

Virtual Church News

Sunday 1 November

All Saints' Day



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

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

There has been a significant amount of forensic analysis of the Gospel stories, mostly by people who have no interest either way in whether Jesus was or was not the son of God. It started with questions about the four Gospels; Why is John's Gospel (the fourth Gospel) so different from the other three and why are the first three so similar, yet not quite similar enough?

All four Gospels were written in Greek, which was far more common than Latin in the Greco-Roman World, and the fourth Gospel is utterly different to the other three. It has no Christmas story, but Jesus originates from the beginning of time (John 1) and calls us to be a new creation who turns from the darkness to be born again in him.

The other three Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, are clearly tied up together, and most scholars say that Mark, being the shortest, is also the earliest and was used as a primary source for the other two. Again, Mark does not have a nativity story but rather Jesus just appears in the Judean wilderness and is first spotted as the son of God at his Baptism by John the Baptist. It is short and you could read Mark's Gospel in under half an hour if you put the time in. What it does tell us is that Jesus is good news to us all (Mark 1:1).

There seems to be lots of matching stuff in Matthew and Luke that cannot be found in Mark. In this, Scholars have identified another source, which they have called 'Q' (there is nothing dramatic about this, it is merely the first letter in the French word 'Quelle,' meaning source.) Once you have identified this it becomes easy to see how Matthew and Luke have told the story of Jesus in a particular way to make a point about who Jesus was to them.

Luke begins his Gospel (In the same way as the same author begins Acts of the Apostles) by addressing his story to somebody called Theophilus (this is not a proper name but a Greek

A Reading for the Week

Matthew 5:3-10

Jesus said:

- ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
- ⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
- ⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
- ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
- ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

title meaning friend of God.) Luke's emphasis is on justice for the poor. Jesus, to him, is a healer, a liberator and a social reformer. His use of Mary's song, the Magnificat, shows that God brings down the mighty from their thrones and lifts up the lowly (Luke Chapter 1).

In Luke's Gospel Jesus stands in the synagogue and announces; "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind to set the oppressed free." (Luke Chapter 4). This Gospel has always been used to allow Jesus to empower the poor and the oppressed. It gives voice to the victims of racial abuse, to slaves, to those in poverty and to those who suffer sexual and gender inequality.

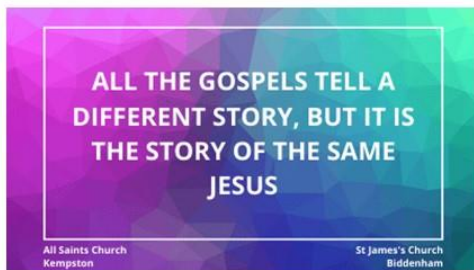
It is in this Gospel that Jesus is permitted to say; 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the Kingdom of God.' (Luke 6).

Matthew is different in his approach. He begins with a detailed genealogy of Jesus' origins, taking him right back to Abraham (Luke's genealogy follows

Continued on next page

Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued
 the line of Mary, and not Joseph), through David, the King of Israel. These great patriarchs were important because Matthew wanted to show Jesus as having his origin in the founding fathers of Israel. He was a descendant of David and Abraham and a fulfilment of the promise that Jesus was the Messiah (Greek: Christ) who sit on the throne of David. He was the King that was always promised to Israel.

Matthew was, it must be said, much more critical of the Jewish believers than any of the other Gospels. He wanted to turn their faith upside down and recognise a different kind of saviour, a different kind of King and a different kind of God. The whole of his story demonstrates the Jewish tradition but does so by showing that Jesus was not interested in religious prohibition but rather what is in our hearts. Matthew paints Jesus as somebody who transforms law into compassion and gentleness.



So, as the Moses of Israel stood on mount Sinai and cast down the Torah (the rules of Israel) on tablets of stone, Jesus stands on a mountain in our reading today and gives a different kind of law, one which is about our hearts. As followers of Jesus we do not break people with rules, but rather we respond with humility, gentleness, a hunger for justice and righteousness, an ability to bring peace to others and those who are prepared to suffer for the Christ who suffered for us. All the Gospels tell a different story, but it is the story of the same Jesus who meets us where we are, who has been there right from the beginning of creation and whose hand reaches out to the lost, the broken and the oppressed. He does not call us to be religious but faithful followers of him and the good news is that he transforms us at the very core of our being. He is the lover of the loveless, and he calls us to be lovers of those in need.

God bless, Eric

Virtch

Zoom services are held at 11am on Sunday and 6pm on Wednesday. Login details are sent out to members of our church community. If anyone else would like these, please do get in touch. Everyone is welcome!



All Souls

Today, we would have been holding our All Souls services where we remember all those who have died during the past year. If you are able to please (safely) light a candle and remember these people in your prayers.



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

This bible study group meets via Zoom on Thursday evenings at 8pm. For further details, contact john.c.lambert@gmail.com

Remembrance Day in Biddenham

An Act of Remembrance will be held at the War Memorial, but due to social distancing rules, only key people will be able to attend. Members of the public are asked not to attend.

The Act of Remembrance will be streamed live to the usual Zoom service that day.



Services in Church

Sunday services in our churches are at 9.30am:
 Sundays 8, 22 Nov - All Saints

Sundays 1, 15, 29 Nov - St James

Face coverings must be worn by all those who attend (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.

A register of attendees' names and contact numbers will be taken for the Track and Trace system. 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.


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.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. .
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 3 November:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.



Christmas
with **St James's and All Saints**
Churches
Sunday 20 December
4.00pm Nine Lessons and Carols
Christmas Eve
4.00pm Christingle
11.30pm Midnight Communion
Christmas Day
10.30am Family Service

All services will be held via Zoom
To join, just go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039

Unfortunately we will not be able to hold our usual events and services in church this year

Elections at Annual Meetings

At the St James's Annual Meetings held on Wednesday 14 October, the following were duly elected:

Church Wardens

Laurie Hurn/Lois Price

Deputy Church Wardens

Edwin Martin/John Richards

PCC Members

John Lambert/Margaret Lowe/Tom Perry

Deanery Synod Representative

Chris Haydn-Jones

At the All Saints Annual Meetings held on Tuesday 20 October, the following were duly elected:

Church Wardens

Barbara McKay/Alison Walker

For the Children (& young at heart!)

Today is the feast of All Saints, when we remember all the people who have lived their lives really well and who have died and gone to heaven. Let's also think about how we can follow their example and live our lives as God wants us to.

Sometimes it is easy to get caught up in Halloween and forget that it is also All Saints' Day today. Watch this short video as a little reminder of what All Saints' Day is all about. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcPXns6gilk>

Our reading today is Matthew 5.3-10 (see the front page). In this passage we hear Jesus telling us the kind of person he wants us to be and how he wants us to live our lives.

Activity:

In Kempston our church is named after all the Saints, whereas in Biddenham it is specifically named after one, St James. What other churches do you know of in Bedford that are named after Saints? Can you do some research into one of these to find out who they were and what they did?

Very often we see Saints shown in the stained glass windows in our church. Can you make a stained glass window using permanent markers on a jam jar or Pringles tub lid, or using tracing paper/ baking parchment?

Prayer:

God of life, we give thanks for all the holy men and women who have lived throughout the world. Help us too, to live as you would like us to by showing love to all, bringing peace, and always trying to do what is right. Amen.

Hymns/Songs of the Week

For all the Saints

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQSLWJtkUd0>

God be in my head

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCik9Us_K2A

This I believe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtUNQpu2b7Q>

Holy is the true light

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



Please pray with me

God and Father
we all have different stories,
but we thank you that in Jesus,
you meet us where we are,
transforming our hearts,
and calling us to reach out to others
and to you.
In Jesus name. Amen



ST JAMES'S CHURCH



Biddenham Tea Towels
Mugs/Coasters
Jotters
Contact Jane: 359014

Village Christmas Cards
Marmalade/Jam
Jelly/Chutney
Contact Sue: 342373

Christmas Handicrafts
Contact Trissa: 950612

**Also on Sale Outside St James's Church
after Sunday Services (approx. 10.15am)**

There will be no Christmas Bazaar this year

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

For your prayers

Please pray for:

- All those who have died in the past year, along with their families.
- All those working on the front line.
- Those who will feel isolation and loneliness more now that dark nights and winter weather are drawing in. Pray for anyone you know who might need a friendly call/visit to check they are ok.

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.

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 fruit juice (longlife), tinned meat (stews, curry, meatballs), Sponge pudding (long life), coffee, anti-bac spray cleaners, washing up liquid, laundry wash tablets and cleaning cloths.

Alternatively please consider making a financial donation.



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