

# Virtual Church News

Sunday 12 July

Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Welcome to Virtual Church News for the fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Hard copies will be circulated to those without access to email/social media. If you know of anyone without email who you think would benefit from a hard copy, please call Jacqui on 356993 or email [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com)

## A Reading for the Week

Matthew 13.1-9

### The Parable of the Sower

*That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!'*

## Re-Opening of Church Buildings

Unfortunately re-opening our Church buildings is not as easy as simply opening the doors and everything being 'back to normal'. There are a lot of safety considerations and measures that will need to be put in place before we can re-open our church buildings and this will take time. We need to create our 'new normal'!

Please be patient with us. We are keeping the situation under constant review and will update you further as soon as any decisions are made



Photo of Barley Fields next to Stagsden Wood by Rev Eric Lomax

If you have any photos of Kempston or Biddenham, send them to [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com)

## Message from Rev Eric Lomax

I remember visiting Funchal in Madeira a few years ago and seeing a sculpture of the Sower from Matthew chapter 13. His hands are open and he is casting his seed indiscriminatory over the fields. In the Bible passage, most of the seed is lost, falling on rocky ground, gets trodden under foot on paths, gets eaten by the birds, or is strangled by weeds, while only a small amount finds its way to the good soil.

When I saw the statue I remember thinking that the sower must have been really stupid to have wasted so much of his seed on bad soil. Remember, before coming here, I spent much of my time in rural communities with modern farmers who use all sorts of technology to conserve seeds and make sure that seeds are given appropriate spacing so that they do not get wasted.

*Continued on next page...*

## Join us for Online Services

Zoom services are held at 11am on a Sunday and 6pm on a Wednesday. Login details are sent out in the covering email to members of our church community. If anyone else would like these, please do get in touch. Everyone is welcome!

The Love of Christ is not locked down

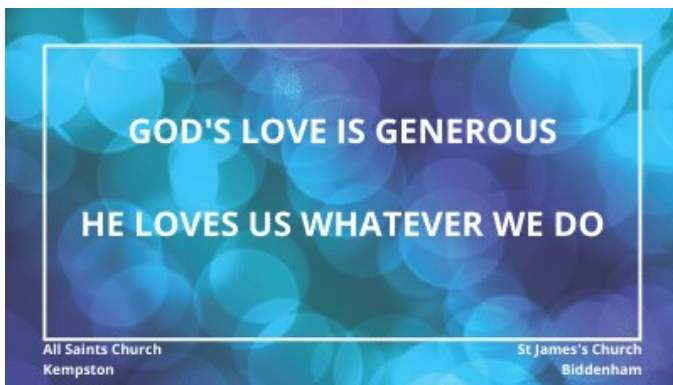
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St James, Biddenham, All Saints, Kempston

## Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued...

This was not the case in ancient times. There were no GPS or computer guided drills and planters as there are now. The sower would walk around his fields and cast his hand full of seeds. His hope would be that wastage would be limited but more often than not he would depend on luck that the rain and the hand of God would direct that everything would grow and bear fruit as it should. He would know in his heart that much would be lost, but that was the way that it must be.

Jesus' parable really should have been called the stupid sower and he was, in fact, referring to a God who had adopted a kind of stupidity in throwing his love to the wind in the expectation that some would receive the treasure that he had given. We need to think of this in two ways.



Firstly, the early Christians would risk everything to proclaim the good news that they had been given. They would talk about God's love and the salvation that he offered, indiscriminately, like the sower sows his seed. Some, like the path, or the rocky ground, would simply not be able to receive that message and the message would, therefore, be lost. Equally, some would try to strangle and suppress that message and the early Christians would be persecuted for doing this. The story Jesus told would simply be there to remind them that even if nobody was ready for it they were doing the right thing in proclaiming God's message.

Secondly, the Bible makes it clear that God's love is generous. He loves us whatever we do, like a parent loves his or her child. Like the sower, the love of Jesus is indiscriminate, and he died for us not because we asked him to, but simply because he wanted to, whether we are prepared to accept it or not. For this reason we can talk about the foolish generosity of God, and it is for this generous love that we should be so grateful.

Before I left my last parish I remember talking to a spiritual advisor about my time there. It was very difficult making an impact on tiny villages with a small population. I remember him saying to me, 'You kept telling the story, Eric, and sowing the seed.' That is what we do. We keep sowing the seed and demonstrating the wasteful, foolishness of God's love: 'For the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who perish; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God.' (1 Corinthians 1:18)

God bless

Eric



## Alpha Online Starting 27 July!

Do you want to find out more about the Christian faith? Do you want to be able to ask questions in a safe environment where all views are listened to and nobody is judged?



Then join our new Alpha Online Course which will be starting on Monday 27 July at 7.30pm. For further details contact Jacqui on 356993 or at [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com)

## Hymns and Devotional Music

Tim Grant-Jones, organist at All Saints, and his wife Irene are live streaming hymns and other devotional music at 10am each Sunday (before the Zoom service). Find this and other music on Facebook by searching for Grant-Jones Musical Services or entering #gjmusicalservices. You can also request hymns in advance!



## Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

If you don't have access to the internet, try tuning in to the following on Sunday:

- 8.10am on BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship. From South Wales Baptist College.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. The UK's favourite hymn with Aled Jones.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from the Chapel of Kings College Cambridge.

Wednesday 15 July:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Chichester Cathedral.

## Follow us on Social Media?

All Saints Church can be found on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/allsaintschurchkempston/>

St James's Church can be found on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram:

<https://www.facebook.com/St-Jamess-Church-Biddenham-428040160888713/>

<https://twitter.com/BiddenhamChurch>

<https://www.instagram.com/stjameschurchbiddenham/>

Do follow us for more up to date information/daily prayers etc.

## Online Services

The Church of England's online services continue to be broadcast each week on its website and Facebook page at 9am each Sunday.

You can also download the order of service and the sermon in pdf format from the Church of England website.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

Many other churches and cathedrals across the country are also providing online services including St Albans Cathedral. Follow their Youtube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/stalbanscathedral>

## Discovery Group

Meets via Zoom on Thursday evenings 8pm. Contact [john.c.lambert@gmail.com](mailto:john.c.lambert@gmail.com) for details.

**\*Highly Recommended by Members of our Congregation\***

## Daily Hope



The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus. Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

## For the Children (& young at heart!)

In today's Gospel reading (Matthew 13.1-9 and 18-23) Jesus tells the crowds a parable of seed being sown onto different sorts of ground. Later, he explains it to the disciples as an illustration of how different people respond to hearing the word of the kingdom.

### Activities:

Why not sow some seeds? Look after them and watch them grow. Think about what makes the seeds grow and what might help us to grow as followers of Jesus.

Jesus told many stories. Why don't you try writing stories with your family? Decide together what your stories are going to be about - it could be anything! Each take a piece of paper and write the first line of a story at the top of the page. Fold the paper over so the writing cannot be seen. Then pass each piece of paper round to the next person, who writes the next line of the story. Repeat this process until all the stories have been finished. Share the stories together and see how different they all are, even though they are about the same thing.

### Songs:

Rocky Wocky Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-8veaBmsEI>

The Potter's Hand

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgXL3y9Rlbl>

### Prayer:

Lord Jesus, may we have eyes to see and ears to hear what you are saying to us. Make us ready to learn from your stories. Amen.



## Please pray with me

God our Father,  
Thank you for the love and kindness  
That you have shown us in what Jesus has done for us.  
Help us to reflect your kindness  
In sharing that love to others.  
In Jesus Christ name, Amen.



## For your prayers

Please pray for:

- All those who have heard the stories of Jesus for the first time during lockdown and for those who have come to know God as a result. We particularly pray for all those who have attended or are planning to attend an online Alpha course.
- Our community, friends and families.
- Rev Eric and our PCCs as they consider how to safely re-open our churches.

Our prayer group meets at 8pm on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Get in touch if you would like the login details or have any prayer requests.

## Hymns/Songs of the Week

Come down O love divine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXO4rqBQOAU>

If ye love me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlgVGlyzxYU>

I am a new creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtOu2iwmuEA>

Why have you chosen me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sq7ujDcaZNY>

## Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

\* Note: new landline number from June 2020

## Bedford Foodbank

Please don't forget that we support the Bedford Foodbank, who need our donations now more than ever.



Donations of food can be placed in a box in St James's Church Porch, taken direct to the Foodbank (off Manton Lane) or put in the boxes in the supermarkets. In Biddenham, Imogen Sanctuary is collecting donations from various roads once a month. Email sarah.sanctuary@yahoo.com for further details.

Items currently needed include Cup-a-Soup, Jellies (pre-made), Tinned Rice Pudding, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Hand Soap, Anti-Bac Spray Cleaners, Washing Up Liquid, Deodorant, Shampoo, Shower Gel

Alternatively please consider making a financial donation. More information can be found at <https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk/>

## Community Support Groups

Do you need support? We can help with shopping and companionship (via regular phone calls). Can you volunteer to help? Let us know if you are DBS checked (for any organisation). It doesn't matter if you aren't, we still need your help, but safeguarding is important!

### Biddenham:

If you need support, ring 01234 815393 (daytime only) or email [help@biddenham.org.uk](mailto:help@biddenham.org.uk) with your name/phone number/address.

If you can volunteer, please email [help@biddenham.org.uk](mailto:help@biddenham.org.uk)

### Kempston:

If you need support or can volunteer to help, contact:

Rev Eric Lomax: 328452 or 07805 879537

Alison/Brenda Walker: 851597

Alan/Anita Lowe: 857212 or 07751 659695