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Anglican churches at Kimpton and Ayot St Lawrence opened for services from 5th July. Sunday Worship now includes: social distancing, hand gel, masks and half the pews closed! We're anticipating our first celebration of Holy Communion will be in September—but that's another hurdle to jump, with extra Covid-19 infection control measures to assess and put in place.

This summer, St Peter & St Paul have offered a Saints' sermon. A 4th churchyard trail complemented this. We've taken a fresh look at Transformation and Conversion, which are the watchwords for all the saints' lives. How God calls us and how our lives are irrevocably changed by that call: 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!' 2 Cor 5:17. We've looked at the lives of St Peter & St Paul, St James the Less, St Mary Magdalena, St John the Baptist, St Luke, St Lawrence, St Francis and St Oscar Romero. Today I want to talk to you about St Luke.

Only the Gospel of Luke contains two episodes where Jesus sends his followers on a mission. First, Jesus sends the twelve disciples and then, in Luke 10:1-12 (you may like to read this passage), he send out seventy-two. Tradition suggests Luke was among those 72. Jesus is preparing his disciples for mission. He leaves them in no doubt about the challenges, obstacles and dangers which will await them. Jesus orders them to carry no money bag and greet no one along the way. In doing this he stresses the urgency of the mission and the single-mindedness required of missionaries. They will succeed, however, because the power of God is working with them.

Jesus sent the disciples on a mission to restore health and well-being to individuals, families and communities. Jesus also sent the seventy-two to do this. He tells them: "Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'the kingdom of God is at hand for you.' In sending these seventy-two, Jesus confirms it is through his disciples, and those who would come to believe in him through their word, that his peace and the news that "the kingdom of God has come near to you" would be proclaimed to the world. A message we need to hear today.

The group comes back full of joy. Jesus rejoices at their success. But it's not all plain sailing! They are not to give up in places where their message was rejected. As the kingdom of God is gradually being established, evil in all forms is being defeated. The dominion of Satan over humanity is at an end—even in our days when it doesn't seem like it. And that is a source of great joy.

For Jesus, healing is not just about making people physically better, but healing of mind body and spirit. About hearts made whole, sins forgiven and a world healed. About Transformation and Conversion with capital T and C. The very proclamation of the word is healing. It cannot be separated

from care of neighbour. As we too share meals with the stranger, we naturally build relationships which lead us to a deeper concern for their health and well-being.

The message Jesus entrusted to the disciples is peace and the nearness of the kingdom of God. This same message of peace and justice, forgiveness and healing; of conversion and transformation and the Good News of God's kingdom, has been entrusted to the Church ever since. Now we are sent to witness to it in the community that surrounds us. We can be in no doubt about the challenges, obstacles and dangers which await us, but we are not to give up when we are rejected. We will succeed because the power of God is working with us. Amen.

Rev'd Linda Williams

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Go forth and tell! O church of God, awake!
God's saving news to all the nations take;
proclaim Christ Jesus, saviour, Lord, and king,
that all the world his worthy praise may sing.

Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;
he will in grace respond to all who call:
how shall they call if they have never heard
the gracious invitation of his word?

Go forth and tell where still the darkness lies;
in wealth or want, the sinner surely dies:
give us, O Lord, concern of heart and mind,
a love like yours which cares for all mankind.

Go forth and tell! The doors are open wide:
share God's good gifts let no one be denied;
live out your life as Christ your Lord shall choose,
your ransomed powers for his sole glory use.

Go forth and tell! O church of God, arise!
go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;
go till all nations his great name adore
and serve him, Lord and king for evermore

