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St John's and St Luke's Together

St John's Church



December

2020

50 pence

St Luke's Church



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LETTER FROM ANDY

Dear all,

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

This has been a difficult year. Things have gotten pretty dark. At times it has been hard to see light at the end of the tunnel.

Covid-19 has caused tremendous suffering around the world – Isolation; Families kept apart; Financial ruin; Illness; Loss.

Even before this pandemic these things have been the familiar experience of many people. Life is a struggle. Things are hard.

The pandemic has had the effect of bringing to everyone's attention a reality that was always there and is universally true – we're not in control and we're going to die. That may sound blunt and bleak, but I think it can be wonderfully liberating. Acknowledging those two things can help us draw strength and hope from the One who is in control, and who can bring life from death.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Whenever we suffer we need to be reminded that our suffering is not the final word. Death is not the end of the story.

The apostle Paul wrote '*I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us*'.

How timely are these words for us to hear. We do not deny the pain of our current situation, but we see it with the perspective of something infinitely bigger. It is a single brushstroke within an epic masterpiece. Or to put it another way, as Paul does, these are the birth pangs, the labour pains, anticipating something indescribably beautiful. With my wife Claire being a week away from her due date at the time of writing, this image feels appropriate! (I'm sure she can relate to this analogy more than I, though!)

Of course, this month we will be celebrating the birth of another baby born into a world of darkness, pain, and uncertainty. I wonder if Mary and Joseph were warned that it wouldn't be a normal Christmas for them that year?



The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

As we move closer towards Christmas our focus will be on these wonderful words. We're uncertain at the present time the precise details of how we will celebrate (guidance is changing all the time), but we will find new and creative means of celebrating. One such way is by getting involved with other churches across town in Harrogate Hub's **#thelightshines** project, bringing the message of Jesus' light to as many streets in Harrogate as possible. The idea is to decorate your window and include the words #thelightshines (John 1:5) and then to register by filling out a registration form on the Hub's website -

<https://theharrogatehub.org/pf/thelightshines> to ensure that your street is included in the light trail map for anyone to explore. The registration deadline is 11th December, and the project will run between 18th December and 31st December, 4-9pm. Do have a look at the website, or simply look out for the lit-up windows when it comes to the big light-up, if you can.

See elsewhere in the magazine for carol services, christingles, nativity services, and the like – though they may change. The website will carry up-to-date information, and the weekly newsletters too. It's clear that things will look pretty different this year, but the message is still the same.



The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

With love,

Andy

QUESTION CORNER



Q. I am puzzled by angels. Can you explain?
A, Many years ago, when I was chaplain of the Training Ship 'Arethusa', I remember one of the boys saying "Oi, Padre, what's all this stuff about angels, blokes with wings?" And someone submitted this question to Focus before but, as that was in 2010, I will repeat some of what I said then.



The word 'Angel' is from the Greek ANGELLOS, meaning 'Messenger'. In the Bible angels form a communication system between God and man. So Gabriel brings a message to Mary, and angels bring the message to the shepherds. They are not described, but are often pictured with wings (for flying up and down?). In Isaiah 6, 2-7 is a vision of angels, Seraphim, with six wings, and the book of Revelation is full of imagery with angels all over the place!

Don't get stuck on the details of imagery or symbolism; wings are not obligatory or necessary! Angels can look ordinary, and might BE ordinary people who pass on God's truth in a special way. Hebrews 13,2 etc reminds us of Abraham and Sarah who cooked lunch for three men who were afterwards revealed as angels. For angels remind us of a spiritual dimension, and lift us to an awareness of God.

No doubt this year, as festivities are muted or cancelled, we will often hear that 'Christmas is cancelled.' But even if we can't party, the message of eternal life and love which Christ came to bring is something we still celebrate. The message of the angel to the shepherds (and to us) is 'To you is born a Saviour' and it starts 'Don't be afraid.'

Have a happy and peace-ful Christmas.

David



TWO WELL-LOVED FRIENDS

BERYL FORD



Beryl threw herself into church life from the moment she arrived in Harrogate along with Sarah and Emma. As well as making a contribution to children's work, especially Smelly Yellow Welly Club, she was a deeply committed member of the Bereavement Support Group. Many people, young and old, are grateful for the advice and support they received from Beryl.

Her work as a Teaching Assistant, first at Richard Taylor School and later at St Aidan's, enabled her to use her talents as a listener and encourager, with struggling youngsters. Sadly this was cut short when she developed early-onset dementia, which led to her death in September this year.

Our prayers and sympathy are with Sarah and Emma.

KATHLEEN CRAGG

When the Craggs, Peter and Kath, moved into Knox Mill Lane they joined the congregation at St John's, and were quickly roped in; Peter was Treasurer for a while, and many of us remember the wonderful Cream Tea afternoons that they ran at their home. They, along with others including Les and Shirley Anderson, also resurrected the traditional Harvest Supper, organising and cooking a delicious meal over quite a few years.



As they grew older they decided to move to Wales to be nearer their son, but still kept in touch with friends here, coming back a couple of times to visit. Peter died last year, and now we hear that Kath has died too, aged 93. Our prayers and sympathy go to their family.

**STOP
PRESS!!**

YOUTHWORK CONTINUES IN LOCKDOWN!

**STOP
PRESS!!**

The latest lockdown has meant big changes to our youthwork but hopefully we're still managing to have fun and most importantly, continuing to build relationships so that the young people feel connected.

So this is what we've been doing:

Sunday Evening Zoom Games

We've enjoyed meeting to play 'Among Us' and an online Escape Room, where we had to follow the clues to free the kidnapped vicar!

Sunday Strolls

I've been able to meet for walks with individual young people to chat about anything and everything!

Tuesday and Thursday evening Insights



We've been reading and reflecting on the gospel of John on Instagram Live twice a week.

Also, the 'Youth Ministry' section of the website is up and running so please do have a look at that; lots of thanks to Gill in the office for getting this sorted!

Youthwork in lockdown presents many challenges but we know that God works through everything, even Zoom! Thank you for supporting our young people through your prayers.



THIS CHRISTMAS HELP KEEP HOPE ALIVE

The
Children's
Society

Hope is hanging by a thread for too many young people whose lives are overshadowed by abuse, exploitation and neglect. This year has turned children's lives upside down, so this Christmas, hope is under threat more than ever before. You can help transform the hopes of those who need it most.



We are busy planning for our CHRISTINGLE SERVICES at both churches and although they will be different from other years we want them to be as much a part of your Christmas as ever. We will be livestreaming from St John's and will provide packs to make up at home for those who are not able to attend in person ; you will need to provide your own oranges. If you have not already let the office know you would like to attend please do, and watch out on Eventbrite for tickets to attend in person or to collect a take-home pack.



TOY SERVICE - Sunday 13th December

10.30 at St John's and on Facebook



Bring your gifts to the service, or deliver them on Saturday morning 12th. They will go to Martin House Hospice for sale in their shop on Commercial Street.

OUR DELAYED ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

via Zoom!

At the first meeting of the evening we elected Jane Reichert and Nigel Thompson as wardens for St John's, and Pat Fenton and Jean Jarvis for St Luke's, before moving on to the APCM.

Despite the unusual circumstances, we had a very positive meeting, looking back over 2019 and the beginning of 2020. As well as electing **Parochial Church Council** members and representatives to **Deanery Synod**, we had reports from the PCC and its sub-committees:

Standing Committee deals with urgent matters and monitors actions agreed by the PCC eg the Mission Action Plan.

Finance and Building Committee deals with finance and the maintenance of all church buildings

Environmental Group co-ordinates our efforts to become more environmentally friendly, including using eco cleaning materials, buying recycled stationery, and making the churchyard more biodiverse.

Safeguarding – St John's and St Luke's are adopting the national policy document 'Promoting a Safer Church', which ensures the safeguarding of children, young people and adults.

Simon, in his **Team Rector's report**, highlighted the way in which God blessed us with the necessary funds to enable us to appoint Emma James as Young People's Worker. We were also blessed to have Laura Martin allocated as our new curate, even before Ruth Donegan-Cross had found a new post – most unusual! Although this means we have a strong 'professional' staff, Simon stressed that every member of the church has a part to play; we must still have the courage to offer ourselves in service of the church and the world, and encourage others to do the same. We must also ensure that we are a welcoming community.

Andy's **Team Vicar's report**, about St Luke's, stresses seeking to identify its distinct call and identity, and how it works complementarily in partnership

with St John's. The focus is on young families and an emphasis on well-being (or what it means to live well as disciples of Jesus). Café Church has been refreshed with a new format and an overarching theme, and the Wellbeing Café continues to provide a safe happy place for those living with Dementia (and others). St Luke's is also a venue for the Happiness Lab and a Singing Group.

Andy also explained our response to the need for a 'new normal' since March this year:

Live-streamed services

Daily/Weekly Reflections

Pastoral Care – a system for keeping in touch with people, especially the lonely and vulnerable

Prayer – daily Morning Prayer has continued as we lift our community, nation and the world to God, praying for an end to this pandemic, and for healing, peace and blessing. And for the renewal of all things – for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

Finance and Fabric

A detailed financial report was presented – copies can be requested from the church office. Since March this year, our income has been considerably reduced, especially due to the lack of coffee mornings and fairs.

Normal maintenance has continued in all buildings. In addition St John's has undergone complete rewiring, and most of the exterior of St Luke's refurbished, repaired and repainted. Thanks to the many volunteers who have contributed to the care of our grounds and buildings, especially Peter Crook who seems to have cured the regular flooding of the head of St John's church drive, Russ Hirst who did a drone inspection of the Church Hall tower, and St John's Playgroup who funded and executed replacement of the floor covering in St John's Hall cloakroom area. And Terry Wagner for his mapping of the 42 different varieties of wild flowers in the Churchyard.



We left the meeting inspired by Simon's and Andy's final words.

MEET OUR NEWEST CHURCH WARDEN JEAN JARVIS

Editor We are so pleased that you are to be warden along with Pat Fenton at St Luke's and Jane Reichert and Nigel Thompson at St John's. What made you decide to offer to take on this responsibility?

Jean I love Pat, and when she invited me to go for a cuppa, she asked if I would be prepared to help out. So I kind of fell into it!

Editor Are you excited about this job?

Jean Yes, to find out the full extent of the role, to integrate with St Luke's congregation, and support Andy and Laura and the community. And offer my skills.

Editor Maybe a difficult question – what skills do you feel you can offer?

Jean I am a very good organiser and methodical, and have a really helpful husband who is an experienced builder. He is very willing to help; no charge of course.

Editor What brought you to St Luke's?

Jean We moved to Harrogate seven years ago. While renovating the house, travelling up from London most weekends, I started attending St Luke's. After Darren left I tried other churches, but didn't settle anywhere. I asked the Lord for guidance, and believe that He told me to return to St Luke's. I had met Andy at St Mark's evening service, which helped. I realised that I had found it difficult to settle because I had been trying to find somewhere my husband Phil and son Matthew could belong. The Lord helped me to see that I had been going for the wrong reasons, and that I needed to find a place for myself. Phil and Matthew are both supportive of me in my belonging to St Luke's.

Editor Tell us a bit about yourself.

Jean I recently retired after 26 years as a Child Protection Social Worker in London and then Leeds. My mother was Jewish and my father a lapsed Catholic; I was brought up culturally as a Jew. After a difficult childhood, as I described in my testimony a few weeks ago, I felt the Lord speaking directly to me about my experiences and His love for me – not through anyone else. I asked the Lord to help me meet people who could help me,



and was led to St Andrew's Rayner Lane, then was involved in setting up a church plant 'Emmanuel' and then St Paul's, all three under the rector, Bruce Collins who is part of New Wine.

Editor Have you been to New Wine?

Jean Oh yes, our children Matthew and Laura grew up with it; we used to go every summer, and before that to Faith Camp at Peterborough. And I did a degree in theology while I was working.

Editor Thank you for sharing. We look forward to your leadership, and will pray for you.

Jean I see myself more as a servant!



CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS
AND SUPPORTING SASH

Will you share your Christmas dinner with a homeless young person - homeless as Jesus was? You are invited to give the value of the

meal to SASH.

'SASH is a youth homelessness charity that works across York, North and East Yorkshire. We help young people aged 16-25 who are facing homelessness.

*We do not run a hostel or own any property. The accommodation we offer is through our **Nightstop** and **Supported Lodgings** services, which rely on volunteer 'hosts' who offer a spare room in their own home. Our services are as much about supporting young people to resolve the problems which have led to them becoming homeless as they are about putting a roof over their head. Part of this support is provided through our **SASH Active** programme.'*

This year we will not be giving out envelopes or plates, but invite you to put your donation into an envelope marked SASH. If you are able to Gift Aid, please enter your name and address and postcode, and 'I wish to Gift-Aid this donation. I pay UK tax.'

All envelopes returned to either church by the end of January, along with sponsorship money, will be included in our church family donation.

Harrogate Youth

CONTEMPORARY CAROLS

FRIDAY 18TH DECEMBER

6-7PM
& REPEATED
7.30-8.30PM

ST LUKES CHURCH





Join us this Christmas & register via Eventbrite. Link on website



ECO CHRISTMAS IDEAS



- Be creative in the gifts you give this Christmas; make sure your desire to be loving is not damaging the environment.
- Getting ready for the festivities of Christmas:
 - Buy locally-produced, in-season food and particularly veg and meat where possible.
 - Try not to over-cater and waste food.
- Wrap and rewrap. Why not reuse your wrapping paper? Take a bit of care unwrapping your presents (it adds to the gift experience!), save the paper and reuse next year.
- Enjoy the feast of Christmas! Don't forget to recycle your rubbish, keeping landfill to a minimum.
- Don't waste unwanted presents; find new homes for them through the charity shop or on ebay.
- Get ready with your environmental New Year's Resolution. How will you care for Creation in the coming year?

A PRAYER AS I PUT ON MY MASK

Creator,
as I prepare to go into the world,
help me to see the sacrament
in the wearing of this cloth -
let it be "an outward sign
of an inward grace" -
a tangible and visible way of living love
for my neighbours, as I love myself.

Christ,
since my lips will be covered,
uncover my heart,
that people would see my smile
in the crinkles around my eyes.

Since my voice may be muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words,
but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,
As the elastic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully -
and full of care -
to all those I meet.

May this simple piece of cloth
be shield and banner,
and each breath that it holds,
be filled with your love.

In your Name and in that love,
I pray.

May it be so.
May it be so.

*by Richard Bott,
Moderator of the United Church of Canada*



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PEOPLE



FUNERALS/ MEMORIALS

*We extend our sympathy to the families of those
who have recently died:*

Beryl Ford

Kathleen Cragg

Terry Wagner



CHRISTMAS VARIATIONS

The Church Office will be closed
from Thursday 24th December to
allow Gill a well-earned break,
and reopens on Tuesday 5th
January 2021.



Email and phone will be checked
at intervals.

If urgent contact is needed, please
ring one of the clergy

CHURCH OFFICE INFORMATION

Gill is in the Church Office on Tuesday and Friday,
and working from home on Monday and Wednesday

SUNDAY 8th December

is Copy Date for the
January 2021
edition of Focus.

Items for inclusion to:
SJSLfocus@gmail.com
or leave them in the
drawer at the back of
St John's Church

St John's & St Luke's

CHURCH OFFICE OPENING HOURS

MONDAY to WEDNESDAY

9.30am to 1.00pm

THURSDAY CLOSED

FRIDAY 9.30am to 1.00pm

TELEPHONE 565129 (+ Answerphone)

email -

church@stjohnsandstlukes.org.uk

DECEMBER'S CALENDAR

One of the 10.30 services will be on Facebook each Sunday

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsandstlukes>

NB Services in the churches may change according to guidelines

Those who attend should wear masks unless exempt

BOOK YOUR PLACE AT PUBLIC WORSHIP AT ST JOHN'S AND ST LUKE'S

All our services at St John's and St Luke's are now loaded onto Eventbrite

To book your place:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/st-johns-and-st-lukes-30850527525>

If you aren't able to access Eventbrite you can still book your place via email or a call to the parish office. There is no need to print off your ticket before coming along, we have a list of who has booked a place.

Tuesday 1 st	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (Zoom)
Wednesday 2 nd	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (Zoom)
	7.30pm	Alpha Course (Zoom)
Thursday 3 rd	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (Zoom)
	6.30-7.15pm	Evening surgery in church (SJ)
Friday 4 th	6.45-7.45pm	Choir Practice (SJ)
Saturday 5 th	morning	SJ open for donations to Toy Service (SJ)
Sunday 6 th	9.00am	Holy Communion (SJ)
	10.30am	All Age Service/Toy Service (SJ)
	10.30am	Holy Communion (SL)
	6.00-7.00pm	Ignite 1 (Yr 8-9 Youth Group) (SL)
	7.30-8.30pm	Ignite 3 (Yr 10+ Youth Group) (SL)
	7.00pm	Growing leaders Commissioning Service (SJ)
Monday 7 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
Tuesday 8 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	7.30-8.30pm	Church Prayer Meeting (SJ)
	7.30-8.30pm	Ignite 2 (Year 7 Youth Group) (SL)
	7.30pm	Finance & Building Committee meeting (Zoom)
Wednesday 9 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	10.30am	Holy Communion (SJ)
	7.30pm	Alpha Course (Zoom)
Thursday 10 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	6.30-7.15pm	Evening surgery in church (SJ)
Friday 11 th	6.45-7.45pm	Choir Practice (SJ)
Sunday 13 th	9.00am	Holy Communion (SJ)
	10.30am	Holy Communion with children's work but no creche (SJ)
	4.00pm	Christingle Service (SL)

Sunday 13th cont	5.00pm	Christingle Service (SJ)
	6.00-7.00pm	Ignite 1 Christmas Party (Yr 8/9 Youth Group) (SL)
	7.30-8.30pm	Ignite 3 Christmas Party (Yr 10+ Youth Group) (SL)
Monday 14 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
Tuesday 15 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	7.30-8.30pm	Ignite 2 Christmas Party (Yr 7 Youth Group) (SL)
Wednesday 16 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	10.30am	Holy Communion (SJ)
Thursday 17 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	6.30-7.15pm	Evening Surgery in church (SJ)
Friday 18 th	6.45-7.45pm	Choir Practice (SJ)
	6.00-7.00pm	Contemporary Carol Service (Youth Groups) (SL)
	7.30-8.30pm	Contemporary Carol Service (Youth Groups) (SL)
Sunday 20th	9.00am	Holy Communion (SJ)
	10.30am	All Age Morning Worship (SJ)
	10.30am	All Age Nativity Service (SL)
	5.00pm	Carol Service (SJ)
	7.00pm	Carol Service (SJ)
Monday 21 st	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
Tuesday 22 nd	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
Wednesday 23 rd	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	10.30am	Holy Communion (SJ)
Thursday 24th (Christmas Eve)	4.00pm	Nativity Service (SJ)
	4.30pm	Carol Service (SL)
	11.30pm	Holy Communion (SJ)
Friday 25th (Christmas Day)	9.00am	Holy Communion (SJ)
	10.30am	All Age Communion (SJ)
	10.30am	All Age Communion (SL)
Sunday 27th	9.00am	Holy Communion (SJ)
	10.30am	Joint All Age Morning Worship (SJ)
Wednesday 30 th	10.30am	Holy Communion (SJ)
<u>JANUARY</u>		
Sunday 3rd	9.00am	Holy Communion (SJ)
	10.30am	All Age Service (SJ)
	10.30am	Holy Communion (SL)
Monday 4 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
Tuesday 5 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
Wednesday 6 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	10.30am	Holy Communion (SJ)
Thursday 7 th	9.00-9.30am	Morning Prayer (SJ)
	6.30-7.15pm	Evening Surgery in Church (SJ)
Friday 8 th	6.45-7.45pm	Choir Practice (SJ)

We hope to Livestream a Christingle Service, Carol Service, Nativity Service and Christmas Day Service

ST JOHN'S AND ST LUKE'S TOGETHER WHO'S WHO

Parish Office Phone No: 01423 565129

Parish Office email: church@stjohnsandstlukes.org.uk

For parish information including services and events

visit Parish Website: www.stjohnsandstlukes.org.uk

Twitter: [//twitter.com/stjohnsstlukes](https://twitter.com/stjohnsstlukes)

www.facebook.com/groups/stjohnsandstlukes.harrogate

www.facebook.com/stjohnsandstlukes - for livestreaming

For tickets to services:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/st-johns-and-st-lukes-30850527625>

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Contact the Church Office for more information.

See page 19 for contact details

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