



St Marylebone
Parish Church

St. Luke 2020 8.30 am

2 Timothy 4.5-15 & Luke 10.1-7

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

When the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, visited us a few years ago to deliver the first Sir George Pinker Lecture, he reminded us that many of London's great medical institutions have their roots sunk deeply into the rich soil of active Christian faith.

St. Thomas' and St. Bartholomew's are just two of London's ancient hospitals which bear witness to their Christian foundation, and the commitment of the Church to the work of healing and wholeness still underpins the health services in many countries and on many continents.

God is the Great Physician and God's will is for *all* to be made whole and to find their healing in him.

Disease, pain, and death entered the world through the Fall; through creation turning away from its creator and choosing to go its own way without God, but even the Fall does not derail God's perfect eternal plan that creation is made whole and finds its reconciliation and healing in him.

The *Old* Testament story of creation's Fall and of a people trying to find its way back to God through the Judges, the Law and the Prophets, finds its completeness in the *New* Testament story of God's searching, prevenient love becoming incarnate in Christ Jesus who makes us one with our creator again and who opens up for *everyone* and *everything* – even the Covid-189 virus – access to wholeness and healing.

Today, as we celebrate the Feast Day of St. Luke, just yards from Harley Street, the most famous medical address anywhere in the world, we do well to remind ourselves again that Christianity is founded on a principle, not just of well-being, but of making the broken whole and of bringing people into the abundant life of the Kingdom.

This is what attracted St Luke to Jesus.

In Jesus, St Luke found someone whose very presence alongside the sick, the disabled, the broken - and even the dead, made them whole.

Someone whose living and dying and living again proclaimed for all who had ears to hear and eyes to see that God's purpose for creation was not decay and death, brokenness and worthlessness, but a creative flourishing in which, and by which and through which, creation itself is restored and made whole.

St Luke saw that people and situations were changed when they encountered Jesus. He himself was changed by *his* encounter with Jesus and St Luke's life's work as an Apostle and Evangelist was to make this life-changing encounter known

as widely as it lay in his power to as many people in as many places as he could.

St Luke's whole life in Christ was shaped by the Gospel, by the good news of what God the Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit, was doing in and through Christ Jesus.

As a Disciple and as an Apostle; as someone whose own life found its wholeness and healing and meaning and hope, through meeting Jesus, St Luke knew that wherever men and women encountered the risen, living Jesus, their lives could be transformed *too*, that they, like him, could become whole.

Today, here at St Marylebone, the "Doctor's Church" we try through our hospital chaplaincies, the work of our HCC's psychiatrists and psychotherapists, through our NHS primary care practice, through our schools and our links with universities - to bring something of God's wholeness and healing to the lives of those whom we encounter; to introduce men and women to Jesus, or rather, to introduce Jesus to them.

As we remember St Luke, the Beloved Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, we pray for God's grace to follow his example and we ask for his prayers, that we might find our wholeness and healing and that we might help others to find it too. Amen.