

Virtual Church News

Sunday 21 June

Second Sunday after Trinity

Father's Day

Welcome to Virtual Church News for the second Sunday after Trinity.

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

Wow, this is not such an encouraging Message for the Church during Lockdown.

We will often search the Bible for messages of peace and encouragement because times are difficult and we need to know that God is there for us. We are not alone and in all the circumstances we face there is the knowledge that we are loved. Two sentences here seem to jump up and hit us in the face.

The first is; Jesus said 'Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.'

And the second is; 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace but a sword.'

Jesus was not like a used car salesman with shiny teeth, who shined up his message so that we would buy it. Instead, like the warning on a packet of cigarettes, he wanted his followers to know the risk of following him. He told it just as it is and when it came to standing up for injustice he was really prepared to put his neck on the line. Being a Christian is potentially tough, risky and dangerous. Many disciples of Jesus throughout history have been persecuted for their faith and many have died because of their beliefs.

The New Testament was largely written during a time when Christians were being persecuted because of their faith. St Peter was, according to tradition, crucified upside down and despite having, himself, the privileges of being a Roman citizen, St Paul wrote many of his letters from prison. The risk to followers of Jesus is there as much today as it was two thousand years ago because we must stand up for our faith, and that is dangerous.

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View across the Golf Course

If you have any photos of Kempston or Biddenham, send them to stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

A Reading for the Week

Matthew 10.34-39

'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.'

Join us for Online Services

Zoom services are 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!

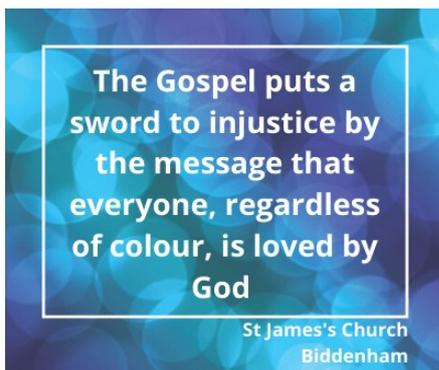
The Love of Christ is not locked down

Virtual
Virtch
Church

St James, Biddenham, All Saints, Kempston

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

I have been to South India several times to spend time with the Churches over there and once as I arrived at the airport one of my co-travellers announced that she was smuggling a pack of Bibles in her suitcase. I was quite looking forward to my trip there and I pointed out that if they were found we would be put right back on the plane from Delhi and sent back to England at our own expense. In the end she gave the Bibles to her husband who had brought her down to the airport. I took great pleasure in buying her a leather-bound Bible in a trashy gift shop in Madurai for which I had bartered the owner down to a thousand rupees. It is easy to get persecuted for being irritating but being an irritant in the midst of injustice and corruption is something entirely different. The real issues that the church encounters in South India, which we discovered, are issues of exploitation, gender discrimination and poverty. Surely these are issues that the Gospel should be challenging.



The brilliant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a book called *The Cost of Discipleship* and the first line on the very first page says; 'When Christ calls a man (Person), he bids him (or her) come and die.' Bonhoeffer himself was executed by the Nazis at the end of the second world war. He died not because he wore a 'Jesus saves' badge, but rather because for him the good news of Jesus Christ was about standing up for an evil, corrupt and unjust regime and he did that in the name of Christ. Bonhoeffer really wanted to bring about God's Kingdom instead of a Nazi Kingdom and for that his message really needed to be more like a sword than a kiss of peace.

I travelled to London on Saturday to pick up Liz's car which Rachael had borrowed some time ago. London was far from being on lock-down. There were police cars everywhere because of the race protests that were taking place in London and a white, right-wing rent-a-mob had turned up to attack black protestors and police.

The injustice felt by many black people even in the 20th century is certainly at odds with the Kingdom values of Justice and equality.

The Gospel puts a sword to such injustice by the message that everyone, regardless of colour, is loved by God and Paul's statement that '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).

The context of Paul writing this is different, because he is referring to the Church, but the Church is a reflection of Christ's Kingdom here on Earth.

We are called to the dangerous task of extending the scope of that Kingdom beyond our own walls to the world, God's world! Jesus said; '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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' (Luke 4:18-19).

That is what Jesus meant when he said; 'I have not come to bring peace, but a sword,' and with his Gospel, he has placed that sword in our hands, so that being a Christian is, to us, a risky business.

God bless

Eric

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?



Then join our new Alpha Online Course which will be starting soon. For further details contact Jacqui at stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com or on 356993.

Hymns and Devotional Music



Tim Grant-Jones, organist at All Saints, and his wife Irene are live streaming hymns and other devotional music at 10am each Sunday (before the Zoom service). Find this and other music on Facebook by searching for Grant-Jones Musical Services or entering #gjmusicalservices. You can also request hymns in advance!

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. Images of Fatherhood.
- 11.45am on BBC 1 - Sunday Worship. A service for Father's Day from Holy Trinity Platt Church, Manchester.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise - Father's Day.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Wednesday 24 June:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Manchester Cathedral.

4Front Theatre Group

Virtual Sunday School

Follow 4Front Theatre Group's excellent Virtual Sunday School on Facebook or Youtube. Each week they produce a short video (approx. 10 minutes) with music, bible story, crafts and prayers. Great for the kids and adults alike!

<https://www.facebook.com/VirtualSundaySchoolUK/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMu2bG8L2dp7ywUZVa9uXDA>

Online Services

Join the Church of England on its website or Facebook page for this week's 9am Virtual Service.

You can also download the order of service and the sermon in pdf format from the Church of England website.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

Many other churches and cathedrals across the country are also providing online services including St Albans Cathedral. Follow their Youtube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/stalbanscathedral>

Discovery Group

Next meeting via Zoom on Thursday 9 July at 8pm. Contact john.c.lambert@gmail.com for details.

Highly Recommended by Members of our Congregation

Daily Hope

The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus. Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.



The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

For the Children (& young at heart!)

In today's Gospel reading (Matthew 10.24-39) Jesus tells his disciples that being a disciple may involve suffering and people being unkind to you but that everyone is known and valued by God.

Activities

1. Find an empty jam jar or drinking glass to represent our lives. Place large stones into the jar to represent God - God should come first and take up the most room in our lives. Add smaller stones until the jar seems full to represent family, friends, jobs, school etc. - these take up a lot of our time. Next add some sand or soil to represent things like TV, computer games, social media etc. which also fill up our lives and sometimes distract us from God. Finally add water until the jar is full to represent everything else in our lives. If we were to put the water, sand and small stones in first, we couldn't fit in the larger stones. This is the same with our lives. If we don't put God first we get so busy with everything else that we can't fit God in.

2. Jesus says "even the hairs on your head are counted and known by God". Can you count the number of hairs on your mum/dad/carer's head!

Song

My best friend

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JFjruVrrag>

Prayer

Let us pray to God: for a fire of love to burn within us, for those who are weary, for those who are afraid, for those who are lonely, for those who find life difficult, for those who are facing challenges. Be with them Lord. Amen.

Please pray with me

Faithful Creator,
whose mercy never fails:
deepen our faithfulness to you
and to your living Word.
Give us courage to stand firm,
With the sword of love and justice,
For the sake of your Kingdom
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



For your prayers

Please pray for:

- Our church leaders: all our Bishops, Archdeacon (Dave), Rural Dean (Richard), Vicar (Eric) Readers (Christopher and Paul) and Reader in training (Sue).
- Our children, as more children go back to school while others remain at home.

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

Such love, pure as the whitest snow

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

Take my life, and let it be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sss-g50Dw1Q>

Christ is mine forevermore

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

Beneath the cross of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbaHBmxcK8>

God so loved the world (Stainer)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5Akz6J8Rw0>

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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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 Jars of Sauce (curry/sweet&sour), Jam, Tinned Potatoes, Tinned Carrots, Jellies (pre-made), Squash, Nappies (size 5+6), Hand Soap, Anti-Bac Spray Cleaners, Washing Up Liquid, Shower Gel, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Deodorant, Shampoo.

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: 852241 or 07805 879537

Alison/Brenda Walker: 851597

Alan/Anita Lowe: 857212 or 07751 659695