misery to go round.

I'm not all that impressed by large numbers and neither are our callers. What matters to them is that somewhere there is someone with a listening ear, who is prepared to hear their story and to spend as long as it takes doing so, and who will never judge.

While in some ways a Samaritans call may be like an everyday phone conversation at home, there are important differences. The most challenging one is that almost certainly the Samaritan volunteer and the caller will never have spoken to each other before,

and after the call has ended will almost certainly never speak to each other again. Somewhere there is a computer which looks to see which caller has been waiting longest (minutes, usually), and which volunteer has been available for the longest time (seconds, usually) and connects the two. If the call is to do anything worthwhile, two strangers must establish a rapport which is strong enough, and comfortable enough, for the telling and reception of personal troubles and secrets. We don't always achieve this; the miracle is that it ever happens.

Each call is unique, because each connection between caller and listener is unique and takes place within a limited time, and from a dedicated place.

Calls vary in length from five seconds to over an hour. They vary in content, from the trivial to the tragic. Occasionally we get sex calls (yes, even me!), a gush of obscenities, or threats. The first threatening call I received did scare me at first, until I realised that although the caller said that he knew who I was and where I lived, he didn't. Several of my relatives, whom he threatened with torture and rape, had departed this life years ago. The system which linked us also provided a barrier between us. Those electronic bars held firm. It could have been a prisoner – a lifer, maybe – venting his pent-up rage. Who am I to judge?

Some calls are silence, maybe punctuated by the occasional snuffle or sob. You don't have to be suicidal to ring Sams, and most people aren't. Less than one call in 700 ends with a suicidal death. Even so, it is to be expected that you or your shift partner may handle one such call each year. If you aren't able to dissuade them, and life ebbs into silence, at least they did not die alone. It was your privilege to be there. Yours was perhaps the last voice they heard on earth.

Most calls are somewhere in the middle. People are sad or worried and need to talk it over. If you have the wind behind you, then part way through the call you realise that you have passed a pivot point, and, imperceptibly at first, the gradient of the conversation is gently up, rather than down. That's a good feeling, at both ends of the line. Have another look at Psalm 130, and note that this, too, pivots.

Who called me on Friday night? Well, there was the caller mourning the death of her partner, with whom she had lived twenty years. There was the gentleman with his obsession with red cowboy boots. Next came a girl in intense pain, waiting for an appointment with a consultant so that she could be in the queue for an operation. Then came the one packing more obscenities than I had thought possible into six seconds. Last was a vulnerable girl, exploited as a slave.

How did I cope? Not very well, to tell the truth. But as I fed my notes into the shredder, I gave thanks for the callers I had been sent, and committed them and their unknown futures into the hands of a caring God.

When a Samaritan takes a call, there's a lot of listening and not so much talking. We are trained to divulge as little as possible about ourselves; the focus of the conversation is the caller and his or her concerns.

No man is an island, wrote John Donne, each man's death diminishes me. He was speaking of connections which link all human beings on the planet. These vary from the strongest to the barely perceptible. **If I were moved by the death of a stranger in a far land as intensely as at the death of a close relative, life would be intolerable. We need grief to be attenuated as it gets passed from person to person. At the same time, the question of who our neighbours are is a clear challenge. While the emotional link to a stranger may be weaker, that does not let us off the hook. Thoughtful, compassionate concern for suffering, wherever it may be, and generous response, are our bounden duties.**

Here's an uncomfortable moral conflict. How should we live with it in our daily lives? Perhaps the trick is to take on board more grief and pain than we pass on to others.

When discussing the world's woes, may we listen intently, but speak sparingly.

The **Methodist** Church

in Endon

Shrove Tuesday, 1st March

DON'T FORGET YOUR PANCAKES!



All are welcome to enjoy freshly-made pancakes at the Methodist Church from 3.00 to 5.00pm.

- **The Community Café is open on Mondays from mid-morning to 1.30pm.**
- **Every Thursday at 10.30am 'Fit-as-a-Fiddle' gentle exercise group**



FLOWER & CRAFT CLUB

There was a real buzz of conversation and laughter at our last meeting and some fantastic parallel arrangements were created. However, you don't have to be an expert to enjoy an afternoon in good company. Our next meeting is on **Wednesday March 9th** from 1.00 to 3.00pm in the Chapter House as usual when we will be using a lattice of tape or twigs to arrange tulips and foliage/twigs – no oasis this time. Rose bowls would work well too. We have had an enquiry for providing flowers for a wedding in June; more details later.

The Platinum Jubilee/ Well Dressing celebration will soon be here and we hope to decorate the church for visitors. You will find a warm welcome if you'd like to join us.



ST LUKE'S CE ACADEMY

You will probably have noticed that our connection with the school has been greatly strengthened over recent times. Children have provided samples of art and written work for Remembrance Sunday and Christmas which the head and deputy helped to display. Classes from the school also make regular visits to church. The next two visits are:

- **Mothering Sunday** celebration with the Reception Class on **Friday 25th March** at 10.00am and
- **An Easter Service** with Year 6 on **Friday April 8th**.

Everyone is welcome to come and join in. Members of our congregation also volunteer to take assemblies at the school. These links mean that our church is very much a part of the children's educational experience.

CONNECTIONS

The more informal, and very family friendly service, continues to run **each Sunday** in the school hall at **11am**. Coffee, tea and biscuits are served before and after the service and there is time to chat and catch up with each other. There are plans for craft activities in the lead up to Easter. More details from Debbie Podmore or Neil Taylor.

Sue Forrester

Sheila H writes...



LENT LUNCH 2022

Ash Wednesday March 2nd

Don't forget the Ash Wednesday Lunch on Wednesday 2nd March in church at 12.00 noon until 2pm. It will be the usual Lenten menu: homemade soup, homemade bread with cheese and biscuits and fresh fruit. This year it is a

fundraising effort for church funds. Our wonderful volunteers are donating the food provided so all your donations will go to church funds. Please give generously. The Waterside cafe at Tittesworth Water charge £6.80 for soup, bread roll and a cup of tea. At St Luke's you have cheese & biscuits and fresh fruit as well. I would suggest a donation of £7 or whatever you can manage.

GIFT AID

I am about to begin the gift aid claim for 2021/22. If your tax status or address has changed during the last year please let me know.

Envelopes for 2022/23 will be at the back of church by 6th March. Please take yours and start to use them on Sunday 10th April.

Many thanks, Sheila H



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

At Endon Methodist Church on
FRIDAY 4th MARCH
at 2.00 pm
ALL WELCOME!

This year the service has been prepared by women from England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

Her Majesty The Queen's seventy years of service as monarch have been a symbol of stability and hope throughout the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and the world. As we mark the anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne, we give thanks for her dedication to us all, and her faithful witness to Jesus Christ. Let us pray that God would continue to strengthen and guide her, and bless her with continued health and wisdom, as we celebrate together the beginning of her Platinum Jubilee year.

I also warmly welcome Her Majesty's wish that HRH The Duchess of Cornwall will take on the title of Queen Consort when, in the fullness of time, HRH The Prince of Wales becomes King. Along with the rest of the Church of England, and millions more around the world, I pray for Her Majesty, for Prince Charles and The Duchess of Cornwall, and for all the Royal Family.

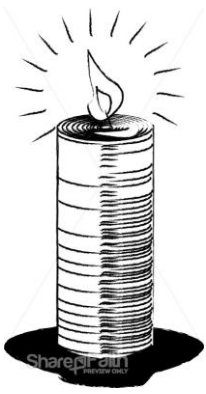
The Most Reverend Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury

MEMORIES OF OUR QUEEN'S CORONATION

I should like to include some of your memories of this significant occasion in our May and June newsletters. Did you go to London to see the procession in person or join family and friends around a neighbour's telly?

Please let me have any stories you would like to share as soon as possible either on paper or sent to my e-address: jandrbenson@btinternet.com

I look forward to hearing from you! **Ros**



CANDLE DEDICATIONS for MARCH

For £2.50 you can keep the Candle of Hope or the Sanctuary Light burning for a week with a dedication.

Please contact Shirley Brindley on 504089 as soon as possible if you would like a particular date.

Mar	CANDLE OF HOPE	SANCTUARY LIGHT
6 th	Alan and Maureen Payne to celebrate grandson Olly's birthday (2 nd)	Barrie Jackson in celebration of Chris's birthday
13 th	Mabel McGrath to celebrate the birthdays of son David and great grandson Ewan	Barrie Jackson in celebration of Emma's birthday
20 th	Ann Boulton in loving memory of her parents	Shirley Brindley to celebrate the 6 th birthday of granddaughter, Emma
27 th	Alan and Maureen Payne to celebrate Maureen's birthday (28 th)	The candle is kept burning by Avril Weaver



MARCH BIRTHDAY GREETINGS to

Olly Payne (2nd), Steve Dale (3rd),
 Claire Salt (4th), Adrian Davis (5th),
 John O'rourke (6th), Ros Benson (15th),
 Deb Podmore (16th), Vicky Barlow (17th),
 Christopher Jackson (20th), Craig Davis (21st),
 Wendy Bardell, Maureen Payne (28th)

*If you would like your own or a family birthday included here
 please contact Ros 504137*

ENDON COMMUNITY CHOIR... new members welcome!

After lockdown we were all pleasantly surprised that around 30 turned up to our first rehearsal. However that number fell short of pre-lockdown when we had over 40 regularly attending. Although there are still enough of us to make a joyful sound we should be very happy to welcome new members. ECC is a friendly group and no-one has to audition or sing solos unless they volunteer. Do give us a try....Tuesdays 7 – 9 in the village hall (except school holidays). First two sessions free. **Ros**



Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad

WELCOME HOME

Parishes all over the country are seeing new houses being built. These range from a few houses to whole estates, meaning the shape of our villages and towns are changing. All developments, big or small will have an impact on their local community. Developments of less than 500 new homes will be expected to access existing amenities, while developers of over 1000 houses will often have an obligation to provide extra community provision. New housing can create enormous opportunity but also challenge to communities and churches. Some greatly welcome the opportunity to provide affordable, much needed housing and embrace the thought of new neighbours and relationships. For some it can be more challenging, and some struggle with the thought of stretched amenities or have concerns about environmental issues. How churches respond and engage with the new housing agenda will depend according to size and circumstances. There are many levels of engagement from dropping welcome leaflets right through to intentionally planting people to live within these new communities. There is a role for all churches to play in these new developments. Here are some simple ideas to consider.

START NOW

Get involved as soon as you can to maximise your involvement in the earliest stages. Often land allocation and community/education provision are decided at an early stage. Your local planning authority is a good starting point. They can also support if you are thinking about using a new building for worship. At the stage when houses become occupied it can be useful to look at the demographics of the new estates. Are they being occupied by young couples commuting out, families, retired people?

PRAY

Pray and encourage prayer for the new development at all stages. Prayer walking around the area is a good way of engaging existing congregations with the new estate.

RESOURCES and GIFTS

Identifying who, in your existing congregations, are likely to be in or near these places and prepare them to be missional. Consider developing a strategic group, to identify future housing projects and to co-ordinate work and mission in the new developments.

CREATE A WELCOME PACK

This could be anything from a leaflet with church information on, to community information and new house gifts. Tea, coffee, cake or new household items are all lovely to receive and give an opportunity to make contact with new residents.

EXPLORE 'THIRD PLACE' PLACES

Have a fresh look at your local community, both buildings, community spaces and open and outdoor spaces to look for potential places to engage with new residents or for potential new worshipping spaces.

LISTEN TO THE COMMUNITY

Moving into a new estate is different to an existing one and pioneering can become influential very quickly. If we want to bless the community, it is important to listen to what the community wants rather than imposing our own ideas.

If you would like to explore the area of new housing further, please contact Laura Edwards from the diocese's Mission team. Email Laura.edwards@lichfield.anglican.org or phone 07838127921



Hairy-footed Flower Bee

March can be a cold month and not one we associate with insects, the majority of which will emerge a little later in the year. Bumblebees are amongst the first to appear as their hairy bodies give them some insulation against the changeable weather of March; but have a look for another bee, which looks at first glance like a small bumblebee, but which is actually the delightfully named Hairy-footed Flower Bee. The males emerge first and can be found from late February onwards. The male is a rusty brown with a yellow face and long hairs on the middle pair of its six legs. It is these long hairs that give the bee the name of 'hairy footed'. About two weeks later the females emerge, looking completely different. Females are mainly black with orange hairs on their back pair of legs which act like little brushes, collecting pollen as they visit flowers. Hairy-footed flower bees have a long tongue which they use to probe into flask-shaped spring flowers such as primrose and lungwort (or pulmonaria). It is worth checking primroses and lungworts for this little bee, they have a faster, more zippy flight than a bumblebee and also a shrill buzz.

As spring progresses, have a look at the walls of your church or churchyard if they are lime mortared or cobb. The female will nest within the mortar of an old wall, making a small hole in which to lay eggs. These are 'solitary' bees, so they do not nest in a colony like honey bees and bumblebees.

Hairy-footed flower bees are a good example of the need to provide a range of flowers for pollinators, including both spring and autumn blooms. This bee is active until June and relies on early pollen to give them energy for their brief breeding season. Most churchyards contain primroses and perhaps you can include lungwort and comfrey in flower beds or planters as well. Please let us know if you see a hairy-footed flower bee, for those who love a phone or computer app, take a look at iNaturalist (uk.inaturalist.org) to confirm your identification and make a record of your spot.



All the best, Harriet Carty

Diocesan Churchyard Environmental Advisor, harriet@cpga.org.uk,

www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk - individuals and groups in the diocese receive 20% members discount on all CfGA materials. Use the discount code Lich19

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU!

Correctly this letter should be addressed to all at both our churches who have supported the Leprosy Mission by donating used stamps.

Mrs R Benson
Claremont
St. Georges Avenue
Endon
STOKE-ON-TRENT
Staffordshire
ST9 9EQ



Dear Rosamund,

You are amazing!

Thank you so much for donating your used stamps and collectables. You are transforming lives.

When Hasan was diagnosed with leprosy, his community turned against him and his family. They were forced out of their village, with nowhere to go. But, because of your caring heart, leprosy trained health workers spent time talking to members of the community, dispelling the myths and misinformation which surrounds this feared disease and allowed them to be welcomed back into their community. Because of the support from a self-help group, Hasan's mother has been able to raise enough money to build their own home.

Without supporters like you, who share your heart for people affected by leprosy, none of this would have been possible. The money raised from the sale of these stamps and other collectables, will cure people of this debilitating disease and restore hope and livelihoods, now and for future generations.

Thank you for your kindness and compassion.

Joshua Waddup
Supporter Relations Assistant

P.S. Thank you for donating your used stamps and collectables. Did you know we can receive donations of: stamps, postcards, coins, bank notes & Medals?

DON'T FORGET...

- **FOOD BANK** contributions are still needed please and can be placed in the box at the back of church near the main door.
- **KNITTED SQUARES** are still welcome especially if you can sew them together in groups of six. Sue and Norman are planning another trip to the women's refuge in France later this month. There will be a service of blessing at Biddulph Methodist Church on Sunday, 13th March.



KATH REDMAN

Regulars at St Luke's 9.15am service were dismayed to hear of the death of Kath Redman at the end of January. Kath moved to Endon in 2013 to live in one of the new houses built in the village opposite the Well Dressing field on the former site of Geoff Perkin's forge. She began making friends in the village and at St Luke's church where she soon became part of the 9.15 'family' of worshippers and she welcomed those of us who dropped by to her home.

She holidayed in Crete and often brought back yummy cakes and biscuits to share with us over coffee after the service in the chapter house.

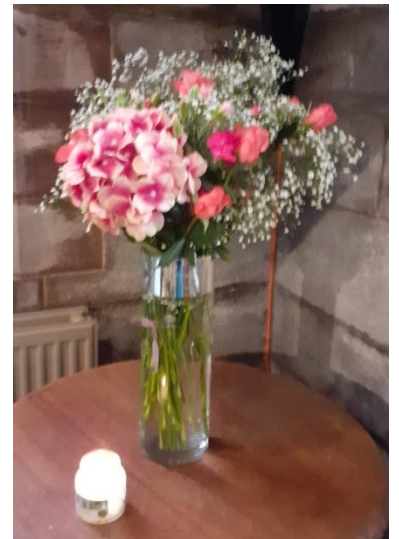
Her son Carl, daughter Lana and granddaughters Rachel and Naomi paid tribute to Kath who was clearly a much-loved and very proud mum, nan and great-nan. She had worked at Stallington where she had met her husband John. Carl described her passion for animals which started at an early age as well as her love of dancing having enrolled at the Angela Beardmore School of Dance. She loved to feed the birds in her garden and we were all given a small sachet of bird seed to take home with us. She loved travel and to take holidays which led to the purchase of a house on Crete in 2005.



Her thanksgiving service was attended by her many friends and family and Carl thanked members of St Luke's for their support and for the flower arrangements in church.

Kath will be missed enormously by her friends and may her family in particular be in our thoughts and prayers.

Thank you Lord for Kath.



Members of the Flower & Craft Club were very busy the previous day creating floral displays in tribute to Kath. Here are a few of them. Well done folks!



GOOD NEWS: A safe arrival!

Tom and Libnah are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their daughter Shenandoah. We send our congratulations and pray that she will be a great blessing to her Mum and Dad. We look forward to meeting all three of them when Libnah is feeling well again.



THOSE STEPS!

Having been a cause for concern for some time St Luke’s car park steps have finally been made safe by Andy Barker. We can now go up and down to and from the car park and the churchyard without those rather disconcerting wobbles underfoot! Thank you Barrie and Roger for organising these repairs.

A SERIOUS NOTE which concerns us all...

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY on Thursday, 23rd February 2022 as Russia invades Ukraine

To wake up to the news of war is terrible. To wake up to its reality is orders of magnitude worse.

Shakespeare refers to war as chaos - the loosing of the dogs of war - and calls for one of his characters to cry out the warning about what it means. Those in the Ukraine will be thinking about their relatives on the front lines, or the friends on the front lines. We are thinking, where is it going to go next? Politicians are thinking, what do we do?

In all of the thinking, in all of the responses, there is the great uncertainty which is the worst enemy of good decisions. Uncertainty leads to fear, fear leads to overreaction. How do we react well? How do politicians in the cloud of war, not really knowing what’s going on, but knowing they have no opportunity to wait – how do they make up their minds?

They will rightly call for all of us, and for themselves, to have resolution, courage, determination, a willingness to sacrifice whatever is necessary in order to ensure that peace may come and justice may be done.

Peace and justice. They often seem to contrast, and yet they are opposite sides of the same coin. We seek peace and justice, and that must end with those involved in conflict not having solutions imposed on them but finding for themselves the way forward to reconciliation and peace.

Right at the end of his life, Jesus Christ, on the eve of his crucifixion, spoke to his disciples and he said something very memorable. ‘In the world you will have trouble, but do not be afraid, I have overcome the world.’ For me and for many of faith, the great certainty in the world, the only certainty, is that we know that God does not change. Let us find our resolution, our peace, our certainty not by screwing up our courage, but in the knowledge of the eternal arms that hold us.

May God be with those who suffer today.

March Prayer Focus

- **The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the threat to world peace**
- Those adversely affected by recent storms
- Leadership of the Met in the wake of Dame Cressida Dick's resignation
- The adults and children in Afghanistan who are starving and penniless after the Taliban take-over of their country
- Those without homes after the devastating typhoon in the Philippines and those in the Pacific islands of Tonga after the devastating tsunamis
- Those severely affected by the tornados which caused immense damage in the US state of Kentucky in December
- COP26 to result in the immediate co-operation of worldwide governments to combat climate change
- The plight of the many refugees making the dangerous Channel crossing in flimsy boats and what happens to them when they land on our shores
- The release of Iranian-British mother Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe who has lost her appeal against a further 5 yr sentence
- The prospect of rocketing energy prices and those fearful of being unable to pay their bills this winter
- The challenge of those unwilling to be vaccinated against COVID
- Thankfulness for the lorry drivers who keep our supermarkets stocked
- Those countries accepting refugees
- Citizens of poorer countries who have not yet had a COVID vaccine
- The release of Roman Protasevich in police detention in Minsk
- All medical staff worldwide battling COVID
- Our politicians as they make decisions which affect us all
- Improved safety for women on our streets
- Our police force and the challenges they face
- UK businesses and trade problems following the Brexit deals esp in N Ireland
- Thankfulness for those who have worked tirelessly to develop the COVID vaccines and those administering them
- A determination among folk to continue to adhere to government guidelines to stop the spread of infection
- The huge problem of loneliness
- Refugees everywhere especially in Yemen and the US border with Mexico
- All suffering at the hands of deeply corrupt governments
- Loved ones in our parish who are currently unwell
- Our church wardens and worship leaders during the interregnum
- Bishop Matthew and the appointment of our next incumbent
- Archdeacon Megan who took up her post in October
- The Church of England dealing with a shortage of clergy and funds
- Yemen – the on-going crisis and those trying hard to get aid into the country
- Those affected by the recent upsurge in knife crime
- The widespread drug problem especially in Stoke-on-Trent
- Lou Macari's hostel for the homeless in Hanley
- The problem of the millions of plastic bottles afloat in our oceans and the tons of 'space junk' orbiting our planet
- All who have lost loved ones recently
- The Trussell Trust food banks still needed as much as ever
- All children in danger of going hungry

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For the duration of the interregnum the newsletter is available on-line as a PDF attachment and on the church website.

Paper copies are available for those without internet access.

Please contact Barrie if you would like a paper copy or know someone who would. Please submit notices for our next newsletter to Ros Benson

by **Tuesday, March 22nd**

either by e-mail jandrbenson@btinternet.com or phone 504137.



21st Feb – 6th March

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