

St James's Church, Biddenham

All Saints Church, Kempston

Virtual Church News

Sunday 5 July

Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Welcome to Virtual Church News for the fourth 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

A Reading for the Week

Matthew 11.16–19, 25–end

'But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another:

"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn."

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.'

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'



If you have any photos of Kempston or Biddenham, send them to stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

For the last few weeks we have been reading about how much of a hard job being a disciple is and how following Jesus often leads us to suffer for him. This week we are given what seems to be the completely different message. The writer of Matthew's Gospel seems to be telling us that getting to know Jesus would be less of a burden to you; 'You will find rest and peace in following Jesus.'

I remember somebody telling me off in a Church a long time ago. I am used to being told off and ninety percent of the time I deserve it. This person told me off because they reckoned that my sermons had been too hard for people and many people who came to Church needed peace and encouragement.

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

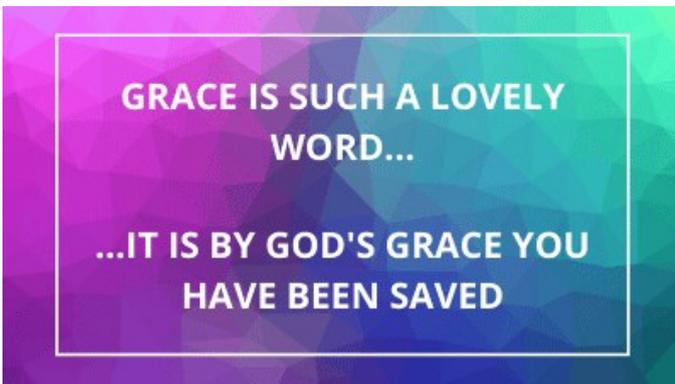
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St James, Biddenham, All Saints, Kempston

Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued...

That, I think, is a fair comment. Jesus comes to us to give strength to the weary, to lift our burdens of guilt and shame and to help us understand that we are, each one of us, loved by him.

We don't know who wrote Matthew's Gospel, as names were assigned to the Gospels a long time after they were written, but Matthew is as good a name as any, so we will go with that. What we do know, however, is that the writer (Matthew?), wanted to turn the Jewish faith on its head so that the Jewish people who read this particular Gospel would see God and themselves in a completely different way.



The Jewish readers believed themselves to be in possession of a set of rules for living, known as the Torah, and in order to be 'good,' they would have to follow these laws to the absolute letter. These laws not only included rules on not stealing, not killing or not lying, but also contained lots of complex laws that were often impossible to live by. A Jewish person had to follow strict guidelines on the types of food they ate and how that food was prepared. There were different and often much more demeaning rules for women than there were for men and a boy had to be circumcised according to the Jewish law. The law was burdensome and uncompromising and often simply highlighted how inadequate people were before God.

There is a character called Matthew in Matthew's Gospel (and some people think that was how the Gospel was allocated its name). Matthew was a tax collector. Tax collectors were absolutely hated by the Jewish people at the time of Jesus because it was their job to collect money from the Jewish communities and give that money to the occupying Roman authorities. In the eyes of ordinary people, this placed tax collectors on the seriously naughty list and many people believed that tax collectors were right outside the scope of God's love.

In Matthew's Gospel (Chapter 9) Jesus went right up to this tax collector and said 'follow me.' Jesus had chosen a bad person who could not have possibly followed the religious rules and put him 'inside' the scope of God's love. All Matthew had to do was believe in Jesus and follow him.

The religious rules were such a burden to the Jewish people, but Jesus said; 'My burden is light!' He does not place heavy demands on you, or impossible rules to follow. He calls you, simply because he loves you. That love even extends to really bad people. This means that whoever you are, or whatever you have done, all you have to do is believe in him. 'Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in love, gave us life with Jesus, even when we were dying of sin - it is by God's grace you have been saved.' (Ephesians 2:5).

Grace is such a lovely word that tells us everything we need to know about God. We have no reason to be burdened by a sense of our own failure and inadequacy. It is a God of grace who chooses to rescue you because he loves you. Amen.

God bless

Eric

Alpha Online

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 soon. For further details contact Jacqui at stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com or on 356993.

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. Exploring the power of music in troubled times.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Celebrating Florence Nightingale and the NHS.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Sheffield Cathedral.

Wednesday 8 July:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from the Chapel of Kings College Cambridge.

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

Join the Church of England on its website or Facebook page for this week's 9am Virtual Service.

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

Next meeting via Zoom on Thursday 9 July at 8pm. Contact 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 this week's reading (Matthew 11.16-19 and 25-30) Jesus reassures us that no matter how busy life is, if we ask him, he will share our burdens and give us rest.

Activities:

Think about things that might be worrying you at the moment e.g. going back to school, not being able to see your friends. Write each of these down on separate pieces of paper and stick the paper onto a heavy weight (large stone/can of beans?). Try carrying all your worries - they are heavy and hard to carry! Now put them down and say "*Father God, when we are worried, we know that you are there and ready to help bear our burdens. Amen*". Take the pieces of paper off the heavy weights. They are much lighter. God helps us by carrying our heavy burdens if we ask him to.

Why not watch Duggie Dug Dug's Crazy Stay at Home Roadshow https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eB9bC6_gZtA

Songs:

Our God is a great big God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaXPXWbcE3I>

He's Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjLaW54Oy54>

Prayer:

Lord Jesus,

thank you that you are our great teacher!

Thank you for all that you reveal to us in our lives. Amen.

Please pray with me

Gracious Father,
by the obedience of Jesus
you brought salvation to our wayward world:
draw us into harmony with your will,
that we may find all things restored in him,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.



For your prayers

On the anniversary of the establishment of the NHS, thank God for the NHS and pray for those in countries without good health services who are struggling to cope with the pandemic.

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.

A Prayer for the NHS

Everlasting God,
at this time we lift to you
those from all nations and backgrounds
who work on the front line in healthcare.
Give them skill and wisdom in their work.
Be their strength and their shield
as they give of themselves in the care of others.
Amen.

Hymns/Songs of the Week

Meekness & Majesty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDGF3c8tsko>

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

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

Amazing Love

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDi7uYYxz48&list=PLmziFeGN1VMh4ZQUREkAWcfRoj7Ksmvna&index=20)

[v=iDi7uYYxz48&list=PLmziFeGN1VMh4ZQUREkAWcfRoj7Ksmvna&index=20](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDi7uYYxz48&list=PLmziFeGN1VMh4ZQUREkAWcfRoj7Ksmvna&index=20)

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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* 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 Jars of Sauce (curry/sweet & sour), Jam, Tinned Potatoes, Tinned Carrots, Jellies (pre-made), Squash, Nappies (size 5+6), Hand Soap, Anti-Bac Spray Cleaners, Washing Up Liquid, Shower Gel, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Deodorant, Shampoo.

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 with your name/phone number/address.

If you can volunteer, please email 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