ST LUKE'S &
CHRIST CHURCH
CHELSEA

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Signs of Hope

At this season many of us pin a red poppy close to our hearts, marking a profound convergence of memory, sorrow, gratitude and hope.

The humble poppy's presence on the battlefields of the First World War was no accident. It was an ecological response to devastation. Across Belgium and northern France, millions of shells pulverised the earth, releasing lime from the shattered chalk beneath. Poppy seeds, which can lie dormant in the soil for years, are stimulated by disturbance and thrive in alkaline conditions. As artillery relentlessly overturned the ground, the scarred landscapes of the Western Front became unexpectedly fertile soil for spectacular blooms.

Soldiers spoke with astonishment of fields suddenly awash with crimson. In places defined by mud, ruin and barbed wire, the poppies brought a startling splash of colour. Amid the destruction, they became a sign that life had not surrendered to death.

In recent decades some have questioned whether the red poppy has become too closely associated with nationalism or militarism, or whether it can adequately reflect the complexities and ambiguities of war. Yet if we return to the symbol's origins, we discover something deeper. The poppy was never primarily a celebration of conflict: it was a botanical witness to life emerging where death had been sown, and a quiet testimony that devastation does not always have the final word.

This speaks powerfully to the Christian story. Jesus said, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). Throughout Scripture we encounter this surprising pattern: life arising from loss, renewal emerging from surrender, and resurrection following death. The poppy standing amidst the shattered ground of Flanders becomes a faint echo of that deeper truth. What appears barren may yet bear fruit. What seems lost may yet be restored.

If we remain open to the rich mixture of memory, reflection and emotion that the poppy carries, hope remains an essential part of its message. It is hope for a world to choose peace over war, cooperation over conquest, and compassion over power. It is hope that dialogue may soften hearts hardened by fear or excited by violence. Above all, it is hope that even in places scarred by violence, new life can emerge, and that God continues his work of healing in a wounded world.

The poppy reminds us that remembrance is not only an act of looking back. It is also an act of looking forward: praying and working for a future in which the sacrifices of the past inspire a more peaceful and just world for all.

REV'D LYDIA COOK

Peace & Reconciliation

As Remembrance Day approaches, we commemorate the armistice that ended fighting on the Western Front; we rightly mark that moment at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the sudden coming of a new peace.

Peace may instantiate in these singular historic moments, the culmination of great tides and changes, called into being by powers that feel beyond our reach. Yet peace must continue beyond its inauguration; it must be maintained by all of us through our refusal to turn against our neighbour and our willingness to meet those we do not yet understand with compassion and curiosity. The very work of peace is always ongoing and calls on each of us. It must be the practice of our daily lives.



As the founding Trustee and CEO of GINGKO, a charity that attempts to work towards a better mutual understanding between the wider Middle East and the West, organising encounters between Jews, Christians, and Muslims, bringing a fellowship of scholars and community leaders together in a different country every year, I have seen the extraordinary human capacity to reach across divisions.

By sharing past experiences and creating new ones together, our fellows do more than merely 'encounter' the other; they break bread, laugh, live, and yes, argue with each other. It may at times be hard work to maintain an open heart towards those we see as different from ourselves, but I have witnessed the importance of this work. When, at our retreat this summer, an Israeli Jew and an Iranian Muslim held each other and cried in their shared pain, what passed between them was a recognition of innate humanity which transcends the borders of politics and religion.

This cannot be achieved by ignoring our differences, or pretending we do not disagree, sometimes fundamentally. As part of our ongoing work, we are developing a toolkit of approaches for having what can be the hardest conversations when talking across religions: how do we deal with those parts of our sacred texts that encourage hatred, even violence towards the religious other? We put these into practice, believing that true reconciliation is built on honesty. Last winter, we held a retreat to trial these approaches, presenting divisive words from each religion. I was struck again and again by how productive it is to let others into our own religious traditions and confront the most challenging parts of our faith together.

Through the hard work of truly knowing each other, we can come together in real peace. On the last day of the 2024 retreat, watching the sun set in the Egyptian desert, our fellow, Rabbi Dr Natan Levy, recalled how Isaac, having nearly been murdered by his father, disappears from the scripture. In Genesis, Isaac is missing from his mother's funeral and is not to be found with his wife Rebecca. Instead, he is next found at Beer Lahai Roi, the 'Well of the Living One Who Sees Me', where his brother Ishmael was banished. In exile and hardship, the two sons of Abraham found refuge in the place of seeing.

So, our work of peace is not only for times of peace. In our moment of conflict across the world, it is more important than ever to see the person in the supposed enemy. In WWI, it was the ordinary soldiers of the trenches who called a truce at Christmas in 1914, recognising their shared fate and crossing into no man's land to play football, exchange gifts and sing hymns together. Peace and reconciliation are innate human endeavors, and they are practiced at the human level; it is work we must all share.

BARBARA SCHWEPCKE

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REV'D BAXTER MCROLSTON

Seen Things Through the Sight of God



Earlier last month I picked up a book by Christina Thompson titled *Sea People*.

It tells the story of the Polynesian Peoples from a host of perspectives: the Polynesians themselves of course, but also the accounts of the European explorers who traversed the Pacific Ocean (among them Captain Cook) which we're perhaps more familiar with in the West.

Each of the tales are impressive in their own right, but the thing that magnifies them is the backdrop of the so-called 'Problem of Polynesian Origin', a term coined in the 18th Century to describe the wonder of how the Polynesians came to occupy such a vast expanse of ocean while still maintaining concordant linguistic and cultural ties. One such example Thompson recounts is when the voyager Tupaia (who joined Captain Cook on one of the legs of his journeys) encountered the Māori in Aotearoa (New Zealand). Despite Tupaia being from Ra'iātea (some 2,500 miles away), he was able to converse quite comfortably with the Māori, much to Captain Cook's benefit (and no doubt relief!)

Tupaia himself is among the most interesting figures of the Polynesian-European Encounter. Today we might call him a polymath, while to Cook and his crew they described him as a 'priest'. To Tupaia himself and his peers however, he was known as a *tahu'a*, or as such a role was called in Hawaii (and better known to the West once more), a 'kahuna'. The translation Thompson offers for this role is someone who is adept, a master, or an authority, and Tupaia certainly was in a number of respects. A confidant and lover of a great 'cheifess' named Purea, Tupaia was a master navigator and voyager who also maintained the knowledge of dynasty, politics, the sacred rites of his people, medicine, and much more.

Beyond his impressive encounter with the Māori, Thompson also recounts the exchanges between Tupaia and Cook as they collaborated on the making of maps during their voyage. What emerged was a synthesis of indigenous wisdom with mathematic cartography: the former encouraged the British to understand the interconnectedness of sky, land, sea, and the elemental forces beyond that which can be measured on paper. Cook (for his part) preferred the more objective approach, yet he benefitted from the wider perspective offered to him by Tupaia, who also encouraged him to view distance not merely in miles, but in time.

I mention this encounter because it serves as an example of how perspective must shift when circumstance demands it to do so. There are times where obvious metrics only go so far, and we must enhance our sight even beyond the realm of the temporal, which as Christians means we must attempt to see things through the sight of God. November in our calendar is one such circumstance in the way that it presents distance in a very distinct way: not only geographic terms, but in the form of our contemplation of those whom we have loved and lost.

Indeed, November is a time where we are bade to contemplate death and the divine perspective on it: our month begins with All Saints and All Souls, before moving though Remembrance, and ultimately the start of Advent which is the ultimate example of Christian perspective on time itself, as well as its completion. While one perspective will undoubtably be concerned with the very real and objective grief we carry following the loss of those we love, we are also invited to see death as little more that an unexplored horizon that we (like Cook and Tupaia in their earthly travels) are bound to discover, confident that on that shore we will be reunited with our loved ones by the mercy of the one who himself defeated death and prepares us for a new reality, guided by his love.



Canoes near Tahiti. Drawing by Tupaia, c. 1769

Some notes on the Altarpiece at St Luke's

When I came to interview for the role of Verger at St Luke's over the summer, I wasn't aware that the church was home to one of the most unusual paintings by an artist with whom I am very familiar, James Northcote.

In my other job, as an art dealer specialising in antique drawings, I've handled a number of Northcote's studies after the Old Masters from his time in Rome . I do therefore have a bit of a soft spot for the artist, who I believe is rather underrated: it was a pleasure therefore to find his monumental *Entombment* reredos, and I've been doing some digging for further information on it over the past few weeks.



James Northcote's Entombment of Christ

Firstly, however, it's worth sharing a very brief bit of Northcote's biography for those unfamiliar with this intriguing painter. He was born in Plymouth, the son of a watchmaker, and grew up sketching and painting in his spare time. After an apprenticeship with his father, Northcote became a professional painter, and soon afterwards travelled to London and became a pupil of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had him enrolled at the Royal Academy's Schools as well. During his time with Reynolds, Northcote was responsible for drawing illustrations to the great portraitists lectures (among other tasks): Reynolds could do many things, but drawing was something that always eluded him (not for want of trying!), whereas Northcote was a very good draftsman. One can tell how much he admired Reynolds from a later self-portrait, which clearly owes a debt to his teacher's own from four decades earlier. He also wrote a biography of Reynolds, and remembered him fondly in his own memoirs. Northcote then travelled to Rome in 1778, staying for three years and making close studies of the Italian masters of bygone centuries, before returning to England and joining the ranks of the Academy, swiftly becoming one of the most respected and senior artists in the Establishment.

The large boards in the café at St Luke's note that Northcote was a 'famous portraitist'; however, this does him an injustice, as it was as a '*History*' painter that he was best-known and most admired in his lifetime, and he was also an excellent painter of animals. His grand paintings of scenes from English and classical history won him plaudits and earned him a considerable fortune, while portraiture was more of an everyday pursuit, though one in which he also excelled.



Fig. III - Sir Peter Paul Rubens I The Deposition (or Descent from the Cross) I Inv. No. P74

Now, how did this monumental religious work - itself something of an anomaly in Northcote's body of work - end up at St Luke's? The *Entombment*, though it is strictly speaking a Deposition in fact, was the second version Northcote painted of this subject. The first was exhibited at the British Institution (in 1822) and then at the Royal Academy, and is thought to have been identical to ours. In 1825, the directors of the British Institution paid Northcote the princely sum of 150 guineas for a second *Entombment*, which they then presented the following year to St Luke's, to be placed into the ornate reredos. An engraving of how this looked before its various amendments can be found on an easel at the back of the church. The British Institution (B.I.) had been founded in 1805 (and disbanded in 1867) was a private society whose chief aim was to exhibit the works of *both* living and dead artists and to support the arts in Britain more broadly. Its membership was largely drawn not from the arts but from the peerage, and it was regarded as having conservative tastes.

This final point sheds some light on the artistic origins of our painting: the very grand composition is derived from a much earlier work, by Rubens, which was painted for the Capuchin Monastery in Lille and now hangs pride of place in the city's Palais des Beaux-Arts. Northcote had ambivalent feelings about Rubens, to judge from his rather supercilious comments in the *Conversations of James Northcote with James Ward, on art and artists (London, 1901): indeed, he apparently said that 'it requires a strong mind to study Rubens with safety. I have seen instances of silly imitations of that great painter...Rubens is a dangerous model!' (He does later admit that Rubens 'was a mighty genius').* In spite of this, Northcote clearly felt that *he* was worthy of emulating the Flemish master! Strangely, no mention is made, either in

this posthumous text or the later biography of Northcote by Stephen Gwynn (London, 1898), of either Rubens' *Entombment* or Northcote's own.

How he came to know the earlier painting we don't know, though it was reproduced in various engravings, and Northcote himself could have seen it in-situ whilst travelling in France. Whatever the case, it does make sense that the British Institution were keen to commission a second version of a grand painting by a leading Academician, itself connected to one of the most famous artists in history, for one of London's newest and largest churches of the day. Even if it may seem a slightly 'tricky' or 'challenging' subject for an altarpiece to some, it is nevertheless an important artwork in its own right. I for one am very glad that it's still here, front and centre, and not lodged in a museum's storage!

TOM MENDEL



Fig. I (Left): James Northcote R.A. | Self Portrait (1784) | National Portrait Gallery, London | Acc. No. P 3253
Fig. II (Right): Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A. | Self Portrait (c.1747 - 1749) | National Portrait Gallery, London | Acc. No. NPG 41

The inscription beneath the image reads:
'Drawn and Engraved by Henry Meyer from the original picture painted by James Northcote Esqr. R.A. Purchased by the Directors of the British Institution for the encouragement of the Fine Arts in this Country, and presented by them to the New Church Chelsea"

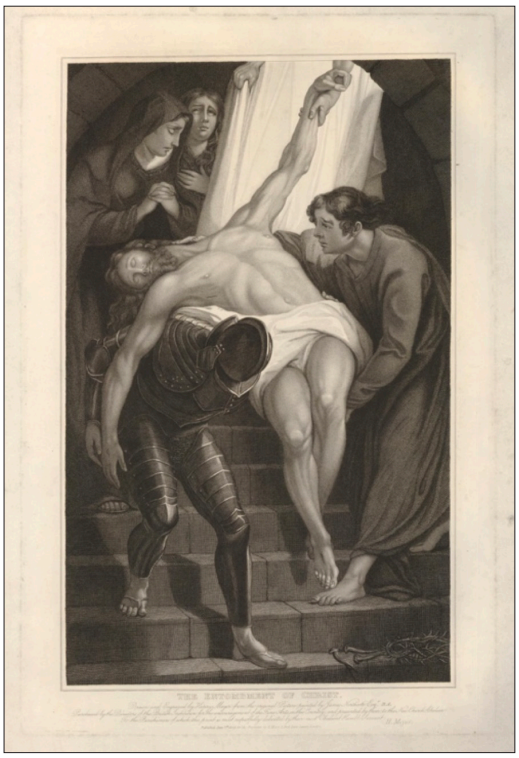


Fig. IV - Henry Meyer after James Northcote | The Entombment of Christ | Publ. by Meyer in London, 1826 | British Museum, London | Acc. no. 1917,1208.3224

The Importance of Welcome

The welcome is one of the most important parts of your church service experience. I have been volunteering as part of the welcome team for several years now and I love it. Whether I am acting as Duty Warden or a sides person, all the team work together to make everyone's experience a good one.

We arrive early and prepare the hymn books and service sheets and generally make sure everything is ready for the service.

Soon the congregation start arriving. We see familiar faces and chat with them about how their week has been or it could be a conversation about football or cricket. We are prepared for most things!

Families are among the arrivals, and it is lovely seeing how little ones that were once small babies when your first sae them, are now growing fast, it does make me feel old though! Inevitably there is a special toy that the children bring, and I have been introduced to lots of dolls and teddies etc over the years.

One of the main jobs is looking out for newcomers. It can be a daunting experience walking into somewhere for the first time. I remember coming to St Luke's on my first occasion and wondering if anyone would speak to me. As it was, I was greeted by two lovely sidespeople. I remember who they were, they made a lasting impression with their smiles and welcome and I hope I now do the same.

With new people we introduce ourselves, try to find out if they are new to the area and try to answer any questions they may have - such as whether they have to go up for communion. We reassure them they are free to choose to go for communion or a blessing, but if they prefer to sit quietly in the pew, that is also absolutely fine. Whatever they are comfortable with.

There are also questions about children's activities, such as Sunday school, scouts etc. We do our best to give them the information they need.

When the service ends, we encourage people to stay for refreshment. Again, this can be a great opportunity for newcomers to get to know people.

Our main aim is for everyone's experience to be an enjoyable one. Everyone is welcome. It is wonderful when you see new people returning week on week and I hope that in some way out welcome contributed to that.

JANET GOWER



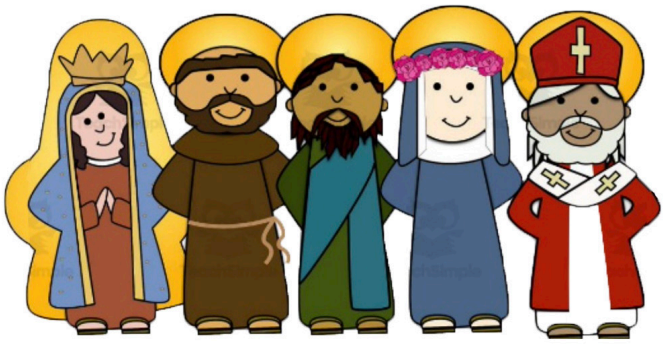
"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1

Celebrated on November 1st, All Saints' Day is a special time when the church honours all the holy people who have gone to heaven before us. This includes well-known heroes of faith like St Luke, St Peter, St Francis, St Nicolas as well as the quiet, everyday believers whose names only God knows. It reminds us that we are all part of one big, joyful family of faith.

Children should know that saints were not perfect superheroes. They were ordinary people who made mistakes but loved Jesus deeply and did extraordinary things through His strength. Becoming a saint is not about being famous; it is about being set apart to do God's special work in the world today.

On 1 November at Christ Church, we have our 9.30am Family Eucharist where we will celebrate All Saint's Day. Even though it is one day a year, we can learn about saints and try to be more like them every day! By reading stories of the saints, children learn how to stay strong when things are difficult, how to stand firm in their faith, and how to treat others with kindness.

We can also pray and ask the saints in Heaven to pray for us. At home families can build a connection by drawing pictures of these faithful role models or creating a small jar of acts of kindness to complete during the week. Most importantly, children can live out the faith today by shining Christ's light through simple acts of love, forgiveness, and sharing with those in need.



May this month bring you peace of mind, strong health, sound sleep, and protection for you and your family.

Love,

Anna

Harvest

Harvest Festival was celebrated across the parish with great generosity of food gifts (and more) for our Food Bank.

Gratitude for the blessings of food lies at the heart of this festival and a willingness to recognise our interdependence. With the Christ Church School children we explored the meaning of Harvest, and so many of the children talked about the need to be generous in giving, to help others and look beyond ourselves. The prayers they wrote for the service captured these ideas beautifully.



Do pray them yourselves in a quiet moment.

We pray for those who do not have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear.

We pray to have peace in the world and an end to conflict.

We pray for those who do not have a safe place to call home.

We pray that we will reduce pollution and take better care of our planet.

We pray for those who feel lonely, that they be comforted in their hearts.

We pray for those who are ill in hospital and that they may draw strength from God.

We pray for anyone who has lost a loved one or does not have family members.

Amen



Christ Church CE Primary School Annual Report 2025-26

It has been another very eventful and busy year at Christ Church School. We continue to work very closely with our sister school Holy Trinity and the staff having each other to plan for learning experiences for children.

Ensuring that every child enjoys a vibrant and enriching school experience is incredibly important to us. We want all children, whatever their needs, to learn with purpose, enthusiasm and curiosity.

We provide a wealth of hands-on learning opportunities beyond the classroom, making the most of the museums, galleries and open spaces available to us. These visits are carefully woven into our curriculum, bringing learning to life, sparking curiosity and helping children make meaningful connections with the world around them. Our aim is that the children have a sense of place and feel a pride in their school but also in the place where they are schooled and often live.

This year a very big focus for us has been on revisiting our Physical Education teaching. We have been looking at developing skills rather that sport's-based approach to teaching that focuses on meeting the needs of all children's physical development. We have been raising the profile of Physical Education and the important elements that make for an active child and children actively enjoying physical activity of all types.

We have also been looking at raising the profile of Science teaching and learning and enhance the opportunities of partnerships like St Paul's outreach and the RHS. We have been building a list of science related jobs that adults in our community do to look at careers focus.

Specialist teachers continue to be a valued and important part of what we offer the children. The learning areas for which there is specialist teaching include:

• Music • Drama • Dance • Gymnastics • Swimming • Spanish • Sport • Gardening

Our children are our biggest asset! The range of needs that they have is exceptionally wide and their aptitudes, talents and difficulties challenge and inspire us as teachers every day. We have many children with very significant medical, physical and learning needs and many children who are extremely able and talented. They work, play and learn together in a way that shows inclusivity at its best. Our achievement as measured in end of Year 6 SATS scores is very high and taking into account the starting points and progress of many of our children, the progress of children in the core subject or reading, writing and maths is high. We continue to be the most proud of the progress our more average children make in their time with us. We are certainly not a school for just the outliers in ability!

Parental support is strong and feedback from parents is used very positively. Parent coordinators in each class play an important part in the communication to and from parents to school. The website continues to be well used by our school community and beyond. It really represents the priorities of the school and communicates our aims and ethos clearly. Look us up if you would like to read more: www.ccht.rbkc.sch.uk



We have a very skilled and dedicated team of Governors who really know the school well as a result of regular visits to their link classes and supporting members of staff in their strategic roles. They are well placed to be the critical friends they are required to be.

We continue to have very close links with the Church and have regular Church Collective Worship and Services in Christ Church. In the absence of a Rector at Christ Church Father Baxter and Father Michael (from Holy Trinity) have contributed to the education and spiritual development of our children in numerous ways.
Here are some findings from external assessors we have had visit the school recently:

Christ Church July 2024 Ofsted Quote:

Happy pupils attend this school. They are proud of their community and value the opportunities available to them. The school offers an impressive array of activities and clubs. The performing arts provision is equally impressive.

Behaviour here is exceptional. Pupils model the school's core virtues of kindness, love and generosity and treat each other with a caring and inclusive approach. Teachers insist on high-quality work, and pupils capably meet these high standards.

Holy Trinity May 2025 Guided Peer Evaluation Quote:

It is clear that pupils are motivated and enthusiastic about school. the curriculum is ambitious and challenges pupils to engage in sophisticated ideas and concepts. Expectations are high while at the same time pupils are celebrated for being themselves. Leaders have created a genuine culture of community and they ensure that all pupils experience the same rich offer and provision. This is a very special school. For me, the root of our success lies in three main things, a relentless focus on individual children; a strong ethos based on explicit values that can be lived by all and a lack of complacency – "The road to school improvement is always under construction!"

AVIS HAWKINS
Federation Head Teacher
October 2026

St Luke's 200th Anniversary Kneeler

In June 2024, the canvas for a kneeler for the 150th Anniversary of St. Luke's was discovered in a drawer at Cadogan's offices, and they contacted Brian to see if he knew anyone who would be willing to stitch it.

Brian asked around and Sue, the Verger, suggested that I could.

I collected the canvas from Cadogan's which came with the various coloured wools.

Brian agreed that I could change the date from 1974 to 2024, as I was making it in the year of the 200th Anniversary. I knew it would take a while due to my love of travel.



The blue body wool ran out, but we managed to match the colour. By November of 2025, the stitching was complete. When I began, I did not realise that my initials should have been at the front. It is the only



kneeler made in 2024 and the only one with the initials at the back.

It took a while to make but I enjoyed stitching whilst watching hours of cricket.

JOCELYN DAVIDSON-ARNOTT

Tourette Support Group

We are a family which have been involved in the parish community for many years.

Our children all went to Christ Church school in central London, SW3. My husband and I run a gardening company 'O'Keefe Gardens Ltd' and we yearly donate the large Christmas trees for St Luke's and Christ Church.

Seven years ago, our family life changed when our



daughter was diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome. Tourette's syndrome is a neurological condition that causes people to make involuntary movements or sounds called tics.

We wanted to meet other families and found there weren't any groups nearby to offer any support. The parish office offered our group the Hut. We are now in



our third year of running a very successful, safe and fun environment for our all our members.

We run the Chelsea Tourette's support group once a month, our members travel up to two hours to join us. We have activities & games always on offer and it's a safe space for everyone.

The group is growing and it's always nice to meet new parents and their children. There is always a sense of anxiety for new members walking through the door, meeting new people, and sharing their difficulties. It's always so nice for Kirsty and I to see them return.

KIRSTY & CHRIS O'KEEFE

What is Safeguarding?

This autumn the volunteers of our community foodbank mark 6 years since they took their first deliveries and opened their doors to parishioners.

Safeguarding is a word we hear often in church life, but it is sometimes misunderstood. Many people assume it is simply about protecting children and vulnerable adults. While that remains a vital part of safeguarding, the reality is much broader. Safeguarding is about the way we care for one another. It is about noticing, listening, behaving appropriately, and creating environments where every person can flourish safely.

At its heart, safeguarding is an expression of Christian love. It reflects the way we value one another as people made in the image of God. It is found in the practical decisions we make, the boundaries we respect, the concerns we raise, and the culture we create together. Safeguarding is not merely a policy displayed on a website; it is a commitment to looking after one another well.

This means caring not only for children and vulnerable adults, but also for those who have been hurt, abused, neglected, or manipulated. Victims and survivors of abuse must find churches that are ready to listen, believe, support, and accompany them on their journey towards healing. For too long, churches have sometimes failed to bring painful realities into the light. We must learn from those failings with honesty and humility.

Safeguarding is also about ensuring that our churches are safe physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Physical safety involves health and safety provision, risk assessments, and security measures. Emotional safety means creating communities where people are treated with respect and dignity. Spiritual safety means ensuring that faith, leadership, or scripture are never used to control, intimidate, or exploit others.

One of the greatest safeguarding challenges comes from our commitment to radical welcome. The Gospel calls us to welcome all people. Yet "all" includes those who have been harmed and those who have caused harm. Holding those realities together requires wisdom, courage, and clear boundaries. Welcome does not mean ignoring risk, and grace does not mean overlooking harmful behaviour. Churches must be places where accountability and compassion walk hand in hand.

This is why safeguarding requires transparency. Concerns should never be dismissed, minimised, or kept quiet for the sake of preserving appearances. Healthy churches are communities where difficult conversations can happen honestly, where concerns can be raised safely, and where everyone understands that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

Ultimately, safeguarding is about creating churches that reflect the Kingdom of God: places of trust, truth, justice, and welcome. When safeguarding is woven into the life of a church, it helps ensure that every person who walks through the door can encounter not only safety, but also the loving care of a Christian community committed to helping all people thrive.

We are currently establishing a new team of people to support the work of safeguarding in our parish. If you would like to find out more or get involved, please contact the Parish Office or the Rector directly.

REV'D LYDIA COOK

Borne at Christmas:

Sharing hope with babies and families

As candles glow, carols fill our churches and families gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus, Christmas invites us to share hope, love and generosity. This year, on 10th December at St Luke's Church, our parish community can bring that spirit to Borne, a medical research charity working to prevent premature birth and give mothers and babies the healthiest possible start.

For thousands of families, the joy of welcoming a new baby comes much earlier than expected. Premature birth - before 37 weeks of pregnancy - is the leading cause of childhood mortality worldwide. Around 60,000 babies are born preterm in the UK each year, and approximately 15 million worldwide. An early arrival can mean anxious days beside an incubator, long hospital stays and lifelong health or developmental challenges. Yet 85% of women who go into early labour have no idea they are at risk.

Borne was founded in 2013 by Professor Mark Johnson, based at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, after he witnessed first-hand the devastating effects of babies being born too soon. He created the charity to deepen our understanding of pregnancy and find ways to prevent premature birth. Today, Borne brings scientists and clinicians together, funding pioneering research into pregnancy and labour.

Borne at Christmas, being held at the Church on Thursday 10th December, promises to be a joyful and uplifting evening. Guests can look forward to much-loved carols and seasonal musical pieces performed by the acclaimed Whitehall Choir, alongside festive readings from Jamie Laing, Sophie Habboo, Caro Tasker, Charlotte Riley and Emilia Wickstead. It will be a wonderful opportunity to pause amid the Christmas rush, enjoy the warmth of music, and celebrate the season in support of mothers, babies and vital research into premature birth.

By attending, inviting friends or making a donation, you can help Borne move closer to a future in which fewer babies are born too soon. To discover more about Borne at Christmas 2026 and join this special celebration, please visit:
https://uk.emma-live.com/BorneAtChristmas2026
As we celebrate the Christ child this Christmas, this festive evening offers a heartfelt way to carry the season's message of hope beyond our church doors. Together, through song, reflection and generosity, we can help give more babies a safe beginning—and more families the gift of Christmases together for years to come.

St Andrew: A Life of Faith, Courage and Service

How the life of Jesus' first-called disciple continues to inspire the Church today

Every year on 30 November, the Church of England celebrates the feast day of St Andrew, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. Although sometimes overshadowed by his brother, St Peter, Andrew has a remarkable story of faith, humility and bringing others to Christ. His life reminds Christians that even the smallest act of faith can make a lasting difference.

Andrew was a fisherman from Bethsaida in Galilee and the brother of Simon Peter. Fishing was hard, demanding work, and his life would probably have revolved around the sea and his family. Yet everything changed when he encountered Jesus.

The Gospel of John tells us that Andrew was originally a disciple of John the Baptist. When John pointed towards Jesus and declared him to be the Lamb of God, Andrew followed Jesus. After spending time with him, Andrew found his brother Simon Peter, declaring, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41). He then brought Peter to Jesus.



Saint Andrew
by Peter Paul Rubens

This encounter reveals something important about Andrew: having discovered something wonderful, he wanted to share it with someone he loved. His introduction of Peter would have far-reaching consequences for the early Church. Jesus later called Andrew and Peter to leave their fishing nets and follow him, promising to make them "fishers of people" (Matthew 4:19). Andrew responded to this invitation, leaving behind his former occupation to become a disciple and witness Jesus' teaching, miracles, death and resurrection.

Andrew's significance is not measured only by his prominence among the apostles. In John 6, when a large crowd needed feeding, Andrew drew attention to a boy who had five barley loaves and two fish. He questioned how such a small amount could feed so many people, yet these humble provisions became part of Jesus' miracle of feeding the five thousand.

Andrew also helped introduce some Greeks who wished to meet Jesus (John 12:20–22). On these occasions, he acted as a bridge between people and Christ, helping those who wanted to know more take the next step. These moments offer a valuable picture of Christian discipleship. Andrew was not always at the centre of events, but he noticed people and helped them encounter Jesus. His example reminds us that faithfulness does not always require a public platform. Sometimes it begins with a conversation, an invitation to church, a kind gesture or the willingness to listen to someone who feels overlooked.

Christian tradition holds that Andrew travelled to share the Christian faith beyond Galilee and was eventually martyred at Patras in Greece. Later tradition associates his death with an X-shaped cross, now commonly known as St Andrew's Cross. Although these details come from tradition rather than the biblical accounts, they have become an enduring part of his story.

Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, and his cross appears on the Scottish national flag. St Andrew's Day provides the Church of England with an opportunity to reflect on Christian faith, national heritage and our responsibility to serve our neighbours.

In a world concerned with status, recognition and personal achievement, Andrew offers a different model of greatness. He points away from himself and towards Jesus. His story encourages us to do the same in our homes, workplaces, communities and churches.

Andrew teaches us the importance of invitation. We do not need to have all the answers or be accomplished speakers to share our faith. A genuine welcome, a conversation about what gives us hope, or an invitation to a church service can open a door for someone else. Just as Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, we can help others discover the Christian faith through the way we live and the welcome we offer.

His encounter with the boy carrying the loaves and fish reminds us not to underestimate what we have to offer. Our time, skills, prayers and acts of kindness may seem insignificant, but when offered in faith and love, they can become part of something much greater. Churches demonstrate this through food banks, community cafés, pastoral visits and support for people experiencing loneliness or hardship.

Finally, Andrew reminds us that discipleship is a journey of trust. Leaving behind familiar routines to follow Jesus required courage. We may not be called to leave fishing boats behind, but we are still challenged to examine our priorities, respond to God's call and live out the values of the Gospel.

St Andrew may not always receive the attention given to other apostles, but his life speaks powerfully to the Church today. He shows us that we can make a difference without seeking recognition, that sharing faith can begin with a simple introduction, and that God can use what appears small to accomplish something extraordinary.

As we celebrate St Andrew's Day on 30 November, we might ask ourselves: who could we bring closer to Christ through our words, our welcome or our actions? Andrew's legacy encourages every Christian to recognise the opportunities for faith and service that arise each day. Perhaps that is St Andrew's greatest lesson: we do not have to be the most prominent person in the room to make a lasting difference. We simply have to be willing to follow Christ and invite others to discover the hope we have found in him.

JOHN MCVEIGH

FROM THE REGISTERS



Isla Hodgson's Baptism at St Luke's



Hugo Goodhew's Baptism at St Luke's in September

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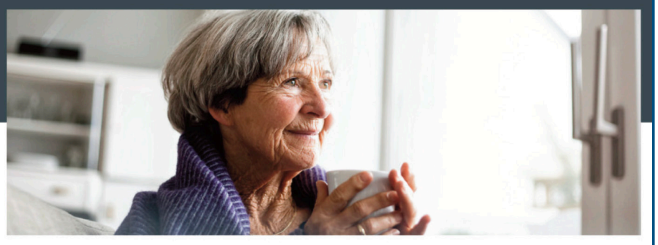
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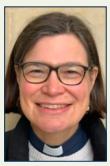
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Meet the Team



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Director of Music: Jeremy Summerly j.summerly@icloud.com
Organist: Rupert Jeffcoat

CHRIST CHURCH
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Churchwardens: Julie Clancy, Millie Kirkland and Jane Ellard
Director of Music: Gareth Wilson 07939 378 759
Organist: Joe McHardy

Safeguarding Officers:
(for any safeguarding issues in the Parish)
Duncan Kennedy (Mob: 07548705667)

Services

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

Weekday Services

0900 Monday - Thursday	Morning Prayer at St Luke's
1230 Thursday	Holy Communion at St Luke's

Open for Prayer

St Luke's is open for prayer from 0900-1530 Monday to Saturday

Party Venues For Hire

The Hall of Remembrance, Flood Street, St Luke's Hall, St Luke's Street, and The Hut, Alpha Place. All are available to hire for children's parties, workshops, rehearsals and public or private meetings. All halls are light and airy, on the ground floor with high ceilings. For more information contact tel: 020 7351 6133.

Youth & Children's Activities

Children's Ministry

Sunday School takes place in term time during the Sunday services at St Luke's (10.30am) and Christ Church (11.00am). On the first Sunday of the month, Sunday School pauses at both churches as and we gather for a Family Service (9.30am) at Christ Church. A crèche is available during all services.

ABC Club for parents, carers and toddlers, takes place on Thursdays from 10.00am-11.30am at Christ Church.
To find out more, contact Anna Stamenova, the parish Children's Administrator: annastamenova@chelseaparish.org

Youth

Youth Events for ages 11+ take place every other Thursday. For more information, Jess Masters-Carrer, our youth worker at Jess@ymic-london.com

We also have several uniformed groups supported by the Church. If you would like to find out more about these

Upcoming Events

01/11 - 3pm All Souls' Choral Evensong at St Luke's
02/11 - 8pm All Souls' Requiem at Christ Church
08/11 - Remembrance Sunday
29/11 - St Luke's Advent Carol Service at 6.30pm
08/12 - Carols on Chelsea Green at 6.30pm
13/12 - Nine Lessons and Carols at Christ Church at 5.30pm
20/12 - Nine Lessons and Carols at St Luke's at 6.30pm
24/12 - Crib services at both churches at 4pm
24/12 - Parish Midnight Eucharist at St Luke's 11.30pm
25/12 - 8am Holy Communion at St Luke's
10.30am Christmas Eucharist at St Luke's
11.00am Christmas Eucharist at Christ Church