

St James's Church, Biddenham

All Saints Church, Kempston

# Virtual Church News

Sunday 23 August

Tenth 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](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com)

## A Reading for the Week

### Romans 12.1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

## Virtch

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!



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

## Service at St James on Sunday 23rd

Services in our churches (or the churchyards if good weather) during August will be as follows:

Sunday 23rd August - 9.30am St James

Sunday 30th August - 9.30am All Saints

**Please read the following important notes on what to expect when attending Church**

**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). We will have a few disposable face masks for use by anyone who has been unable to obtain one.

Please wash your hands before leaving home. You will be asked to sanitise your hands on entering and leaving the church.

A one-way system will operate in both the Church and the Churchyard. Please enter the churchyard via the entrance opposite the Church Barn. Entry to the church (if the service is inside) is by the main door. Please note the signs in place and follow the one way system once inside. You will be asked to exit via the Chancel door and the main Churchyard gates. Please adhere to social distancing requirements at all times when in the Church and Churchyard.

We are required to keep a register of attendees' names and contact numbers which can be used for the Track and Trace system if required. These details will be stored securely and disposed of after 21 days.

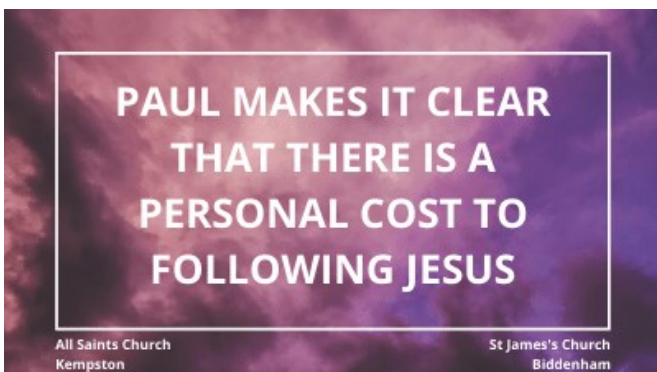
If you are in a vulnerable category we advise you not to attend these physical services, but this is ultimately your decision to make.

Please do not attend if you feel unwell.

## Message from Rev Eric Lomax

Last week we looked at the Canaanite woman, who approached Jesus out of desperation for the sake of her daughter. As a Gentile woman, an outsider, she believed herself to be outside the love of God but Jesus showed her otherwise. In order to receive his love, however, she had to reach out across the boundaries of prejudice, racism, and gender bias, the arrogance of religion, and this meant sacrificing her own dignity. She risked rejection in order to reach out to Jesus.

This week I move back to Paul's letter to the Romans. Here, Paul talks about us being saved not by following the strict observances of religion, but purely by the grace and the love of God. This does not, however, mean that we should do nothing and depend only on God. Paul makes us clear that there is a personal cost to following Jesus. We must present ourselves as a 'living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God.' (Romans 12:1)



Paul was writing to two types of people here.

Firstly, the Jewish readers would have been followers of a religion that practiced a complex system of sacrifices in order to stay close to God. They would have to slaughter a living thing in order to buy a relationship with God. Logic dictates that really this is no relationship at all, and the Christian teaching is that Jesus, instead, gave his life for us on the cross.

Secondly, the Greco-Roman readers would have had no knowledge of the Jewish ideas of sacrifice. Their understanding of the physical world was largely influenced by Plato which separated the world into its visible (physical, material) and invisible (spiritual) aspects. For the Greeks, the physical, material world was something to be endured until the soul could be freed of it.

Greek dualists could never have suggested offering our bodies to God as a living sacrifice, because such an offering would be inherently unworthy of God.

Paul was saying to his readers that God did not want animal sacrifices and while our bodies are, indeed, unworthy of God, our lives and our bodies are, indeed, what God requires of us. Like the Canaanite woman, in order to reach out to Jesus and grasp his love and his grace we must reach out and put our very selves on the line for him.

Paul knew very well what it meant to offer his own body as a living sacrifice. He wrote on many occasions about the personal cost of following Jesus. He wrote; 'For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings.' (1 Corinthians 4:9). Read the whole passage if you get chance. Paul makes it clear, however, the immense benefits of paying the price of discipleship. By giving yourself to him you discover what he calls the 'Glorious freedom of the children of God.' (Romans 8:21), and you begin to discover 'as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.' (Ephesians 3:18)

God Bless

Eric

## Greenbelt Festival

29-30 August



Each year a group of people from our Churches head off to Greenbelt over the Bank Holiday weekend. Have you ever wondered what it is like, but not wanted to brave the camp site? Well this year the Greenbelt Festival is going online so you can try out the Festival from the comfort of your own home!

For £10 you can get access to livestream all the content at any time during the whole of September. The line up includes music, spoken word, comedy, ideas and conversations, films, social meet ups and the Great Big Festival Picnic.

For more information and to purchase your 'Virtual Wristband' for the festival weekend, go to <https://www.greenbelt.org.uk/wild-at-home/>

## 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. The inspiration of listening.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Celebrating the Salvation Army.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 26 August:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

## 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 in September. For further details contact Jacqui on 356993 or at [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com)



## Gospel Reading

### Matthew 16.13-20

When people heard the stories about Jesus, they couldn't believe that he was just an ordinary man. They thought he was a prophet like their Old Testament heroes.

Arriving in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples, 'Who do people say I am?' and his followers had a list: 'Some say Elijah, or Jeremiah, or another of the prophets.' They even included some more recent heroes: 'Some say you are John the Baptist.'

Jesus asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?'

Simon Peter said, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'

Now, the Messiah was someone that the Jews had been waiting for: a person God would send to rescue them from their enemies. 'You are blessed, Simon,' Jesus said, 'because God, my Father in heaven, has given you this answer. From now on you will be known as Peter.' Jesus gave him this name because it means 'rock'.

'On this rock,' Jesus continued, 'I will build my Church, and even hell will not defeat it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you say is allowed on earth, will be allowed in heaven.' Then Jesus warned his disciples, 'Do not tell anyone that I am the Messiah.'

*(from Roots resources)*

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

In this week's Gospel reading Jesus asks his disciples who they say he is. He then says that he will build his church, but warns his disciples not to tell anyone that he is the Messiah (which means the anointed one - someone chosen by God to save the Jewish people). Jesus is asking his disciples to trust him, just like he asks us to trust him.

### Activities:

1. Can you build a 'junk modelling' church with boxes, plastic bottles etc. that you have around the house? We would love to see your photos! Send them to [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com).

2. Put various items of different textures (e.g. jelly, hairbrush, cling film, frozen peas) into boxes and close the lids. Invite other members of your household to put their hands into the boxes without looking. Are they brave enough? Can they tell what the object is? Ask them how it feels to trust and not know what they will experience.

3. Play a game with your family. Each person writes the name of a famous person on a sticky note and sticks it on another person's forehead. You can each then ask 10 questions (which can only have yes or no as the answer) to try to find out who you are.

### Songs:

I will build my church

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUv4RUUKyDA>

I will trust in you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIJU3te81Dg>

### Let us pray:

Through our words and actions, make us ready to take every opportunity under your protection and guidance. Send us out to share your story - the good news for all people. Amen.

## Daily Hope

Music, prayers, reflections and full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a free telephone line.

**0800 804 8044**

Available 24 hours a day



## Discovery Group

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



## Please pray with me

God our Father  
the end of our searching,  
help us to put aside  
all that prevents us from following you  
and to give all that we have,  
Whatever the cost,  
So that we can gain the love that you give us,  
through our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen



## For your prayers

Please pray for:

- All the young people who have recently received A level and GCSE results, along with their teachers and the universities who are trying to find them places.
- Our schools and teachers as they prepare to re-open in September.
- All migrants who risk their lives trying to reach the UK, and those who try to help them.

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

Be still for the presence of the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZugvUQ4m90U>

All for Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7mqKMNIyXA>

Trust in you by Lauren Daigle

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n\\_aVFVveJNs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_aVFVveJNs)

Your name is power by Rend Collective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H62gNjAYOs>

## Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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Email: [Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com](mailto:Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com)

## 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](mailto: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](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