



This Christmas, fear not

Even before the turbulence of the last two years, there has always been an endless list of things to worry about: money, work, our health, our family or tricky relationships. For many, recent times will have compounded existing insecurities or revealed new ones.

Fear and worry are an intrinsic part of our human experience. Our anxieties can feel like the queue of cars at the taxi rank after a Christmas night out. There is always an issue sitting at the front of the worry queue, flashing its hazard lights, or beeping its horn. We are relieved when it moves on into the night. But - lo and behold! - isn't there always another problem or situation that takes its place at the front of the queue?

Christmas is a time when fears and anxieties can feel intense. Family conflict and personal losses often feel raw, and there are the pressures

of spending and consuming and the expectation of putting on a fantastic Christmas spread or just a brave face.

Yet in the Bible account of the first Christmas, the angels tell Elizabeth, Mary, and lastly the shepherds to **"Fear not!"** - I firmly believe that this heavenly instruction is meant just as much for us today as it was for those central to the Nativity.

The description of Jesus' birth in the Bible shows us something truly beautiful and amazing, but set within the gritty context of profound human hardship and challenge. The key players faced fear and yet received the message: **'Do not to be afraid'**. But this wasn't just rhetoric or angelic platitudes; it was backed up by a physical demonstration of God's love for us. Hope was born in the form of a tiny baby - God came down in a time of oppression, stigma, and fear. And He still does.

His hope remains with us still and has the power to redeem and reconcile the most difficult of situations and the most broken of lives. It's a message and a lifeline as relevant today as it was then. This is not a festive fairy-tale for children, but a truth and an invitation of hope for us all.

So, amid the food, fun, chaos and worry I invite you to take some time to reflect on the story that is at the core of this whole celebration. I'm extending this invitation of hope to you, as you hold this issue of Outlook in your hand. You are so very welcome at St Luke's and Connect Gamston this Christmas, or on any random Sunday. Oh, and fear not. There's no expectation here. We all belong at church: just come as you are.

Mark Fraser



Join us this Christmas

Sunday 19 December

- **3pm** Connect Gamston Christingle Service at Pierrepont Gamston Primary School
- **6pm** Carol Service at St Luke's

Monday 20 December

- **8pm** Christmas Carols at the Willow Tree Pub

Christmas Eve Friday 24 December

- **3pm and 4.30pm** Christingle services at St Luke's - Everyone from youngest to oldest is invited to come dressed up as a character from the Nativity - A tea-towel, halo or crown will do!
- **11.15pm** Midnight Communion Service at St Luke's

Christmas Day Saturday 25 December

- **10am** Christmas Morning Celebration and Holy Communion at St Luke's

Boxing Day Sunday 26 December

- **10.15am** Joint Sunday Service at Holy Rood, Edwalton

Happy New Year!

Alpha Courses starting Mondays and Thursdays in January, details over the page...

Alpha

St Luke's & Connect Gaston invite you to Alpha this January 2022

Food. Short films. Conversations about Jesus, God and life.

Thursdays at 7.30pm starting 20 January 2022
At St Luke's, Leahurst Road, West Bridgford NG2 6GL

Thursdays don't work for you?
Online Alpha starts Monday 10 January.
Contact ade@st-lukes-gamston.org

BOOK IN: 07881 771 447 / alpha@st-lukes-gamston.org

Alpha runs here

#TryAlpha



David Rankin (pictured) came on a recent Alpha Course at St Luke's. Says David: *"When my sister suggested I might benefit from doing the Alpha Course, my first thought was whether it was necessary at my age, but I found it very informative - inspiring even. I met a lot of wonderful people and Alpha prompted questions and supplied answers. It brought me closer to God, and resulted in my getting confirmed at Southwell Minster. I feel I'm more thoughtful than I was and enjoyed it so much I think I may do it again."*

Congratulations Reverend Emily



Emily Charkham, who joined St Luke's as a curate in September 2020, was ordained as a Priest by Paul Williams, Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham, on 7 November.

This was a wonderful celebration of Emily's commitment to Christian ministry attended by her family and friends from St Luke's and beyond. May God bless you Emily, and may you flourish in His ministry and service!

A Friary Christmas



St Luke's has been privileged to support the work of The Friary for around 30 years, and many of our church members have volunteered with this local charity.

Much more than a local food bank, the Friary opened in 1988, operating next to Friary United Reformed Church on Musters Road. Having grown from being a weekly drop-in café for the hidden homeless of West Bridgford, The Friary is now a UK registered charity meeting the needs of homeless people from across Nottingham.

It maintains its distinctly Christian ethos to serve the poor, responding to the ever-changing and complex needs of the homeless and unemployed. The Friary has extended its services to provide support to people with housing and financial problems, mental and physical ill-health, substance misuse and addiction issues and

the socially excluded. Clients have access to a GP, dentist, podiatrist, mental health professionals and a specialist nurse to assist rough sleepers. The Friary also offers IT services to help with online benefit claims, CV writing and job applications.

Says Ben Talbot, CEO of The Friary (pictured): *"Our mission is to help homeless and vulnerable adults to rebuild their lives. Our offer is free to anyone who needs it, thanks to the ongoing financial support of those who partner with us and the donations of food, clothing and practical items we receive from the community. Our committed volunteers give so generously of their time with one shared goal: 'Working locally to end homelessness'.*

"The enforced restrictions during the pandemic have given us time to reflect on how best to operate in the future. The economic fallout from the

pandemic means we are increasingly supporting those who are facing challenges for the first time; sadly, we are seeing more substance abuse than ever before. Our priority is to provide the most effective support that we can; this means emphasis on one-to-one support both at the Friary and in the wider community."



The Friary has launched their 2021 Christmas Appeal, please see their website for details and list of the essential items they require to meet the needs of their current clients:

www.the-friary.org.uk

Last Christmas by Rachel Lavarini

I learned a new word from my South African friends last Christmas – 'heartsore'. One of my children was living away from home at the time, and I had been eagerly waiting for them to come home for Christmas. Their presents were wrapped, I'd bought their favourite food, made their bed and repeatedly run through in my mind the hug I would give them as they came off the train. Then suddenly, the festive travel window was closed and they weren't allowed to come. They didn't come home for Christmas. It made my heart sore.

As I prepare for this coming Christmas, I'm thinking about what has stuck with me most from last year. I think it is the image of that little pile of presents that didn't get given. Not the gifts I didn't receive, but the ones that I couldn't give. However, I also relished the slower pace of December 2020; the time to just rest and 'be' and appreciate the simple things. I want to keep that for this year, but I'm also keen to belt out some carols.

As we book the train tickets home for them this year, I am more excited than you can imagine. But I will also sit for a moment in the quiet, remembering the people who worked so hard last year to allow the most essential aspects of life to continue. You know who you are, and thank you. I will also think about those who didn't make it into 2021. I am not waiting for presents I am going to receive, but for the hug I am going to give when that train arrives. Merry Christmas 2021.



New Associate Pastor at St Luke's



In November we welcomed Tom Judge in the new role of Associate Pastor at St Luke's.

Tom and his wife Catherine have moved into the former Edwalton vicarage with their daughters Phoebe (14 months) and Lillymarie (4), who has recently started at Pierrepont Gamston School. As the youngest of six, Tom grew up in Rhode Island, New England, in the USA and then settled in Los Angeles for ten years, first teaching in primary education and then leading an English-speaking Korean Church based on Sunset Boulevard!

He met Catherine after moving to the UK to complete a PhD in Old Testament Studies at Durham University. He has spent the last three years teaching Hebrew in the Theology department there and working for King's Church in Durham as a Training and Development Co-ordinator and Chaplain to post-graduate and international students.

Says Tom: "This is such an exciting time for us as a family, we've had such a great welcome already and I'm really looking forward to working at St Luke's. I'll be mainly focused on supporting the small groups that meet for friendship, Bible study and prayer during the week and I'll also be leading on pastoral care. This means getting to know those in the local community most in need of love and support from their local church and co-ordinating our practical response to those needs.

"This move brings us closer to Catherine's family too, which is a real blessing, and we are already beginning to feel at home here. If you happen to bump into me around Gamston or Edwalton please stop and say hello!"

Christmas in a shoebox



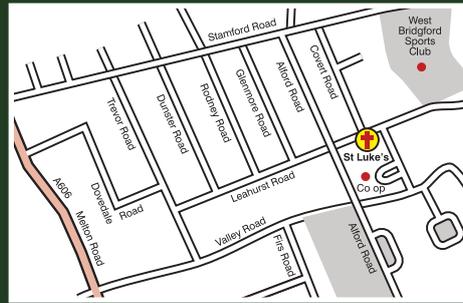
An amazing 46 shoeboxes from St Luke's and friends were delivered to a garage in Keyworth to start their journey to Romania where they will meet up with Father Christmas in Romania for distribution.

These little boxes of joy will go to hospitals, schools and community centres in the poorest areas of the country. Thanks to all the thoughtful gifts they contained, a lot of children, teenagers and older people will know they are not forgotten this Christmas.



About St Luke's

St Luke's is an Anglican Church (Church of England) with around 200 members. Together we enjoy a mixture of service and worship styles from traditional to modern. We offer a warm welcome to everyone, so if you are keen to try church for the first time or are returning to church, we'd love to see you.



Contact us

St Luke's Church
Lehurst Rd, West Bridgford,
Nottingham NG2 6GL

Call the church office
on **0115 974 5024** or email
office@st-lukes-gamston.org

What's on

Regular Services

- **Sundays 10am** at St Luke's Morning Worship or Communion Service including groups activities for ages 0-3, 3-7, 7-11 and 11+
- **Second Sunday of each month** 'All Age' service at 10am at St Luke's
- **Sundays 10.15am** at Holy Rood Edwalton, Holy Communion or Morning Worship
- **Sundays 3pm** Connect Gamston at Pierrepont Gamston Primary School
- **Sundays 5pm** at St Luke's traditional communion / teaching service
- **Thursday 11am** Midweek Service at St Luke's

Activities and events

- **Christmas Tree Festival** Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 December at Holy Rood, Edwalton.
- **First and third Thursdays of the month**, Prime Time - 2pm social group for older people
- **Every Monday, After school drop-in** - 3.15pm at St Luke's hot chocolate and chat for school years 7-11
- **Every Tuesday, Oasis** – a place for mums, bumps, babies and toddlers to share life and have a coffee, every Tuesday 10-11.30am - email children@st-lukes-gamston.org for more information.
- **Dads & Tods** meets at St Luke's for tea, chat and bacon butties on the third Saturday of every month at 10am No need to book.

Check these websites for details of other groups, activities and events:

- st-lukes-gamston.org
- connectgamston.org

Connecting and growing in Gamston



Connect Gamston launched two years ago as a new worshipping community meeting at Pierrepont Gamston School on Sunday afternoons. Little did we know that we would soon be pivoting to move services online, finding ways to support people at a social distance and putting many of our plans on hold.

Providing church for families and people of all ages in the heart of Gamston had long been an ambition for St Luke's and now - with renewed energy - we have reopened our doors and are meeting weekly at 3pm. Our new intern, Holly, has done an amazing job developing our Connect Kids sessions and we've set ourselves up as a welcoming church for the many people arriving here from Hong Kong - we have been thrilled to get to know lovely people who are new to our community.

We have had fun and nurtured new friendships with a church 'house party' and our first Glowwalk (both pictured). The latter saw us dressing up brightly for a night hike through Gamston with lights and glow sticks. We also recently started another of our popular courses to support local families to manage parenting challenges big and small in a positive way.

This Christmas we're inviting you to join us for a special Connect Christingle service at Pierrepont Gamston Primary School at 3pm on Sunday 19 December. You can keep up to date with all our activities by following us on Facebook or emailing Sarah Sharpe to be added to our weekly mailing list:

connectgamston@st-lukes-gamston.org

Hello Brownies

One group regularly hiring the hall at St Luke's is the local Brownie unit, and we have been delighted to welcome them back into our building recently. Says volunteer Clare Lehane: *"Brownies has now started meeting after what feels like such a long time. Everyone is very excited to be back and to be able to see each other face to face once again. Being a Brownie is all about getting together to see friends, work on badges, learn new skills, play games, and have fun together."*

The unit at St Luke's is currently meeting fortnightly, with plans to be meeting every week in the New Year. Brownies is for ages 7-10. If you would like to find out more or are interested in your daughter joining us, you can get in touch by emailing wbstlukesbrownies@outlook.com