

St James's Church, Biddenham

All Saints Church, Kempston

Virtual Church News

Sunday 2 August

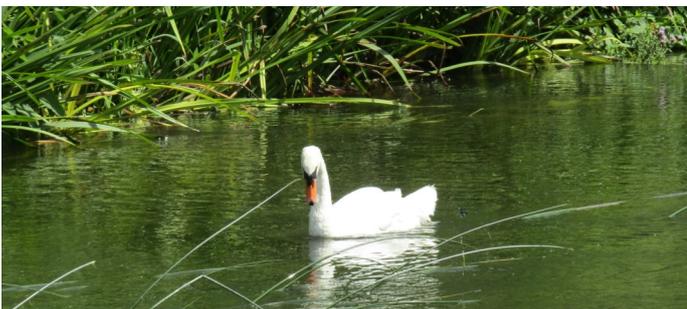
Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Welcome to Virtual Church News. 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 14.13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.



The Comet Newise, taken from Box End
Photo by Cliff Izzard

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

Services in Church Resuming

Some services in Church (or the Churchyard if good weather) are resuming. They will be short, simple services with no hymns or communion. Services during August will be as follows:

Sunday 9th August - 9.30am St James
Sunday 16th August - 9.30am All Saints
Sunday 23rd August - 9.30am St James
Sunday 30th August - 9.30am All Saints

Face coverings must be worn by all those who attend (this is now a legal requirement) (if you are exempt please bring some evidence with you).

If you are in a vulnerable category we advise you not to attend these physical services, but this is ultimately your decision to make.

Please do not attend if you feel unwell.

Virtch will be Continuing!

Zoom services will continue to be 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!



Photo by Alison Walker

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

When I was a child I was frightened of the dark. Our house was not old but it creaked and my bedroom was filled with shadows. All sorts of terrible things lurked in those shadows and often I found it difficult to sleep.



Fear has become so much a part of everybody's lives and even many Christians that I know; people of hope, people of promise, people with God's good news written on their hearts are struggling to find God in all of this.

In Matthew 14 we have three stories that are all tagged together and there is a reason why they are linked together in the Bible.

The first story is the story of John the Baptist. We are told a number of times in the Gospel that John is a good and humble man who has a good relationship with God. In this story (John 14.1-12) John the Baptist is brutally executed and his head is put on a plate in order to satisfy Herod's lust for his young niece. Having his head chopped off and put on a plate was a tough way for anyone to die and from a religious perspective, it is difficult to understand how God could allow such a terrible thing to happen to one of his followers.

I will skip the second story in Matthew 14 for a short while and go onto the last story (Matthew 14.22-33). The disciples were alone in their boat. It was night time and it was dark. When I was a child I remember going on a school trip on a boat, over to France. It was night time and I remember spending some time on the deck by myself. I remember being conscious of the darkness and the stillness of the sea around me. I remember feeling that same sense of fear that I had felt as a child. The shadows over the water are filled with incomprehensible fears and it was then that the disciples saw Jesus walking towards them. They were afraid.

It was then that Jesus called to Simon and asked him to step into the shadows and walk towards him. Faith allowed Simon to take a small number of steps onto the water and then, as the fear sunk in, he began to sink. There in the still darkness of the lake, Jesus was there for him. He reached out and caught him.

The middle story also takes place away from the familiar places, away from safety. In Matthew 14.13-21 Jesus had led a crowd of five thousand people away from their towns and cities, away from their familiar places and after some time the disciples thought it was best if Jesus sent all these people home to get some food. 'No', Jesus said, 'get them to stay in the wilderness with me and we will find some miracle to satisfy the needs of these people.'

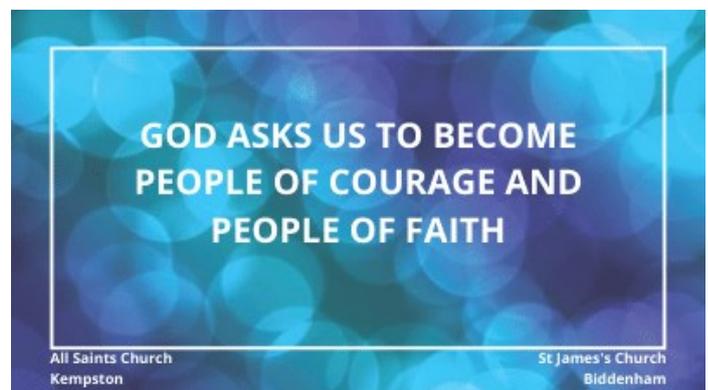
So Jesus gathered together a small packed lunch of some bread and fish, blessed the food, and shared it out so that there was enough to feed all these people and lots more left over.

This story reminds of the story of the people of Israel, lost and afraid in the wilderness and God fed them with bread from heaven (Exodus 16.1-35).

We must not think that we are called to a safe place without shadows and without danger, as John the Baptist discovered. Often God calls us to dangerous places, and challenging places. What he does ask of us is that we become people of courage and people of faith. In the shadows, in the darkness and in the wilderness God is there. He will supply all our needs and feed us when we are hungry. We are his people in the wilderness and he is our God.

God bless

Eric



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. Encountering God in abandonment. The chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury charts her walk with God and with Covid-19.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Faith and sport. Aled Jones explores links between Christianity and sport.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Hereford Cathedral.

Wednesday 5 August:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Buckfast Abbey, Devon.

Alpha Online Starting in September

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



Mental Health Webinars

The Diocese of St Albans are running webinars aimed at making our churches places of welcome and inclusion for people living with mental ill-health. Everyone is welcome - no need to book in advance. One webinar a month (starting 29 July) on a range of topics. For further details go to <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/mental-health-and-wellness/>

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!

Discovery Group

Meets via Zoom on Thursday evenings 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!)

This week's reading from Matthew's gospel (14.13-21) is one you might already know - the story of the feeding of the 5,000.

Activities:

Think about those in need in your community e.g. the homeless, hungry, refugee families. You may know of a neighbour or a friend who is struggling at the moment. If you are able to, can you put some food or toiletries into a bag for that person (or for the Foodbank). Say a prayer for whoever might receive that bag before taking it to your neighbour/the Foodbank (with an adult).

Share a meal together with your family or carer. Thank God for his generosity to us and for giving us people to share things with.

In the story Jesus said "the hour is late" to let his disciples know that people needed to eat and that doing God's work was urgent. Think about the issue of climate change. Can you find out some information on this? What makes it urgent? What can and should we be doing about it?

Let us pray:

As Jesus thanked you for the baskets of food, we thank you, God, for the many things you give to us every day. Amen.

Songs to listen to:

One basket

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ8qsaxRYWM>

Hold us together

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sxOdBeo0BE>

Please pray with me

Father hear the prayer we offer,
not for ease our prayer shall be.
Just for strength that we may ever,
live our lives courageously.
Amen



For your prayers

Please pray for:

- Our PCCs as they endeavour to re-open our churches;
- Those who are anxious and afraid;
- Those coping with bereavement at the moment;
- Those planning to be married in our churches over the coming weeks.

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.

*God of love,
turn our hearts to your ways;
and give us peace.
Amen*

Hymns/Songs of the Week

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCnQNwQG5GI>

I the Lord of sea and sky

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgLwH5RdtPk>

Teach us, good Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoL-flAdU1s>

Make us one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69tQzr-60Bs>

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 Cup-a-Soup, Jellies (pre-made), Tinned Rice Pudding, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Hand Soap, Anti-Bac Spray Cleaners, Washing Up Liquid, Deodorant, Shampoo and 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 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