

St James's Church, Biddenham

All Saints Church, Kempston

## Virtual Church News

14 February 2021

Sunday before Lent



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

### A Reading for the Week

#### Mark 9:2-8

<sup>2</sup> After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

<sup>4</sup> And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup> (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

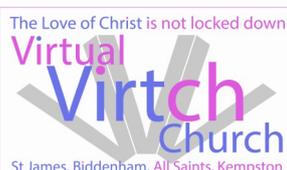
<sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

### Discovery Group

The Discovery Bible Study Group is not currently meeting, **however a new Christianity Explored course is starting on Wednesday 17 February.** If you are interested in joining a bible study group please contact John Lambert by email at [john.c.lambert@gmail.com](mailto:john.c.lambert@gmail.com)

### Virtch (Online Church)

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



### Services in Church

There are currently no services in church at the moment due to the Covid restrictions. We will resume services in church when we consider it safe to do so. If you need support during this time, please contact Rev Eric Lomax (contact details on back page) or email [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com).



Join us for a special Ash Wednesday service at 6pm on Wednesday 17 February. To join the service, go to Zoom and enter the usual meeting ID: 998 074 6039.

To help you reflect on Ash Wednesday and throughout Lent, why not mark (with paint or a marker pen) a cross on e.g. a pebble, or alternatively cut out a cross from fabric or card and put it somewhere visible as a reminder.

### Message from Rev Eric Lomax

'Are we there yet?'

Every parent knows this relentless call from their children, and most people can remember saying it themselves.

It is no fun for children being stuck in the back of a car on a long journey. For me it was motion sickness that was the problem. My parents did not have their own car when I was a child, but my mum had an old Bedford van, that she had for her job. She was an artist (she has Alzheimer's now and no longer has the capacity to direct a paintbrush, or for that matter, a Bedford van.) *continued on next page*

## **Message from Rev Eric Lomax** *continued*

In those days it was perfectly legal to throw your children in the back of a van and take them on long journeys without seat belts, and because she loved the mountains and the hills, the Snowdonia National Park and the Lake District were natural haunts for us. For somebody like myself, it was the journey that was the problem, and not the destination, and many times I remember being stood by the van on a country road being sick. Usually, after it happened once I was good for the rest of the journey. My children seem to have inherited the same issues, and I clearly remember my son, Matthew, being sick on the bus from Nice, in the South of France, to Monte Carlo. An American tourist, who was stood right next to him laughed; 'Better out than in, son!' he said.

We are all impatient to reach our destination, no matter how old or young we are, especially when the journey is hard, and it was no easier for the early Church as they faced the suffering of persecution and the struggle of standing up for their faith in a hostile environment.

The common medium for stories in the early Church were scrolls and scribes would write their texts on long, rolled parchments, papyrus, made from woven and compressed reed. The most ancient Gospel fragment we have, however, is known as the Rylands P52 fragment, held just off Deansgate in Manchester. What is unique about this fragment (a portion of the 4th Gospel), is that it is from a booklet rather than a scroll, because booklets are much easier to hide and pass round in secret. It is written on both sides, like a booklet, whereas scrolls are written on one side, and the lines of the text continue from the same page blocks on the other side. I have held it, and I have read it, so I can verify this.

### **Please pray with me**

Lord Christ.

We struggle on our journey,  
and at times it is difficult to see you.

Give us courage.

Restore our strength,  
and help us to remain faithful to you.

In Jesus name

Amen.



This is Mark's Gospel, and the readers of this Gospel would have been in the same boat, being persecuted for their faith, and having to hide the stories of Jesus for just the same reason.

Imagine the readers of Mark's Gospel (the second Gospel) looking at the text for the first time. Many of their friends would have been executed or imprisoned from their faith, and they would want encouragement and support from their little booklet; 'Are we nearly there? When Lord, are you going to help us?'

Here in their little booklet of the 2nd Gospel, Mark, is the story of the Transfiguration. The disciples are up on a high mountain with Jesus. This refers to destination rather than journey, as Jesus is transformed before their very eyes. Not only this but the entire history (and promise) of the God of Israel, come together on this mountain as the prophets, Moses and Elijah, are there on the mountain with them.

The disciples wanted it to remain like this. They wanted to stay on the mountain top, with the feel good experience of seeing the transformed and risen lord. In the story, Jesus saw their fear and their distress, but compassion drove him to silence. They could not stay because they were not there yet. In fact, they were not even nearly there.

When at the start of Mark's Gospel, Jesus had to go into the wilderness to face hunger, hardship and temptation, a voice announced him as the son of God (Mark 1:11). Now the Disciples had to go into their own wilderness, God, again gives them a reminder of who Jesus is; 'This is my son, Listen to him.'

For those early Christians facing persecution, picking up this story in their little booklet must have been such an encouragement for them. They faced struggle and hardship in their journey of faith, but the Lord of Life and Hope was with them. They were not alone.

In the same way, we must not expect the mountain top. We are not there yet. Lots of things we experience, such as the COVID restrictions and the general struggles of life make us feel isolated and afraid. The Lord of life is with you, and you are not alone, so keep the faith and be of good courage. Listen to him. God Bless, Eric

## Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

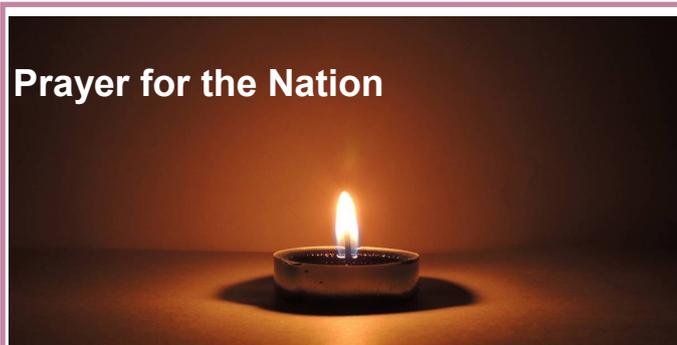
If you don't have access to the internet, try tuning in to the following:

Sunday 14 February

- 8.00am on Three Counties Radio - Although not advertised on their schedules, a short weekly service is broadcast.
- 8.10am on BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship. Facets of Love.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Love and Lent, from Ripon Cathedral
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from the Chapel of Clare College, Cambridge.

Wednesday 17 February

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from St John's College, Cambridge.



## Prayer for the Nation

In response to reaching the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from Covid-19, the Archbishops invite all to call on God in Prayer at 6pm each day based on the following themes:

- Sunday: Family, friends and loved ones.  
Monday: Schools, colleges, children and young people.  
Tuesday: Elderly, isolated and vulnerable.  
Wednesday: Businesses, the workplace and economic wellbeing.  
Thursday: NHS and other key workers.  
Friday: National and local government.  
Saturday: All who are grieving and all suffering with physical and mental ill-health.

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

Our reading this week is the same one that the grown-ups are using (this can be found on the front page). Why not read it together as a family? If you have a children's bible you could try finding the reading in there.

This reading tells the story of Jesus' transfiguration. Do you know what 'transfiguration' means? If you have a dictionary, try looking it up. It basically means a complete change of form or appearance.

### Activities

**What's changed?** Everybody should close their eyes while one person changes something in the room. It could be closing the curtains or swapping two pictures over or putting on a hat! They should tell everybody when they can open their eyes. Who can spot what has changed the fastest?

**Let's build a tent!** When Peter saw Jesus transfigured, he panicked and didn't know what to do. I wonder what the other disciples thought of his idea that they set up tents! Why not build your own tent to hang out in as a family. You could use sheets or blankets combined with furniture or anything you have handy. While you are in your tent, why not read and explore some of these stories from the lives of Moses and Elijah. You might like to look for similarities and differences between the stories and the story we explored today. Exodus 33 v 7-23 Moses sets up a tent where he can meet with God and has an amazing encounter when he asks to see God's glory. 1 Kings 19 v 1-18 Elijah encounters an angel who gives him breakfast and then meets with God on a mountain.

### Song

One way

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G689PIEXiXk>

### Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for the story of Jesus' transfiguration which reminds us of how holy Jesus is. Even as we draw close in friendship with you help us remember what a privilege it is to be able to come into your presence. Thank you that just like Elijah, Moses and the disciples we can know you and grow in knowledge of you and relationship with you. Help us to make time with you a priority this week. Amen

*Resources from Together at Home.  
For more free resources visit [tath.co.uk](http://tath.co.uk).*

## Prayer Group

Join our prayer group at 8pm on the 1st/3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Everyone welcome.

Contact us for login details or if you have any prayer requests.



## Suggested Music for this week

Jesus shall take the highest honour  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_GaiRYYOB0Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GaiRYYOB0Y)

Father hear the prayer we offer  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1-9wam-2Rk>

Be thou my vision  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2TdiCpow18>

Transfiguration  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pri10SRoBPc>

# #LIVE LENT



## God's Story Our Story

The Church of England's Lent campaign. Six reflections for each week including a short bible passage, a brief exploration of the passage and a prayer. Download the free App, see the Church of England's social media or obtain a booklet from Church House Publishing for £1.99. If you would like a booklet but are unable to purchase one yourself, let us know and we will obtain one for you. Call Jacqui on 356993 or email [stjameschurchbiddendenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddendenham@gmail.com)

## 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

## Spring Harvest Home 4-8 April 2021

Sign up now to join in with Spring Harvest Home and enjoy the teaching, worship etc of Spring Harvest from your own sofa. For information and details of how to purchase your subscription go to <https://springharvest.org/springharvesthome21>

## Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: [Rev.ejloxmax@gmail.com](mailto:Rev.ejloxmax@gmail.com)

## Bedford Foodbank

Sadly we have decided we cannot currently continue to collect items for the Foodbank in the St James's Church porch, as it is too much of a risk to those who then take the items on to the Foodbank.

At this time we would ask that you make donations at the supermarket or by way of a financial donation.

**We would specifically ask you to consider supporting the Foodbank during Lent.**

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