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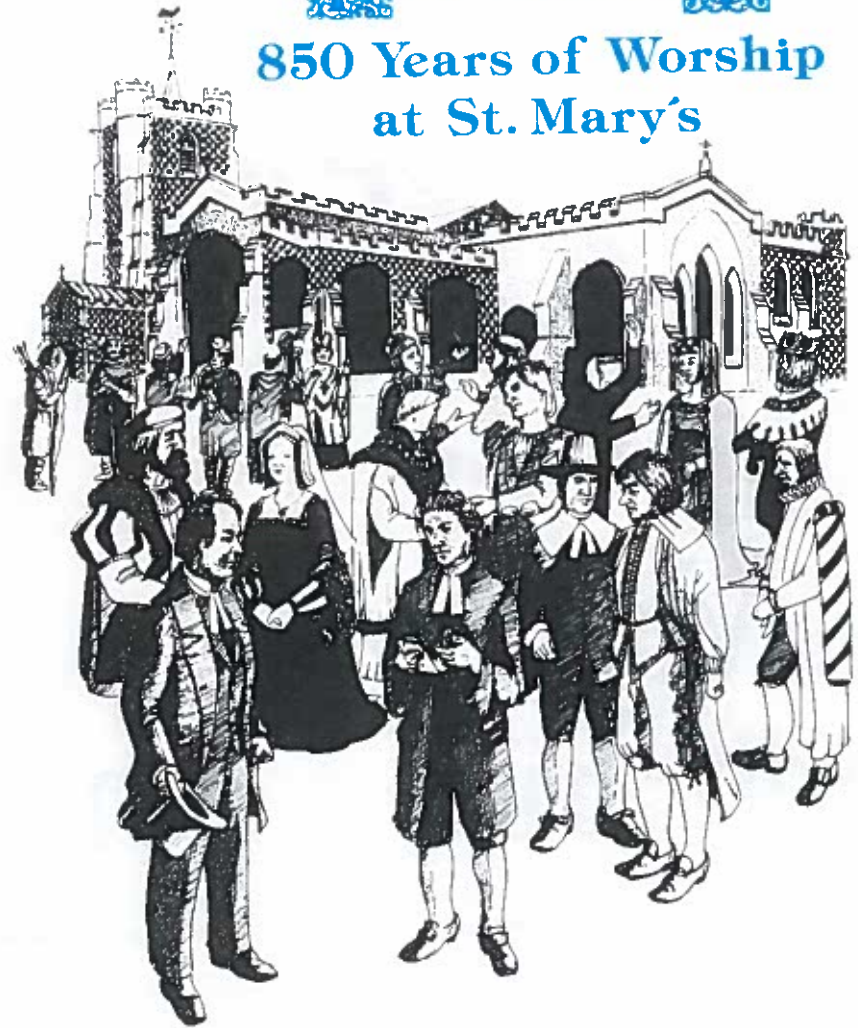


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A
PAGEANT
850 Years of Worship
at St. Mary's



MON 002

**9th to 14th November 1987
at 7.30 p.m.
in Luton Parish Church
of St. Mary,
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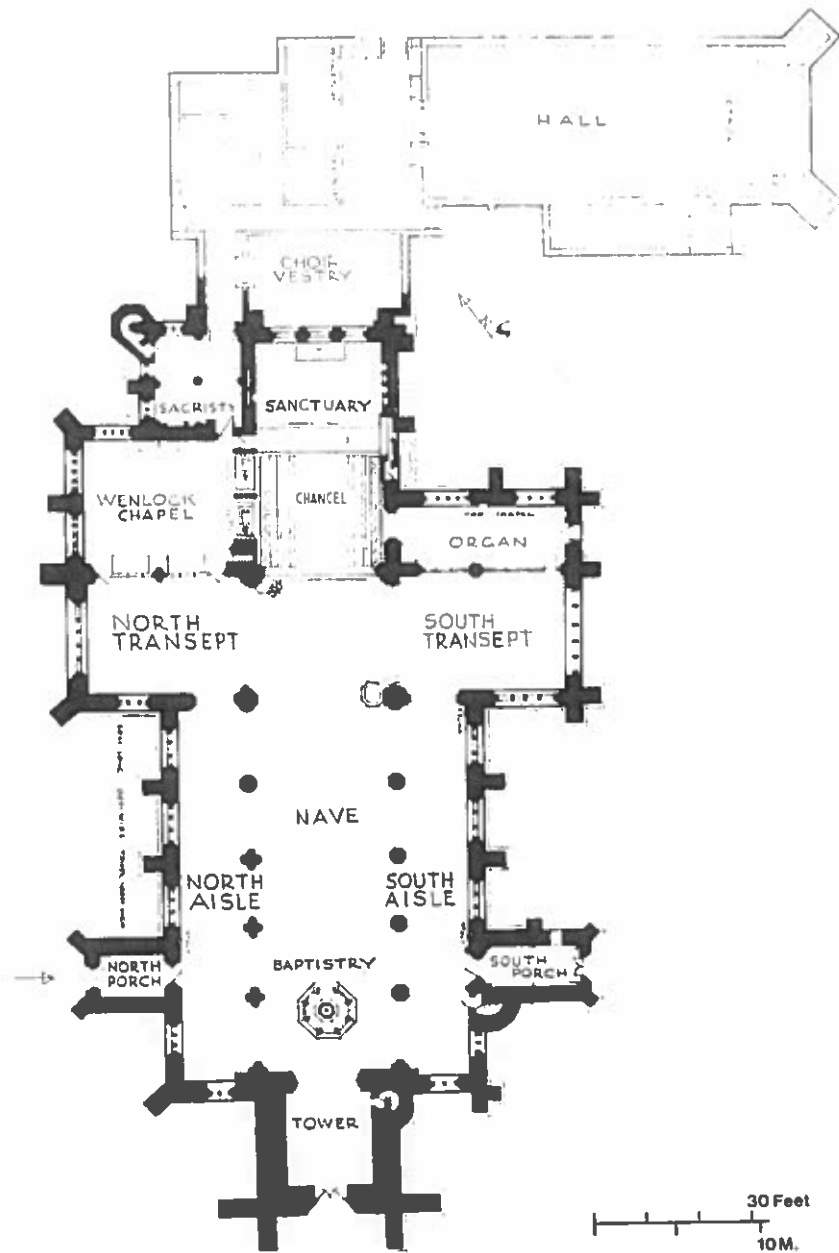
BARCLAYS

A
PAGEANT

850 Years of Worship
at St. Mary's

Sing we merrily – Adrian Batten

- Scene 1 LUTON'S FIRST CHURCH 913
Gregorian Chant : Puer Natus
- Scene 2 THE FOUNDING OF ST. MARY'S 1137
Cum sancto spiritu – Hans Bucher
- Scene 3 FALKES de BREAUTE
Jig – Flute
- Scene 4 THE BLACK DEATH
Funeral Hymn – Dies Irae
- Scene 5 THE BAPTISTRY
Now make we merthe
- Scene 6 JOHN DE WENLOCK AND THE WENLOCK CHAPEL
In Dulci Jubilo – Anon
- Scene 7 THE GUILD OF THE HOLY TRINITY
- Scene 8 THE BARNARD CHANTRY
If ye love me – Thomas Tallis
- Scene 9 THE REFORMATION
- INTERVAL (20 mins.)
- Prelude – John Bull
- Scene 10 THE REFORMS OF ARCHBISHOP LAUD 1639
- Scene 11 THE FUNERAL OF LADY CRAWLEY 1658
Lead me Lord – Wesley
- Scene 12 JOHN WESLEY PREACHES AT ST. MARY'S 1772
True loves the gift – Wood
- Scene 13 JAMES O'NEILL AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
Prelude from Chichester Psalms – Bernstein
- Scene 14 THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND FINALE



Script writers

Thelma Shacklady
Chris Barnes

Historical Adviser

Charles Elliott

Producer

Len Ridd

Assistant to Producer

Clive Richardson

Musical Director

Roger Windmill

Organist

Roger Palmer

Stage Manager

Arthur Young

Lighting

John Pinnock

Properties

June Hill

Costumes

Jane Mileson

Elaine Hobson

Prompt

Beverley Cooper

Business Manager

Andrew Rodell

Publicity/Front of House

Bill Shacklady

Refreshments

Jane Ford and helpers

Programme Cover Design

Robert Ford

Secretary to Producer

Rosemary Rodell

Many thanks to the church bellringers for the ringing of a quarter-peel from 6.30 – 7.30 p.m.

Thanks also to Esme Plant for her considerable assistance in the supplying of costumes.



LEN RIDD

"I have spent the last 11 months wondering how I came to say yes to producing this Pageant". For Len this sees the end of a long association with drama at St. Mary's, an association stretching back to 1931. This time really means to enter into, he hopes, honourable retirement. This is to be his 'Swan Song' and he hopes the result will not be what all cricketers fear 'a ducks egg'.

THELMA SHACKLADY

Born and raised in Prescot, Lancashire, more years ago than she cares to remember, Thelma was educated at Childwall Valley High School for Girls and Liverpool University, where, in 1960, she obtained a B.A.Hons.Degree three weeks before marrying Bill. She taught in Liverpool and Maghull before moving to Luton with Bill and their two children Catharine and Christopher in 1971. Since then she has taught at Icknield High School, where, for the last ten years, she has been Head of English.



ROGER WINDMILL

Roger Windmill was educated at Luton Grammar School and Trinity College, London, where he studied organ with Martin Neary, organist of Westminster Abbey and conducting with Bernard Keeffe, the conductor and broadcaster. He has been Head of Music at Harlington Upper School since 1974 and Director of Music at St. Mary's for the past 14 years. He is also conductor of Harpenden Choral Society. In what little spare time remains Roger enjoys eating, photography and motoring with the occasional walk up Snowdon helping keep his weight down.



CHRIS BARNES

Chris is the Chairman of St. Mary's Players. He first trod the boards at school over 25 years ago and has since been involved in more productions than he cares to remember. These have been as diverse as Shakespeare, grand opera, Ayckbourn and two rock musicals at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The pageant has enabled Chris to combine his love of both theatre and history. His only previous dramatic writing was a series of programmes for BBC Radio Sheffield which followed the fortunes of a fictional butcher starting his own business. In his spare time, Chris has a career in local government.

SCENE 1: LUTON'S FIRST CHURCH 913

In 913, the River Lea formed the boundary of the Danelaw, the half of England ceded to the Danes by Alfred the Great over thirty years earlier. His son, Edward the Elder, began the reconquest of Danelaw and the Danes responded by sending a party from Leicester and Northampton to Luton. The townsfolk fought and defeated this party. In appreciation, Edward started to build a stone church in Luton, which was probably consecrated by his son, Aethelstan. The exact location of the Anglo-Saxon church is not known, but it was probably in the Park Square area, near the site of the present St. Mary's. In 975, Luton was claimed as a royal township, which was to have great consequences for the present church.

<i>Curate</i>	Tony Sellers
<i>Monks</i>	Men from St. Mary's Choir
<i>Aethelstan</i>	Robert Ford
<i>Archbishop</i>	David Banfield
<i>1st Man</i>	Tom Thurman
<i>2nd Man</i>	John Lawrence
<i>3rd Man</i>	Richard Vickers
<i>1st Noble</i>	Gareth Jones
<i>2nd Noble</i>	Matthew Climance
<i>1st Thegn</i>	David O'Brien
<i>2nd Thegn</i>	Simon Jackson

Music during scene
– Plainsong

Jam Lucis

SCENE 2: THE FOUNDING OF ST. MARY'S 1137

In 1115, King Henry I gave the manor of Luton to his illegitimate son, Robert, Earl of Gloucester. It was Robert who founded the present church on three acres of his own land. It was completed in 1137, only 71 years after the Norman conquest and two years after Henry's death. The population of the town remained overwhelmingly Saxon, controlled, much to their resentment, by a Norman aristocracy.

<i>Alfred</i>	John Childs
<i>Mother</i>	Rosemary Rodell
<i>Lady</i>	Katie Childs
<i>Harold</i>	Jason Wood
<i>Lady-in-Waiting</i>	Rachel Banfield

SCENE 3: FALKES de BREAUTE

In 1216, the year of his death, King John gave the manor of Luton to one of his supporters, Falkes de Breaute. He was a Norman of illegitimate birth who acquired numerous manors and castles throughout England. During the reign of the young King Henry III, Falkes became one of the most hated men in England because of his brutal and greedy behaviour. In 1221 he built a castle on the land between St. Mary's and what is now the ring road. Scene

three, set in St. Albans Abbey, dramatises an amazing true story recorded by the monks there. Eventually his evil deeds caught up with him. In 1224 he lost the king's favour, was outlawed and stripped of all his lands. He died, penniless, two years later in France. By a delicious historical irony, his name is still connected with Luton. The name of one of his many properties, Falkes Hall in Surrey, got corrupted to Vauxhall.

<i>Monks</i>	Men from St. Mary's Choir
<i>Falkes de Breaute</i>	Chris Barnes
<i>Abbot</i>	Michael Crow

Music during scene

Conditor alme siderum

SCENE 4: THE BLACK DEATH

During the Middle Ages, it was common for plays based on bible stories to be performed in the church. In an age when most people were illiterate, this was a good way of teaching the Word of God. Because of the increasing rowdiness which came to be associated with them, the priests moved them to the churchyard. The story of Noah and the flood was always a popular choice, with Noah's wife traditionally presented as a shrewish woman. Because the players travelled the country, during the period known as the Black Death (1348-9), they were blamed for spreading the Plague. The rhyme "Ring a Roses" is traditionally associated with the symptoms of the disease.

<i>1st Player</i>	Richard Vickers
<i>2nd Player (Noah)</i>	Simon Richardson
<i>1st Townswoman</i>	Thelma Shacklady
<i>3rd Player (Noah's wife)</i>	Hilary Barnes
<i>4th Player</i>	John Lawrence
<i>2nd Townswoman</i>	Betty Fleet
<i>5th Player</i>	Jean Marshall
<i>3rd Townsman</i>	Ken Rose
<i>4th Townsman</i>	Steve Kesseru
<i>5th Townswoman</i>	Jan Miller
<i>6th Townswoman</i>	Beryl Mingay
<i>Boy Singer</i>	Andrew Bodycombe
<i>Boys</i>	Boys from St. Mary's Choir

SCENE 5: THE BAPTISTRY

During the early fourteenth century, the people of Luton extensively rebuilt their church, creating much of the magnificent building we see today, particularly the nave, tower and transepts. These major works were often interrupted by famine (1317), fire (1336 when most of the town was destroyed) and plague (1348-49). Scene five illustrates the legend that the unique baptistry was given by Queen Philippa, wife of Edward III, to put new heart in the town after the fire and the plague. There is no other similar stone baptistry in England, and it is a fitting story for such a beautiful adornment to the Church.



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*Monks
Philippa
Edward III
1st Parishioner
2nd Parishioner
Serving Girl
William of Wykeham
Abbot
Andrew de Power*

Men from St. Mary's Choir
Rosemary Rodell
Robert Ford
Sheila Cosby
Sue Kesseru
Rachel Banfield
Jason Wood
Michael Crow
Ian Wallace

Music during scene

Ach lieber herre, Jesus Christ

SCENE 6: JOHN DE WENLOCK AND THE WENLOCK CHAPEL

In 1467 the manor of Luton came fully into the hands of Sir John Wenlock, one of the greatest soldiers of his age. After much fighting in France on behalf of Kings Henry V and VI, Sir John was in Henry's Lancastrian camp at the start of the Wars of the Roses. In 1455, after being badly wounded in a Lancastrian defeat, he swapped sides and became speaker of the House of Commons. Other honours poured on him when the Yorkists were in the ascendant. By 1470, however, he turned his coat again. The following year he was killed in another Lancastrian defeat at Tewkesbury and was buried in Tewkesbury Abbey. At the height of his Yorkist power, he built the Wenlock Chapel, separated from the chancel by its magnificent screen. His helmet and gauntlets can be seen there still.

*Thomas
David
Mother*

James Grylls
Chris Barnes
Thelma Shacklady

SCENE 7: THE GUILD OF THE HOLY TRINITY

After Sir John Wenlock's death, the manor of Someries passed to Bishop Thomas Rotherham. In 1474 Bishop Rotherham founded a religious guild with, amongst others, his mother, brother and the then vicar of St. Mary's. Such guilds were common in medieval towns, in theory providing charity for the old and sick, and encouragement to their members to live the Christian way of life. The Guild of the Holy Trinity became one of the richest in England and founded a chantry in the church, with two chaplains to sing masses for the souls of the founders. All too often, such guilds were used by greedy and selfish men to increase their fame and glory. In this fictional scene, this conflict between charity and greed is represented by the various participants. Bishop Rotherham eventually became Archbishop of York and a Cardinal.

*Monks
Alice Rotherham
Rotherham*

Men from St. Mary's Choir
Moira Cann
Michael Cann

Music during scene

Sun of my soul : Josquin de Pres
O pater sancte

SCENE 8: THE BARNARD CHANTRY

The Barnard Chapel is a small chapel to the immediate south west of the high altar. It was built by Richard Barnard, vicar from 1477 to 1492, to be the place where his tomb would reside and prayers would be said for his soul. The leper window was a common feature in many churches to enable lepers to see the elevation of the host and to partake in a limited way in the church services.

Apprentice Mason
Revd. Richard Barnard

James Grylls
Michael Crow

SCENE 9: THE REFORMATION

In 1539, St. Mary's and the St. Albans Abbey lands were seized by King Henry VIII. The church escaped relatively unscathed from the reformation, with the same priest, John Gwynneth, surviving as vicar for another nineteen years. All the statues and images were removed at this time, but no record of the event exists. In 1547 all chantries and guilds were abolished including the Guild of the Holy Trinity. By that time the Guild's wealth had severely declined and the two priests were pensioned off at £5 per year.

1st Parishioner
2nd Parishioner
Revd. John Gwynneth
1st Soldier
2nd Soldier

Beverley Cooper
Betty Randall
Robert Ford
Ian Wallace
Richard Vickers

Music during scene

Ave Maria : Archedelt

SCENE 10: THE REFORMS OF ARCHBISHOP LAUD 1639

In 1639, the shadow of the Civil War lay over England. The Puritan merchant classes, represented in this scene by the fictitious Henry Impey, became increasingly angry with the policies of King Charles I. The landowners, represented by the historical Lady Elizabeth Crawley of Someries, were Anglicans who supported the King. At this time, the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, imposed a number of reforms on Church of England services which were hated by the Puritans but needed in many ways. In 1636 the churchwardens at Knottingley in Bedfordshire permitted cockfights and gambling in their chancel. The Civil War was a time of great uncertainty for all the clergy. Early in the war, the Reverend Birde chose to give up his turbulent parish of Luton and retire to his other benefice in the quiet village of Cheddington. We see the fate of Lady Crawley in the next scene.

Lady Francis Crawley
Mr. Impey
Mrs. Impey
Revd. John Birde
1st Parishioner
2nd Parishioner
3rd Parishioner

Rosemary Rodell
Chris Barnes
Hilary Barnes
Michael Crow
Sue Kesseru
Jean Marshall
Anne Marshall

Music during scene

Let thy merciful ears : Mudd

SCENE 11: THE FUNERAL OF LADY CRAWLEY 1658

There were no major Civil War battles in and around Luton, although there was a small skirmish in the town in 1645. When Sir Francis Crawley declared for the King, his estate was occupied by parliamentary troops. It was returned in 1646 and he lived there until his death in 1649. Lady Elizabeth continued to live there until her death in 1658. Following the departure of John Birde, St. Mary's had a succession of Puritan ministers until Thomas Jessop arrived in 1650. Jessop was not an ordained minister in the Anglican tradition, which greatly upset the Royalist members of his congregation. These tensions erupted when Lady Elizabeth died. It is probable that John Crawley, who conducted his mother's funeral as shown in this scene, had been unofficially ordained as an Anglican clergyman before his mother's death. After the funeral, Thomas Jessop reported John Crawley to Oliver Cromwell, but Cromwell died before Crawley could appear before him and the Commonwealth rapidly crumbled into history.

Cavaliers
Mr. Impey
Mrs. Impey
Thomas Jessop
1st Parishioner
2nd Parishioner
3rd Parishioner
4th Parishioner
5th Parishioner
Revd. John Crawley

Men from St. Mary's Choir
Chris Barnes
Hilary Barnes
David Banfield
Ken Rose
Steve Kesseru
Vicky McDowell
Jan Bresland
Edna Peck
John Spurgeon

Music during scene

Inton John II 25-26

SCENE 12: JOHN WESLEY PREACHES AT ST. MARY'S 1772

The industrial revolution widened the gap between rich and poor in England as never before, threatening social revolution. The established church largely supported the rich landowners. John Wesley, an Anglican clergyman to his death, determined to take the Christian message to those ignored by the church. He set up a series of societies to enable the poor to help themselves, both spiritually and materially. Shunned by the Church of England, these societies grew into the Methodist Church.

Wesley was bitterly opposed by the aristocracy, such as the Marquis of Bute, then owner of Luton Hoo. On 16 January 1771, Wesley preached in St. Mary's. He wrote in his diary, "I was offered the use of the Church; the frost was exceeding sharp, and the glass was taken out of the windows. However for the sake of the people, I accepted the offer, though I might just as well have preached in the open air." Wesley was supported by Coriolanus Copplestone, who was curate for twenty-six years when the parish had a series of absentee vicars. The parish clerk (the fictitious Mr. Johnson), however, refused to allow the church bells to be rung for the service.

1st Bellringer
2nd Bellringer
3rd Bellringer
4th Bellringer
Mr. Johnson
John Wesley
Revd. Copplestone

John Lawrence
Tom Thurman
Richard Vickers
Robert Ford
Michael Cann
Simon Richardson
John Childs

SCENE 13: JAMES O'NEILL AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Irishman James O'Neill was one of the most dynamic vicars St. Mary's has ever had. He purchased the living in 1862 and occupied it for thirty-five years. In that time he made many changes. Firstly he restored the neglected fabric of the church, creating the building we largely see today. O'Neill and his architect G. E. Street improved the building immensely. They created the noble east end of the church and moved the baptistry from its exile in the south transept to its proper place between the entrance doors. Secondly, he led the fight for new church schools in Luton, financing some from his own pocket. In doing so, he fought many battles with the evergrowing non-conformist churches in the town. Eventually the rivalry lessened, to the great benefit of the town's children. Thirdly, O'Neill appointed a young organ scholar, Frederick Gostelow to be the church organist and choirmaster. Gostelow laid the foundations of the excellent musical tradition which we enjoy at St. Mary's to this day.

Revd. O'Neill
Teacher
Frederick Gostelow
Churchwarden
Boys
1st Girl (Reciter)
Girls

Chris Barnes
Helen Banfield
Michael Pearson-Booth
Ian Wallace
Boys from St. Mary's Choir
Anne Marshall
Eve Grylls
Sarah Grylls
Emma Grylls
Verity Brewer
Debbie Waters
Roger Windmill

Headmaster

SCENE 14: THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND FINALE

With two world wars, mass starvation, threatened ecological disaster and nuclear weaponry, it seems that the Twentieth Century has presented the church with more challenges than ever before. St. Mary's has faced these challenges and continues to go forward. Two daughter churches, St. Anne and St. Francis, have been created. The glorious, new Magnificat window was installed in 1979. The services have been updated, using modern translations of the bible and the modern prayers of the Alternative Service Book. The words may have changed, but their purpose has not. We continue to serve, praise and worship God, just as our predecessors have done for the last 850 years.

"To God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, for ever and ever! Amen"

Ephesians ch 3, v 21.

Curate
Canon Davison
Mary
1st P.C.C. member
2nd P.C.C. member
3rd P.C.C. member
Reader

Tony Sellers
David Banfield
Gillian Cann
Richard Vickers
John Childs
Michael Cann
Len Ridd

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The 'Friends of Luton Parish Church' was formed with the purpose of uniting those who love this historical church and wish to share in the task of maintaining its fabric and enhancing its beauty for future generations.

In recent years, it has become impossible for the congregation, sizeable though it is, to bear the burden alone. As costs increase the support of the Friends becomes more urgently required and their generosity more clearly appreciated, to avoid dilapidation.

All of us in Luton who are proud of our most beautiful building, have a responsibility to see that this does not, and will not happen.

All grants made by the Friends are for the sole purpose of restoration and preservation of the ancient fabric, and do not support the day-to-day running of the church or its pastoral work. Since their inauguration, the Friends have made grants totalling in excess of £70,000.

New Subscribers are urgently needed if this support is to be continued. The minimum subscription is £1.05.

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