

All Saints Church, Kempston
St James's Church, Biddenham

Virtual Church News

18 July 2021

7th 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 0778 6886 710 or email her at stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

This Week's Services

- Sunday 9.30am: Service at All Saints, Kempston
- Sunday 11.00am: Virtch (Zoom)
- Monday 9.00am: Morning Prayer (Zoom)
- Wednesday 6.00pm: Virtch (Zoom)

A Reading for the Week

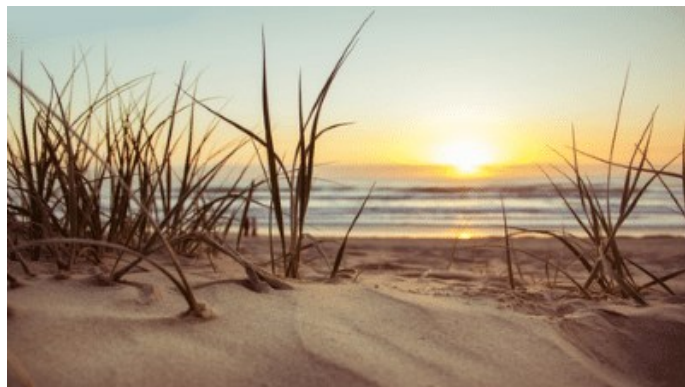
Mark 6. 30-34, 53-56

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Virtch

Zoom services are normally held at 11am on Sunday, 9am on Monday and 6pm on Wednesday. Simply go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.



Reflection from Keeley Frampton On Mark 6.30-34, 53-56

I have just returned from a couple of days on the North Norfolk coast where I go frequently to 'get away from it all'. The 'it' being the business of modern life. In Norfolk everything slows down, and I can rest in expansive and vast landscapes, and breathe in fresh sea air. Outside of my Norfolk life there seems to be a glorification of 'busy' in society, like busy is a badge of honour to be collected no matter the cost. It seems it is no longer acceptable to simply 'be', one must 'be busy' (or at least seem to be busy). For example, there is an expectation when we text or email someone that they will respond quickly, when in fact we are perhaps only one of many electronic voices clamouring for that person's attention.

My husband has also been working from home for a while, and the walls of the sanctuary that is our house now reverberate with steady 'pings' indicating emails arriving. On top of this, social media makes it feel as if everyone is vying for attention and seeking to be heard or seen in some way. In this last year it has become necessary to cultivate an online presence for my work, via Zoom and social media. And personally, it has been tiring to spend a great deal of time imprisoned in a small electronic box on a computer screen whilst I try hard to connect with other people in the electronic desert.

Continued on next page...

Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

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

Sunday 18 July

- 8.00am Three Counties Radio - weekly service.
- 8.10am BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship.
- 1.15pm BBC 1 - Songs of Praise.
- 3.00pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 21 July

- 3.30pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Reflection from Keeley Frampton cont...

On our final evening in Norfolk I felt the need for some solitude on the beach and, as it was late, (and the Euro finals) I thought I would have the place all to myself. I walked out at 8.20pm to catch the high tide, intent on going for a swim and then reading my book. You might think it strange to be seeking solitude after the last year, but whilst I (like many) have been pretty isolated in some ways, the stresses and strains of the year have left me craving peace and tranquillity. When I got to the beach, I was surprised that there were about 20 other people there, fishing, reading or bird watching. After my initial 'only child syndrome' frustration of having to share the beach, it was actually lovely to be surrounded by silent people who also seemed to be seeking solitude. Everyone looked relaxed, the sea was calm and there was not a smart phone in sight, and I felt God's presence all around.

Perhaps many of us can resonate with the disciples in the reading who, after a busy time of teaching and healing were tired and in need of rest. I think today's reading is reassuring because it reminds us that Jesus recognised this need for rest amongst his disciples when things were busy. And even Jesus sometimes had to sneak out of the house to pray at night because it was the only quiet time he had. A lot of people I talk to seem to attach a sense of shame around 'self-care', and a feeling that we should keep going at any cost. In fact, this reading says the opposite, almost as if it is our duty to make sure we rest, balancing contemplation with action. What use are we to anyone else if we are burnt out? We cannot spread the love and peace of Christ authentically if we are too busy to contemplate and feel it in our own lives.

A holiday can be much needed, but it has not always been possible this last year with lockdowns or financial strains. We also know from today's reading that the disciples' attempts to rest were thwarted by the crowds of people who had followed them to their sanctuary. These people were searching for healing and guidance. Jesus is moved by them so deeply and with such compassion that, without a second thought, he lays aside the disciples' need to rest and begins teaching the crowds.

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Prayer/Bible Study Groups

Join our prayer group at 8pm on the 1st/3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Everyone welcome. We also have Bible study groups which are open to everyone.

Contact John Lambert for further details, or with any prayer requests. john.c.lambert@gmail.com



I don't know about you, but I think I would find it pretty hard to just get on holiday and have people effectively demand that I come back to work. And we can't always go away for a few days, or sometimes even for a few hours, because of life's demands, but we can carve out time to find some quiet to contemplate and let God's love in. Walking in nature, just breathing for five minutes in the garden, sitting on a windowsill and watching and listening to the rain, taking a bath, having a nap (Jesus napped too!), whatever works for you. It is not self-serving, but it does seem like a radical act in today's society to take care of yourself in order to be able to care for others.

It's also useful to note that the reading is set around the story of the feeding of this crowd of 5,000 from only five loaves and two fish, which serves to remind us that God provides in scarce times. There is enough for everyone. Even if we are exhausted and wanting to rest, but unable to do so because modern life has other ideas, we can rest in the knowledge that the energy of God's love will keep us going. The 5,000 people who trekked into the wilderness without food, following the disciples to their sanctuary, were provided for.

Sometimes we may feel we are in a spiritual wilderness, and in those times we can simply try and trust that God will provide us with what we need. Like any good parent, God gives us what we need (even if it is not always what we want). God's love can fill us in a moment of rest on holiday, or during a stressful event in our life. But we need to balance out action with rest and contemplation so we can learn to feel this love. If we are rested and recharged by God's love, we are more likely to shine with gentleness, love and truth. So, I am glad our vicar Eric is taking a holiday and that I am writing this week's reflection, and I pray that he comes back restored and well rested.

Keeley

(A member of the St James's congregation)

Let us pray...

Generous God,
you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard seed,
make it grow to your glory
and the flourishing of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen



Do you have a spare room?

Asylum seekers are often the poorest people in our community. They get £30/week for everything and are not allowed to work. Many land on the streets. Sanctuary Hosting work with people who can offer a spare room to house such people. Many hosts feed their guests, but this is not a requirement. Bedford is in need of more hosts! Do you have a spare room and would you be willing to lodge such a person? For more information go to www.sanctuaryhosting.org

All Age Reading

2 Samuel 7. 1-14

King David was living in his palace. And the Lord gave him peace from all his enemies around him. David said to Nathan the prophet, "Look, I am living in a palace made of cedar wood. But the Ark of the Covenant of God is still kept in a tent!" Nathan said to the king, "Go and do what you really want to do. The Lord is with you."

But that night the Lord spoke his word to Nathan. The Lord said, "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord says: You are not the person to build a house for me to live in. I did not live in a house when I brought the Israelites out of Egypt. I have been moving around all this time with a tent as my home. I have continued to move with the tribes of Israel. But I have never asked their leaders who take care of them to build me a house of cedar wood.'

"You must tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord of heaven's armies says: I took you from the pasture when you were following the sheep. I took you to become leader of my people, the Israelites. I have been with you everywhere you have gone. I have defeated your enemies for you. I will make you as famous as any of the great men on the earth. Also I will choose a place for my people, the Israelites. I will plant them so they can live in their own home. They will not be bothered anymore. Wicked people will no longer make them suffer as they have in the past. Wicked people continued to do this even when I appointed judges. But I will give you peace from all your enemies. I also tell you that I will make your descendants kings of Israel after you.

'Your days will come to an end, and you will die. At that time I will make one of your sons the next king. He will build a temple for me. I will make his kingdom strong forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he sins, I will use other people to punish him. They will be my whips.

Bedford Foodbank

Items currently needed: UHT Milk, Cup-a-Soup, Fruit Juice (Longlife), Tinned Carrots/Peas/Sweetcorn, Tinned Tuna, Tinned Fruit, Rice 250g/500g/1kg, Ham (Small Tins), Coffee, Biscuits, Shampoo, Washing-Up Liquid, Anti-Bac Spray, Deodorant (Unisex), Tin Openers.

Please continue to support this valuable charity and help them prevent hunger in our community.

Covid-19 Support Networks

If you need support with shopping, loneliness or anything else at this time please do get in touch!

Biddenham: Ring 01234 815393 (daytime only) or email help@biddenham.org.uk with your name/phone number/address.

Kempston: Contact Rev Eric Lomax (328452) or Alan/Anita Lowe (857212).

The All Age Bit!

This week we will be exploring the story of God's promise to David which can be found in your Bible at 2 Samuel 7 v 1-14. David lived in a palace, but the Ark of God, their most precious symbol of God's presence amongst them only lived in a tent. David wanted to give honour to God and bless Him by building a house but God told David that He would bless David and his descendants, the house and kingdom He was planning would last forever. Why do you think that David wanted to build a house for God? What do you think is the most important thing to make a house a home?

Activity

We are invited to be part of building God's Kingdom here on the earth, sharing God's love with others and inviting God's rule and reign in our communities. Why not find some stones to decorate with messages of encouragement and love (e.g. The Lord is my rock, Jesus loves you or Trust in the Lord). Paint onto the stones or decorate them with permanent markers. Take the stones and place them around your community, pray that God would bless and encourage those that see them, that they would know God's love for themselves.

Song

Faith as small as a mustard seed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPyIxfN-Oo>

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the story of David and your promise to Him. Thank you that you love to give us good gifts and to bless us just as you blessed David. Thank you that you are not far from us but that we can invite you into our hearts and know you living inside us through our helper the Holy Spirit. We pray for those in our communities who do not have a safe home or any place to live. Would you protect and provide for them. Amen.

Above resources (and more) can be found at Together at Home. www.tath.co.uk.

Suggested Music for this week

The Lord's my Shepherd

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

All hail the power of Jesu's name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9voJsbicG9M&t=31s>

Hail to the Lord's anointed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkrepBvrLI4>

He is our peace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Yj6BO5pQ0A>

Hymn of Heaven

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqxtFUwM3-o>