

The Way



Edition



ALL

Are Welcome

**St Luke's is a place to worship,
grow and to serve.**

**No matter where you are
on your**

spiritual journey,

no matter your age,

or your background,

we would love to invite you

to experience our

church family as we seek

God together.

St Luke's is a place where

everyone

finds a loving welcome.

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Special

Prayer News

Prayer Chain: The St Luke's On-Line Prayer Chain is still going strong and I would like to thank all those who are part of it for their faithfulness in praying for many needs during this past difficult year. I am sure that many people have benefited and are thankful. If you have a prayer request or you would like to be part of the Prayer Chain, please contact me by email or phone or speak to me at church.

Weekly Prayer: on our new weekly notice sheet there is a space for prayers. At the moment I am contributing to this but if you have a particular request, which doesn't involve people's names, please let me know. I am tending to stick to more general subjects as personal requests can be shared with the Prayer Chain.

Notes from the Editor

Please keep all the articles rolling in! Remember articles do not have to be three pages long as every little article helps make The Way more enjoyable for all to read.

A copy can be viewed on the church website by clicking on the month at:

www.stlukesrochester.co.uk

Hard copies are free but any donations are kindly accepted. All monies go to the Project Funds.

Don't forget if you need the article typed just give it to Danny Gibson or leave it in an envelope at the church marked "The Way".

Safety Notice *when leaving our* *Church by car*

When leaving the Church premises in a vehicle would you please ensure that you turn immediately left out of the entrance and access City Way via the traffic islands in front of the George Pub. The church has been in contact with the police regarding going straight across onto City Way from our entrance and have been advised, that for safety reasons, due to the speed of traffic coming down City Way, you are less likely to have an accident and technically you are going round a roundabout the wrong way and could be liable to prosecution.

Hall available in City Way

For classes, parties, playgroups, Reasonable rates. Please check for availability and book on-line using the form on the website at:

<http://www.stlukesrochester.co.uk>



Never Alone

How welcome are these sunny days of summer after the mixed bag of weather we have had over these last months! It's a real joy to be able to start thinking about having an occasional BBQ outside in the garden and to savour these long light evenings walking along riverside. Another reminder of summer besides Wimbledon, Ascot and the Ashes series are the Summer fayres and church anniversaries events that are being planned. Often at these times you get asked something along the lines of, "Can you have a word with God so that it doesn't rain?" To which my response was inevitably something like, "well, God's in a tough spot here, because while you're praying for it to not rain, the Water Companies and gardeners might be praying that it will rain!"

But isn't that often the way? Things are getting better for some, but others might be facing new struggles. But throughout it all, the good and the bad, one thing we can take comfort in, is that God journeys with us through it all. That's not to say that we should just stop moaning and get on with things, but that as we do go about our lives we can know that we're not alone

But, I think God knew there would be times when we would be so enveloped in fear and uncertainty that we would lose sight of His presence. He knew there would be circumstances so difficult we would often question whether He really loves us and is with us in our suffering.

Yet, it does not matter how chaotic the world may get or even appear to be now, it does not matter

what our eyes see nor what we may go through in life, what we may have to suffer or how long we may endure what we are enduring, we have assurances that God is with us!

In Isaiah 43:2, God says, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."

So whatever the path we travel on a daily basis, be it in the depth of life's valleys, in the mountain top experiences, on life's storm seas, in victory or defeat, in good or bad times, in sadness or gladness, in sickness or in good health, in hope or in despair, in the darkness of the midnight hour or in the light of day, we are not alone in our circumstances no matter how difficult they are. God is with you. He promises to meet you in your pain and to help you, saying, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

And so there is no reason to fear; you are not alone. God has been there "for every tear and every sorrow" (Psalm 56:8), and He will strengthen your heart and help you back to your feet, no matter where He finds you today, you are never alone. This is God's promise from Heaven to earth to all who trust and believe by faith in Him.

Robin

St Luke's Methodist Church Centre

Groups that use the Church

Contact details for groups can be found at Community Group Page on church website



St Luke's Pre-School

Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday & Friday
9am to 3.30pm
Thursday
9am to 1pm

Rainbows and Brownies Mondays

See Leaders for details



Medway Towns Bridge Club

Monday
At 7.30pm



Angie's Over 55s

Keep fit!

Every Tuesday/Thursday at 2pm

Blind Club
Tuesdays
2pm to 4pm

Apolostic Faith Group UK

Tuesday
7pm to 9pm

Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs Explorers and Scouts

Wednesday
5.15pm to 9pm



Bible Study and House Group

Wednesday at 7pm
at Fran's



Homemakers

Thursday at 2pm



Singing Choir

Thursday
between 7pm to 9pm

Craft Club

Every Friday between
10.30am and 1.30pm



Coffee Morning

Last Saturday in month
At 10am



Pentecostal Church Group

Every Sunday between 2-4pm



Sunday 9th July

Week 1

Prayer

is like a Telephone?

Revd Robin Selmes

Sunday 16th July

Week 2

Praying through

tough times

Oscar Siu

Sunday 23rd July

Week 3

The Power

of praying together

Lesley Trott

Sunday 30th July

Week 4

The Prayer

answering God

Tony Brown

Services— June to August 2023

Minister/Preacher	4th June Mandy Harris	11th June Revd Robin Selmes Holy Communion Fran Shepherd Jean Wahanchuk Tony Wheeler Jan Sellings Val Gibson
Duty Steward	Ian Smith	
Duty Steward	Deborah Ingram	
Reader	Rosemary Moss	
Door Steward	Derek Brighton	
Flowers	Ian Smith	
Minister/Preacher	18th June Revd Gareth West Church Anniversary	25th June Local Arrangements Jean Wahanchuk Fran Shepherd Tim Crouch Victoria Odugbesi Deborah Ingram
Duty Steward	Ian Smith	
Duty Steward	Jean Wahanchuk	
Reader	Jan Sellings	
Door Steward	Brenda Munchin	
Flowers	Jean Wahanchuk	
Minister/Preacher	2nd July Trish Robb	9th July Revd Robin Selmes Holy Communion Deborah Ingram Ian Smith Sylvia Kane Jean Wahanchuk Deborah Ingram
Duty Steward	Ian Smith	
Duty Steward	Fran Shepherd	
Reader	Derek Brighton	
Door Steward	Angie Rastall	
Flowers	Val Gibson	
Minister/Preacher	16th July Oscar Siu	23rd July Lesley Trott Jean Wahanchuk Fran Shepherd Roger Eastwood Derek Brighton Victoria Odugbesi
Duty Steward	Fran Shepherd	
Duty Steward	Jean Wahanchuk	
Reader	David Warrington	
Door Steward	Val Gibson	
Flowers	Ian Smith	

Services— June to August 2023

	30th July	6th August
Minister/Preacher	Tony Brown	Kasongo
Duty Steward	Fran Shepherd	Deborah Ingram
Duty Steward	Deborah Ingram	Jean Wahanchuk
Reader	Roger Eastwood	Jan Sellings
Door Steward	Jan Sellings	Brenda Munchin
Flowers	Jean Wahanchuk	Val Gibson
	13th August	20th August
Minister/Preacher	Roger Byard	Revd Robin Selmes
		Holy Communion
Duty Steward	Jean Wahanchuk	Ian Smith
Duty Steward	Fran Shepherd	Deborah Ingram
Reader	Roger Eastwood	Derek Brighton
Door Steward	Victoria Odugbesi	Angie Rastall
Flowers	Ian Smith	Deborah Ingram
	27th August	
Minister/Preacher	Local Arrangements	
Duty Steward	Fran Shepherd	
Duty Steward	Ian Smith	
Reader	Tony Wheeler	
Door Steward	Jean Wahachuk	
Flowers	Jean Wahachuk	

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Summer Fair on July 15th

We are holding our summer fair on July 15th. Details have yet to be finalised, but we expect Chris and Martin to perform their saxophone duet and the Singing Choir will also be taking part.

Choir Concert on September 23rd

The Singing Choir, who were the highlight of last year's summer fair, are putting on the concert. This should be a real treat, so put this date in your diary. Further details will be posted nearer the date, so keep an eye out.

Beetle Drive on Saturday 21st October

INSPIRATIONAL CHRISTIANS CORRIE ten BOOM

Corrie ten Boom was born in Haarlem in the Netherlands on April 15th 1892 and was the youngest of four children. Her Grandfather owned a Watch-making and repair shop and the family lived in the rooms upstairs. They were a devout Christian family who did much to help those in need in their community. Corrie's father Casper took over the business and trained Corrie to become a licensed Watchmaker in 1922.

Corrie was an excellent crafts-woman but also maintained a very strong Christian faith from an early age. Her life seemed rather uneventful and to her disappointment, she remained a spinster. It turned out however that God had lots more in store for her than watch-making.

In May 1940 the Nazis invaded the Netherlands. Now aged 48, Corrie witnessed much suffering of those being persecuted and she felt she must do something to help.

With the agreement of her family they decided to use the family home as a refuge for anyone needing to be rescued. It was a good location, as the constant flow of customers to the shop provided a distraction and aroused no suspicions from the German or Dutch Authorities.

A secret room was constructed behind a false wall in Corrie's bedroom. This became the hiding place for Jews and members of the Resistance being hunted by the Authorities.

It was a small space holding up to six people. There was an alarm buzzer in the house to warn fugitives to hide quickly when any security searches were being made in the locality. It could be a tense time if Germans were entering the building to make a search. There wasn't much time to hide and silence was essential until they received the all clear from Corrie.

Sadly and inevitably on 28th February 1944 Corrie and her family were betrayed by a Gestapo

"plant" pretending to be a fugitive. They were arrested along with others who had subsequently entered the shop, 30 people in total. They never found the people in their hiding place.

They were all imprisoned and interrogated. Her 84 year old father was told he could face the death penalty for saving Jews to which he responded "It would be an honour to give my life for God's chosen people." He died shortly afterwards and Corrie and her sister Betsie were deported to Ravensbruck Concentration Camp. Luckily they were able to stay together until December 1944 when Betsie died. Just days before her death Betsie had said to Corrie "There is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still. They will listen to us Corrie because we have been here." These words have been quoted many times since.

Miraculously, 12 days later Corrie was released through a clerical error, which saved her from certain death.

Whilst she had been in the camp she arranged worship services in the evening after their hard days of work. She obtained a smuggled-in Bible. They were nervous of being caught and punished at first but no guards ever came near night after night so their confidence grew. The text was in Dutch but there were people to translate the readings into French, Polish, Russian and Czech.

In recognition of her bravery hiding Jews from arrest and deportation she received the Yad Vashem Remembrance Authority as one of the "Righteous among the Nations" in 1967. She was also knighted by the Queen of the Netherlands in recognition of her work during the war.

After her release Corrie went on to become an International Public Speaker and Missionary between 1944 and 1977, sharing God's forgiveness with people and in places scarred by the events of war. Her greatest witness was Forgiveness.

Much of her writings dwell on themes of love and forgiveness, qualities which she worked out so powerfully in her own life. In her own words : "We have nothing to fear because Jesus is Victor and He will never let us down. With Jesus even in our darkest moments the best remains

and the very best is yet to be."

Corrie died on her 91st birthday in 1983 at her home in California where she had lived since 1977.
Roger E



SATURDAY 15TH JULY FROM
11AM TO 3PM

St Luke's Methodist Church Centre, City Way,
Rochester ME1 2BQ



And many other stalls.
Performances to include
Singing Choir, Folk Group and
more.

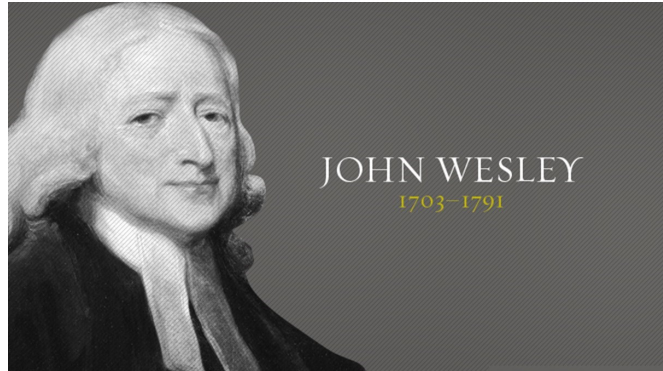
All proceeds to
St Luke's Church Funds and Chosen
annual charity which this year is

"Re-Engage"



“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”

-John Wesley
(1703-1791)



Tribute to John Wesley

You did all the good you could
Just like our master JESUS CHRIST did
Thank you for showing us the way

By all the means you could
Just like our master JESUS CHRIST did
Thank you for showing us the way

In all the ways you could
Just like our master JESUS CHRIST did
Thank you for showing us the way

In all the places you could
Just like our master JESUS CHRIST did
Thank you for showing us the way

At all the times you could
Just like our master JESUS CHRIST did
Thank you for showing us the way

To all the people you could
Just like our master JESUS CHRIST did
Thank you for showing us the way

As long as you ever could
Just like our master JESUS CHRIST did
Thank you for showing us the way

Sylvia Kane - May 23

Local Arrangements

As we all know by now, Local Arrangements are Sunday services when there isn't a Preacher planned to lead and we have to put something together ourselves. Sometimes, if we ask nicely, we can persuade someone to come and take the service as in the case of Paul Barrett, a lay reader at St Matthew's, Borstal who was invited by me following a conversation at Food Bank. Other times, with the use of technology, we can watch and listen to Robin preaching a sermon on-line, which shows just how far we have come since the pandemic!

However, with the increase in the number of Local Arrangements, there are times when we just need to work something out for ourselves. So far Ian and I have been managing to do this but we

would like more people to become involved in sharing ideas and taking part. For instance, it would be good to have people who would be happy to lead the prayers - either improvised or read - and Robin is putting together Offertory Prayers, which anyone can read at that time in the service.

We are always on the lookout for resources so if you have something you have read, which has inspired you spiritually, please feel free to share it with us. Basically, if you have anything to share please speak to Ian or myself and we will see if we can incorporate it into a future LA.

Local Arrangements are here to stay and maybe they are not a bad thing because it makes us think about how we can share in all that God is doing in our lives instead of just listening to someone else!

Fran

St Luke's Wildflower Garden

Our beautiful bees and butterflies are in decline, and it has been suggested that we create a wildflower haven using the lawn nearest the chemist. Pre-school are going to plant tree/shrubs in the gap between the front wall and the current hedge. The cubs are working toward their Gardening badge and will be planting wildflowers/seeds in the lawn.

In the autumn we hope to plant bulbs for Spring. If you would like to donate seeds etc please let the stewards know.

Do we have anyone who enjoys woodwork? A hedgehog house would be a lovely addition to the garden.

Deborah

Beautiful Words

- Prayer is not a "spare wheel" that you pull out when in trouble; it is a "steering wheel" that directs us in the right path throughout life.
- Do you know why a car's **WINDSCREEN** is so large and the rear view mirror is so small? Because our **PAST** is not as important as our **FUTURE**. So look ahead and move on.
- Friendship is like a **BOOK**, it takes a few seconds to burn, but it takes years to write.
- A blind person asks St Peter: "Can there be anything worse than losing eye sight?". Yes, "losing your vision".
- When you pray for others, God listens to you and blesses them; and sometime, when you are safe and happy, remember that someone has prayed for you.
- **WORRYING** does not take away tomorrow's **TROUBLES**; it takes away today's **PEACE**.
- All things in life are temporary. If going well enjoy it, they will not last forever. If going wrong don't worry, they can't last long either.

A DELIVERY IN SOHO

March 1956 and he had been doing the same delivery for the past four years. Dean Street, Frith Street and Carlisle Place – all in the heart of Soho. He had taken over the delivery area from a now-retired postie who had been doing the same delivery since the end of the war for eleven years.

He enjoyed the delivery area. Typical Soho – night clubs, bars, restaurants, strip clubs, dirty book shops and the occasional ‘Lady of the Night’. Not that he was actually interested in anything like that. It was the feeling in the area. The noise the smells, the people who said hello to him each morning. It was a magic place and he was a small part of it – a living, breathing part of it.

He collected the mail for his section of the Soho ‘walk’ (the proper name for a post person’s delivery area). He began to sort the letters into the delivery order on his sorting frame. As he sorted each letter into its place he was able to imagine the shops and people the letter was destined for.

Lifting one letter he was surprised to see the address ‘5, Richmond Dwellings, Soho’. It was surprising because in the years that he had been doing this delivery he had never had a letter addressed to Richmond Dwellings before. He knew that this building, a block of Victorian flats, was deserted. His predecessor had told him that the building had been empty since at least the end of the war.

He visualised the building. It was three stories high and was in a shocking condition. The windows were so dirty that he had never been able to see through them apart from one on the second floor which was half open. Pigeons had been using the windowsill to perch on and the sill was about two inches thick with bird poo.

After setting the letters in order and putting elastic bands round them he placed them in his delivery bag and set off. It was only a 10 minute walk from the sorting office to the beginning of his delivery area.

Nothing untoward happened at first and at last he came to Richmond Dwellings which was quite near the end of his ‘walk’. As he arrived outside the building he immediately saw there was no letter box and no doorbell on the filthy paint chipped door. The knocker looked like it was welded to the door there was so much muck round it.

He knocked on the door with his hand. A dull sound was all he heard, but as he lifted his hand away he noticed the door move open a little bit. ‘Well,’ he thought, ‘as it’s open I had better see if there is anybody around’.

Entering the front hall he was greeted by a horrible smell and dust flew everywhere as the wind blew in behind him. There were two doors either side of the hall with the numbers 1 and 2 in rusty door numbers.

‘Better go upstairs and find number 5. Maybe someone has moved in’. With much trepidation and with the smell getting worse he began to ascend the stairs to the next floor. The stairs felt unsafe and the banister swayed alarmingly as he reached the next floor where the doors, numbered 3 and 4 greeted him. These two doors, like the ones downstairs, looked like they had not been opened in years. He went up the rickety stairs to where he hoped number 5 was. On reaching the head of the stairs he saw there was only one door – number 5 – and it was open.

‘Hello,’ he called out, ‘Anybody at home?’ there was no answer. So taking a couple of small steps he entered the short entrance hall. Intrigued by what he had found he took a couple more steps and opened the door into one of the rooms that led off from the hall. On entering he saw that it was the place with the open window and pigeon poo. Looking quickly around he saw an old worn carpet with holes in it covering the floorboards. There were bits of old, old furniture, again covered in bird droppings and dust with many cobwebs hanging of them and many broken bits.

‘I’m not going any further in,’ he thought, ‘I’ll leave the letter on the door mat’.

As he turned round to head back to the front door to accomplish this he noticed something odd in the room on the floor under the window. Lying on the floor was a heap of bones – a skeleton.

With a squeak of fear he jumped back and collided with the door frame. He fell forward and ended up lying on the floor a few feet from the pile of bones . . . and they were moving. He looked again and it was just bits of material or something like that blowing in the breeze from the open window.

‘Get a hold of yourself, Johnny, what on Earth am I supposed to do?’ he asked himself. ‘I need to report this to the Rozzers, but I doubt that there is a phone here that works. I think there’s one at the end of Dean Street.’

He had a quick look round to see if there was a phone, which, of course, there wasn’t. So he began to trudge down the stairs again until he reached the front door – which was shut. He tried the handle, but nothing happened. It was stuck fast. He tried shouting and banging on the door – all to no avail.

‘I know,’ he thought. ‘I can go back upstairs and shout out of the window.’

So once again he climbed up the stairs, trying all the other flat doors as he went. All were shut and locked tight. He reached the flat with the skeleton and went over to the window. Imagine his horror when he looked out of it. Gone was the 1950’s buildings he had got used to, gone was the clear blue sky when he had set out on his delivery. It looked Victorian outside with horse drawn carriages plodding along the street and urchins loitering around. There was the sight and smell of smog hanging over everything.

He gasped, ‘What’s happening, what’s happening to me?’ Leaning out as far as he could without getting the bird’s mess on his blue uniform he shouted out

to the people below, but it was if they couldn’t hear him. They just carried on their way ignoring him completely.

April 2005 was a lovely month. I had been doing this particular delivery for quite a few months now and it was fun. Happy people in Soho who always had the time of day to talk to you if you weren’t in too much of a hurry. I had picked up my bundles of letters that had been machine sorted and collected a few small packets and set out to walk to my delivery area. Carefully I went along Dean Street and Frith Street until I reached the end. I was just about to go down Carlisle Place when I noticed that I still had one more letter for Frith Street. It was addressed to 5 Richmond Dwellings. That was the old deserted building that I had never had a letter for before. I walked up to the door looking for a letter box or a bell. There wasn’t either and the door knocker looked as if it hadn’t been used in a million years.

I noticed that the door was slightly ajar. ‘Perhaps someone has just moved in,’ I thought. Entering I was struck by how dusty and cold the place was and along with the awful smell I thought nobody in their right mind would want to live here. As I entered the foyer the wind blew the door shut behind me.

There didn’t seem to be anywhere to leave the letter in the entrance hall so I looked round at the two doors either side. Flats 1 and 2. I set off up the stairs. The next floor had numbers 3 and 4. ‘Oh, great,’ I said to myself, ‘up we go another flight’.

Reaching the next floor I saw that the door to flat 5 was slightly open. ‘Anybody home?’ I called out. There was no reply. I pushed the door open a little and gasped with shock. There were two skeletons lying by the window. One had the remains of an old postman’s uniform on it. Anon.

Circuit Meeting May 16th 2023

Here are some of the main points from a recent Circuit Meeting, which I attended on Zoom:

- The Circuit accounts for 2021-2022 have been audited and were approved by the meeting.
- All assessments for 2022-2023 have been received and the accounts are on budget at present.
- Budget for 2023-2024 - working on a deficit in the region of £60,000, which will have to be found from Circuit Reserves as there has been a significant drop in grants from Connexion and District.
- Ministerial Staffing - Rev Gill Le Boutillier-Scott will be moving on in September 2024 and will not be replaced. Re-Invitation/Stationing process has begun for Rev Naomi Oates and Deacon Elizabeth Harfleet. Rev Robin Selmes will take his sabbatical from February/March-May 2024.
- Lay Employment - Pioneer Mission Enabler/Lay Pastor Bart Woodhouse, who has been working in the Circuit for 18 years, has found a calling to candidate for the Church of England. He is likely to leave us to enter into training in September 2023. He won't know the outcome of his application until late June; we are asked to keep him and his family in our prayers. We will not be replacing him but looking at ways to continue his good work across the Circuit and explore possibilities for leadership at the Peninsula churches.
- Following recent quinquennial inspections it was noted that several churches are struggling with highlighted repairs. The question, as always, is how do churches continue to maintain their buildings?
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training for relevant people needs to be completed by 31st December 2023.
- There was a conversation in breakout rooms at this point in the meeting, to discuss what challenges we felt our churches were facing. Some of the main responses were - age, with older congregations and fewer younger people; lack of volunteers, with existing ones overstretched; declining incomes and increasing costs, particularly of buildings; lack of commitment.
- Churches with 12 members or less for more than 12 months are deemed to become a class of another church. Those with more than 12 which are struggling aren't necessarily going to close. There is time to consider other possibilities eg joining together with another church (church on two sites) or merging membership.
- There is to be an Away Day at St Luke's on Saturday 16th September for all Circuit meeting reps and Treasurers to discuss this question further.
- Church Councils are asked to have a conversation about creative solutions, including talking with those churches (circuit or ecumenical) in their local area.

Fran Shepherd
Church Rep.

Homemakers Celebrating the Coronation



Memories

CITY WAY METHODIST CHURCH,
ROCHESTER.

The
OPENING CEREMONY
will be performed by the
RT. HON. LORD ROCHESTER, C.M.G.
On **SATURDAY, 1st DECEMBER, 1951**
AT 3 P.M.
followed by
SERVICE of DEDICATION
Preacher: Rev. Dr. HAROLD ROBERTS, M.A.

4.30—5.45 p.m. Teas will be served in Little St. Margaret's
Church Hall (200 yds. away) by kind permission of the Vicar.

6.30 p.m. **EVENING MEETING**
Chairman: R. S. CAMPLING, Esq.
Speaker: Rev. Dr. HAROLD ROBERTS, M.A.

Collections for Building Fund. Please Come and Support Us.

**ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE OPENING AND
DEDICATION OF**

**ST. LUKE'S METHODIST CHURCH
ROCHESTER**

SATURDAY, 21st MARCH 1964 AT 3 P.M.

to be opened by

MRS. J. E. TREVITHICK

to be dedicated by

The Chairman of the London South-East
Methodist District

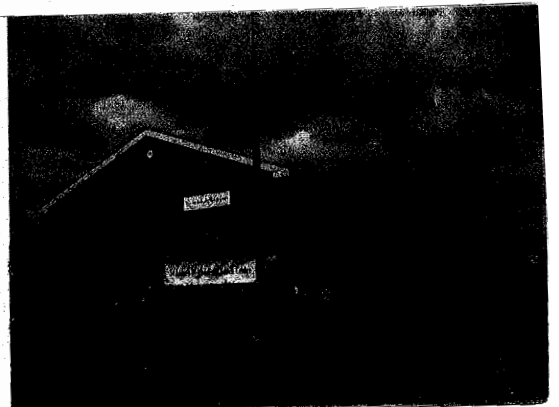
The Rev. F. RONALD DUCKER
B.COM.

sermon by

The Rev. F. RONALD DUCKER
B.COM.



2014
*St Luke's Methodist
Church Centre
50th Anniversary*



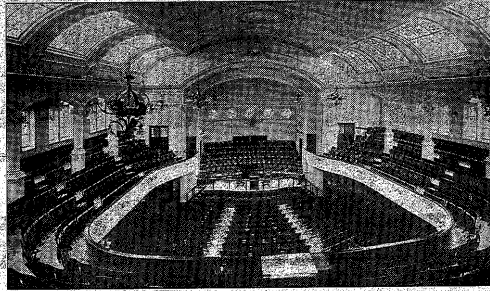
Memories

From hymns to David Bowie strutting his stuff

In February 1966, Chatham Borough Council made an investment which was to bring pop music, comedy shows, orchestral concerts and pantomimes to Medway. It bought the Methodist Central Hall on the High Street for £40,000.

Had it not done so the Towns would have nowhere to host major performances. But the Hall, now the Central Theatre, needed relatively little converting. With its sloping auditorium and horseshoe seating arrangement capable of hosting an audience of 1,600, it was virtually ready-made.

Converted from a former London and County Bank premises, the Hall was built at the start of the Edwardian era, and in the early days Sunday evening congregations filled every seat. Up till then there had been nowhere for Medway Methodists to meet in large numbers, and they hired



The Central Hall as it was when 1600 Methodists attended services there on a Sunday night

Chatham Town Hall instead. Ironically that building has now become a theatre too.

With an eye to the large numbers of socially deprived people in the Towns, the Methodists installed large coppers in their building which could be used for making soup to feed the poor in harsh winters. It became a

regular soup kitchen during the First World War, and a canteen during the Second.

With the coming of the welfare state its social function diminished, as did its congregations. By the time of its sale it would be doing well if 100 people turned up for the Sunday evening service.

New purposes were sought.

The Hall staged annual concerts by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and it was hired out for school speech days. Clearly, as a church, it had outrun its time. "The Methodists wanted us to take over the Hall to be used for the good of the community," said Alderman FB Semple, chairman of the general purposes committee, once the sale had gone through.

Since then top entertainers have performed where Wesleyan ministers once belted out the gospel.

David Bowie came in 1973, offering, perhaps, a somewhat different creed.

I recall interviewing Harry Secombe and Acker Bilk there. The annual pantomime has always won massive acclaim from Medway audiences, featuring, as it does, young local performers as well as big stars.

Concert

In aid of the Church Building Project Funds
by

Heather Gallagher and Brian Davies



St Luke's Methodist Church Centre
Saturday 24th February 2018
At 7.30pm

The Concert will run as announced
by Heather and Brian.

Please turn the page for the words
for community songs



Church Leaders & Contacts Page

Minister	Revd Robin Selmes
Church Steward	Jean Wahanchuk
Church Steward	Deborah Ingram
Church Steward	Fran Shepherd
Church Steward and Worship Leader	Ian Smith
Church Notices	Danny Gibson
Church Secretary	Fran Shepherd
Gift Aid Secretary	Sylvia Kane
Baptism Roll Secretary	Jan Sellings
Magazine Editor	Danny Gibson
Hall Bookings	Jean Wahanchuk
Property & Finance Chairman	Revd Robin Selmes
Church Treasurer	Sylvia Kane
Church Pastoral	Derek Brighton

Details of Groups that use the church can be found via the church
website
details below

City Way, Rochester, Kent ME1 2BQ

Website: <http://www.stlukesrochester.co.uk/>

Church e-mail Address: stlukes2014@gmail.com

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