

**And Mary said:**  
**“My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour”**  
(Luke 1:46-47)

Last Christmas we faced a surge in Covid infections and a last-minute tightening of restrictions that limited our festivities. This year, although there are differences, it feels like the same thing is happening. How do we respond?

Practically, our Christmas services will involve mask wearing. We will also have every other pew blocked off to increase social distancing and in light of yesterday’s advice to avoid unnecessary socialising we will not have any refreshments after the services. The aim is to offer people the Christmas service experience, whilst limiting the possible spread of disease. For those who feel uneasy coming out at present we will also continue to livestream the services.

How do we respond spiritually? The rapid spread of Omicron will no doubt provoke feelings of anxiety and disappointment as many celebrations and festivities are cut back. Yet, for us as Christians, Christmas is not primarily about food, family or fun, it is about Christ. It is an annual reminder to remember and reflect on God’s wonderful gift: His own beloved Son, God made man, God with us, God come to save us.

When like Mary, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our salvation, then we cannot but glorify and rejoice in him. Such an attitude lifts us beyond the temporary problems of our world to delight in the eternal truths of God’s great love for us.

*Paul Worledge*

## **This Weekend’s Services will be livestreamed:**

[Details of the Christmas Services available here.](#)

### **[Service of Remembrance – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm](#)**

- ❖ *If you would like to put forward someone to be remembered at this service, but cannot attend in person, then [please use this form](#).*

### **[Family Carol Service – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>, 3pm](#)**

Click the above links to access the livestream for the services. You can also use the link to watch the service at a later time.

## **Weekly Calendar**

### **Friday 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Christmas Baroque Concert** (at St. George’s church), 7:00-8:00pm

### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Daily Prayer** (at St. George's Church) - 9:30-10:00am

**Christmas Service: Remembrance** (St. Luke's Church) - 6:30pm-7:30pm

### **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Family Carol Service** (St. Luke's Church) - 3:00pm-4:00pm

## Monday 20<sup>th</sup>

Daily Prayer (St. Luke's Church) - 9:30-10:00am

## Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>

Daily Prayer (at St. George's Church) - 9:30-10:00am

## Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>

Daily Prayer (at St. Luke's Church) - 9:30-10:00am

Cafe4All (St. Luke's Church), Coffee and Chat for all - 10:00-11:30am.

## Friday 24<sup>th</sup>

Crib Service (at St. Luke's Church) - 4:00-4:45pm

Traditional Carol Service (St. Luke's Church) - 6:30pm-7:30pm

## Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>

Christmas Day All Age and Holy Communion (St. Luke's Church)

- 11:00am-12:00pm

## Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>

Eucharist (St. George's, 11:00am) – Acts 7:51-end – **Stephen, the First Martyr**

Check out the website for details of our Christmas services: [Christmas 2021](#).

## Tomorrow: Christmas Baroque Concert, Friday 17<sup>th</sup>, 7pm – St. George's Church

As part of our Christmas Tree Festival this year, we have a wonderful concert by Beachside Baroque. The group includes Petra one of St. George's amazing organists, a violinist and a tenor. There is free entry, but we are suggesting a donation of £10 each.

## Taking a Break

The following activities will be having a Christmas break:

- **Daily Prayer meetings.** The last one will be on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> and they will not restart until Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January.
- **Cafe4All.** The last one will be on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> and will be back on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January.
- **Play and Praise:** This has now stopped for Christmas holidays and will restart on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> January.

## Prayer Requests

Be assured I will do my best to check that people are happy for the requests to be shared before including them. Please pray for...

- Our Christmas Services that they will help people to rejoice in God's wonderful gift of Jesus.
- Give thanks for the successful Youth Led service last Sunday.
- Jean Hann who has been in hospital this week.
- Norah and family after the death of her daughter, Katrina.
- John Galer. Give thanks that the transfer went well last Monday and that he is now in Canterbury hospital. Pray for his continuing recovery.
- Ken Tipler that the pain caused by his bone cancer can be kept under control.

Please also continue to pray for: Flo Baldock, Nathan Court, Pauline Emptage, Shirley Crabb, Collette Judge, Barb (Gloria's daughter's friend), Jean Simmons, Rita Ryan and Joy Smithers.

## **Christmas Services - Mince Pies**

Thank you to all those who brought mince pies for the Christmas service. Sadly, as we have decided against refreshments after the Christmas services, we will no longer be using them. Please feel free to take a box away with you!

## **Christmas Collections - Tearfund**

As is traditional, during our services our collections are for Tearfund. This year, Tearfund are particularly asking for support for the Afghanistan Crisis Appeal.

Afghanistan is in the grip of a catastrophic food shortage – half of the population don't have enough to eat. Now, the bitter cold is setting in, with temperatures dropping to as little as -20°C.

The Disasters Emergency Committee, of which Tearfund is a part, have launched an urgent appeal.

Your support will help our local partners provide emergency food packages, as well as distribute winter kits to help families who have lost their homes stay warm. [Read more or give directly...](#)

## **Planned Giving - Responses**

Thank you to the 16 who replied to the 'Planned Giving' letters back in November. It is not too late to respond and it would be very helpful if you could consider doing so soon, so that we can gain a clearer picture of our financial situation both as we finish 2021 and look forward to 2022. If you plan to keep your giving at the same level, then a simple email to our treasurer will suffice: [treasurer@stlukeramsgate.org](mailto:treasurer@stlukeramsgate.org).

## **Volunteers for 2022**

One of the challenges of the different lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 is that many of our volunteer teams have needed rebuilding. This is an ongoing process. In particular, we could do with more volunteers for our audiovisual and host teams. If you are interested, then please let Paul know as soon as possible, so we can include you in rotas for early 2022.

## **Livestreaming on YouTube**

St. Luke's YouTube channel now has 155 followers and had 7,239 views during 2021 with 1,887 hours of video watched through the year.

## **Links to Share:**

### **Last Sunday's Sermon:**

Last Sunday's Sermon is available on YouTube, as a Podcast or a transcript:

#### [Spiritual Division \(Luke 3:7-18\)](#)

It is often said that our society is increasingly divided. But what are the divisions that really matter? John spoke to a very divided society, but challenged their views of which divisions mattered.

### **Bible Project Announcement**

The Bible Project produce educational videos that help to show how the whole story of the Bible fits together and points to Jesus. In this ten minute video you can learn about the development of the project and their plans for the coming year: [Bible Project Announcement](#)

Finally, let's remember to rejoice and glorify Christ this Christmas.

Yours in Christ,

Paul Worledge  
(Vicar, St. Luke's Ramsgate)