



spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

Journeying with Luke

issue 57

advent 1 to transfiguration

30 november 2025 to 15 february 2026

A resource with a Scottish flavour for
Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools,
Junior Churches and Youth Leaders.

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introduction

Welcome to the first issue in a two year series comprising eight issues of Spill the Beans through which we are embarking on a journey through the texts written by Saint Luke: both his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

Lukan Lectionary

While working through our previous Word and World Lectionary cycle the Spill the Beans Resource Team was already working on the next steps and had long discussed the possibility of focussing for a year on one Gospel. There was not, amongst us, a great desire at this stage to return to one of the other lectionaries like the RCL or Narrative, so we started initially to work on a way to cover all of the text of Luke's Gospel.

As we completed that work it seemed natural to continue on with Luke's second book as these are two parts of one larger work. While seeking to include every verse of each book during the year we did need to do some work in order to also meaningfully mark the main seasons, so we have split how we approach the text into sections. This is particularly noticeable, of course, when journeying through the Gospel as we take a season to travel the Road to Golgotha before then taking a long season on the Ministry of Jesus. We hope that this makes some logical sense.

We keep the format for the layout of the issues as we have used in past years, which we hope encourages the development of intergenerational worship.

See [pages 4-6](#) for the details of this new lectionary so that you can plan ahead.

Intergenerational Worship

Spill the Beans has always been rooted in the power of story telling. Story binds generations together. In that shared bond of story lies the creative space for building relationships between generations. Using different ways to engage with the story recognises the variety amongst us all: some learn by listening, others by doing, others by creating. All are valuable and a part of our shared worship of God.

We are encouraging you to experiment as we will be doing with ways to worship intergenerationally in an authentic and inclusive manner. To that end we are still providing a rich variety of resources but grouped by how they help us **'tell the story'**, **'explore the story'**, and **'live the story'**. Mix and match, rewrite, contextualise for your own setting, try something different, and have fun with it! Please do give us feedback.

There are many resources online to help think more deeply about intergenerational worship. A simple but very helpful summary is provided by the Methodist Church, copied below.

Intergenerational worship IS about:

- **building relationships**—offering a key time for people to get to know each other better and build a sense of connection;
- **a time of worship and learning that is offered in a simplified and participatory way**—simple does not mean shallow; rather it enables everyone to contribute and receive in a meaningful and appropriate way;
- **providing an inclusive experience and a sense of belonging**—helping everyone of all abilities to feel part of the body of Christ, whatever their experience;
- **being a bridge**—not only between ages but also for those who are exploring what being part of a church means. This relaxed service style can provide a comfortable place for some to discover more about Christianity;
- **encouragement, nurture and inclusiveness**—it is a means by which faith can grow and, in turn, inform life-making or life-changing decisions;
- **exploring vocation**—an opportunity to discover and develop gifts and calling.

Intergenerational worship is NOT about:

- limiting the richness of resources used;
- oversimplifying the message or adding a children's talk into the 'usual' service;
- unstructured and chaotic worship;
- children having token responsibilities for roles and participation;
- limiting potential to explore faith and discipleship together;
- nuclear families exclusively worshipping together.

Information

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Sleepless Nights Publications

Cover artwork is an adapted detail from "St Luke drawing the Virgin" by Rogier van der Weyden, 15th century.

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Please remember you can use the bookmark system within Adobe Reader to quickly move around this document.

the team

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Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

ATAS	All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need
CG	Common Ground
CH4	Church Hymnary, 4th Edition
GTG	Glory To God: The Presbyterian Hymnal
GWA	God Welcomes All (Supplement to CH4)
JP	Junior Praise
MP	Complete Mission Praise
STF	Singing The Faith
WGP	Wild Goose Publications



lukan lectionary

Journeying With The Doctor

Welcome to our new lectionary based around the texts of Saint Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles.

It is not possible just to work our way through the gospel chronologically, as there are inevitably some diversions at different points in the year to align with the liturgical calendar. So we have tried to approach this a little differently with some major themes that we will explore: the beginning birth narrative, the road to Golgotha, Holy Week and the Passion, and finally Jesus' life and ministry. We are going to be reading every verse of the gospel during the year.

For the Acts of the Apostles, Luke's sequel, we have tried to follow chronologically the events as Luke records them

as much as possible. Again, we will be reading every verse of Acts over the course of the year.

You can find the complete plan for both years in the following table.

Come join us on this journey with the good Doctor Luke.

Date	Liturgical	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
LUKAN LECTIONARY YEAR 1: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE				
The Beginning				
30 Nov 25	Advent 1	Luke 1:1-4	Joshua 22:4-6	The Setup; The Lord's Commandment
7 Dec 25	Advent 2	Luke 1:5-38	Isaiah 9:2-7	Births foretold; People walking in darkness
14 Dec 25	Advent 3	Luke 1:39-56	Psalms 146	The Magnificat; Praise for God's help
21 Dec 25	Advent 4	Luke 1:57-80	Isaiah 40:1-9	John the Baptist's birth; God's people are comforted
25 Dec 25	Christmas Day	Luke 2:1-20	Micah 5:2-5	Jesus' birth; Ruler from Bethlehem
28 Dec 25	Christmas 1	Luke 2:21-40	1 Samuel 1:19-28	Jesus presented; Samuel's dedication
4 Jan 26	Christmas 2	Luke 2:41-52	1 Samuel 2:18-21	Jesus as a boy; Samuel growing up in God's presence
The Road To Golgotha				
11 Jan 26	Epiphany 1	Luke 19:45-20:8	Proverbs 26:4-5	Jesus back in the Temple; Fools and folly
18 Jan 26	Epiphany 2	Luke 17:22-37	Genesis 19:15-29	Jesus foretells death/resurrection; Sodom & Gomorrah
25 Jan 26	Epiphany 3	Luke 6:1-11; 13:10-17	Exodus 34:21	Jesus breaking Sabbath taboos; Sabbath renewal
1 Feb 26	Epiphany 4	Luke 11:14-23	Acts 28:23-28	Jesus causing division; Paul preaching in Rome
8 Feb 26	Epiphany 5	Luke 11:29-54	Jonah 3:1-10	Signs from Jonah with Jesus' critique; Nineveh conversion
15 Feb 26	Transfiguration	Luke 9:21-36, 43b-45	Exodus 34:29-35	Jesus foretells and transfiguration; Moses beams
22 Feb 26	Lent 1	Luke 12:49-56	Micah 7:1-7	Households divided and repentance; People corrupted
1 Mar 26	Lent 2	Luke 15:1-10	Ezekiel 34:11-16	Parables of the shepherd/woman; The true shepherd
8 Mar 26	Lent 3	Luke 18:31-34	Luke 13:1-9; 21:29-33	Third foretelling of death/resurrection; On fig trees
15 Mar 26	Lent 4	Luke 20:9-19	Isaiah 5:1-7	Parable of the vineyard; Song of the unfruitful vineyard
22 Mar 26	Lent 5	Luke 20:20-26	Acts 17:1-9	Taxes and authority; Uproar in Thessalonica
29 Mar 26	Palms/Passion	Luke 19:28-44	Zechariah 9:8-12	Entrance to Jerusalem; A coming ruler
The Passion (Holy Week)				
30 Mar 26	Monday	Luke 20:27-21:4	Deuteronomy 25:5-10	Questions about resurrection and widow's mite; Levirate marriage
31 Mar 26	Tuesday	Luke 21:5-28	Revelation 6:1-17	Mini-apocalypse; The seven seals
1 Apr 26	Wednesday	Luke 21:34-22:6	John 20:45-53	Be on your guard and Judas' plans; Plotting amongst elites
2 Apr 26	Maundy Thursday	Luke 22:7-30	Deuteronomy 16:1-8	Preparation of Passover, institution, disputes; Passover legislated
3 Apr 26	Good Friday	Luke 23:1-49	Psalms 31:3-5, 9-14	Execution; Prayer for deliverance
4 Apr 26	Holy Saturday	Luke 23:50-56	2 Chronicles 16:13-14	Burial of Jesus; Example of burial (Asa)
5 Apr 26	Easter Day	Luke 24:1-12	Psalms 126	At the tomb; Song of joy
12 Apr 26	Easter 2	Luke 24:13-35	1 Corinthians 10:12-17	Road to Emmaus; Partake of the one bread

Note that the double-lined breaks in the table delineate between issues.

Date	Liturgical	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
The Ministry Of Jesus				
19 Apr 26	Easter 3	Luke 3:1-22(23-38)	Isaiah 42:1-9	John with Jesus' baptism; The Servant and light to the nations
26 Apr 26	Easter 4	Luke 4:1-15	Deuteronomy 8:1-6	Jesus' temptation; Lessons from 40 years in the wilderness
3 May 26	Easter 5	Luke 4:14-30	1 Kings 17:8-16	Jesus preaching in the synagogue; Elijah and widow of Zarephath
10 May 26	Easter 6	Luke 4:31-44	2 Corinthians 5:11-15	Jesus healing and teaching; Ministry of reconciliation
17 May 26	Easter 7	Luke 5:1-11,27-28; 6:12-17	Acts 6:1-7	Jesus calling disciples; The community leadership grows
24 May 26	Pentecost	Luke 5:12-16	Acts 2:1-11	Jesus heals a leper; Pentecost spirit visits
31 May 26	Pentecost 1 (Trinity)	Luke 5:17-26	Leviticus 24:10-16	Healing of paralysed man; An example of blasphemy punished
7 Jun 26	Pentecost 2	Luke 5:29-39	Isaiah 58:3-9a	Fasting / old and new; On true fasting
14 Jun 26	Pentecost 3	Luke 6:17-31	Psalms 63	Blessings and woes; Comfort in God's presence
21 Jun 26	Pentecost 4	Luke 6:27-42	Acts 9:9-20	Do not judge / speck and plank; Saul/Paul transformed
28 Jun 26	Pentecost 5	Luke 6:43-49	James 1:2-11,22-25	Good/bad fruit/foundations; Poverty and riches, be a doer
5 Jul 26	Pentecost 6	Luke 7:1-23	Acts 10:1-35	Healing of centurion, raising of widow's son; Peter and centurion
12 Jul 26	Pentecost 7	Luke 7:24-50; 8:1-4	Exodus 30:17-21	Jesus deals with question, anointing; The bronze basin
19 Jul 26	Pentecost 8	Luke 8:4-21	Galatians 5:22-26	Parable of sower and explanation; Fruit of the Spirit
26 Jul 26	Pentecost 9	Luke 8:22-56	Psalms 107:23-32	Commanding the waters / healings; The Lord's control over chaos
2 Aug 26	Pentecost 10	Luke 9:1-20	Numbers 11:21-23	Jesus teaching and feeding multitude; Moses doubts God's power
9 Aug 26	Pentecost 11	Luke 9:37-50	1 Thessalonians 4:1-12	Faithless and perverse generation; A life pleasing to God
16 Aug 26	Pentecost 12	Luke 9:51-10:24	Ecclesiastes 4:9-12	Jesus sets face to Jerusalem, mission of 70; Pairing up
23 Aug 26	Pentecost 13	Luke 10:25-42	Leviticus 19:11-18	Parable of Good Samaritan and Mary & Martha; Moral holiness
30 Aug 26	Pentecost 14	Luke 11:1-13,24-28,33-36	Philippians 4:4-8	Jesus praying, admired, do not hide your light; Exhortations
6 Sep 26	Pentecost 15	Luke 12:1-34	1 Corinthians 5:6-8	Crowds trampling to hear Jesus; On yeast
13 Sep 26	Pentecost 16	Luke 12:35-48,57-59	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Watchfulness and preparation; Prepared for the day of the Lord
20 Sep 26	Pentecost 17	Luke 13:10-35	Acts 8:14-24	Healing and words about the Kingdom; Buying your way to blessing
27 Sep 26	Pentecost 18	Luke 14:1-24	Proverbs 25:6-7	Healing, parables of humility; Do not put yourself forward
4 Oct 26	Pentecost 19	Luke 14:25-35	Colossians 4:2-6	Cost of discipleship; Let your speech be gracious
11 Oct 26	Pentecost 20	Luke 15:11-16:13	Genesis 27:30-38	Parable of prodigal / dishonest manager; Esau's lost blessing
18 Oct 26	Pentecost 21	Luke 16:14-31	Psalms 19	Rich man and Lazarus, the Law and the Kingdom; Perfect Law
25 Oct 26	Pentecost 22	Luke 17:1-21	Leviticus 13:45-46	Sayings, cleansing of lepers, coming Kingdom; Unclean
1 Nov 26	Pentecost 23	Luke 18:1-30	Hebrews 13:1-8	Unjust judge, persistent widow, rich young ruler; Contentment
8 Nov 26	Pentecost 24	Luke 18:35-19:10	Numbers 5:5-7	Blind beggar, Zacchaeus; Restitution
15 Nov 26	Pentecost 25	Luke 19:11-27	1 Corinthians 4:1-5	Parable of the ten pounds; Servants and stewards
22 Nov 26	Reign of Christ	Luke 24:36-53	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	Jesus' commission of disciples; The good news flows on
LUKAN LECTIONARY YEAR 2: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES				
Introduction				
29 Nov 26	Advent 1	Acts 1:1-14	Isaiah 64:1-9	The promise of the Holy Spirit/Ascension; Prayer of penitence
6 Dec 26	Advent 2	Acts 1:15-26	2 Peter 3:8-16a	Matthias chosen to replace Judas; Promise of the Lord's coming
In Jerusalem				
13 Dec 26	Advent 3	Acts 2:12-21	Luke 1:46-55	Peter addressing the crowd; Mary's song of praise
20 Dec 26	Advent 4	Acts 2:22-36	Matthew 1:1-17	Peter's sermon continues; The genealogy of Jesus
25 Dec 26	Christmas Day	Acts 2:37-39	Matthew 1:18-25 and/or Luke 2:1-20	Peter's sermon closes; The birth of Jesus
27 Dec 26	Christmas 1	Acts 2:40-42	Galatians 3:23-29	The first converts; Children of God through faith
3 Jan 27	Christmas 2	Acts 2:43-47	Matthew 2:1-15	Life among the believers; The visit of the Magi
10 Jan 27	Epiphany 1	Acts 3:1-11	Matthew 9:1-8	Peter heals a crippled beggar; Jesus heals a paralytic
17 Jan 27	Epiphany 2	Acts 3:12-26	Matthew 3:1-17	Peter speaks in Solomon's Portico; John the Baptist's proclamation
24 Jan 27	Epiphany 3	Acts 4:1-22	Matthew 4:1-11	Peter and John before the Council; Testing of Jesus
31 Jan 27	Epiphany 4	Acts 4:23-37	Hebrews 10:19-25	The believers pray for boldness; A call to perseverance
7 Feb 27	Transfiguration	Acts 5:12-16	Mark 9:2-13	The apostles heal many; The Transfiguration



Date	Liturgical	Primary Text	Support Text	Notes
LUKAN LECTIONARY YEAR 2: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (continued)				
14 Feb 27	Lent 1	Acts 5:1-11	Micah 6:6-8	Ananias and Sapphira; What God requires
21 Feb 27	Lent 2	Acts 5:17-33	John 11:45-53	The Apostles are persecuted; The plot to kill Jesus
28 Feb 27	Lent 3	Acts 5:33-42	Psalms 37:1-11	Gamaliel's intervention; Exhortation to patience and trust
7 Mar 27	Lent 4	Acts 6:1-7	Psalms 37:12-27	Seven chosen to serve; Comparisons between righteous & wicked
14 Mar 27	Lent 5	Acts 6:8-15	Psalms 37:28-40	The arrest of Stephen; On justice
21 Mar 27	Palms/Passion	Acts 7:1-16	Mark 11:1-11	Stephen begins to address the Council; Jesus' entry to Jerusalem
22 Mar 27	Holy Week Monday	Acts 7:17-29	Psalms 24:1-2	Stephen speaks about Moses; The earth is the Lord's
23 Mar 27	Holy Week Tuesday	Acts 7:30-34	Psalms 24:1-4	Theophany on the mountain; Who shall ascend?
24 Mar 27	Holy Week Wed	Acts 7:35-43	Psalms 24:1-6	God uses Moses; Blessing from the Lord
25 Mar 27	Maundy Thursday	Acts 7:44-53	Psalms 24:1-8	Stephen challenges those who oppose God; Lift up your heads
26 Mar 27	Good Friday	Acts 7:54-8:1	Psalms 24:1-10	The stoning of Stephen; Who is this King of glory?
27 Mar 27	Holy Saturday	Acts 8:2-3	Mark 15:42-47	The burial of Stephen and Saul's violence; The burial of Jesus
28 Mar 27	Easter Day	Acts 9:32-42	Mark 16:1-8	Healing and raising from death by Peter; The resurrection of Jesus
In Judea And Samaria				
4 Apr 27	Easter 2	Acts 8:4-25	Mark 16:9-13	Philip preaches in Samaria; Jesus' appearances
11 Apr 27	Easter 3	Acts 8:25-40	2 Timothy 3:10-17	Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch; Paul's charge to Timothy
18 Apr 27	Easter 4	Acts 9:1-19a	2 Kings 5:1-14	The conversion of Saul; The healing of Naaman
25 Apr 27	Easter 5	Acts 9:19b-31	Matthew 13:54-58	Saul's new ministry begins; The rejection of Jesus in Nazareth
2 May 27	Easter 6	Acts 9:43-10:33	Leviticus 11:1-12	Peter and Cornelius; Clean and unclean foods
9 May 27	Easter 7	Acts 10:34-43	Romans 2:6-11	Gentiles hear the Good News; God shows no partiality
16 May 27	Pentecost	Acts 2:1-13	Acts 10:44-48	The coming of the Holy Spirit; Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit
23 May 27	Pentecost 1 (Trinity)	Acts 11:1-18	1 Corinthians 1:10-17	Peter's report to the Church in Jerusalem; Divisions in the Church
30 May 27	Pentecost 2	Acts 11:19-12:5	Deuteronomy 11:18-21	The Church in Antioch, James killed, Peter imprisoned; The Shema
6 Jun 27	Pentecost 3	Acts 12:6-13:3	Revelation 3:19b-22	Peter delivered from prison; I am standing at the door, knocking
The Missionary Journeys				
13 Jun 27	Pentecost 4	Acts 13:4-52	1 Samuel 8	Preaching in Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas in Antioch; Israel demands a king
20 Jun 27	Pentecost 5	Acts 14:1-28	Daniel 2:24-29	In Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and back to Antioch; Daniel's dream interpretation
27 Jun 27	Pentecost 6	Acts 15:1-35	Galatians 2:15-21	The Council at Jerusalem; Jews and Gentiles saved by faith
4 Jul 27	Pentecost 7	Acts 15:36-16:10	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	Paul and Barnabas separate, Timothy joins Paul and Silas; The Thessalonians faith and example
11 Jul 27	Pentecost 8	Acts 16:11-40	Isaiah 61:1-3	Conversion of Lydia, Paul and Silas in prison; Good news of deliverance
18 Jul 27	Pentecost 9	Acts 17:1-15	1 Thessalonians 2:13-16	Uproar in Thessalonica; Giving thanks for the Thessalonian believers
25 Jul 27	Pentecost 10	Acts 17:16-34	2 Corinthians 4:1-6	Paul in Athens; We do not lose heart
1 Aug 27	Pentecost 11	Acts 18:1-23	1 Corinthians 2:1-5	Paul in Corinth; Proclaiming Christ crucified
8 Aug 27	Pentecost 12	Acts 18:24-19:20	Jeremiah 33:6-9	Ministry of Apollos, Paul in Ephesus; Healing after punishment
15 Aug 27	Pentecost 13	Acts 19:21-41	Proverbs 29:8,22,25-26	The riot in Ephesus; Wisdom sayings
22 Aug 27	Pentecost 14	Acts 20:1-16	Daniel 12:1-3	Paul visits Macedonia and Greece, sleepy Eutychus; Awakening to eternal life
29 Aug 27	Pentecost 15	Acts 20:17-38	Ezekiel 34:23-31	Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders; The one shepherd
Paul's Witness Spreads To Rome				
5 Sep 27	Pentecost 16	Acts 21:1-26	Galatians 2:1-5	Paul's journey to Jerusalem, visit with James; Paul and the disciples
12 Sep 27	Pentecost 17	Acts 21:27-22:5	John 18:1-11	Paul arrested in the Temple, defends himself; Betrayal of Jesus
19 Sep 27	Pentecost 18	Acts 22:6-29	John 18:28-38	Paul continues his defense, pulls the Roman citizen card; Jesus before Pilate
26 Sep 27	Pentecost 19	Acts 22:30-23:22	Mark 12:18-27	Paul before the Council, plots to kill Paul; Sadducees try to catch out Jesus
3 Oct 27	Pentecost 20	Acts 23:23-35	Joshua 1:1-9	Paul sent to Felix the Governor; God's commission to Joshua
10 Oct 27	Pentecost 21	Acts 24:1-27	1 Timothy 1:1-7	Paul before Felix at Caesarea; Warning against false teachers
17 Oct 27	Pentecost 22	Acts 25:1-22	John 18:12-14,19-24	Paul appears to the Emperor, Festus consults King Agrippa; Jesus before the High Priest
24 Oct 27	Pentecost 23	Acts 25:23-27	John 18:38-40	Paul brought before King Agrippa; Jesus sentenced to death
31 Oct 27	Pentecost 24	Acts 26:1-32	Luke 21:12-15	Paul defends himself before Agrippa, tries to convert the king; Persecutions of the faithful
7 Nov 27	Pentecost 25	Acts 27:1-44	Jonah 1:1-17	Paul sails for Rome, stormy seas and shipwreck; Jonah tries to flee
14 Nov 27	Pentecost 26	Acts 28:1-10	Psalms 91:11-16	Paul on Malta; God's protection
21 Nov 27	Reign of Christ	Acts 28:11-31	Isaiah 6:6-13	Paul in Rome; Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

the prologue

Advent 1

Sunday 30 November 2025

Lukan Lectionary Year 1

The Gospel of Luke

The Beginning

Scripture

Luke 1:1-4

Joshua 22:4-6

tell the story

Bible Notes

Introduction

We embark this Advent on a two-year journey through the writings of Luke, beginning in his Gospel for 2025-26 and then moving in our second year to the Acts of the Apostles. It is a journey we are looking forward to as we work through these two books and get closer to both the author and his subject matter: Jesus, his followers, and the early church.

The Gospel of Luke is very attractive. While it does not have the same breathless style as the Gospel of Mark, the writing engages the reader in the story of Jesus and his ground-breaking and transformative message. When we put aside our familiarity with many of the passages we can still be left shocked and surprised at the turn of events Luke describes. Parables delight with their twists and turns, inviting us into the world of Jesus and his listeners and opening our eyes to fresh understanding of the kingdom of God.

It has long been the opinion of scholars that Luke based his writing on the Gospel of Mark but with additional sources, oral and written (including the posited 'Q' of which the author of Matthew's Gospel clearly also had access), giving information that allowed him to expand upon the content of Mark's Gospel. While there can be a modernity to Luke's gospel, for instance in his concern for having good sources of information (trying to avoid accusations of misinformation?), we also recognise that inevitably the author of the Gospel will have their own emphasis and prioritisation, their own lens through which they share Jesus' story.

This comes through in some of the themes that are developed throughout the gospel. Luke can be accused

on occasions of some radical tendencies, clearly trying to emphasise Jesus' role in challenging power and in questioning and breaking down the boundaries within society. Overall this work explores the presence of God's grace through the life of Jesus, his actions and ministry, his teaching and healing, his death and resurrection, which works to draw us into the life of God.

Who was the author? We do not really know. There are some traditions regarding who Luke might have been. The most common is that Luke was a physician who accompanied Paul and worked with him in the early decades of the church. Some go further, identifying Luke as a Syrian who came from Antioch. There are some interesting observations we can make about Luke from his texts themselves. For instance, while it is clear that Luke knew a lot about the Jewish beliefs and practices, one sometimes gets the impression that this is abstract knowledge rather than lived-experience: he has done his research, but perhaps did not have first-hand experience of the rituals that are integral to much of Jesus' ministry and his reversals of the status quo. This points to the likelihood that Luke would have been a Gentile, giving his Gospel a unique perspective in comparison to those of Matthew, Mark and John.

We see that Luke often sets scenes in what feels like a urban environment, perhaps signifying Luke's own experience, rather than the more rural setting that was more likely that which Jesus actually experiences in his itinerant ministry around the countryside of Palestine.

You may know that Saint Luke is the patron saint of painters. There is a story that Luke had first painted

"Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin" by Rogier van der Weyden (15th century)



the Madonna and Child being in their presence when Jesus was young. It is a lovely story, but alas there is no evidence to support it.

If we turn to Luke's second book, the Acts of the Apostles, which spends a great deal of time with Paul's missionary ministry, if Luke had been a fellow traveler with Paul it seems very strange that he would not mention the letters that Paul wrote to churches, and yet there is no mention of them. Neither does Luke in Acts explore the theology of Paul that is developed so clearly in his letters, which seems very odd if he had spent time directly with Paul. However, he clearly knew well Paul's mission.

Neither can we be sure of a date or location for the composition of this Gospel. Tradition suggests either Antioch or Rome, which is the location where the Acts of the Apostles culminates. It must have been after Mark's Gospel was complete, so perhaps around 85 CE is a good suggestion, but there is a healthy error margin to be applied here!

What we know is that the Gospel of Luke has had a profound impact in shaping the world we know. There are phrases we will visit during the year that are part of our common language, and Luke's account has a crucial part in helping us understand Jesus and his transformative and graceful work.

A Statement of Intent

We start right at the beginning of the Gospel for the first Sunday in Advent with the opening four verses which in the original Greek (and many English translations) is one long sentence: a formal statement of intent, a prologue that follows the same pattern common for historical writings of the time.

Luke is taking authority and responsibility here for the account which he is presenting. He notes the study he has done, the research and gathering of sources, in order to create order out of the many stories that would have been circulating about Jesus of Nazareth.

The Gospel is addressed to a particular person, Theophilus. The name means "a friend/lover of God". Who this might be is the basis of conjecture. It could be a person of high social standing, one wonders at the possibility of it being a patron who commissioned Luke to take on this work, and whose wealth and status might then have allowed the work to be copied and distributed. On the other hand, this could also be a literary device that Luke adopts. Anyone who comes to the text afresh, open to be a friend of God are thus invited in to the Gospel by the good Dr Luke himself.

The formality of this opening statement is somewhat at odds with the approachability of the rest of the Gospel, but perhaps we see in that formality an expression of the importance of what is to follow in Luke's mind.

The short passage from Joshua is a farewell message marking a transition and change as he blesses the Transjordanian tribes on their journey to their homes. He instructs them to observe the commandments and instructions that had been handed down from Moses: "to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, and to hold fast to him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Joshua 22:5) These are words that may echo in our own minds as we embark on our own journey through the Gospel of Luke, in order that we might love the Lord our God and walk in God's ways as Jesus did.

And so we begin...

Story Retelling

Mitchell's Family History

I sat down in the sanctuary seeking peace and quiet. Life in church is not easy at this moment in time. We did not have enough money to pay for repairs to the roof. Nor did we have the volunteers needed to run the next coffee morning. And there were people in hospital needing visited, school assemblies to lead, and committee meetings to attend all over the country, Spill the Beans scripts to write... my 'to do' list just getting longer by the minute.

So, I sought refuge in church appreciating the silence as I waited on God. I was longing for inspiration, hope and guidance, so I prayed with all my heart, mind and soul!

I had only been there for a few minutes when I was hit by a little bit of paper! I had no idea where it came from and I thought it had maybe fallen from the balcony. I picked it up and put it in my pocket and settled down to pray again.

Then another bit of paper hit me and I thought someone was hiding in church, trying to distract me, so, I shouted out: "Who's there?"

There was silence for a moment and then I heard the pitter patter of paws running down the aisle. It was Mitchell puffing and wheezing as he climbed the chancel steps where he flopped on the floor exhausted.

"Mitchell, was that you who was throwing paper at me?"

"Oh, yes, sorry about that," he answered. "I was trying to write a history of my family and I kept making mistakes! I was frustrated at having to start all over again and I was finding it really difficult as to whose story I should write about first and what were the best stories that would tell other people about my family and the lives we had lived in various places around the world."

"I can understand your difficulties, Mitchell," I sighed.

"Oh Meenister, have you written a history of your family?" he asked excitedly. "Maybe I could read it and that would maybe help me to write a true version of the Mouse family line."

"No, Mitchell," I said, "I am afraid I have never written our family history. I think there are things in my family that are best not told, if you know what I mean?"

Mitchell clapped his paws together, "Oh Meenister, that sounds intriguing. Is there real scandal in your family line?"

"Well, Mitchell," I replied, "I am sure there is scandal in all families and stories that are difficult to tell."

Mitchell squinted his eyes, "Meenister, I think you are trying to avoid my question!"

I stared for a moment at Mitchell then said: "You are absolutely right, Mitchell! I am totally avoiding your

question because... well, just because this is not the time or the place to recall the disasters that beset my family."

Mitchell rolled his eyes, "Och, c'mon Meenister, I am sure everyone would want to know."

"Well, they will just have to wait, Mitchell, for some things are best left unsaid..." I paused a moment then asked: "Mitchell, what makes you want to write a family history?"

"Well, I was reading my bible and I discovered that Luke decided to write an eyewitness account of the life of Jesus. Luke found it really hard as well to decide what to put in and what to keep out."

"Aye, Mitchell," I said, "I've always thought that Luke was writing it because his friend Theophilus was asking so many questions. Luke wanted to put in writing all the things he and others had seen and heard during Jesus' time on earth."

"Who was this Theophilus bloke?" Mitchell asked.

"Well, we are not quite sure who he was," I replied. "He might have been someone of importance because Luke calls him 'most honourable'. He may well have been a wealthy man who was supporting the work of Jesus and had maybe requested that someone should write these stories of Jesus so that others would read them and learn from them."

"Maybe he was a man of faith," I went on, "who began following Jesus and he wanted something to read and learn from! The name Theophilus means 'lover of God' or 'friend of God.' Maybe he hoped that in future other friends of God would have an accurate account of the words and teachings of Jesus."

"Well, Meenister," Mitchell said thankfully, "I am glad Theophilus was an inspiration to Luke as his gospel, along with the other gospel writers and Paul's letter to the churches and the stories from the Old Testament about the life of God's people has given us the bible today so that we can have an accurate account of what God wanted from his people."

I smiled, "Yes, Mitchell, it took many thousands of years of storytelling which was then condensed into one large collection so that the people of God have a record of God's story in which we can unpack the truth of God now as these same words did when Luke first wrote his gospel all those years ago."

"Well, Meenister, maybe this book about God is far more important than my family or your family's history."

I chuckled, "I think it most certainly is, Mitchell, and we should thank those who wrote it down and who gathered all those eyewitness accounts so that the truth of God was made known."

"Amen to that, Meenister," said Mitchell.

Discussion Starters

Invite everyone to think about favourite or most memorable openings. These could be the first line from a novel or an opening scene of a film.

Examples could be:

"Once there were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy." (The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, CS Lewis)

"It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen." (Nineteen Eight-Four, George Orwell)

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." (Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen)

"All this happened, more or less." (Slaughterhouse-Five, Kurt Vonnegut)

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." (A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens)

Or in film the opening scenes to Jaws, Raiders of the Lost Ark, 2001: A Space Odyssey, Citizen Kane, most James Bond films, Trainspotting, Star Wars: A New Hope, The Matrix, are just a few with iconic scenes to start off the story.

- What is your most memorable opening?
- Why is it memorable?
- What difference does a memorable start make to a book/film?

Luke takes a rather different approach with the opening to his Gospel. Together read Luke 1:1-4. Then read the opening verses of the other gospels for a contrast: Mark 1:1-3, Matthew 1:1-2f, John 1:1-5. Mark launches into prophetic expectation, Matthew heads into a genealogy for Jesus, while John goes fully theological.

- How do you respond to each of these different openings?
- What is different about the approach Luke takes?
- Which one captures you most effectively and why does it have that effect?

Theophilus is addressed by Luke in the prologue. We do not know who he is, but it is no accident that the name means "friend/lover of God". This could be a patron for Luke, commissioning his authorship of the Gospel, or it might be a literary device of Luke's drawing all lovers of God into this text that is personally addressed to us.

Work together as a group to imagine you are collectively writing your own account of Jesus, through your own experience of knowing Jesus. Write your own prologue. If you have a number of groups working, then share their prologues with each other when they are completed.

- What is the essence that was captured in the prologue(s)?
- How much could you tell about the story to follow from the prologue(s)?
- What might be a 'prologue' for yourself at the start of each day?



explore the story

Engaging The Text

You will need: A4 sheets of paper, pens, large old Bible, sheet of paper on which the Gospel reading (Luke 1:1-4) is printed.

In the centre of the worship space place the old Bible, open at Luke and lay on top the sheet with the passage printed on it.

Explain that this year we are exploring the books of Luke and Acts, both written by the same person. It is a journey into what Luke thought was important to tell his community about Jesus.

Have someone come to the Bible pick up the sheet with the passage written on it and read it aloud, then place it back down.

Ask everyone to pause and reflect on these words: What has Luke chosen to tell us about Jesus.

- As we begin this journey what will you be looking for?

Invite everyone to write a question at the top of each page in their booklet; things they will look out for over the year. Such questions might be:

- What words are important?
- What images will I take with me?
- What themes does Luke focus on?
- What stories are new?
- What lessons do I need to learn?

Invite everyone to write a different question at the top of each page and to fill in the booklet as the year goes on.

Advent Book

You will need: basic jotters, purple paper or gift wrap, star stickers, scissors, pencils, sticky tape, gold/silver pens.

Give each participant a jotter and ask them to cover it with purple paper. They should cut a piece of purple paper about 3 cm bigger all around than the size of the jotter with the cover open, lay the jotter on the wrong side of the coloured paper and then fold in edges to fit snugly around jotter and then to secure the edges with tape, just as you would cover jotters and books when you were at school (if you are of a certain age)! Ask the participants to decorate the jotter with sparkly star stickers and to write their name on the front of their jotter's, using silver/gold pens. They should also add the title of their Advent book, such as: Advent Journal, Advent Reflections, Advent Art.

Talk about the introduction to Luke's gospel and the beginning of telling a story. Encourage participants to use their Advent book as a way of helping them to reflect on the journey through Advent.

A Blank Page

You will need: small blank canvases, poster paints in purple, blue, silver, gold, sparkly stars, paint brushes, plates to put paint on, tubs for water, aprons and covers for tables.

Protect the tables or work surfaces with covers and give participants an apron or something similar to wear, to avoid anyone getting messy! Put a small amount of each colour of paint onto the paper plates, to allow each participant to have their own 'paint palette'. Give each participant a canvas, paint brush and paint palette and ask them to paint onto their blank canvas in the colours of Advent: swirls, trails or whatever people's imaginations take them. Stars can be added whilst the paint is wet, (hopefully they will stick). Of if you prefer the stars can be added later using glue sticks.

Talk about starting at the beginning with a blank sheet, the possibilities and challenges this gives. Talk about Luke starting at the beginning with a blank page as he seeks to tell the story of Jesus. Talk about Advent as the beginning of the Christian year. How are we going to tell Jesus' story today?

Advent Candles 1

You will need: printed paper, Advent candles, felt tip pens, scissors and glue sticks, template available from Sun Hats and Wellie Boots here: <https://www.sunhatsandwellieboots.com/2021/11/paper-advent-candle-to-make-colour.html>.

Print off the free printable Paper Advent Candle to make and colour. Follow the instructions given. This is an easy craft to do and makes a lovely paper candle for people to take home and include in their Advent displays.

Talk about the season of Advent and the ways we use candles and calendars to help us mark the days until Christmas. Encourage participants to think about how they can wait with hope and patience and use the time for both action and reflection. For children, encourage them to place their candle beside their Advent calendar and to be still for a moment each day to thank God for something.



Advent Candles 2

You will need: paper plates, thick card, scissors, sticky tape, felt tip pens, a hole punch, narrow ribbon, scraps of paper (green and purple), PVA glue and glue spreaders.

Cut the centre section out of a paper plate to form a ring, it may be useful to have this prepared beforehand. Give each participant a paper plate ring and ask them to lay it on their work surface as though the centre of the plate is still in place. Ask participants to stick scraps of green paper onto the ring using the PVA glue. The pieces of paper should overlap. They should then cut out a candle shape that fits into the centre section of the ring. Once this has been done, they should stick scraps of purple paper onto the candle and to colour in the flame using the felt tip pens. Once this has been completed, they should then punch a hole in the ring above the candle—this is best done when the glue is dry—and to thread ribbon through the hole so that the candle wreath can be hung up.

Talk about the season of Advent and the ways we use candles and calendars to help us mark the days until Christmas. Encourage participants to think about how they can wait with hope and patience and use the time for both action and reflection. For children, encourage the children to place their candle beside their Advent calendar and to be still for a moment each day to thank God for something.

Friends Of God Tag

You will need: space to move around.

Ask those participating to gather in the middle of your space and to choose one or two people to be the 'IT'. Ask everyone to move around and when 'IT' tags you to then join hands with them to form a chain. Continue to play the game until everyone is linked together in a chain.

The name Theophilus means 'friend of God', talk about how as the story of Jesus is told, from news of his coming and birth and on through his life, more people join in and become friends of God. Talk about how we tell the story today.

Witnesses

You will need: a short video (a YouTube short, for instance, perhaps a Pixar short movie?) and the means to show it or a few people who have rehearsed a short drama and space for them to perform, paper, pencils, 5-6 prepared questions relating to the video or the drama.

Show the video or perform the prepared drama, asking people to watch carefully. Ask the questions you have prepared and get participants to write down their answers. Then compare the answers they have given.

Talk about being a witness to an event and how people notice different things. Use this as a way into a discussion about the gospel stories and in particular how Luke started to write his version of the gospel. Talk about how we tell the story of the gospel today.

Theophilus

You will need: sheets of paper with the name 'Theophilus' written across the top and pens.

This can either be done as an individual activity with each person being given an A4 sheet and a pen, and then ask them to write as many words as they can with three or more letters, using the letters from 'Theophilus', once they have completed this, they can then compare their lists to the others people have come up with. This can also be done as a group activity with a large flip chart sized sheet of paper, people work together to give suggestions of words that are three letters or more, made from the letters of the name 'Theophilus'.

Talk about Luke beginning to write his gospel and the things he would have heard. Talk about how we tell the story of the gospel today.

live the story

Call To Worship

A blank page
not yet written upon.
A new start,
a second chance,
the advent of the story
yet untold.

Might we hear it as if for the first time.
And hear what we have so far unheard.

Let us gather in this moment,
of the story of God
becoming flesh.

Prayer Of Dedication

Gracious God,
we joyfully dedicate these offerings
because we love you.

We are giving a small portion
of your abundant blessing to us
to share our blessings
with others in this community
as we aim to serve you
with all our heart and soul.

Bless these gifts and the givers,
we ask in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Advent Candle 1 New Beginnings

Do not be afraid of starting afresh,
or trying something new.
Be a risk taker for Jesus.
Be open to the movement of the spirit,
be as innovative as you can,
For God's kingdom is near!

LIGHT THE CANDLE

Be courageous and adventurous.
Be bold in all you do.
Be certain of God's truth
today and every day.
Amen.

Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

O God,
origin of orderly accounts,
bringing life from chaos,
we come in awe to worship you.
As the days rapidly progress to greater darkness,
we long for the light.

We begin this season of Advent,
waiting in anticipation for new beginnings,
for the birth of the Prince of Peace
to reign in our hearts
and in the world.

We realise we do not
hold peace in our hearts
and we are sorry.
Instead of forgiveness
we respond with barriers;
instead of kindness,
we respond with hurt withdrawal.
Forgive our consistent denial
of your presence in our lives,
our communities and our world.

Lord, in this Advent season
fill our hearts with longing
for following your will,
for adding our stories of faith
to this most orderly account.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Prayers For Others And Ourselves

Loving Lord,
we give thanks
for those who wrote down
ordered accounts
of your time on earth.
Those who were eyewitnesses
at a time when we can only imagine,
and we benefit from their commitment
and enthusiasm to convey your story.

We give thanks for those servants,
the saints of the faith,
who have shown us
examples of your love in their lives.
May we follow their examples by following you.

Gracious God,
we ask your tender mercies:
for those who have lost their way;
for loved ones who feel in need of rest
and see no end in sight;
for countries ravaged by war
and your creatures
along with all of creation suffering;
for your church across the world
in a birthing time, groaning with pains.

There are souls that seek your rest, Lord.

On this first Sunday of Advent,
awaken us to new possibilities,
and remind us of old promises:
to love the Lord our God,
to walk in all God's ways,
to keep the commandments,
and to hold fast,
serving God
with all our heart and with all our soul.
Amen.

Reflective Prayer

The truth about what we've been instructed...
Truth so complicated,
certainly, more than fact
and certainly, more than we can comprehend.

This season of anticipation,
let us bring our innocence and trust.

Truth born in an infant,
our visions of weak and strong
turned upside down.

Our expectations of ordinary
turned on its head in a moment.

O God, challenge us with your truth.
Equip and enable us to understand,
that we may be your servants of the Word
sharing your truth and not ours.
Amen.

Reflection

Words on paper.
This is my story,
pure and simple.
Not HIStory
but my HERStory.

Words on paper
telling my story.
It's more than just words on paper,
It's my feelings,
my thoughts,
my experiences.

Words on paper
reasoning my story,
expressively and honestly.
A way to communicate,
understanding each other
and creating identity
within the community.

Words on paper
completing my story.
Singing hymns of praise,
illuminating light in darkness
aflame soul in my heart.

So, aye,
it's words on paper,
but it's more than that
it is God's story too.

Sending

Go,
seekers of truth,
read God's Word,
study God's truth,
experience God's wisdom,
in your own Bible.

Make a start to growing in faith,
enjoy understanding the Bible's wisdom,
use it to unfold the power of God,
and live out the teachings of Jesus.

May the word bless you and keep you,
the Lord's light shine upon you,
and bring you peace
today and everyday.

Praise/Hymns

Alleluia! Hurry, the Lord is near	CH4 280
Blessing and honour, glory and power	CH4 442 / MP 976
Come now, O Prince of peace	CH4 275
Jesus calls us here to meet him	CH4 510
Let's walk together for a while	GWA 198
Light of the world	STF 175
Long ago, prophets knew	STF 178
Make way, make way	CH4 279 / MP 457
Maranatha, maranatha	GWA 92
Now the heavens start to whisper	GWA 98
O come, O come, Emmanuel	CH4 273 / MP 493
People, look East	CH4 281
Praise to the God who clears the way	STF 183
Tell me the story of Jesus	online at https://hymnary.org/text/ tell_me_the_story_of_jesus_write_on_my_h
The voice of God goes out	CH4 283
We are a people of hope	GWA 90

sampler



sampler

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