

Virtual Church News

Sunday 27 September

Harvest

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

Mark 4:26-29

The Parable of the Growing Seed

He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain - first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

It is harvest time, and this year we cannot celebrate in the same way that we have in the past. It is a period of thankfulness when we are reminded that the earth is the Lord's (Psalm 24:1) and that he is our creator. In our greed and arrogance, we should turn to the father from whom all things come, and we recognise our responsibility to be faithful stewards of the gifts that he has given us (Genesis 1:28).

In 1917, two young girls in the village of Cottingley, near Bradford, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, borrowed a camera. The camera, a quarter-plate 'Midg' camera, made by Houghton-Butcher, belonged to Elsie's father and it was capable of producing images on four glass negatives. After they had finished with it, they took it home and Elsie's father developed the photographs in his own home. The pictures that formed in the red light of his darkroom were perfectly focused black and white images of the girls playing by the side of the river and around them danced a party of fairies.

Of course people questioned the authenticity of the photographs, but they made the front cover of the Christmas edition of 'The Strand' magazine.

Sceptics had them analysed by experts, who found them to be legitimate and celebrities such as Arthur

Continued on next page



Harvest
- Photo
by Rev
Eric
Lomax

Harvest Appeals

We will not be having Harvest collections this year, but please support the Foodbank and Bishop's Harvest Appeals - details on page 4.

Annual Meetings/Electoral Rolls

Annual Meetings

Notice is given that the (postponed) Annual Meetings of both parishes will be held via Zoom as follows:

All Saints - Tuesday 20 October at 7.30pm

St James - Wednesday 14 October at 7.30pm

Everyone in our church family is welcome to attend these meetings, although you will only be entitled to vote if you are on the Electoral Roll. Zoom login details will be the same as for the Sunday Virtch services.

Electoral Roll

Notice is given that the Church Electoral Rolls (membership lists) are being revised.

Any person is entitled to have their name entered on the roll if they are a) baptised, b) aged 16 or over and c) either i) a member of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with it and is resident in the parish; ii) a member of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with it, is not resident in the parish, but has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months or iii) a member in good standing of a Church which is not in communion with the Church of England but subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and are also a member of the Church of England and have habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months, or would have done but have been prevented from doing so.

If you are not sure whether your name is currently on the roll or would like your name to be added, or if you wish to inspect the published roll, please call Jacqui on 356993 or email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued

Conan Doyle (the author of the Sherlock Holmes stories) came out in full support of the images. All of this happened while over in France the blood of thousands of men was being spilled on the battlefields of Ypres and Nivelles.

One of the difficulties that prevented the potential fraud from being exposed was the status of women and young girls. Two young girls, of course, could not have possibly forged such technically perfect images of fairies. Quite literally, people would have much rather believed in fairies than girls who were capable of faking them. This was ironic in that while most of the young men of Europe were ripping each other apart, it was effectively the women that were running the country. It would still be eleven years before women were considered competent enough to vote.

Back in the 21st Century, as much as I talk freely and with conviction about equality, I would say that I am still very bad at carrying out even the most basic of household chores. I do try to iron things, clean the carpets, wipe the surfaces, fill and empty the dishwasher and even, from time to time, do some of the washing and ironing. Liz will then often go back and say, "I'll go back and do it properly". She finds it inexplicable how the shirt I have taken off still has the buttons fastened and how I could possibly manage to fill the dishwasher so badly. I do believe, however, that she has some help, as from time to time I will ask her how a shirt I had taken off earlier that day, finds itself perfectly folded and placed in a pile next to the wardrobe. "That," she says "is because the fairies did it!"

There is an arrogance in patriarchy that does not recognise dependency. When Elsie and Frances were creating their dreams it was the women who were harvesting the fields, maintaining the machines, bringing up the children and even creating the weapons to help the men blow each other apart. Women were the hidden force in our world, as they often are now.

There should never be hierarchies in society based on suppression, but rather mutual servitude based on gratitude. Last week in Philippians we were reminded of this in Paul's call for us to mirror Christ's humility (Philippians 2:1-11). The word 'humble' comes from the Latin humilis,

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!



meaning 'ground'. To be on the same level, to lower ourselves to the ground, is the perfect imitation of Christ.

Very simply our Gospel reading lies at the core of this message. The farmer acts like a servant. He is humble, because he recognises the servant who is outside himself. He plants the seed, then he lays down on the ground, and while he sleeps, it is the servant God who causes the seed to grow. In this farmer's world there are no social hierarchies. Men do not stand above women, the rich do not stand above the poor, nor one race above another. It is God himself who deserves our gratitude. 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians 3:28)

God bless

Eric

Services in Church

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

Sundays 11, 25 Oct - All Saints

Sundays 4, 18 Oct - 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.

The forecast for this Sunday is varied - we will try to be outside if possible so please wear something warm, but we will be inside if it rains.

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. Song of the Prophets.
- 2.00pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Kate Bottley's Faith Journey.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 7 October:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

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

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

For the Children (& young at heart!)

We continue look at Paul's letter to the Philippians this week, chapter 3, verses 13-14.

"My friends, I don't feel that I have already arrived. But I forget what is behind, and I struggle for what is ahead. I run toward the goal, so that I can win the prize of being called to heaven. This is the prize that God offers because of what Christ Jesus has done."

Paul talks about a prize and running towards a goal. Think about when you might have been in a race - what helped you reach your goal? If Christ is our goal, what sort of things could we do to keep moving towards him? We could pray, try to live like Jesus lived - being kind and compassionate and letting other people see Jesus through the way that we live.

Activity:

Draw a picture of yourself on a large piece of paper (you can get other members of your household to do the same). Then write things about yourself around the outside e.g. sporty, musical, caring. Ask others in your household to write things about you. Your picture shows that you are uniquely made by God - knowing who we are and what makes us "us" is important to us and to God.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, we go to meet our friends and family. We're looking forward, not back. We press on to do your will. We're going on our way with Jesus. Amen.

Song:

Jesus in my life

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8plEO_MgXZ8

(courtesy of Roots resources)

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?

It's not too late to join our new Alpha Online Course (via Zoom).

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



See for yourself.
Try Alpha

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

God our creator, forgive us our arrogance.
How we waste your grace in the service of destruction
and how we place ourselves above others
in the belief that we are better.
Give us the humility to thank those who serve
and to lower ourselves in gratitude for your gift of life.
Amen.



Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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Hymns/Songs of the Week

The Lord's my Shepherd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Msh0PAJfPU>

Fairest Lord Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOEuvLQ-Gy4>

Knowing You Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sotCi7St0fA>

Who you Say I am

[youtube.com/watch?v=FrpDWX_8ozk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrpDWX_8ozk)

Produce/Christmas Cards Sale

This Sunday a selection of jams and marmalades, along with our Scenes of Biddenham Christmas Cards, will be on sale before and after the service at St James. If you would like anything but will not be at the service, please call Sue on 342373.

Bishop's Harvest Appeal

Creating a Buzz in Nepal. Helping the Nepalese people keep bees to help maintain the fragile biodiversity, enhance crop production and create an income from sales of honey. Donate online or by putting your donation (marked Bishops Appeal) in the donation box at a Sunday service. For further details: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/bishop-s-annual-harvest-appeal/>

For your prayers

Please pray for:

- Our clergy and PCCs.
- All those facing uncertainty.

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 spaghetti, cup a soup, tinned rice pudding, coffee, rice (small), hand soap, anti-bac spray cleaners, washing up liquid, laundry wash tablets. Alternatively please consider making a financial donation.

Changes for This Year's Harvest Collection

This year the Bedford Foodbank has asked that, rather than us supporting them with collections of food for harvest, we support them financially. If you would normally give to our harvest food collections, perhaps you would consider making a financial donation instead.

More information including details on how to make a financial donation 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