



Sometimes I pray...

I wonder if you ever pray? Has joy, fear, hope or something else ever led you to speak a word in your heart to someone who might be listening?

A parent may say: "Thank you" at the birth of a child, even if they don't believe in God. Others, faced with a certain fear or pain, may simply cry: "Help!" Others may groan inwardly with a deep longing for something to change and the word, "Please!" might come to their lips.

If you have a religious background of almost any kind, you will have heard people praying and you may have spoken a word of prayer because you have heard others doing it. But why were they doing it, and why do people keep doing it? I believe that we do it because, as spiritual beings, we are made to connect with something beyond ourselves - it is a deeply human intuition to pray.

When we look up at a blanket of stars or see mighty crashing waves hitting the shore or when we hear thunder boom and roll from heaven, we may (at times) be moved to wonder and awe. And the intuition

to pray may be there in that moment. We may see our children sleeping peacefully or see the first buds of spring or simply the dust dancing in the sun that warms our living room floor. Any of these may cause us to pause and consider. We may hear of someone in terrible distress and feel utterly helpless to ease their pain. In that moment, even if we are not 'praying people', the intuition to pray may be there.

As the nights grow long and Christmas draws near, thousands of prayers will shoot up into the crisp winter air from hundreds of homes in this neighbourhood. Some will be expressed in song as people gather to sing carols. Some will be knitted together with words and said out loud while others will be spoken silently within the heart. No matter how the intuition to pray finds expression this Christmas, there is a God who hears these prayers and is not indifferent to them.

During this Christmas season, if you feel the urge to pray, then I would encourage you to do so. You don't need to have a faith or fixed views on

religious matters. You don't need to have made a decision on the question of 'Who is Jesus?' Without these things, you can still simply pray. And if you do find yourself moved to pray, then please drop me an email at tom@st-lukes-gamston.org to tell me a little bit about it - I would love to see a hundred messages letting me know that 'Sometimes I pray.'

I will gather with many others to sing out prayers at our evening Carol Service on Sunday 11 December and then come to hear the story of Jesus' birth on Christmas morning. You are so very welcome to join us! If that is a step too far for you, then please still receive our warmest wishes for a Happy Christmas.

Tom Judge

Associate
Pastor



Join us this Christmas

- * **Christmas Craft Night** - 8pm Thursday 1 December (see back page for ticket information)
- * **Connect Gamston Christingle Service** - 3pm Sunday 11 December at Pierrepont Gamston School
- * **Carol Service** - 7pm Sunday 11 December with mulled wine and mince pies from 6.30pm
- * **Carol singing at The Willow Tree pub** - 8pm Tuesday 20 December
- * **Outdoor Crib Service** - 2pm Christmas Eve in Church of the Holy Rood garden, Edwalton
- * **Christingle Services** - 3pm and 4:30 pm Christmas Eve
- * **Midnight Communion** - 11:15pm Christmas Eve
- * **Christmas Day Celebration Service** - 10am

All services / events at St Luke's, Leahurst Road unless otherwise stated.



Score!

58 children joined in with the footballing fun at our October half term Holiday Club.

The team and young leaders from across three churches (St Luke's, St Giles' and Holy Rood) partnered with coaches from the Ambassadors Football outreach charity to kick off four days of faith-based fancy foot work.



Says Sarah Sharpe, Families Minister at St Luke's: *"With the World Cup on the way there was plenty of excitement for our football themed activities - and even those not into football had a really great time. It was fantastic to see so many children joining in and making friends whilst learning about the life of Jesus and picking up new skills."*

"I wanted to throw in a few football puns here but then that's not the goal of this article and the editor threatened penalties if I took a shot at it. I don't want to get the boot, so I'd better play the game!"

Alpha

The Alpha Course enables people to explore the basics of Christianity in a welcoming and safe space.

Those on the current course have been sharing a range of delicious puddings this Autumn, learning more about the Christian faith and enjoying the opportunity to ask searching questions. And making new friends.

St Luke's and Connect Gamston will be running an Alpha course in the New Year. For more information or to express an interest in taking part visit www.connectgamston.org for their latest updates or email alpha@st-lukes-gamston.org

Reverse Advent calendar for The Friary

Traditionally, Advent calendars are used to count down the days in the run up to Christmas. The first day of Advent falls between 27 November and 3 December, but most calendars start on 1 December and run until Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Most calendars comprise a series of doors or windows to open, revealing a picture, small chocolate or little gift for each day. But the reverse Advent calendar turns this on its head. Instead of receiving a gift, those taking part in a reverse calendar put aside an item to DONATE each day. At the end of Advent, you end up with a collection of 24 items that can be dropped off at a local food bank, shelter or other good cause in time for Christmas.

The Friary drop in has launched its Christmas campaign and would love to receive some of the most-needed items listed below. Much more than a local food bank, The Friary has grown from being a weekly drop-in café for the hidden homeless of West Bridgford. Thirty three years later The Friary is now a UK registered charity meeting the needs of homeless people from across Nottingham.

- ✓ Individual (small) bottles / cans of drinks all types
- ✓ Powdered / long life milk
- ✓ Sugar
- ✓ Instant / microwave pasta and noodles - packets or pots
- ✓ Rice – any type - packet / instant / microwave
- ✓ Snack food – cereal bars, crisps, nuts, cheesy biscuits
- ✓ Biscuits & individually wrapped chocolate biscuits
- ✓ Chocolates
- ✓ Packets of cereals
- ✓ Tinned meat
- ✓ Tin openers
- ✓ Small torches & AAA batteries
- ✓ Washing powder
- ✓ Nail Clippers
- ✓ Shaving foam / gel
- ✓ Men's joggers and boxer shorts – medium and large
- ✓ Rucksacks in good condition – small, medium and large
- ✓ Men's winter coats in good condition – medium and large
- ✓ One / two man tents
- ✓ Trainers in good condition – particularly sizes 8, 9 & 10



"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me..."
Matthew 25: 35-36

Community Hog Roast brings us together

We were delighted to welcome around 400 people into our church building and garden for our Community Hog Roast at the end of September.

St Luke's provided free roast pork cobs for anyone dropping in and church volunteers made salads and vegetarian options so there was plenty to go round.

The young people enjoyed the bouncy castle slide in the hall and the tables and chairs set up outside and inside saw people gathering to eat, talk and make new connections.



Thanks to everyone who came along – it was great to meet you. And a huge thank you to our wonderful kitchen team and salad chefs. We're hoping to put on more community food events in the new year – check out our Facebook page for the latest news, search St Luke's Gamston and Bridgford.

Welcome to the UK



Connect Gamston has run two Welcome Courses this Autumn to share information and build

friendships with those from Hong Kong who have moved into the Gamston, West Bridgford and Nottingham area.

The course gives recent arrivals insight into UK culture and customs and gives people the opportunity to make new connections. Short videos covered topics such as wellbeing and problem solving and there were discussions facilitated by both English and Cantonese speakers. Thanks to all who took part. It was great to meet you and welcome you into the local community.

Meimei's UK Diary

Meimei arrived in Nottingham 12 months ago, one of many people who are relocating from Hong Kong. She has been worshipping at Connect Gamston over the last year and recently joined her friends at a whole church away day at Stathern Lodge, attended by 75 people - almost twice as many as last year! Here she shares her reflections on a time of fellowship and fun.

At the end of September, Connect Gamston organised a day of retreat - a great opportunity to interact with my new church community and share worship and quiet time.

We brought our own picnic food for lunch. To my surprise, many Brits used folding chairs for the picnic. I remembered watching the western movies where picnics were always enjoyed sitting on the grass with a blanket. But my British friends explained that they have now evolved to use folding chairs!

After eating sandwiches, a father and some children started a tug-of-war. One brave father started the tug with three children. More and more children ran to support the three kids.

The children's chain got longer and longer. In the end, it took all the children's combined strength to win against two big strong dads. This activity was one of the children's favourite memories.

This year, instead of blackberries, we were able to pick apples and prunes. Some enterprising ladies made a lot of apple jelly and brought it back to church to share with everyone. I was very lucky to get a jar. Autumn is the season of harvest, and I find that for the Brits, it is also the season of sharing.

In the evening, we started a bonfire - this was the first time I have seen an actual bonfire. The children, supervised by their fathers, carefully added wood into the fire pit. I found chatting with people around the fire very relaxing and a good way to know people better.

My biggest discovery was that a quiet church friend turned out to be a master in dishwashing. He really just used hot water and detergent, which is different from our Asian method that includes rinsing.

I highly recommend these opportunities to connect with the local church community. If you have the chance to participate in church activities, do not hesitate. Take a step forward. You will find the people in your community lovely and generous.



CHRISTMAS CRAFT NIGHT

Get crafty and find last minute presents from local businesses at our Christmas Craft Night.

With a host of craft activity tables, cocktail making and good conversation, this is set to be a festive evening of friendship and fun. Bring a friend or work colleague and have your own little Christmas party with us. There's even a 'freestyle' craft competition table where the most creative idea will win a prize.

Tickets are £5 available from St Luke's Church or Lulu B in Hilton Crescent. Or contact the church office to reserve your place and pay on the door.

THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER FROM 8PM

We're ALL IN together

ALL IN services are even more informal than our regular Sunday services here at St Luke's.

They take place on the second Sunday of every month. The format varies, but we ALL stay IN church for a time of sung worship, an interactive talk, games, craft and sometimes drama.

These services provide the perfect opportunity for us to build community across the generations, welcome new families and get to know each other and God's love for us all. It's a really easy service to walk into and there are always refreshments afterwards as well. Hope to see you there!



JOIN US AT

FOOD FELLOWSHIP FAITH

Time out in the middle of the week to enjoy a free light lunch and explore the Christian faith together. Everyone welcome!

12.30-2pm
Second Thursday of each month

8 DEC
12 JAN
9 FEB



What's on

Regular Services

- **Sundays 10am at St Luke's**
Morning Worship or Communion Service including group activities for ages 0-3, 3-7, 7-11 and 11-14
- **Second Sunday of each month**
'ALL IN' service for all ages at 10am
- **Sundays 3pm**
Connect Gamston at Pierrepoint Gamston Primary School
- **Sundays 7.30-9pm (term time)**
Inspire Youth Group for school years 10-13
- **Thursdays 11am**
Midweek Service at St Luke's

Activities and events

all at St Luke's unless otherwise stated

- **Second Thursday of each month**
Food, Fellowship and Faith (free light lunch) 12:30- 2pm
- **First and third Thursdays of each month**
Prime Time - 2pm social group for older people
- **Every Tuesday (term time)**
Oasis – a place for mums, bumps, babies and toddlers to share life and have a coffee, 10-11.30am
- **Every Thursday (term time)**
Tinies & Toddlers - play, stories and friendship for under fives, parents and carers 10-11.30am
- **Dads & Tods**
Meets for tea, chat and bacon butties on the third Saturday of each month 10-11.30am

Visit our websites

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

About St Luke's

St Luke's is an Anglican Church (Church of England) serving the Parish of Gamston & Bridgford. 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.

All activities and events are held at St Luke's Church unless otherwise stated. Our church building is also used by the community including Guides, Brownies, Rainbows and Leahurst Road Pre-school. Our community hall is also available to hire for meetings, children's parties and special events.



St Luke's is a registered charity (number:1132547)

Contact us

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

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