

St Luke's in the City

Celebrating at the Crossroads **Feast of Francis of Assisi, 7 October 2007**

Dear Friends,

OCTOBER's patronal festival always focuses our attention on our being a community. From very early on in the life of the church small gatherings of Christians came to recognise the witness of particular persons, Saints among the community of all the saints. Patron saints are sources of inspiration and hope, encouragement and communion for the faithful. No doubt a martyr patron saint will be both assuring and inspirational for a church community facing persecution itself. We are so blessed that we do not face persecution. Nevertheless, our patron Luke the Evangelist has without doubt inspired and encouraged this particular faith community, at these particular crossroads these last 148 years. This particular community is stamped with Luke's gospel imperatives – the radical hospitality of God and reconciling love as expressions of the fulfilment of God's purposes which Luke saw in Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

What a privilege it is to be a member of this parish community, where the doors are opened wide, where all are welcomed, all respected as God's beloved children, where the dignity and worth of all people is celebrated – regardless of race, gender, colour, sexuality, or any other distinction. What a joy it is to share with you in this physical space, where all who enter find the stillness and silence which is the heart of God's reconciling love. We who call this 'home', this faith community under the patronage of Luke, belong to each other not because we chose each other, nor because we like each other necessarily, but because Christ the Host invites us to share in a common meal around his Table which has no favourites and no special places. The Bible alone doesn't make us members of the Body of Christ. Nor does exalted theological ideas about Christ and God, nor the eucharist as merely a collection of disembodied words and actions. No, what makes us members of the Body of Christ is the fact that we are members of each other, in communion, with and through Christ. This is what we celebrate during October, focussed around Luke-tide, and it is the reason why we conduct our annual review of our giving this month also.

Our ThanksGiving is above all else an expression of our gratitude for this common calling and common place at the banquet table of Christ in this particular community. We know that everything we are and everything we have is fundamentally gift, including our sometimes-surprising belonging together. It is for this reason that we review what we can realistically and healthily offer of ourselves – in time, in skills and abilities, in money. The only justification for doing this is to respond to the Love who first loved us, and in recognition of our shared status as guests at Christ's banquet. Please do pray and reflect about what is meaningful and appropriate giving for you. Then please complete your ThanksGiving forms during the week, and bring them back here completed next Sunday – ready to offer them at the Altar.

With my love,
David