

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

Virtual Church News

24th April 2022

**Second Sunday of Easter
(4th Sunday)**



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 email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

Our Sunday Services

1st Sunday of the month

10.00am All Age Worship at All Saints
10.00am All Age Worship at St James's
11.15am Holy Communion at All Saints

2nd Sunday of the month

9.00am Said Holy Communion at All Saints
10.00am Holy Communion at St James's
6.00pm Evening Prayer at St James's

3rd Sunday of the month

10.00am Holy Communion at All Saints
10.00am Morning Worship at St James's
7.00pm Revive: Coffee/Bible/Fellowship

4th Sunday of the month

9.00am Said Holy Communion at All Saints
**10.00am Holy Communion at St James's
(Explorers in the Church Barn)**

5th Sunday of the month (when there is one)

10.00am Service of Wholeness & Healing at St James's
6.00pm Choral Evensong at St James's

Message From Rev Eric Lomax

Have you ever found Wally? I have been given a number of 'where is Wally?' books for Christmas or birthdays in the past. Each page shows an image of thousands of different people, and somewhere amongst them is Wally. The task on every page of this pointless book is to find Wally. Of course, the issue for me is actually caring where Wally is.

Finding 'hope' is another matter. In our world, and I probably don't need to spell out why, it is hard to find that particular version of Wally amongst all the chaos that surrounds us.

In our reading, Thomas was not a man filled with hope. Like his friends he had invested several years of his life in following Jesus. Jesus was, to him, an extraordinary individual whose perspective on the world was like nobody that Thomas had ever met, ...

Continued on next page...

Reading for the Week

John 20.19-end

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.²¹Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.²⁵So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'²⁷Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.'²⁸Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'²⁹Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Revive - 3rd Sundays

A short act of worship over a coffee, then unfolding the scriptures together. 7.00pm in St James's Church Barn. Everyone invited.



Message *continued...*

... and Thomas had come to believe that Jesus was the fulfilment of all God's promises to Israel. The disciple's conviction was so firm that even when Jesus seemed to be telling them that it was going to end in failure and suffering, they refused to believe it. Of course we know that Good Friday was not exactly a happy ending. The women and John stayed close to Jesus when he was on the cross, but Thomas, like all the others, kept his distance at the end. They had to for their own safety, otherwise they would end up on a cross too.

Thomas later found it inexplicable that his friends, women included, seemed to be living a kind of reactive fantasy. They claimed that Jesus, the same Jesus that they had seen suffering and dying on the cross, was now alive. Of course this was nonsense and Thomas kept his distance from them. They were determined to convince him, so when he visited them he refused to believe what he was being told; 'Don't talk rubbish,' he said, 'Jesus had died. Unless he touched the wounds in Jesus' hands, and in his side, he would not believe. Everything was lost and there was no hope.

It was then that Jesus entered the room. Jesus showed Thomas his wounds and Thomas looked straight in Jesus' eyes. He fell to his knees and said, 'My Lord and my God.'

This was the most profound confession in the New Testament. Not only did Thomas call Jesus Lord, but he also referred to him as his 'God.' Nowhere else in the Gospels is there a confession quite like this. It was here that Jesus said, 'You believe because you have seen. Blessed are those who believe but have not seen.'

Those of us who were not, like Thomas, witnesses to the resurrection find it harder to find hope than it is to find Wally. The resurrection is the most profound embodiment of hope in the New Testament. If even death on the cross can be defeated, then surely there is nothing that is without hope.

I remember spending time with a community minister in a really challenging part of Gateshead in the North East. It was a depressed community with significant policy and social divisions. I remember talking to the minister who was called Andy Lie about the resurrection. He said that we believe we are not witnesses to the resurrection, but actually in his ministry he sees every day, how individuals and agencies work hard to bring healing, reconciliation and justice in that community. He said that because of this he feels that in seeing those signs of hope, he was witness to the resurrection every day. Perhaps that made him truly blessed. Maybe there are more signs of the resurrection in our world than we think, and perhaps we just need to open our eyes of faith a little wider.

Amen.

God Bless,
Eric

Let us pray...

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:
open the doors of our hearts,
that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God the Father.
Amen



ST JAMES'S CHURCH
BIDDENHAM

SPRING TEAS



Plant Sale



Cream Teas



Tea Towel
Display

Sunday 8th May

2.30pm - 5.30pm

St James's Churchyard/Barn

PLANT CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME TO JANE (359014) OR
PAM (327035) OR DELIVER TO 49 CHURCH END

ALL PROCEEDS TO ST JAMES'S CHURCH

Suggested Music

Resurrection Day

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9u7V-g_cJaU

The World Blessing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d48-qbcovVY>

And can it be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9wIP9Ahykc>

Immortal Invisible

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oGuGzCFEWI>

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Ukraine Financial Support

To help meet the cost of supporting people fleeing the war in Ukraine, the Church (St James Biddenham) has launched an appeal for funds from the local community. Funds will be held in a restricted account and will be used only to help meet the many needs of those refugees arriving in Biddenham and Bedford for however long our support is required.

Please consider giving to this fund. There are a number of ways you can make a donation: By cheque – payable to “Biddenham PCC” (Please include a note of your name and address so as to allow Gift Aid to be claimed). Place your donation in a Gift Aid yellow envelope (available in Church). Please mark the envelope “Ukraine Support”. By Bank transfer – sending your donation to the following account:

Biddenham PCC

Sort Code: 60-02-13 (NatWest Bank)

Account No: 51317710

In the reference field please enter “Ukraine” followed by your postcode and house number.

Gift Aid will be claimed where possible – adding 25% to the value of your donation.

Donations can be handed to a Church Warden or simply placed in the weekly collection. Alternatively, donations can be sent to the PCC Treasurer at 32a Church End, Biddenham, MK40 4AR. Thank you.

Annual Meetings

The Annual Meetings will be held as follows:
All Saints: Tuesday 26th April* at 7.30pm in the Church Hall. **Please note the change of date from that previously published.**

St James: Wednesday 27th April at 7.30pm in the Church Barn.

Please contact the relevant PCC Secretary on the above contact details if you have any queries.

The All Age Bit

This week we continue looking at the Gospel of John and our reading can be found on the front page. You may wish to read it there or read it from your own Bible.

After he had risen from the dead Jesus met with his disciples, he sent them out filled with the Holy Spirit to continue his work on the earth. We are invited to do the same. How do you think the Disciples felt when they saw Jesus and when He sent them out to continue His work? Thomas didn't believe that Jesus had risen from the dead - he only believed when he saw Jesus and touched the wounds in his hands, feet and side for himself. The Bible reminds us that faith is believing in something even when we cannot see it. Jesus told Thomas “Those who believe without seeing me will be truly blessed.”

Activities

Touch: Take it in turns to wear a blindfold. Give the person who is blindfolded an item from the room. Ask them to feel it and see if they can work out what it is just using the sense of touch.

Hands: Draw round your hand on paper. Cut out the hands and then try making a picture of something out of the hand shapes. You may wish to colour the hands in different colours or use coloured paper! What can you make?

Song

We believe in God the Father

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIPoWNWB4FM>

Prayer

Dear God, help us to know that you are always with us, even though we can't see you. Show us through your love and Holy Spirit that we are blessed. Amen.

Resources from Journey Together (www.tath.co.uk)

All Saints Missions Table Top Sale

Please note that there will not be a Missions Sale at All Saints in April, but we plan to resume in May, date yet to be confirmed. Thankyou to all who contribute and donate.

Prayer Group

Our joint prayer group meets online at 8pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. Join us in praying for our churches, communities and beyond. For details, or to request prayers, email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com



ST JAMES'S CHURCH BIDDENHAM

MUSIC FOR MAY

A concert by the Ouse Valley Singers
with soloist Philippa Jones

Saturday 21st May
Biddenham Pavilion, Deep Spinney
7.30pm

Tickets £10 (light refreshments included)
For tickets, contact:
Anne 214805 or Sue 342373
All proceeds to St James's Church

