**18 October 2020 Luke the Evangelist Reading and Reflection**

**Collect**

Almighty God, you called Luke the physician, whose praise is in the gospel, to be an evangelist and physician of the soul: by the grace of the Spirit and through the wholesome medicine of the gospel, give your Church the same love and power to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, Amen.

**First Reading Isaiah 35.3-6**

3Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.
4Say to those who are of a fearful heart, ‘Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.’ 5Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 6then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

**Gospel Luke 10.1-9**

1The Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. 2He said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. 3Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, “Peace to this house!” 6 And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; 9 cure the sick who are there, and say to them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.”’

**Reflection by Vanda Perrett**

Good health is something we can take for granted and yet we see it also as a blessing. Think of the toasts to "Good Health" and the wishes on cards for birthday and Christmas, often the wish is for good health in these. Recently good health has become more of a focus as we attempt to keep safe by washing hands and wearing masks, sanitising, and keeping a social distance. The pandemic has changed how we live, we are becoming much more proactive in our own health.

During my curacy I was a part time chaplain in a cottage hospital. While I was there, we had some amazing experiences, and I witnessed first hand the dedication and love that was shown to those who were ill AND their family and friends. This year I spent a few days in hospital on IV antibiotics, and the same care, dedication and love was shown, although of course the PPI and challenges of Covid19 meant that there were some differences in how the care and love was able to be offered.

To my mind in this period, when we are all being so incredibly careful, the impact on hospital staff and the NHS system, dentistry, care homes and whole health organisations (to include vets too!) is massive. They are all expected to do their jobs, to continue to care and support, to maintain the usual daily work lives, but added to this already full load is the additional measures of sanitising, washing even more, wearing PPI and then when the shift ends, the challenges of getting back to the things we all need to do which are taking so much longer!

While it seems right that the time had come to stop clapping for the NHS, I wonder if we have also forgotten the challenges for our health care professionals continue, and living in the threat of a rising infection rate while is challenging and a bit scary for us, what might it be like for those in health care. It seems to be like living in a potential war zone, never quite knowing when the attack will arrive, trying to be prepared for an unknown future while managing the fallout of the last six months of delayed appointments and diagnosis.

On 18th October we celebrate St Luke, the doctor who wrote the gospel of Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles. Traditionally it is time when we remember those involved in healing and pray for them and all who suffer. This St Luke's tide might we focus on praying for our nation, for the world during the pandemic, but more importantly to pray for those who work in the world of health care in its broadest sense. Jesus gave a few simple directions about how we are to live, including the command for us to "go and heal the sick"

Matthew 10 v 8 says: "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give." For me some of these directions are rather more challenging than others, raise the dead and drive out demons may be out of your comfort zone, but everyone can make a stab at healing the sick, by living in a way that cares about the health of all those around us, by caring for and supporting the healthcare professionals, and by praying for them too. We can work together for the healing needed in this world. And we can start by following the examples of the healthcare teams and show them the same care, dedication and love that they show to us? In doing this we shall help the kingdom of God to come near.

**Prayers by Bridget Hugh-Jones**

Let us pray for the church and the world and let us thank God for His goodness:

Almighty God, today we remember and give thanks for your holy apostle Luke …. the beloved friend of St Paul.. the beloved physician.. the author of a gospel as well as the Acts of the Apostles. His writings give us the story of salvation which we have received in Jesus Christ, and he makes it clear that this salvation is for all, regardless of race, colour, gender, creed. In faithfully detailing the humanity of Jesus, he also shows us the divinity of Jesus, and shows us the way to allow ourselves to be led by the spirit in all things. You called him to be an evangelist and physician, both of the body and of the soul…give us grace to follow his example and to care for others as you care for us.

Lord in your mercy… hear our prayer.

We pray for the church throughout the world… for those who can only worship in fear or in secret …giving thanks for the freedom which we take so much for granted. We pray for our Archbishop Justin, our Bishop Philip, for all in ministry within this diocese, for our Rector Vanda and all who serve in our benefice. May our churches be places of peace and welcome as we adapt to our unusual circumstances.

Lord in your mercy… hear our prayer.

Loving Father, we pray for all who are working to alleviate suffering …for all doctors who walk in the footsteps of St Luke as they struggle with this pandemic and the havoc that it has caused. We pray for all those who put their own lives in danger in order to care for others.. all those who look after others in so many different ways … for scientists working to find a cure …. We pray too for those who make decisions about the future and how best to minimise the health risks for us all … for politicians and local authorities …. for councils and health workers … and for those with responsibility for the young, for colleges, for schools, for nurseries. As we all feel our way through these strange times, help us to keep our eyes firmly on you, always to be kind, to be aware of the needs of others, to be patient with the anxious and over worried, and to live as you would have us live.

Lord in your mercy…. Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for our homes and families… may our homes be places of grace and goodness… of hospitality and holiness… of hope and love. We pray for families that are divided, whether through geographical distance, disagreement, or through enforced distance during this pandemic. Help us to be good examples of Christian love to all who surround us.

Lord in your mercy…. Hear our prayer

Loving heavenly Father, we hold before you all who are sick or suffering in any way… for those suffering from Covid, whether physically, emotionally or financially … for those anxious for their loved ones.. for those with other ailments who are waiting for treatment or for test results… for the worried and fearful and those with emotional or mental illness… We pray for all in hospital and for all who are ill at home. In a moment of silence, we hold before you any known to ourselves in need of your healing touch upon their lives.

Lord in your mercy…. Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, receive into your loving arms all who have died in the faith of Jesus Christ… may they be united with you in eternal glory.

Lord in your mercy…hear our prayer.

Father as we give you thanks for St Luke, who was both physician and evangelist, help us to follow his example, to work as evangelists for the gospel and to care for the health and well-being both of body and soul of all those around us.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

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