



# St. Luke's Church, Watford

*(Charity Reg. no. 1130376)*



## Annual Report 2016 – Part 1

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## St Luke's Annual Report 2016

The first part of this report is an informal report summarising what has been happening at St. Luke's during 2016, with the second part being the more formal report and includes information from the Vicar, the PCC, the Electoral Roll, the Diocesan and Deanery Synods, church fabric, safeguarding and our Annual Accounts.

### Part 1.

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### 1. Prayer

The Prayer Working Group encouraged St. Luke's to take part in the 24/7 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer initiative in the week leading up to Pentecost last year which was instigated by Archbishop Justin Welby and Archbishop John Sentamu. 168 people signed up to pray for an hour for: -

- All Christians to deepen their relationship with Jesus.
- All of us to have confidence to share the Gospel
- All to respond to the call of Jesus to follow him as disciples, to live out the Gospel and to seek God's Kingdom from day to day.

We have signed up for this year's week of prayer from the 24<sup>th</sup> May to the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

We also held a Prayer Workshop in August which was very inspiring and we had a good time of fellowship over lunch. We are planning another two Workshops in June and August this year.

We still meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in the month at 8 pm for Focus (Prayer Meeting) and every Thursday evening and Friday morning at 10.00 am for an Hour of Prayer. Also on Saturday morning at 9.00 am for the 'Just One' event at the Emirates Stadium on the 8<sup>th</sup> July led by J. John. All are welcome to come to any of these prayer times which are held in the Chapel.

### Women's World Day of Prayer

The Watford service of prayer in March 2016, was held at Our Lady & St Michael Roman Catholic Church. The women of Cuba had prepared the Service and it proved both

interesting and disturbing to discover how badly some of the women in the country are treated.

The theme for the service, taken from Matthew Chapter 10, was "Receive children. Receive me." Pupils from the local St Catherine of Siena school took part in the service and their choir sang. This made it a very special afternoon.

In November (due to the temporary closure of St Thomas' URC buildings) we were grateful to be able to use St Luke's for the annual Preparation Day. Attended by over 50 people, it was the opportunity for WWDP committees to learn about the service planned for March 2017. People came from as far away as Islington and Berkhamsted.

St Luke's representative: Jackie Mee

## 2. People and Pastoral Support

Following on from the Bereavement Ministry course in 2015 a Pastoral Ministry Course has been organised to take place over 5 consecutive evenings in February – March 2017.

June Wilkinson has very kindly agreed to run another CAP Money Course, offering financial guidance, in 2017 with the dates to be agreed.

As part of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the new church, a Wedding Celebration was organised on 20 November 2016 for those couples who had married in the Church during the 10 years. It proved to be very successful with 14 couples and their children enjoying afternoon tea and celebratory wine. Photographs of their weddings were shown on a screen and everyone enjoyed a game of "Mr&Mrs" while the children played games and did craft in the Lounge. It was also an opportunity for the couples to meet with old friends.

In March 2016 we hosted the Peace Hospice service once again. This is always very successful and those attending are very appreciative of both the service and the afternoon tea provided by our volunteers.

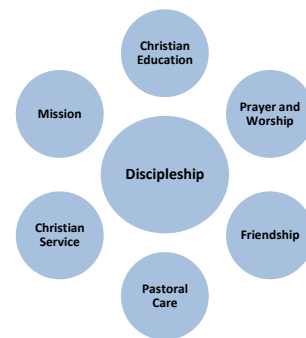
In November 2016 we assisted at the St Luke's Bereavement Service. A large number of people attended and found it very helpful.

During the year we have continued to send out seasonal gifts to members of the congregation who were or are, going through trying times for various reasons. At Christmas 2016 we gave a Christmas tree decoration in the form of an angel playing a musical instrument. Other festivals were marked with a small bag of chocolate eggs at Easter and a plant at Harvest. As always, it proved to be a great pleasure to both the recipients and the giver.

As always our aim is to provide care and comfort for the Church family wherever and whenever it is needed.

### 3. Discipleship

It has been an encouraging year at St. Luke's for our Life Groups. There are now over 150 different people who are part of the 15 different Life Groups that meet during the week. The groups, that meet daytimes and evenings, vary in many ways but all have a similar purpose, to help everyone grow as whole-life disciples of Jesus Christ. All activities are based around six fundamental aspects of Life Groups that the Discipleship Working Group (DWG) have drawn up. Please look at the notice board to the left of the door into church, from the Gathering Area, for the details of groups and how to join them.



The DWG was set up to support and develop Life Groups leaders and to help St Luke's members and newcomers join a Life Group. Training, sharing, providing resources, visits to Life Groups, talking through issues, and more, all form part of the support offered. The DWG has been chaired by Peter Mills since it was established. Peter has worked hard with the group to establish a policy and framework for Life Groups and catalogue the resources available. Peter has now decided to stand down as chair and we thank him for his hard work. I'm pleased that Rev'd Adrian Smith has agreed to become chair of DWG and takes up the role early in 2017.

In the autumn St Luke's ran a successful Alpha course and also a Youth Alpha course. Several of the people who attended Alpha have since joined a Life Group, and a number of the young people from Youth Alpha were confirmed early in 2017. Many thanks to everyone who helped to organise and run Alpha and to the Life Groups who volunteered to serve and wash-up for an evening.

Another encouragement for us as Disciples is to read our Bible regularly and other Christian literature. St Luke's is grateful to Jack Watson for organising and distributing Daily Bible Reading notes.

For all of us to grow as whole-life disciples it is important that as individuals we spend time in prayer and reading scripture. As well as individual reading of scripture joining a Life Group is also key to this growth in faith. Life Groups are a safe place to explore scripture, discuss faith and life, test gifts and share faith together, and with others. If you have never been part of a Life Group please may I encourage you to consider joining a Life Group.

Rev'd Canon Dave Middlebrook

### 4. Children and Youth

#### Children and Youth Working Group

The children and youth working group continues to be well supported and attended by an enthusiastic and wise group of people.

Currently that group is Fran Davies, Dave Middlebrook, Neil Brookes, Jenny Stromberg, Lizzy Baron, Hannah Kessler, Melanie Sills, Phil Boxhall. Bill Miller, Margaret Forester, Marina Waddington, Euan Wiley, Danielle Wright and Mary Bowen.

We have met 3 times over the year to discuss many things. Recently we have spent a lot of time thinking about our social media policy and especially how the youth leaders interact with the young people using social media sites. The youth leaders are now trialling a policy and we will re visit it shortly to see how it is going.

We have also created a very small sub group to look at some of the specific parts of our five year plan and how we might try and move forward.

I believe the meetings continue to be helpful to those who attend and ultimately the children and youth of our church.

Recently I was very excited to attend the confirmation service of six of our young people. It was great to be part of the service and hear them commit their lives to Christ. Although it is obviously, their commitment it is sometimes the result of many hours of friendship and teaching from many different people at lots of different groups.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jenny, Neil, Lizzy, Hannah and the vast number of volunteers for everything they do for the Children and Youth at St Luke's.

Fran Davies

## Children

We ran a successful course in early 2016 on Children and Communion, which resulted in a group of children receiving their first communion on Easter Sunday. The course itself, led by Dave, Chris and myself, was a privileged time when we were able to learn much more about the children's faith and spiritual development. The prayer was that the course would alleviate a great deal of confusion, as many parents and young people were coming forward for communion prior to either this course or confirmation. The evidence is that this has lessened, but we do encourage families who wish the children to take the bread & wine, to do the course.

It is a fact that the number of regularly attending children on a Sunday has dropped, in both the 9.15am and 11.00am services. Whilst all leaders are aware and prayerfully preparing dynamic sessions, we are also looking at increasing the amount of 'mountain top' experiences during 2017. The All-Age Service corner with bean bags and activities has been popular. Light clubs, toddler group, Urban Saints and the Guide & Scouting groups are very well attended; but we seek to find a way to meet families' spiritual needs. Our monthly Toddler continues to be popular and is attended by a multi-faith congregation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the large group of wonderful, dedicated volunteers who work and pray for the children of St. Luke's.

Jenny Stromberg

## Youth

This year our youngest group Rock Solid (11-12) continues to grow in numbers as well as energy. The activities are lively and engaging, the God spots have been a series looking at an overview of the Bible as some of the young people in this group are unchurched.

K2 (13-16) has developed a great deal in their faith and the group is now predominantly a Bible study/life group. Numerically the number of young people has remained a steady constant with a core of very committed young people.

Base (16-18) remains to be a closely knit group which focuses on fellowship and discipleship through exams and other life pressures they may be facing.

Altitude (Sunday mornings) numbers at the 9:15 are small; the 11am though has on average around 15 young people each week. We have been looking at the star wars movies and using those to look at some rather deep topics around the biblical view of leadership, sexism, mission, calling and an array of others. We concluded the year looking at the movie Finding Dory and what the Bible has to say about family and the perseverance of God to draw us into relationship with Him.

Rebuild has been an incredibly faith affirming trip for 11 of our young people. Spending a week seeing God's love in action and exploring more of what that means whilst there and afterwards with the youth alpha course has been transformational and was a key factor in the decision of 7 of them being baptised and confirmed (5/2/17) Many of them speak of it as being a truly pivotal moment for their faith.

Lizzie Baron

## Schools Work

Schools work is an important aspect of mission and outreach for St Luke's. Many of the pupils at schools in the area have little or no Christian input, and include people of many different faiths and no faith. Assemblies give Christians the opportunity to speak to 400+ pupils and staff about aspects of faith, classroom work allows relationships to be built, and contacts in the staffroom allow support to be given in the pressurised environment of education. All this has to be done with care and respect, speaking of personal belief and what 'Christians believe', and not what others must believe. Schools in the area appreciate their links with the church.

St Luke's has numerous links with schools in the area, both primary and secondary.

### a) Personal

All our children and young people attend schools in and around Watford, which means their parents are inevitably connected. Also many members of our congregations are members of staff, both teaching and support, and governors at the local schools.

### b) School Assemblies

I conduct regular assemblies in Cassiobury Juniors and Cassiobury Infants, usually at least twice per term. In addition we are often asked to assist with specific festivals (e.g. Christmas, Lent, Easter, Harvest). In addition church staff have conducted assemblies at Northwick Prep School (Moor Park), Watford Boys, Watford Girls, St Paul's Langleybury, and other schools in the area.

### c) Visits to Schools

There are often occasions when church staff visit Cassiobury Infants and Cassiobury Junior Schools, perhaps at least once a term, for classroom based work, often fitting

in the national curriculum. These sessions can include three classes (approximately 90 children) and can be an hour in duration.

d) School Visits to Church

Throughout the year there are several occasions when schools visit the church, including Cassiobury Infants, Cassiobury Juniors, Queen's School and others, to look at topics such as baptism, 'places of worship', or for special services (e.g. Carol Service, Christingle). With the recent expansion of the Cassiobury Schools to three forms per year we can no longer fit all the children, staff, and parents from the school in the church on a single occasion so we now have to do 'repeats showings' e.g. We had 3 Cassiobury Infant Advent Services

e) Prayer and Schools Communion

Members of St Luke's are also part of prayer groups for various local schools, and Mary Bowen co-ordinates a "Schools Communion" here at St Luke's on approximately a termly basis.

f) Watford Schools Trust

For many years members of St Luke's have support Watford Schools Trust, through financial giving and being trustees.

Please do pray for the church staff and congregation members involved in this ministry.

Rev'd Canon Dave Middlebrook

## 5. Outreach

Fairtrade at St Luke's



**TRAIDCRAFT**  
Fighting poverty through trade



A full team of helpers ensure that we are able to open the Traidcraft stall each Sunday after the two morning services. Sales have increased again this past year, particularly of the special items like the Advent Calendar and the Real Easter Egg. Christmas orders totalled more than £2000. We like to think of this as Gifts which give twice.

St Luke's was host to a Fairtrade Pancake Party and a Fairtrade Quiz evening during Fairtrade Fortnight. Thank you to St Luke's.

10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

In 2016 we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our new building by giving thanks to God for all that it has provided, and the opportunities to do more for His Glory.

On Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup> we had a Community afternoon, with our charity partners providing games & stalls, The Gypsy Booth School of Dance doing a wonderful show, our Singing for Joy group entertaining us with their singing, bouncy castles, afternoons teas, cake competitions, fancy dress competitions, sumo wrestling ...the list goes on! It was a jam packed afternoon for all of our community. The Prince of Bengal provided a tasty dinner, and then the evening was rounded off with a light hearted 10 year revue.

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> of April we had as our inspirational guest speaker Matt Summerfield from Urban Saints, and the celebrations continued through to our buffet lunch.

In October we had an afternoon of celebrations having invited all those who had been married at St. Luke's during the last 10 years, along with their families. We continue to give thanks to God for his provision.

Our regular outreach has continued in 2016. This includes:

- ✝ Tuesday coffee shop
- ✝ Saturday coffee shop
- ✝ Singing for Joy
- ✝ Pre-school coffee
- ✝ Thursday Toddler Group and monthly Toddler Service
- ✝ Friday club (lunch club for those who live alone)
- ✝ Friday table tennis and Badminton Club
- ✝ CAMEO (ladies group, Come And Meet Each Other)
- ✝ Men's Walk (May)
- ✝ Christmas Pudding evening
- ✝ Knitting Group
- ✝ Phoenix Fellowship (quarterly lunch club for the active retired)
- ✝ SLATE (Sunday Lunch at the Essex for those living on their own)

Many thanks to all the volunteers who make these groups become enjoyable activities!

## 6. Partners in Mission

The Partners in Mission (PiM) working group's main objective is to encourage mission within the church, in all its aspects, and to provide support for our Mission Partners.

To this end the work of PiM consists of a variety of main activities:

- 1) Drawing up and maintaining a Five Year Plan to encourage and develop mission within St Luke's. Among the main goals for 2016 were: to encourage greater prayer for our mission partners – to which end an occasional prayer newsletter has been introduced; to attempt to produce some mission content for every issue of the St Luke's News – which we have mainly achieved; and to organize a Harvest Lunch.
- 2) Allocation of the Discretionary Funds from the PCC budget, which normally amounts to 10% of the total church income. In 2016 this consisted of a total of £26,000 which PIM allocated to a range of different Partners and Partner Organisations at home and abroad.
- 3) Building links with our Mission Partners and Organisations. This is achieved through personal communication by PIM members with the various partners we support, arranging visits to St Luke's where possible, receipt of newsletters etc. As many of our Partner



Organisations are local, church members are often actively involved in their work, and PIM attempts to keep itself informed both of the work and the needs of the organisations. An important part of this communication has been the introduction of Mission-themed Upside Down Sundays. The first was held in November 2015, and the second is planned for January 2017. These enable a number of our Partners and Partner Organisations to present to the church on the same Sunday.

4) Encouraging greater involvement of church members in Mission through a number of means including allocation of funds from the YOOOF fund (reserved for young people planning Gap Years or short term mission trips), encouraging mission trips such as Rebuild Mexico, and for 2017 a Lent project to encourage church members to try "taster" sessions working with various local mission partners or community projects.

5) PIM also works with the Thanksgiving Fund coordinator to identify suitable projects for appeals, and to encourage ongoing links with Thanksgiving Fund Projects. The 2016 project was to support Bishop Hannington Institute in Mombasa, Kenya, with their building project to provide additional classroom space.

## 7. Publicity

The Publicity Working Group continues to discuss and develop materials to support and publicise activities and services across St Lukes - these are aimed to communicate events to both church members and to others who live in the area or use our buildings. Where possible the group seeks to support the needs of the other working groups in providing publicity materials.

This year has been one of concentrating on improving and delivering consistent advertising following recent reviews of our output. The team created materials, banner and stand to support the PRAY, GIVE, SERVE initiative aimed at engaging new and current members of the Church in these crucial activities. At the end of the year, the group discussed a new strategy for publicity in 2017 to create greater cohesion and linking events.

Chris Jones

## 8. Our Church Building, grounds and contents

Our Church complex is being used increasingly by Church groups, the Church of the Redeemed, outside Christian organisations and also by the community. This inevitably leads to wear and tear, greater facilities management and the need for refurbishment. As the 'new' building is now in its eleventh year (and the hall is now in its 79th year) maintenance requirement will naturally increase.

The aim of the Building Working group, chaired by Paul Rogers, is to ensure that the buildings are kept in good condition.

During 2016 the Group's tasks included:

- Improvements to signage to meet the legal requirements for personal property left on the premises
- Cleaning the gutters, high level windows and the glass roof of the vestibule
- Cleaning the high level church light fittings and the hanging banners
- Adjustments to the high level hall windows and attaching safety netting to the hall lighting
- Replacement of the Resource Room floor, redecoration and fitting new carpet tiles.
- Installation of a secure cupboard (to store catering equipment) in the Resource Room.
- Adjustments to the rear door closing mechanisms and planning for further improvements
- Redecoration of the Upper Hall,
- Installation of protectors to prevent damage to plaster at corners of walls
- The start of a phased programme for refurbishment of the kitchen – the refrigerator was replaced as the existing model was beyond repair. Also accomplished was a major refurbishment of the kitchen extractor fan.
- The start of a programme for replacing light fittings with more efficient and cost effective LED fittings.
- Improving church security by the installation of CCTV.
- A review of the Cleaning Contract.
- Contributing to the debate on the PCC's proposals for re-organizing Facilities Management.
- Completion of plans for improving the Chapel acoustics.
- Researched and agreed new contracts for the supply of Gas and Electricity.
- PAT testing of the electrical equipment.
- Minor maintenance issues at the Church's property at Orchard Close and also at St. Andrews Vicarage.

The above list demonstrates the increasing maintenance requirements to keep the complex in a good state of repair. Some of the work was undertaken by members of the Building Group, who have a wide range of competencies, whilst other work was undertaken by contractors, based on detailed specifications drawn up by the Building Group, contractors researched and competencies reviewed, bids evaluated and contracts managed.

The Building Working Group would like to record their deep gratitude to Graham Willis, who for many years, until his death in December 2016, made a very significant contribution to the upkeep of the buildings. Graham had a wide range of practical skills, in addition to his professional skills as a Chartered Electrical Engineer. He was always available for advice and practical help on all maintenance work. In his professional capacity his work on the electrical installations saved the church many thousands of pounds. His vast knowledge, practical skills, patience and his good humour will be greatly missed.

During 2017 the Building Working Group plan to:

- Continue the programme of replacing the light fittings with more efficient and cost-effective LED lighting.
- As part of the kitchen refurbishment plan, to replace the kitchen sinks and work tops with stainless steel fittings; installing an additional electric cooker, and replacing the dishwasher.

- Install acoustic treatment to the Gathering Area ceiling
- Install the acoustic treatment to the Chapel ceiling.
- Continue the programme of room redecoration.
- Replace the vestibule carpet.

What can you do?

The Building Working Group urgently needs more voluntary help from the Church membership. Please contact Paul with your offers.

The car park and garden plants are kept looking bright and tidy by Mark Steed, the lawn by Peter Tindale, with the occasional assistance of the West Herts College students who help with leaf clearing and weeding. Thank you to all.

Bryan Hogg

## 9. Rotas

We have many people serving Christ in many capacities at St. Luke's, whether on the silver cleaning, Sunday coffee, welcoming, sidesman, AV, toddler coffee, pre-school coffee, prayers, prayer ministry, crèche, children & youth, security, Fairtrade, singers etc. rotas. In fact, we have over 170 people on rotas. Many thanks to all for organising rotas and especially to Caryl for compiling the Sunday absev rota. We have a lot of hard workers here!

## 10. Church Services

We are fortunate at St Luke's to have a team of people able to lead and preach at services. This gives us the ability to offer a wide range of services and have good variety and insight in our preaching. We have enjoyed having a number of placement students with us in the last year, who are either in training or considering ordination e.g. Rachel Lewis, Andrew Morley, Rev'd Jairo Nyongo. This has brought further variety and breadth to our church-life. On occasions we encourage others who are testing a calling for preaching, or who maybe gifted in this area, to preach, especially at the monthly Informal Evening Service. We are always keen to identify others who may have a gift in leading and/or preaching, especially amongst women and younger members of our congregation. If this is something you feel God may be calling you to then please speak to me, or another member of the staff team.

St. Luke's 'Leading & Preaching Team' consists of those regularly involved in leading and speaking at St Luke's – i.e. Neil Brookes, Dave Clarke, Olu Fasanya, Chris Jones, Dave Middlebrook, Adrian Smith and Greg Wiley. The 'Team' meets near the beginning of each term to reflect on the preaching and worship at St Luke's, to share and discuss ideas, to plan forthcoming sermon series and special events (e.g. Christmas, Easter...), to look at trends and to discuss plans for future services.

During 2016, as well as preaching through the major festivals and special services (e.g. Easter, Pentecost, Christmas, Mothering Sunday, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Back-to-Church Sunday etc.) we also included sermon series on 'Vision and Values', 'Isaiah', 'Daniel', 'Pray-Give-Serve', 'Church is .....', 'Prayer', 'Romans' 'Spiritual Gifts', 'Psalms', and others. For some of the series notes and questions were produced, which have been used and appreciated by individuals and life groups. Most sermons are posted on the church

website, with a summary of the sermon by the preacher, for those who have missed a sermon, or would like to listen to it again.

We have continued with our "Upsidedown Sundays", where the children and youth stay in church, and enjoy experiencing a different environment for their groups, and the adults go out to groups to look at topics and scripture in a different way. It is good for us, on occasions, to be 'outside our comfort zone', and try interacting with scripture and topics in a different way. We usually offer a 'sermon-type' option for those who prefer to stick with this type of input. May I encourage you to consider trying an Upsidedown services if you usually avoid these services as I believe you will find it interesting and challenging.

The move to two main morning services in October 2014 has continued to bear fruit, and we do see a continued higher attendance across the 9:15&11am services, as opposed to the former 10am, this is particularly amongst adults. We also see new people most weeks and please remember to is the responsibility of all of us to make visitors feel welcome, and help newcomers become part of our church family. We are also aware that the number of children and young people continues to slowly decline, as it has done over the last 15-20 years. We are continuing to seek ways, under God, to arrest this trend, and I believe that the answer is probably not found on a Sunday.

Over the last couple of years we have maintained the principle of the two main morning services being the same. With few variations we currently operate the following 'usual' pattern for a 'normal month':-

8am	Holy Communion alternate BCP and CW Morning Prayer Occasionally, with maximum once per month
9:15 & 11am	1st Sunday Morning Worship with baptism on occasions 2nd & 5th Sunday Morning Worship 3rd Sunday All Age Worship 4th Sunday Communion
6:30pm	1st Sunday Evening Worship with Prayer for Healing 2nd & 5th Sunday Evening Worship 3rd Sunday Communion 4th Sunday Informal Evening Worship

Now we have been running our two main morning services for over two years, and as stated when we began this new pattern, you will notice over the coming months more differentiation between the two main morning services, both in style of service (e.g. communion, morning service, all-age) and also style of music. The sermon will remain largely the same across the both services. The 6:30pm sermon is usually an expansion of the 8am sermon. You will also see a slight increase in the number of morning prayer services at 8am, as opposed to communion.

Prayer ministry is now an accepted part of the church culture at St Luke's, with ministry available after all our main morning and evening services, and words or pictures from our 'listening team' being read out in the morning services. There is also prayer and anointing for healing at least monthly in the evening, and on occasions in the morning. We have extended our 'birthday' slot in the morning services to give people the opportunity to give short testimony or give thanks to God for something in their lives, as well as birthdays and

anniversaries, and we give occasional opportunities for personal testimony from the congregation at our evening services.

#### Music at St. Luke's

2016 has been a difficult year for the music ministry at St Luke's. We continue to pray for our Music Director, Jeremy Cooke, and his family, along with all those involved in this difficult situation. We are very grateful to Penny Lazenby, who stepped up as Acting Music Co-Ordinator in Sept, and to all the other musicians and singers who freely give so much of their time and energies to this important part of our church life. It has been good to see, and hear, the musicians rehearsing and praying together on a Thursday evening. Our hope is that we can develop and grow music teams, and encourage musicians within our congregation, especially amongst the young people, to assist and facilitate a wide range of music and music styles within our church. We are looking at ways to enhance and supplement our music provision over the coming year.

#### Tuesday Communion

We continue to hold our Midweek communion in the chapel at 9:30am every Tuesday. Numbers have grown slightly over the year, and we have 6-10 attending, some regularly and others when they can. This is a quiet, 35-40 minute, reflective, said service, alternating between the Common Worship and Book of Common Prayer liturgy, with a short reflection on the readings for the day. After the service we enjoy conversation and a drink at the Tuesday morning coffee morning.

Please do come along if you have not been before and enjoy a few peaceful moments with God in the middle of your busy week.

#### Home Communion

St Luke's offers Home Communion to anyone who is unable to attend a church service, because they are housebound or have long term ill health, and for those who are unwell and in hospital, or housebound, for a short period of time. It is always a privilege to share communion in this way. If you, or someone you know, would appreciate communion at home, either regularly or on an occasional basis, please speak to a member of the staff team. These Home Communions are carried out by a clergy member of staff.

#### Occasional Offices – Baptism, Weddings, Funerals

There are over half a million people a week who attend Anglican Churches in the UK for a baptism, wedding, or funeral. This is a wonderful opportunity for us, as a church, to share something of the gospel with people at significant times in their lives. It is also privilege to be able to offer pastoral support and compassion to people in their times of distress, and celebrate with them in times of joy. As a church we are called to be Christ's presence in these circumstances and we all have a role to play.

Many members of St Luke's, both staff and congregation, take this responsibility very seriously and carefully, offering their support and care for people at these key moments in life, as well as a warm welcome. May I encourage you to ensure a warm welcome, encouragement and support to those who come for baptisms to St Luke's. I want to particularly pay tribute to Jenny and Caryl in the church office, who are often the first point of call for people looking for help, love and guidance, and provide valuable advice, administrative support, and presence on the day of the service. Thank you also to our musicians, av team, wardens, and others who play such important roles on these occasions.

### Baptisms

During 2016 we conducted 6 baptisms, including 3 full immersion baptisms, and 1 Service of Thanksgiving. A full immersion baptism is always a great visual spectacle and a great aid to remind us of 'dying to self and rising to new life in Christ'.

### Weddings

There were 3 weddings in St Luke's during 2016, plus 1 Service of Blessing after a Registry Office ceremony. Chris and I also assisted with weddings in a neighbouring parish during their vacancy.

### Funerals

In 2016 'St Luke's' conducted a total of 17 funeral services, 5 held at St Luke's and the remainder at the crematorium. This was a higher figure than in recent years. As previously mentioned a number of these services were for well-known members of St Luke's, and others closely connected with families who are, or were, part of St Luke's. These included Alan Wheatland (member of St Luke's in 1960/70's), Jean Wiseman (regular at Heathdene Communion), Barbara Davies, Joyce Randall, Roger Bowen, and Graham Willis. We continue to pray for their family and friends, along with all those who have been bereaved this year, as they continue to mourn the death of their loved ones.

Please do pray for the important ministry of the 'occasional offices', and for all those involved in meeting the needs of individuals and families at these times of celebration and sadness in their lives. Please pray that through this ministry they may know the peace and hope of Christ.

Rev'd Canon Dave Middlebrook