

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

Virtual Church News

26 September 2021

17th Sunday after Trinity

4rd Sunday

Harvest Festival at All Saints



Our Services

1st Sunday of the month

- 8.00am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion at All Saints
9.30am All Age Service (followed by said Holy Communion) at St James's

2nd Sunday of the month

- 9.30am* Holy Communion Service at All Saints
9.30am Lay led Service at St James's
6.30pm Service of Evening Prayer at St James's

3rd Sunday of the month

- 8.00am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion at All Saints
9.30am Holy Communion Service at St James's

4th Sunday of the month

- 9.30am* Holy Communion Service at All Saints
9.30am Lay led Service at St James's

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

- 9.30am Service at St James's
6.30pm Sung Evensong at St James's

We also hold online services during the week via Zoom at 9.00am on Monday and 6.00pm on Wednesday. To join these Zoom services, simply go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.

We hope you will join us at our services as we explore a mixture of both traditional and new ways of worship.

* The 9.30am services at All Saints will move to 10.00am from 1 October. Services at St James's will remain at 9.30am.

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 0778 6886 710 or email her at stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

Harvest Festivals
19 September 9.30am
St James's Church

If you are able to give,
we will be collecting donations of non-perishable
foods for the Bedford Foodbank
and monetary donations towards the
Bishop of St Albans' Harvest Appeal
"Water is Life"
bringing clean, safe water to communities in the
Democratic Republic of Congo

Everyone welcome!

26 September 9.30am
All Saints Church

Bedford foodbank
THE BISHOP OF ST ALBANS' HARVEST APPEAL 2021
WATER IS LIFE

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

I struggle with my Church, because I feel that we get so many things wrong. I came back from a clergy conference last week quite heartened. Several hundred vicars and curates were all together in one place and if we had all been required to wear our dog collars, then there would have been no mistaking what we all did for a living. The difference is that we were all dressed in our normal everyday clothes and when we were sat round drinking coffee, or in the bar during the

evening, there was little to distinguish us from any other work conference, that is, except for one thing which I will mention a little later.

What moved me about the conference was something very powerful about the direction that the Church of England has moved in the last few years. The Church of England was once a very monochrome organisation. The leadership of the church used to be predominantly male, but this changed dramatically in 1994, during the time that I was training to be a priest in Durham. *continued on next page*

Message from Rev Eric Lomax *continued*

Only six years ago, in 2015, we saw the first woman Bishop, Reverend Libby Lane installed as Bishop of Stockport.

What was beautiful about our conference was the complex diversity of the clergy there, literally every colour, age, gender and identity.

There is no doubt that the Bible can be very restrictive in places, separating certain human conditions and activities as clean and unclean, together with the defining principles of the law and the purity of Semitic identity (Jews and Gentiles). Equally women were viewed almost as the afterthought of God's creation and, in a predominantly patriarchal culture, were certainly not included as leaders of the Jewish cultures.

When Paul, the Jew, began to establish and preach his new theology of grace he found himself wrestling with his own Jewish assumptions. Not only this, but he began to listen to the lessons of the mission field in which he preached. When working with his Corinthian Church he became frustrated with any elitism that placed one person above another and declared that the absolute core of their motivation should be love (1 Corinthians 12 and 13). It was at the end of this passage that Paul declared the limits of his own knowledge and understanding. Talking about himself as much as anybody else, he announced that our knowledge and understanding are imperfect, yet when the perfect comes the imperfect will pass away (1 Corinthians 13). Paul was doing something wonderful here because he was setting us free from the boundary markers of religion and allowing us to discover God's treasure through the lens of God's agape (love).

Jesus, in our reading today, challenges the divisions that separate Christians of different outlooks. The disciples come to Jesus and complain that some people are casting out demons in his name, and they are not in the same group as them. Again, we have to remember that the Gospel stories were composed around thirty years after the crucifixion, and the Jesus movement was, in the face of persecution, experiencing a period of unprecedented growth. Groups of disciples would have been springing up all over the place, and there would have been lots of theological differences between the various communities. The Gospel story was a call for unity; You may have different ways of looking at things, but, as Jesus said, 'those who are for you are not against you.'

My mum has now got severe Alzheimer's and seems in a different world to the rest of us. Sadly, I often talk about her in the past tense, but I remember her as being a creative artist with a deep faith and sense of discernment. She always said that she could spot Christians from miles away. I note that she said Christians, not churchmanship, not demonisation, but Christians. In her view it was something like the Holy Spirit in her recognising the Holy Spirit in others. I really have no idea whether this was true or not, but the Bible does seem to

indicate that there is a kind of taste to the presence of God in us. The Gospel writers refer to it as a saltiness that flavours who we are, and if we lose that saltiness, then what use are we but to be thrown under foot (Matthew 5:13). Perhaps it is this flavour that Jesus was identifying when he referred to the people who were casting out demons in his name, but what is this common saltiness that Christians have?

I believe that this flavour is commonly identified in Christians of other traditions and denominations. It was certainly identifiable in the clergy I encountered at the conference, whatever their traditions or backgrounds, and it is certainly a quality we find in all churches where Christ is the centre of their worship and their relationships. That quality is quite simply the love (agape) of the father of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 13:35).

God Bless
Eric

A Reading for the Week

Mark 9.38-end

John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

'If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

'For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.'

Let us pray...

Gracious God,
you call us to fullness of life:
deliver us from unbelief
and banish our anxieties
with the liberating love
of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen



All Age Reading

James 5 v 13-20

¹³ If one of you is having troubles, he should pray. If one of you is happy, he should sing praises. ¹⁴ If one of you is sick, he should call the church's elders. The elders should pour oil on him^[a] in the name of the Lord and pray for him. ¹⁵ And the prayer that is said with faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will heal him. And if he has sinned, God will forgive him. ¹⁶ Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other. Do this so that God can heal you. When a good man prays, great things happen. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed that it would not rain. And it did not rain on the land for three and a half years! ¹⁸ Then Elijah prayed again. And the rain came down from the sky, and the land grew crops again.

¹⁹ My brothers, one of you may wander away from the truth. And someone may help him come back. ²⁰ Remember this: Anyone who brings a sinner back from the wrong way will save that sinner's soul from death. By doing this, that person will cause many sins to be forgiven.

(International Children's Bible)

The Lord's Prayer

This week why not use the Lord's Prayer to help you talk to God.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Tea and Coffee After Services

As restrictions have now eased, tea and coffee will now be served after the 9.30am services at both All Saints and St James's. Everyone is welcome to stay for a drink and a chat.



The All Age Bit

This week we continue to read the book of James and look at a passage all about the power of prayer. Do you ever pray at home? At school? At Church? What do you do when you pray? What is prayer?

Just like a best friend, God wants us to talk with Him and share our feelings and needs. When we talk to God we call it prayer. Sometimes we use prayers that others have written, for example the Lord's Prayer, but we can also say our own words. We can speak to God along or pray alongside others.

Prayer is a bit like making a sandwich. It always begins the same with one slice of bread (coming to God) and it ends the same with another slice of bread (saying Amen, which just means 'let it happen'), but in the middle we can put whatever we like. We have the freedom to bring anything to God in prayer and say whatever we want to God when we speak to Him.

Activities:

Secret Whispers - sit in a circle with some friends or your family members. Pass a message around the circle using only whispers. Check if the message at the end is the same as it was at the beginning. Use this as a reminder that God can hear us when we speak loudly but also when we speak quietly or in our heads. When we pray and talk to God it is also important to listen to what God might be saying to us.

Sandwiches - Make yourself (or someone else) a sandwich. As you make it, think about how it is like praying to God, and perhaps say a prayer as you make it.

Song:

James 5 v 13-14 says anyone who is having troubles should pray and anyone who is happy should sing praises. Why not put some praise songs on and spend time singing, dancing and praising God.

Prayer is talking with God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZsCPofgOU94>

Above resources (and more) can be found at Together at Home. www.tath.co.uk.

Bishop's Harvest Appeal

Life in the Democratic Republic of Congo is tough with a history of civil war, widespread poverty and a cycle of conflict and displacement. 70% of the population use unsafe drinking water leading to a high risk of cholera. The Bishop's Harvest Appeal, Water is Life, will bring clean water to many more communities, bringing with it transformation to daily lives and hope for the future. For more details go to <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/bishop-s-annual-harvest-appeal/>

Suggested Music for this week

I was made to praise you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qubBaKtDp24>

Father hear the prayer we offer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1-9wam-2Rk&t=12s>

Through all the changing scenes of life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBkorDtz1nU>

Supporting Afghan Refugees

The Bishop of Hertford has encouraged people in our Diocese wishing to help support Afghan Refugees to donate to three particular charities who work with refugees in our area. The charity most local to us is Bedford Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support.

Donations can be made via their website at <https://www.brassbedford.org.uk/>

Prayer/Bible Study Groups

Join our prayer group at 8pm on the 1st/3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Everyone welcome. We also have Bible study groups which are open to everyone.

Contact John Lambert for further details, or with any prayer requests. john.c.lambert@gmail.com

Coffee Morning

Join us for coffee, cake and a chat!

FRIDAY 1 OCTOBER
10.30 AM TO 12.00 NOON
ST JAMES'S CHURCH BARN

No charge (but donations to charity welcome)
Transport Available - Call Sue on 342373



Organised by
St James's Church
for the
Biddenham Community

The Friends of St James, Biddenham

QUIZ

Saturday 16th October 2021, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Zoom Quiz
Suitable for all the family

Help raise some funds for the upkeep of our local church in a fun way - please join us!

Free entry - but donations welcome to The Friends of St James at
GoFundMe: <https://gofund.me/de1ce53d>

To register and for participation details,
email John Barkas at:
stjamesquiz@mail.com

Bedford Foodbank

Please continue to support this valuable charity and help them prevent hunger in our community.



Items currently needed include: UHT Milk, Fruit Juice (Longlife), Tinned Tuna, Tinned Rice Pudding, Tinned Fruit, Jam, Rice 250g/500g/1kg, Ham (Small Tins), Coffee (small), Biscuits, Shampoo, Washing-Up Liquid, Deodorant (Unisex), Tin Openers, Old Saucepans.

Afternoon Home Group

The next meeting of the afternoon home group will be on Wednesday 6 October at 2.30pm at the home of Colin & Marie, 5 Gower Drive, Deep Spinney.

Call 348356 if you are interested in joining this small, friendly group.

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