

Virtual Church News

Sunday 13 September

Fourteenth 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 18.21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."



Leaping Bishop and Readers following the Licensing Service at St Albans Cathedral (see p2)

Services in Church

Sunday services in our churches (churchyards if good weather) will be at 9.30am as follows:

Sundays 13, 27 Sept - All Saints

Sunday 20 Sept - St James

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

Face coverings must be worn by all those who attend when the service is inside (this is a legal requirement) (if you are exempt please bring some evidence with you). A few disposable face masks will be available for use by anyone who has been unable to obtain one.

Please wash your hands before leaving home and sanitise your hands on entering/leaving church.

A one-way system will operate in both the Church and the Churchyard. Please note the signs in place and follow the directions of the sidesmen. 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.

At St James's, once the services are inside the church, numbers will be very limited (we can only fit approx. 20-25 in church safely). We advise you to arrive early and apologise in advance if there is insufficient room.

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

One of the saddest things about Alzheimer's is seeing that the person you love no longer remembers you. I remember clearly having a meal in a pub one Christmas with my mum and my daughter there. Out of the blue, my mum said to her own granddaughter; 'who are you to me?' Anna was so upset that she burst into tears and ran into the toilet. My mum also burst into tears, because she realised she was losing her most precious commodity, her memory. That was seven years ago and now she has lost all sense of recollection and all language. All that she was, and all that she has done has, as far as she is concerned passed into oblivion. Even her capacity to interpret the present has gone.

Memory is important. It gives us the experience we need to address those around us, to negotiate our way round all the simple (and complex) tasks we need to perform, to understand others, to communicate to others, and to embrace the people we love. Memory makes us who we are.



A natural history programme we watched on TV last week could not fail to impress with the power and beauty of photography. In the same way, however, it was terrifying. Baby iguanas emerged from the ground following their birth, only to be confronted by an army of predatory snakes. A creature with no memory, on its first day of life, has to confront the most terrible memory of fear.

As much as many people have lived in bubbles of positivity and wealth, there are at least as many more whose experience of life has involved fear, suffering, poverty and abuse. These people will grow up with damaged memories that form and shape their perception of the world. Often a woman who hates men has a good reason for that hatred. Somebody who cannot trust others has good reason to feel that way. Hatred of others does not emerge out of the blue, but is rather an inability to deal with the past. I would guess that all negative emotions have their source in a wounded past, which makes us prisoners of our damaged memories.

Galatians 5:1 states; 'It was for freedom that Christ has set us free,' but what does this mean? I believe that at least part of that is the belief that Jesus liberates us from all that destroys us. On one level this goes right back to the narrative of the fall in Genesis which gives us a beautiful parable of how people have, through disobedience, been separated from God. The death of Jesus restores our relationship with God our Father. Deeper still, however, are Jesus' words, when Peter asks him this question; 'How many times do I forgive?'

'Not seven times,' Jesus said, 'but seventy seven times.'

'How do some people deserve to be forgiven that number of times?' you may ask. The answer must be that this is not about what they deserve, but rather it is about your freedom. Jesus is saying that you need not be imprisoned by the hurt, abuse and rejection of the past. Forgiving those who damage you from the past sets you free to move forward into God's future. Forgiveness sets you free from the past and liberates you for the future.

God Bless

Eric

New Reader Licensed

Sue Richards, was licensed as a Reader last Sunday at St Albans Cathedral.

The service was streamed on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmLVM6f-TJw> (note the service starts at approx. six minutes into the recording).

Please pray for and support Sue as she starts this new ministry.



Virtch

Zoom services 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!



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. 400th Anniversary of the Mayflower.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Mayflower.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 16 September:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Alpha Online - Starts 21 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 (via Zoom) which starts on 21 September with the session entitled "Is there more to life than this?"

For further details and to book your place contact Jacqui at stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com or on 356993.

For the Children (& young at heart!)

This week we have the same reading as the grown ups which you can find on the front page. In this reading Jesus is teaching us that we should always forgive, however many times.

Activity:

Can you make up an acrostic poem or prayer using the letters of the word FORGIVE as the first letter of each line?

Make a bookmark out of a rectangle of card. Write the word FORGIVE across the bookmark and decorate it.

Song:

Story of the Cross

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1dmm9N-6bl>

Let us pray:

Lord God, help us to understand how good it feels to forgive and to be forgiven. Help us to remember that you forgive us again and again. 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



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Discovery Group

Meets via Zoom on Thursday evenings 8pm. Contact john.c.lambert@gmail.com for details.

Free Children's Activity (Half Term)

Join Groundwork East for some Really Wild Play at Elstow Abbey Church during the half term holiday. Find out what lives beneath the logs when bug hunting and many other exciting activities including story telling, gardening activities, fun arts and crafts. Aimed at children aged 4-8 with their parents/carers.

Group sizes limited to five individuals - only one adult per household. Booking essential. For further information and to book go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/really-wild-play-elstow-autumn-2020-tickets-117954141011>

THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES,
BIDDENHAM

A registered charity raising funds for the fabric of St James church and barn

ZOOM QUIZ NIGHT

An online quiz to suit the whole family

All you need is a little general knowledge, some inspired guesswork, and a little bit of luck!

*Saturday 24th
October*



7:30 to 9 p.m.

Free entry - but donations welcome to *The Friends of St James* by GoFundMe: www.bit.ly/StJamesQuiz
To register and for participation details, contact John Barkas at stjamesquiz@mail.com

Please pray with me

Merciful God,
your Son came to save us
and bore our sins on the cross:
may we trust in your mercy,
And as you forgive us, help us to be free,
By showing that same grace to others.
Amen



For your prayers

Please pray for:

- Sue Richards, in her new ministry as Reader;
- The current spike in Covid-19 cases in the UK to go down again;
- All those involved in trying to find a vaccine for Covid-19, and those taking part in the clinical trials;
- Our young people going to university around now, and their parents/families.

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

If ye love me

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

Lord of all Hopefulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BP1ecUkOTB8>

This is amazing grace by Phil Wickham

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFRjr_x-yxU

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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.

Items currently needed include Cup-a-Soup, Jellies (pre-made), Tinned Rice Pudding, Coffee, Rice (small), Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Hand Soap, Anti-Bac Spray Cleaners, Washing Up Liquid, Deodorant, Laundry Wash Tablets, 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