

St James's Church, Biddenham

All Saints Church, Kempston

Virtual Church News

Sunday 22 November

Sunday next before Advent

Christ the King

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

Matthew 25:31-45 The Sheep and the Goats

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'



Services in Church

There will be no services in our churches during November. We hope to resume our 9.30am Sunday services as follows:

- Sundays 6, 20 Dec - All Saints
- Sundays 13, 27 Dec - St James

For details of our Virtch services via Zoom, see below.

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

One day, at the end of time, God is at a loose end and decides that he is going to judge the animals and to have one animal sitting on his left side and the other on his right. He speaks to all the animals and cannot find one that is worthy to sit on each side of him. Finally, he comes to two animals, a cat and a dog, so he sits in his throne and calls the first dog to come and stand in front of him.

God asks the dog a question; 'I want to see which of you two animals is worthy to sit next to me in heaven, so I am going to ask you who you are and what you believe?'

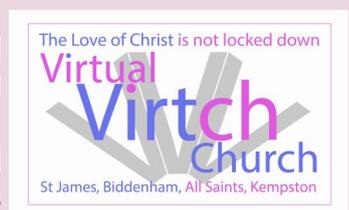
The dog answers: 'I am a Golden retriever and I believe it is in my responsibility to serve my master, to be always at her side and give her company whenever she needs it.'

'That is wonderful,' God says, 'Please come and sit on my left, in preparation for my judgement of the world.'

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Virtch

Zoom services are held at 11am on Sunday and 6pm on Wednesday. Simply go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.



Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued

God then calls the cat and says, 'I have one more seat next to my throne on my right side, so I am going to ask you who you are and what you think your main purpose in life is?'

The cat pauses and then answers; 'My name is Tabby, I am a cat and I believe that you are in my seat.'

Most people who read this joke understand it completely. Dogs are companions that love the company of people while cats are independent and do their own thing. Even to their owners, if a cat disapproves of something you are doing, it will quite happily express its opinion using its claws if necessary.

Those who sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to the story of the sheep and the goats would have instantly recognised the distinction between the two. Both sheep and goats were valuable farm animals in ancient Palestine. This parable used the familiar narrative imagery that portrays them in quite different lights. Sheep are depicted as the obedient followers of Christ (the Lamb of God) and goats as solitary creatures; whose primary aim was self-preservation. Matthew's Gospel gives us the image of God's judgement to define the difference between the two.

This is a parable, a story, and what we must be careful not to do is to over interpret this. Jesus is not painting a picture of what heaven and judgement are like. He is talking about the species of follower that he wants us to be.

Remember that there are several other parables in this chapter and last week we covered the Parable of the Talents. Again, as far as I know, there was no slave master who divided nine gold coins between his slaves for them to look after. What the story does remind us of, however, is that although we may not have much to give to others, we have been loaned God's love to show to others. If we fail to put that love to work then we are wasting God's most precious resource, his love. It really is all about love.

This parable is just the same. God takes the sheep and the goats, and to the sheep, he says; 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' The sheep had been active because they acted as members of a sharing, loving, caring community. They had gone out of their way to show love for others, and in loving others they had demonstrated their active love for God.

The Goats, on the other hand, had been inactive and wasted that talent of love; 'For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

The goats were inactive and failed to demonstrate that love to others and, therefore, to God.

You are neither a sheep nor a goat, and sheep and goats do not populate God's eternal Kingdom. It is populated, however, by living, thriving communities of friends and lovers, whose active relationship is bound by active compassionate relationships of love and support. You have been given the gift of love. Do not waste it.

You will note that I have written about God's Kingdom being populated now, rather than 'will be populated later,' That conversation is for another time.

God bless, Eric

Discovery Group

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

Shine a light of hope!



Christingle Celebration

4pm Christmas Eve (via Zoom)

Email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com, call/text 0778 6886 710 or message us on Social Media and we will deliver your Christingle to you.

Join us for our Christingle Celebration when we will make our Christingles and celebrate the light of Jesus together, or make them in your own time.

St James's Church, Biddenham
All Saints Church, Kempston
Raising funds for The Children's Society

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.
- 2.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Young Chorister of the Year, Girls semi-final.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Chichester Cathedral.

Wednesday 25 November:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Clare College, Cambridge.

St James's Christmas Cards Delivery

Final plea for help

We now have Biddenham covered apart from a couple of roads. We still need help in Great Denham and St Mary's though.

If you are able to help, please text 0778 6886 710 or email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com.

Thank you



For the Children (& young at heart!)

This week we continue looking at the book of Matthew at Chapter 25, verses 31 - 46. This passage shows us that we are accountable for our actions. Neither the sheep nor the goats were aware of their actions, but their behaviour reflected their relationship with God. Those who loved God became a natural reflection of him and reached out to the hungry, thirsty, sick, strangers and prisoners. This reading emphasises the importance of looking after each other in our community, which is especially important for us at the moment.

Activity

Generosity Vouchers: On a piece of paper, write down a promise of something you can do to help/be kind to another person e.g. helping with the washing up, helping to provide a meal to a neighbour. Decorate the slips of paper and give them to the other person who can 'cash in' the voucher at any time.

Song

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mo3MGpcBC5M>

Prayer

Dear God, we pray for those who sit in prison cells; for the hungry who wait for food; for the lonely who wait for a visit; for the sick who wait for comfort. Loving God, bless each one of them and help us to care for each other. Amen.



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

Hymns/Songs of the Week

And can it be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQeIGbKqiw8>

Ave Verum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXjn6srhAIY>

Live like you're loved by Hawk Nelson

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

The King of love my shepherd is

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcCwUF0s_-Y

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.



Please pray with me

Dear God,
We thank you for your fathomless gift of love.
Give us the courage to use that gift of love for the sake of others.
Through Jesus Christ,
Amen



Month of Prayer for the Nation

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York invite you to participate in a month of prayer as the second lockdown in England comes into force.

The Archbishop of York says "At this challenging time when all of us are fearful and anxious, and when so many are suffering, [prayer] is the one thing we can all do... Let's pray together at this difficult time."

Daily prayer themes are as follows:

- Sundays: Family, friends and loved ones.
- Mondays: Schools, colleges, children and young people.
- Tuesdays: Elderly, isolated and vulnerable.
- Wednesdays: Businesses, the workplace and economic wellbeing.
- Thursdays: NHS and other key workers.
- Fridays: National and local Government.
- Saturdays: The grieving and those suffering with ill-health (physical and mental).

To find out more, go to [churchofengland.org/PrayerForTheNation](https://www.churchofengland.org/PrayerForTheNation)

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

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

Prayer Group

Join our prayer group at 8pm on the 1st/3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Contact us for login details or if you 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.



Alternatively please consider making a financial donation. Further details can be found on their website: <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

St James's Church Finances 2020

Following the recent appeal for support by helping to meet the income shortfall suffered as a consequence of Covid-19 we wanted to provide a brief update and also to say thank you!

The shortfall, as recently advised (see November Loop), is very much in line with expectations – almost £12,000 net. The Church has suffered a loss of income across all headings – collections, church barn lettings and church fees in particular.

The appeal for additional financial support is an attempt to contain the 2020 deficit and also to provide some sort of foundation for 2021 as we hopefully emerge from the restrictions of Covid-19.

To all who have responded we send a huge THANK YOU! We are well aware of the demands and calls made upon us at this difficult time and truly we appreciate your support in all forms. Currently the total received in donations stands at almost 50% of the £6,000 target.

It's not too late to help by making a contribution to St James Church. Should you wish to support in this way then please contribute by one of the following methods:

1. By bank transfer direct to the membership account:

Biddenham Church Membership Fund

Account Number: 51317710

Sort Code: 60-02-13

Please quote as a reference your surname and postcode.

2. Cheque payment – please hand to a Church Warden or directly to the treasurer.

3. By way of the regular cash / yellow envelope church collection.

Thank you and if you do have any questions then please have a word with either the Church Wardens or PCC Treasurer.

