

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

Virtual Church News

5 September 2021

14th 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 8.00am: Service at All Saints
- Sunday 9.30am: All Age Service followed by said Holy Communion at St James's
- Monday 9.00am: Morning Prayer (Zoom)
- Wednesday 6.00pm: Virtch (Zoom).

To join our Zoom services simply go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.

A Reading for the Week

Mark 7

From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go – the demon has left your daughter." So she went home, found the child lying in the bed, and the demon gone.

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

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com



Services In our Churches

1st Sunday

8.00am Service at All Saints

9.30am All Age Service (followed by said Holy Communion) at St James's

2nd Sunday

9.30am Holy Communion Service at All Saints

9.30am Lay led Service at St James's

6.30pm Service of Evening Prayer at St James's

3rd Sunday

8.00am Service at All Saints

9.30am Holy Communion Service at St James's

4th Sunday

9.30am Holy Communion Service at All Saints

9/30am Lay led Service at St James's

5th Sunday (when there is one)

9.30am Service at St James's

We hope you will join us at these services as we explore a mixture of both traditional and new ways of worship.

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

'Am I still not a man and a brother?,' was the slogan of abolitionists in the 18th century, who wore badges of solidarity with the human slaves who had been trafficked to UK ports for a life of slavery, abuse and enforced servitude. William Wilberforce, who like many other abolitionists, was an evangelical Christian, fought for an end to the slave trade, achieving his hope in parliament on the year of his death, 1833.

The reason so many evangelicals and non-conformists made this their aim was fundamentally because it was consistent with the Bible story of the exodus, in which the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, and Moses was commanded by God to "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: "Set my people free, so that they may worship me." (Exodus 9:1)

There is an irony in the Bible that God chose a single nation to be his people. In theological terms, this is given the title, 'the scandal of particularity.'

At the heart of God's choice is the belief that people of one racial identity are given special treatment, and somehow given a higher status than another. It may easily fall upon that chosen people to make slaves out of others, in the belief that they Continued on next page...

Message continued...

are the chosen ones. This was not, however, the message of God to his chosen people, Israel. The promise that was actually made to the founding father of the Jewish people, Abraham, was 'through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.' This was the promise really that the Jewish people were chosen not so that they could dominate, bully and enslave everybody else, but rather that through the Jewish people, God would be able to extend his love to everybody else, to you, to me and to our families. In effect, they were chosen by God because we are chosen and called by God.

Of course, the people of Israel are human beings like the rest of us, and just like we see many in our nation assuming a kind of arrogance and xenophobia, so the religious people at the time of Jesus had built a protective wall around themselves. They wanted to preserve their faith for their people and for their religion, and quite frankly, to keep everybody else out, and even to develop a hierarchy of racial, religious and gender superiority.

So Jesus came to break down those structures of hierarchy and liberate those who are slaves to prejudice and discrimination.

One of the most powerful symbols of the equality that Jesus brings is in the bread that Christians share at the Eucharist.

I always find it really sad that this sign that we are the family of Jesus, is used to exclude people, when really it is about bringing in and including everybody. It breaks my heart that children, particularly are cut out of this sharing together, as part of the family of God.

One lovely picture that the Bible gives us is the story that can be found in the feeding of the 5000, one of the few stories about Jesus that is in all four Gospels. Jesus is talking to a very large group of people, and they are hungry. Jesus encourages a young boy, a child, to share the food he has with him and, from those crumbs, 5000 people are fed.

Today's story is of a woman (always considered the least in first century Jewish society), who is also a gentile (considered outside the scope of God's people), who approaches Jesus and asks him to heal her daughter (considered even less than a gentile woman).

Of course, Jesus was a Jew, so he understood the religious view of a worthless Gentile girl. The story is filled with irony, because Jesus points out her worthlessness to her; 'Let the children (Children of Israel) be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' One of the words that the religious people used for Gentiles was 'dogs.' Jesus was asking for one good reason why he should give the 'bread,' to dogs.

The Woman Jesus spoke to had two qualities that the storyteller was going to consider. First she was clever, and second she had something that even the disciples of Jesus lacked some of the time; she had faith; 'Sir,' she replied, 'even the dogs (translation, 'puppies') under the table eat the

children's crumbs.'

You can almost sense Jesus' belly laugh at her answer. The bread he gave was his flesh for the life of the world (John 6:51). Jesus would not actually exclude anybody from receiving the bread that he gave. The children of Israel had no special right to his gift of salvation. In fact it was given from the life of the whole world. The gentiles, the outsiders, those who did not belong, those who were the wrong nationality, the wrong age, the wrong gender and even the wrong colour, were not excluded from receiving the bread of Jesus' sacrifice, in fact they were the most qualified to receive it.

Do you feel the outsider? Are you still not a man or woman who is loved by God? Are you still not a brother or a sister?' The good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that his love, and his saving power, is especially for you.

God Bless
Eric

Let us pray...

God and Father,
In this world it hard to feel valued and loved.

We thank you Christ that you died for each of us, no matter how lowly or insignificant we feel.

Help us to love others,
as you have loved and given yourself to us.
Amen



Harvest Festivals

19 September 9.30am

St James's Church

If you are able to give,
we will be collecting donations of non-perishable
foods for the Bedford Foodbank
and monetary donations towards the
Bishop of St Albans' Harvest Appeal
"Water is Life"

bringing clean, safe water to communities in the
Democratic Republic of Congo

Everyone welcome!

26 September 9.30am

All Saints Church



All Age Reading

James 2 v 1-17

² My dear brothers, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So never think that some people are more important than others. ² Suppose someone comes into your church meeting wearing very nice clothes and a gold ring. At the same time a poor man comes in wearing old, dirty clothes. ³ You show special attention to the one wearing nice clothes. You say, "Please, sit here in this good seat." But you say to the poor man, "Stand over there," or "Sit on the floor by my feet!" ⁴ What are you doing? You are making some people more important than others. With evil thoughts you are deciding which person is better.

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers! God chose the poor in the world to be rich with faith. He chose them to receive the kingdom God promised to people who love him. ⁶ But you show no respect to the poor man. And you know that it is the rich who are always trying to control your lives. And they are the ones who take you to court. ⁷ They are the ones who say bad things against Jesus, who owns you.

⁸ One law rules over all other laws. This royal law is found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbour as you love yourself." If you obey this law, then you are doing right. ⁹ But if you are treating one person as if he were more important than another, then you are sinning. That royal law proves that you are guilty of breaking God's law. ¹⁰ A person might follow all of God's law. But if he fails to obey even one command, he is guilty of breaking all the commands in that law. ¹¹ God said, "You must not be guilty of adultery." The same God also said, "You must not murder anyone." So if you do not take part in adultery, but you murder someone, then you are guilty of breaking all of God's law. ¹² You will be judged by the law that makes people free. You should remember this in everything you say and do. ¹³ Yes, you must show mercy to others, or God will not show mercy to you when he judges you. But the person who shows mercy can stand without fear when he is judged.

Faith and Good Works

¹⁴ My brothers, if someone says he has faith, but does nothing, his faith is worth nothing. Can faith like that save him? ¹⁵ A brother or sister in Christ might need clothes or might need food. ¹⁶ And you say to him, "God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat." You say this, but you do not give that person the things he needs. Unless you help him, your words are worth nothing. ¹⁷ It is the same with faith. If faith does nothing, then that faith is dead, because it is alone.

Bike 'n' Hike (11 September)

Shirley Brown will be taking part in this year's Bike 'n' Hike to raise funds for All Saints and the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust (with half the money going to each). If anyone feels able to sponsor Shirley please contact her on 07469 205938 or at shirley.brown2227@yahoo.com



The All Age Bit

This week we have moved to the New Testament and to a passage all about caring for others. We can show kindness to others in our words and actions or by sharing what we have with those who have needs. How many different ways can you think of that we can care for others? What is your favourite way to love and care for others? Do you think you treat people differently because of how they look or dress? How do you think God might want you to help others this week? Could you perhaps add some food into your family's weekly shop to give to the Foodbank? Could you offer to cook a meal for another family you know of who might be struggling at the moment, or simply leave them a 'random act of kindness' gift on their doorstep?

Activities

Caring challenge: why not make a 'caring chart' with a list of different caring activities down the side e.g. helping, sharing, serving, kind words, loving, other and then the names of each person in your household along the top. You could then note down each time someone demonstrates caring for others this week.

Who am I: Players take it in turns to sit in the middle of the group with their eyes closed. A leader points to another player in the circle and they must say "Who am I?" but disguising their voice. The player in the middle must then guess who the person speaking was.

Song

Love one another

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYIkcoAflU4>

Pray

Can you say, write or draw a thank you prayer to God for the things that He provides for us each day?

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

Suggested Music for this week

Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbe7OruLk8I>

Give thanks with a grateful heart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk_7wUR2Wdg

A great and mighty wonder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MToXUyOnChA&t=8s>

Thou, whose almighty word

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGuUQjDkQA4>

Bedford Foodbank

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

