

## Virtual Church News

Sunday 8 November

3rd Sunday Before Advent

Remembrance 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 call Jacqui on 356993 or email [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com)

### Remembrance Sunday in Biddenham

An Act of Remembrance will be held at the War Memorial, but due to social distancing rules, only key people will be able to attend. Members of the public are asked not to attend.

The Act of Remembrance will be streamed live to the usual Zoom service that day.



### Message from Rev Eric Lomax

A couple of years ago I was on a train coming back from Chester and a student was sat on the same table as me. She talked to me, telling me that she was a Muslim who was in her third year at University. I told her I was an Anglican priest and together we talked about faith. Her story of faith was powerful and moving, but then she asked me; 'Are you not afraid of God?'

I said that I was not, which she found strange; 'How can you not be afraid of a God who is so great?' she asked me.

I asked her if she feared God.

She said, 'yes, because he is terrifying!'

I have to say that this young woman's faith was much stronger than mine and I contemplated her fear of God for some time afterwards. The vastness and power of the creator of all things, whether we name him Allah, Yahweh, or simply God, is a terrifying concept. I remember being in Sicily around five years ago and walking around the crater on Mount Etna. It was a grey and smouldering giant. I could smell the sulphur and the sense of threat and power. A week after we left, the volcano had a minor temper tantrum, nearly burying some of the nearby villages. There were no casualties as far as I am aware.



### 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

### A Reading for the Week

John 15:9-7

*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit - fruit that will last - and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.*

Is this the kind of God we worship?

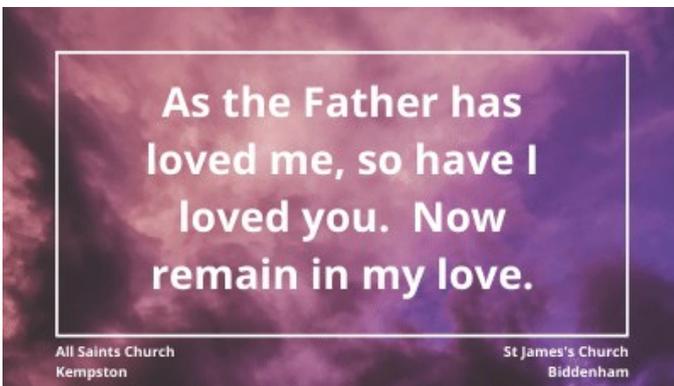
From the Old Testament, one would certainly think so, and there seems to be an emphasis on fear throughout the Bible, but let us look at this gentle discourse (part of a much larger discourse) in John's Gospel.

Here Jesus places the emphasis on relationship and love lies at the heart of that relationship. Jesus talks first about his relationship with his father. 'As the Father has loved me,' he said, 'so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.' *Continued on next page*

## Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued

Anybody who has done any form of pastoral counselling, whether religious or secular, will know about the emotional damage that is caused by the destructive relationship between a dominant father and a child. The Father's (God's) relationship with his son (Jesus) is not like that. It is a bond of perfect love, an unbreakable relationship of deep understanding.

We also become children of that same heavenly father in relationship with Jesus Christ. In Galatians 3:26, the writer states; 'So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

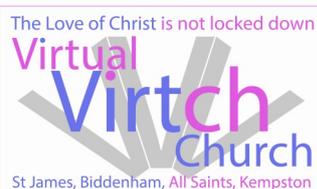


If this is the case, then the model of Jesus's relationship with the Father should be the model for our relationship with one another because we are all one in Christ. 'Love each other as I have loved you.' This is a radical model for how we should behave in relationship with one another because it refuses to operate on the principle of power and control, but rather on the principle of servanthood. Jesus puts it simply: This is how you love one another, 'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

This has been used as a reading for remembrance for as long as I remember because it so easily fits into the principles of sacrifice that were demonstrated by soldiers of freedom in times of war. Still, it goes far beyond this. It is the story of Christ's death on the cross.

## Virtch

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



It is our instinct to disbelieve, or simply to fear, the power of such a God rather like a child who is terrified of a fearful and dominant father. Because we are unable to reach out to him he reached out to us and his motivation was pure unconditional love. So Jesus laid down his life for us on the cross. He died for you because he loves you.

That then is the model for how we should love one another.

God bless

Eric

## 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](mailto:john.c.lambert@gmail.com)

## Shine a light of hope!



## Christingle Celebration

4pm Christmas Eve (via Zoom)

Email [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto: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 from the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise from the Brecon Beacons for Remembrance Sunday.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from New College, Oxford.

Wednesday 11 November:

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

## Delivery of Parish Christmas Cards

### Can you help?

St James's Church is hoping (subject to lockdown restrictions) to deliver its usual parish Christmas Cards in early December - but we need your help!

Could you deliver cards to the houses in your street/neighbouring streets?

If you are able to help, please text 0778 6886 710 or email [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com).

Thank you



## For the Children (& young at heart!)

This week, rather than thinking about the Bible reading, we are going to think about Remembrance Sunday. On the Sunday nearest to 11 November (the day when World War 1 ended) we hold our Remembrance Day services, either in Church or at our local War Memorial, when we remember all those who have died in wars. We usually hold a two minute silence at 11am during the service. This year our Remembrance Service will be held online. Do join it if you are able to.

### Activities:

Think about why we remember those killed in wars. Why do wars still happen? Can it ever be right to go to war? Jesus was a peacemaker - can you think of anyone alive now who could be called a peacemaker?

Many people mark Remembrance Day with poppies. Why not make a poppy cross - draw and colour in a poppy flower, make a cross out of two lollipop sticks and stick the poppy flower onto it.

Can you make a poppy flower out of food? Try it with fruit (black grape with strawberry slices as petals) or vegetables (black olive and sliced tomato).

### Song:

Let there be peace on earth

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

### Prayer:

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth, from despair to hope, from fear to trust, from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our hearts, our world and our universe. Amen.

(resources from BRF/Messy Remembrance)



# 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

Peace, Perfect Peace

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Dwa8oWu1nQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Dwa8oWu1nQ)

O Lord, The Clouds are Gathering

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CRqpMaNbJg>

Be Still, My Soul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqgC1tqifV8>

Let There Be Peace

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

## Please pray with me

Lord Jesus Christ,  
Son of the father,  
we thank you that you have reached out to us in love.  
Help us to love one another in the just the same way,  
by being servants and friends.  
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](mailto:help@biddenham.org.uk) with your name/phone number/address.

If you can volunteer, please email [help@biddenham.org.uk](mailto: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

## Church Finances in 2020 and the Impact of Covid-19

Generally the feeling of isolation is something to avoid but recently, in drafting the forecast of the 2020 PCC General Account (income and expenses) I instantly had that feeling!

I'm sure you can appreciate the current year finances for St James' make difficult reading – income from many sources is severely restricted and whilst some expenses are lower, the majority are not. The major expense item for St James is the Parish Share - £42,328 payable in 2020 to the Diocese of St Albans. In summary income is forecast to be down by almost £20,000 whilst expenses are down by only £6,000!!

Reflecting on these numbers and pondering just how we could try to improve the situation I noted an email drop in from the Bedford Deanery Treasurers Forum and having read the email, I felt the isolation lift and was able to appreciate just how fortunate we (St James') are. There are many churches in severe financial difficulties and the Diocese itself is projecting a deficit of £2 million. Compared to many our financial position is comfortable and we clearly have a role to play in helping to meet and minimise the wider problem.

At St James' we are fortunate to have a solid monthly planned giving total by way of bank transfer and we are not heavily reliant upon other income such as Church Barn lettings and "The Loop" subscriptions. The planned giving forecast total has held up well and the total for 2020 will be very close to our budget. Other churches and diocese are not in such good shape and support will be required. There are discussions ongoing whereby some dioceses – with good reserves, will possibly transfer reserves to other less fortunate dioceses in order to help them meet expenditure. In our own diocese plans to create a sustainable situation include a reduction in the training of curates, staff have been furloughed and all expenditure reviewed and reduced.

### What Can We Do?

Because of the challenges facing the wider church it is essential that churches like St James step up to the mark – by meeting the requested Parish Share and therefore helping to minimise the deficit forecast at diocesan level.

In order to achieve this, based upon the 2020 forecast and accepting a modest deficit (fall in reserves) for the year, we **still** need additional future income of £6,000. This would allow St James to pay the Parish Share in full. The additional £6,000 would allow St James to support the wider church by paying our Parish Share in full - whilst returning a modest and appropriate (given the situation) deficit on the 2020 General Account of somewhere in the region of £5,000 to £6,000 – a modest fall in our reserves.

Included in the 2020 forecast income is support we have received from the Friends of St James – a donation of £4,729 to help meet expenditure incurred last winter and spring relating to major tree work and the cost of audio visual equipment and installation in the Church Barn. We have also received a grant of £2,150 from Bedford Borough Council to help meet fixed costs – essentially the building insurance premium.

We do hope that having considered the situation, you feel able to help by contributing towards the targeted additional income of £6,000 for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

If you wish to support the church 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.

