

ST. LUKE'S & CHRIST CHURCH CHELSEA

The Parish of St Luke and Christ Church
St Luke's Crypt
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DECEMBER 2020 / JANUARY 2021 PARISH MAGAZINE ISSUE NO. 190

WWW.CHELSEAPARISH.ORG

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

If you have been to one of our Charity Carol Service's at St Luke's in a previous year, you will no doubt remember the huge Christmas Tree, so kindly supplied by a generous parishioner, which reaches high into the nave. This year, like in so many other parts of our lives, we're having to make changes, and one of those changes is to have an additional Christmas Tree outside. Partly this reflects our sadness that we can't



accommodate everyone in church safely. Yes, we do seat over 1,000 people in normal times, but this Christmas hardly feels normal and we have reduced our seating capacity severely. Partly, it is recognition that we're going into our second lockdown (at the time of writing), and partly it is to make the most important point of all, that Christmas is not cancelled. Not cancelled, but our celebration is changed.

At the heart of the Christmas story is something which is never cancelled – God's generous, self-giving love for his creation. God identifies with creation so completely that God is born into that creation in a human being, in all our frailty, mutual dependence and vulnerability. The birth of the Babe at Bethlehem is new creation, yes, but hewn out of eternal rock. The same is true of the work which you are supporting. It is not cancelled, but changed.

Yes, people are having to change the way they fundraise, the way they support and communicate, the way they appeal for help. We are having to change so much that has given shape and rhythm to our lives before Coronavirus that the danger is we become blind to what really matters, where the core of our celebration, our commitment lies.

So take it all outside, like our Christmas Tree. Think and act creatively on

behalf of the people who are the beneficiaries of your generosity and endeavour, the people who are your committed supporters, the people amongst whom you fundraise and advocate and tell your story in a changed way. For sure the lit up Christmas Tree outside is going to be seen by more people than the 1000 we can usually accommodate inside at our Carol Services, as will this virtual celebration. Shine a light for charities in an original way this year too. The need is great and so is the generosity of the human heart when people can see the light shining in the darkness.

You will be very welcome at any of our physical or recorded services over Christmas. ☐

www.chelseaparish.org

BRIAN LEATHARD



The month of Christmas is upon us. The Christmas lights are up along the Kings Road and talks of trees and carols are beginning. Usually the buzz of carol services and concerts are the talk of the Church, but this year things are slightly quieter. We do however, look forward to the pre-recorded carol services that are in the works. In this month's magazine we tried to think of things that represent or give us hope. The nights are getting cold and dark but the light is guiding us towards friendship and love. That is what keeps us going. Hopefully this month's magazine can shed a bit of light over the colder evenings and give us some hope for the new year. Have a lovely Christmas and Happy New Year! ☐

Christmas Services

Sunday 6 December

9.30am Christ Church Children's Advent Service
Raffle for the St Nicholas Fair will be drawn after this service

Tuesday 15 December

6.30pm – Carols on Chelsea Green

Sunday 20 December

8.00am Holy Communion at St Luke's
10.30am Sung Eucharist at St Luke's
11.00am Sung Eucharist at Christ Church
3.00pm – Nine Lessons and Carols Sung by Christ Church Choir at St Luke's (Ticketed)
6.30pm – St Luke's Nine Lessons & Carols Service, sung by St Luke's Choir, at St Luke's (Ticketed)

Thursday 24 December –

Christmas Eve

4.00pm Crib Service in both Churches
11.30pm Parish Midnight Eucharist at St Luke's

Christmas Day

8.00am Holy Communion at St Luke's
10.30am Christmas Eucharist at St Luke's
11.00am Christmas Eucharist at Christ Church

Saturday 2 January

Morning – Children's Epiphany party at St Luke's

I have found time to be moving very strangely recently. Another lockdown has meant that we find life being ground to a halt again. With each day indistinguishable from the next, it can feel like time is standing still – lockdown as a kind of Groundhog Day! Yet, precisely because “normal” life has been put on pause and there is little to differentiate one day from the next, time seems to pass by in the blink of an eye. Certainly, for Lily and I, though much has happened since we discovered that she was pregnant – including being stranded the other side of the world and starting my curacy here in Chelsea – the last nine months have flown by and the birth is already upon us!

During this strange passage of time, I have found a special appreciation for the liturgical calendar that marks the rhythms and patterns of the church seasons. Being grounded and rooted in the drama of the Christian story through the liturgical cycle has provided contours and significance to what might otherwise resemble a shapeless passing of time. Through these seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary Time, we are given a pattern by which we can grow in faith and love of God, through continually re-telling and re-entering this story of God's redemptive action. In each season we remember and celebrate the life and mystery of Christ, and in doing so, His life

and mystery becomes real in our own lives. But each season plays a different note of the story and so emphasises a different tone in the Christian life.

In Advent, the particular note we hear played is that of waiting. Through Advent the church waits and prepares for Christmas with hopeful expectation and joy in knowing that Christ has come to us. We've seen the life of God here, among us, in the world and in our own lives. But we are also reminded that we await Christ's second coming, when all things will be made well at the end of



When the final candle of the Advent wreath is lit, the wait for Christmas is finally over.

time. In Advent, we re-enter the tension of waiting that is at the centre of Christian life, the “now and not-yet” of God's kingdom.

With another lockdown, this waiting-in-tension is something we are becoming very accustomed to! We wait, trusting that all will be well in the end. We wait to see friends and family



without anxiety; to hug, embrace, and to share fully in one another's company again. We hope and wait eagerly for this, especially with Christmas on the horizon. A time when we long to celebrate God's physical, incarnate, presence with us, with the physical presence of those we love around us too.

So this Advent, perhaps more than any, we participate in this season of waiting in hope and expectation. Not in a way that seeks to ignore the difficulties or reality of the current situation. But in a way that insists on the hope that is to come – for glimpses of light and life, even in the bleakest of circumstances. And as we wait, we remember Christ's offer of his light with us each day, each moment; the light that has entered the world, and which the darkness has not overcome. ☐

Our Advent course this year considers Paula Gooder's wonderful short book *The Meaning is in the Waiting*. See page 7 for details about the online videos and discussions we will be holding twice each week.

ST. NICHOLAS FAIR

ST. LUKE'S & CHRIST CHURCH CHELSEA

St Nicholas Fair draws near

The St Nicholas Fair – a highlight of the Christ Church year – is going online this year! The fair involves a raffle and a Christmas shop. The draw for the raffle will take place on 6th December after the 9.30 children's service. All money raised will go to support both Christ Church and CCHT schools. Please do get involved and give generously to these deserving causes.

The organisers would be very grateful for any donations, before 6th December, of products parishioners would like to give for the raffle or Christmas Shop.

To offer a donation, please contact krose@ccht.rbkc.sch.uk.



Books and Films of Hope

With long nights and not many of the usual Christmas events to look forward to, many of us need reminders this month of the good that exists in the world. So we asked our families which books and films speak to them of hope. Why not try some of these this Christmas, as we look forward with hope to a better 2021? ☐

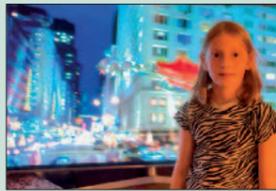
Films of Hope

The Biggest Little Farm

This film is very uplifting and great for the whole family to watch.
Zara Goalen

Elf

Every year Violet and I watch this film. It really signals the start of Christmas for us and we love the spirit of the film.



Rachel Amis

It's a Wonderful Life

Perhaps a bit of a cliché, but I love how it reminds us of the number of people's lives we touch, or have the opportunity to touch daily, often without even knowing it. Small acts that echo for eternity.



Sara Griffiths

Our Christmas tradition every year is to watch 'it's a wonderful life' with family and friends. It's a lovely reminder of how lucky we already are and the ripple effect of our actions. There is rarely a dry eye in the house!

Laura Stone

It's a Wonderful Life is a firm family favourite at Christmas. It offers a reminder that normal, everyday life is the most precious thing we have — and that sometimes we only realise that too late.

Ali and Tom Mogford

Rio

Caspar loves this one as it shows how the animals care and save the rainforest.

Sara Griffiths

Books of Hope



The Grinch

The Grinch is a book that gets a regular reread in our house at this time of year. Dr Seuss's zany, unique take on A Christmas Carol tells us that neither a green curmudgeon (nor a lockdown!) can prevent the Christmas spirit from lighting up a dark December.

Ali and Tom Mogford

The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse

This is a book to bring people together. Charlie Mackesy's inspirational paintings and delicate calligraphic text are a celebration of kindness, compassion and understanding, conveying an essential message for our time.

Laura Miles

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My Favourite Bible Story

In the first of a new series in which parishioners consider the Bible stories that speak most to them, our curate Samuel reflects on the importance to him of the moment when the resurrected Jesus appears to Thomas (John 20).

When asked to write about my favourite Bible story, this one came to mind fairly quickly. And whilst we're on the subject of "favourites," Thomas the Apostle is probably my favourite disciple too, closely followed by the impetuous Peter.

The reason for this affection is that in the account of (the unfairly named) "doubting" Thomas, I completely empathise with his refusal to believe the other disciples who are claiming to have seen the risen Jesus. These were his closest friends, whom he had been living with every day. Yet, in my opinion, he quite rightly says, "Look, that's fine for you— believe away. But unless I see him for myself and actually touch his bodily scars, I won't and can't believe it!"

Now, we can almost imagine an alternative biblical narrative that should go on to tell us how Jesus turns up to rebuke Thomas for his utter failure to believe, banishing him forever from the community of disciples. But that doesn't happen. Jesus does show up— but incredibly, without any resistance, opens his hands and his wounds to Thomas. All Thomas has left to say is; "My Lord and my God!" Indeed, church

tradition holds that Thomas went on to be one of the greatest evangelists of all the disciples in sharing this good news of the risen Christ, even reaching as far as India!



Caravaggio, *The Incredulity of St Thomas*, (1601-2)

This story speaks powerfully of a God who is undefensive, not afraid or angry at our questions and doubts— in fact, it shows a God who comes to meet us in the midst of them. Thomas' encounter with Christ is particularly special to me because I

remember hearing it afresh at a time when I was deeply wrestling with my own faith and doubts. If Christ's openness to Thomas reveals who God really is, my faith needn't be safeguarded nor nervous about other people's questions, or my own. It reminds me that faith isn't about anxiously protecting an idea of who God is, and that it's ok for me not to have all the answers, precisely because our faith is in a real and living God who can speak for himself! A God whom we can intimately know and trust, who meets us in our doubts, but whom we can never finally possess or exhaust. "My Lord and my God!" ☐

SAMUEL RYLANDS

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CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

ANNA STAMENOVA



“When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with a great joy.”
Matthew 2:10

When we celebrated Epiphany in the beginning of this year no one imagined that, just a few months later, the whole world would be changed and that we would be starting a new page in the history books.

Suddenly life stopped for everyone. 2020 has offered us a time to think and reflect on what we do and how we live, and how we feel towards each other. We started our new and strange



future together, we began to be more kind and caring of each other and we

became a family, we learned to look after each other and our faith and hope in God brought us closer to Him as never before. These photos, from our children's half-term activities, remind me of one time recently when I saw that care for each other. Many of us find comfort and strength through prayer and we are hopeful that with the newfound vaccine our lives will be improved again. We must know that God never left us: He always guides us and protects us.

And now we can look forward to Christmas and we can see the light is there, the Jesus star is



shining, the Angels are coming so we can have something to smile together, so let us looking forward with open hearts and welcome Jesus in our lives. Jesus Christ stands in the very centre of

our lives. He stands with us in the good times, when all feels good and wonderful. And he stands with us in the bad times, when we feel fearful, frail and vulnerable. God is leading us today into a future with him.

We love to make God's presence known in the world at our Epiphany party, which we hope to be



able to hold on the morning of Saturday 2 January. We hope that will be able to travel with the Three Wise men to visit the baby Jesus at the crib. They

were committed, they were not prepared to turn back as tempting as that would have been for them. The Magi kept going and going and, despite



all the odds, their journey led them to the child Jesus, their Saviour. **All children and parents/carers are very welcome if circumstances allow!**

Dates for your diary

Thursday 24 December- 4pm Children Crib service at both churches. Children are invited to dress as shepherds, angels or sheep. Please save your king outfits for the Epiphany Party!

Saturday 2 January – morning. Epiphany Party We hope that Covid19 regulation will allow us to celebrate both at Christmas and Epiphany, so for more details please follow our weekly emails.

Merry Christmas and Blessed and hopeful New year.

Love, Anna



CHRIST CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

LEARNING PLAYING AND CELEBRATING IN YEAR 1

Year 1 have been learning, playing and celebrating and would like to show some pictures of their achievements.



COMPUTING IN YEAR 5

The students in year 5 have begun a new unit of computing including cryptography! They have been learning to transmit information using semaphore.



They have been using a semaphore signalling code to decipher messages from their teachers and then created their own semaphore flags. After the making of the flags the students created their own codes for their partners to then crack.

“We signed codes following diagrams of stick people. Each picture showed a different position for a different letter. Then we signed the word to our partners for them to decipher the code. I signed ‘hello’ and ‘rug’.”

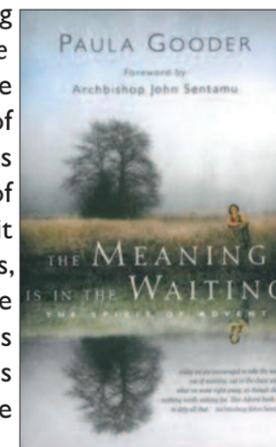
Tom

“We printed of flags that were half red and half yellow in a diagonal and then cut them out and Blu Tacked them onto our pencils. I signed the words ‘hello’ and ‘dotty’ for my partner to decipher. It was quite tricky as some of the letters were very similar.”

Violet ☐

Advent course: The Meaning is in the Waiting

For Advent this year we are reading Paula Gooder's *The Meaning is in the Waiting*. Advent is traditionally a time of waiting before the celebrations of Christmas, and the book offers a series of reflections on the importance of waiting: why we need to wait, what it feels like to be someone who waits, what happens when we lose patience or hope, and why God might want us to get better at waiting. The book is available to buy online, and we also have some copies in the Parish Office.



To explore some of the issues raised we will release an online video and then hold an online discussion each week in Advent. These discussions will be held twice each week (with the same chapter considered in the two sessions), on Tuesdays at 10am and Wednesday at 8pm. You are very welcome to join us or, if you would prefer, simply to read the book.

Please be in touch with Fr Sam in the Parish Office for more details. ☐

YOUTH GROUP AT ST LUKE'S GATHERS PACE

Since the beginning of September we have hugely enjoyed our fortnightly gatherings in St Luke's vestry for young people in Year 8 and above. This is a space on Thursday evenings to hang-out, relax, and have fun- whilst also exploring questions about life and the Christian faith. We play lots of exciting games, do fun activities and always enjoy delicious food at the end of the session. Just in time before the second lockdown we also had a mini Bonfire Night with hot-dogs, hot chocolate, and marshmallows with some sparklers too! Here are some pictures of the highlights from the last few months.

For more information about the group, especially if you know a young person who would be interested in attending, please email Father Samuel Rylands or Anna. ☐

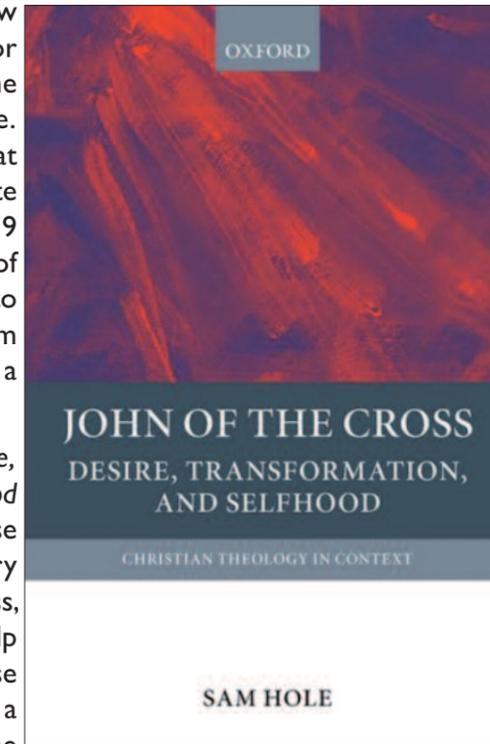


Desiring God

Many parishioners will know that as part of my training for ordination I did a PhD at the University of Cambridge. Wonderfully, the book that emerged out of that doctorate was published last month, on 19 November. In the absence of being able to raise a glass to celebrate its launch, I am grateful to have been allowed a page in the parish magazine!

John of the Cross: Desire, Transformation and Selfhood examines the poetry and prose of the sixteenth-century Spanish friar John of the Cross, considering how they may help theologians today to recognise the significance of desire as a theological theme. The importance of desire in John's writings is perhaps most evident in his poetry, which makes use of Renaissance verse forms to tell tales of unrequited and requited love (sometimes drawing on the biblical Song of Songs) that remain of great interest to literary scholars of the Spanish 'Golden Age'.

Yet John, at the request of the nuns for whom he wrote these poems, also wrote four prose commentaries that explore how these poems also speak of the spiritual growth that we all need to yearn for in our daily lives. Most memorably, in these prose writings John coined the phrase 'the dark night of the soul' to describe periods in our lives when we feel overcome in our faith by doubt, despair or darkness. These are, however, for John, periods which are necessary and valuable (if painful)



moments when we are forced to let go of our old ideas of God and learn new and deeper forms of faith and prayer.

Many past scholars have tended to deal only with John's poetry or his prose – and indeed many past theologians have laid aside the romantic poetry for being too racy for their tastes! I, however, have suggested that what unites John's writings – and is relevant for theology today – is a sophisticated understanding of desire which offers us a way of thinking about our own desires as well as the kind of desire we might describe in God.

If you are interested in knowing more about John, I recommend the older translation of his poems by Roy Campbell (who helped to prevent the destruction of the original copies of John's letters during the Spanish Civil War). And when we are allowed to travel again, keep an eye out for him in Spain. He is the patron saint of Spanish poets and his statue can be seen in many cities, especially in central Spain where he spent most of his life. For someone who was only four feet eleven, he has had quite an impact.

The work is published by Oxford University Press and can be ordered from all good bookshops, for a mere £65. The perfect gift for all your theologically-minded friends and family this Christmas! ☐

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Virtual carols to meet a very real need



On Monday 7th December St Luke's will once again be the venue for the annual carol service held by mental health charity, the Charlie Waller Trust. This year, however, will be a little different, as you would expect in these unprecedented times.

Instead of coming to the church, the congregation will be a virtual one. Whilst it is sad that this marvellous event won't provide the usual opportunity to meet friends and enjoy the music in person, it does mean that many more people will be able to attend via the Zoom link.

Not only will that enable larger numbers to enjoy a marvellous mixture of festive music and readings from Phoebe Waller-Bridge, Damien Lewis, Chris Tarrant and other famous faces – it also has the potential to raise significant and much-needed funds to help the Trust continue its vital work.

The Trust was set up in 1997 in memory of Charlie Waller, a young man who took his own life whilst suffering from depression. His friends and family were, obviously, devastated. What do you do in the face of such unimaginable tragedy? The Wallers chose to set up a charity with the aim of helping others avoid going through what they had experienced, to teach people to identify the signs of depression and other mental health problems in

themselves and others, and to take action that will help.

Today, the Trust reaches thousands of children and young people through its work in schools, colleges and universities and workplaces, offering free training to teachers, students and parents. It offers a free mental health book club, online learning for staff, posters, leaflets and booklets, including 'A Parent's Guide to Depression' and a 'Wellbeing Action Plan' designed to help young people keep themselves mentally well.

This year, as you might imagine, the Trust has stepped up its online training and is providing live Zoom sessions as well as webinars which you can find on its new website at charliewaller.org

Next year the Trust plans to increase its work with parents, helping them support children with mental health issues. After attending a Charlie Waller workshop one parent said, "Completely inspirational – you managed to instil a sense of hope in a room full of desperate, anxious and fearful carers. I can't thank you enough."

The importance of teaching people, especially children, how to look after their mental health has never been more important. ☐

If you would like to find out more about the Charlie Waller Trust or buy tickets for the virtual carol service, please visit charliewaller.org/events

Alongside Charlie Waller, there are a number of charities who usually host a Christmas carol service in our parish, which raises vital funds for their good work. While these services cannot take place physically this year, we have supported the following charities by helping them to produce a virtual carol concert for people watch at home. Please do, if you are able, support one or more of these charities by buying a 'ticket' to one of these concerts. Follow the links below:

Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospital:

<https://www.rbhcharity.org/Event/virtually-christmas>

Cystic Fibrosis Trust:

<https://register.enthuse.com/ps/event/CarolsbyCandlelight2020> or you can donate at

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/carols-by-candlelight-2020>

Hospice UK:

www.hospiceuk.org/ChristmasDickens

Nordoff Robbins:

www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk

FROM OUR REGISTERS

We welcome as members of the church through baptism:

Charlotte Wren Hadden and Sophie Williamson

We congratulate on the occasion of their wedding:

Max Taylor-Smith and Naomi Knight

We pray for the soul of

John Jacobsen, Timothy Cole, Richard Burn and Sallie Hotchkin



Baptism of Charlotte Wren Hadden



Baptism of Sophie Williamson



Max Taylor-Smith and Naomi Knight wedding



Baptism of Olympia Warrick

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Golden Charter

CONTACT PARISH OFFICE : 020 7351 7365

Rector: The Revd Prebendary Dr Brian Leathard
brianleathard@chelseaparish.org

Associate Vicar: The Revd Dr Sam Hole
samhole@chelseaparish.org

Curate: The Revd Samuel Rylands
samuelrylands@chelseaparish.org

Operations Manager and Bursar: John McVeigh
johnmcveigh@chelseaparish.org

General Enquiries

Parish Administrator/ receptionist: Tracy Best
parishoffice@chelseaparish.org

Property Administrator: Alicia Hilliard
(Direct Line: 020 7351 6133)
hallbookings@chelseaparish.org

Children's Administrator: Anna Stamenova
annastamenova@chelseaparish.org

Enquiries re baptism, confirmation (adults and children), marriages, funerals and home communion visits please contact the clergy via the Parish Office. Also for the Planned Giving Schemes for both churches.

ST. LUKE'S

Sydney Street,
London SW3 6NH



Churchwardens: Jamie Gibbs 07803 596 256
Charles Combe 07747 796 124
Director of Music: Jeremy Summerly 07956 801 223

CHRIST CHURCH

Christchurch Street,
London SW3 4AS



Churchwardens: Aidus McVeigh 020 7223 8591
Nick Smith 07889 369 060
Director of Music: Gareth Wilson 07939 378 759
Organist: Samuel Ali

Safeguarding Officers:

(for any safeguarding issues in the Parish)

Guy Tobin (Mob: 07979 596 009)

Lizzie Watson-Steele (Mob: 07855 455559)

Follow us on   

SUNDAY SERVICES

0800 Holy Communion	St. Luke's
1030 Sung Eucharist	St. Luke's
1100 Sung Eucharist	Christ Church
1500 Choral Evensong	St. Luke's

MORNING PRAYER

Monday	0900	Christ Church
Tuesday	0900	St. Luke's
Wednesday	0900	St. Luke's
Thursday	0900	St. Luke's

CHILDRENS ACTIVITIES

Children's ministry Administrator Anna Stamenova:
Please contact Anna for any enquiries about children's groups, registrations and schools via the parish office, or childrensadmin@chelseaparish.org.

Children's Groups during Sunday Services
are currently suspended. Activity packs are available at the back of church.

Youth Events for 11 + please contact Samuel Rylands for more details: 020 7351 7365, samuelrylands@chelseaparish.org

ABC Club During Term Time
Thursdays 1000-1130 (currently suspended)
Parent, carer and toddler group.

Uniformed Organisations All At St. Luke's Hall
10th Chelsea (St. Luke's) Rainbows
For girls Aged 5-7 meet Tuesday 1700-1800
Contact: Lottie Holmes on 07981 891 788

Brownies
For girls 7-10. Meets on Tuesday evenings 1800-1930
Contact: Gail Horn 0203 313 5901

Guides
For girls 10-14 years old. Meets on Tuesday evenings 1900-20.30

9th Chelsea Scout Group - All at St. Luke's Hall
For further info all contact Wolf or Chil
wolf2872@btinternet.com

Beavers: Boys and girls aged 6-8
Every Thursday 1730-1845

Cubs: Boys and girls aged 8-10 & a half
Every Thursday 1900-2030

Scouts - Boys and girls 10 & a half -14
Every Friday 1900-2100

Explorers- Boys and girls 14-18
Every Friday 1900-2100

OPEN FOR PRAYER

St. Luke's is open for prayer from
0900-1500 Monday to Saturday and 1000-1500 on Sunday.