

St James's Church, Biddenham

All Saints Church, Kempston

Virtual Church News

Sunday 12 April

Easter Day

A big welcome to Virtual Church News on Easter Day.

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 Jacqui.piper@btinternet.com

A Reading for the Week:

John 20: 11-18

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.



Join us for an Easter Day Service

A reminder of the Zoom login details for the service at 11am on Easter Day will be sent out in a separate document to members of our church community. If anyone else would like these, please do get in touch!

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

Dear All,

The Disciples were in Lock down, literally, out of fear, while two women, both called Mary, had gone out on essential business. At the time, behind the locked doors, with the men who had followed Jesus, life could not have been that much fun. They had been with him when he had died on the cross (in fact, they had made a run for it, and let the son of God, more or less, die in isolation) and they had seen him buried in the tomb. I suppose, it could have been worse, they could have been in that tomb with him; a dark, cold, empty, lonely and hopeless place, with a massive stone in front of the opening. As you can see, this time with the remaining eleven disciples could not have been much of a party.

Christianity is a strange faith. On Good Friday, we spend our time hanging round a man on a cross and on Easter Sunday, around a tomb.

...continued overleaf

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

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It sounds depressing and miserable. Surely we have enough to deal with during our own particular lock-down, what with a global pandemic going on at the same time.

For us, both the cross and the tomb are amazing symbols of hope.

On the cross, the Lord of tears was not spitting out hatred, revenge, or anger, but rather words of forgiveness, hope, and of mending the broken. 'Father forgive them,' he said about the people who had crucified him, 'Beyond this there is heaven,' he said to the one who was lost, on another cross next to him, and finally, like the mechanic, who can do marvellous things with broken cars, he said; 'It is finished, it is complete, it is mended.'

The disciples, locked in their room did not understand this, because they preferred to sit under a cloud. In fact, they had heard everything he had said for three years, without actually hearing a single word spoken by this Lord of life.

In terms of the tomb, Christians hang around there on Easter Sunday, because it has a special meaning to them. The two Marys saw it as essential business to be there, because anointing a body for burial was an important ritual. They could not have done it on the Saturday, because anything like that was forbidden on the Sabbath, so early on Sunday morning it was. Frankly, anything to get away from those miserable men. (In John's Gospel, it is always women who do the important jobs.)

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the Mother of James had gone to find death, but instead they found life. Even before the sun had reared its head over the horizon, Jesus had already risen from the dead.

When these women went back to the gathering of stupid, ineffectual men, they carried with them the message of the cross of love, and the empty tomb, surrounded by life, but these men had understood it to be a place of isolation, sadness and fear.

The women who returned to the lock-down on Sunday morning, however, did not spoil the party but, instead, they brought it to life.

In their message there was hope because God, in Jesus, had really gone to death and back for them, and for you.

Some of us may feel a bit cut off at this moment. It will only be for a short time, but today, we celebrate the empty cross, and the empty tomb. This is because he is not in lock-down with the dead, he is out there with you, in the world, in our countryside, in our streets, and our shops. Not only that, but he is in your home, with you! Because of Easter, none of us are alone.

Happy Easter, keep safe, and be happy :-)

God bless

Eric

Please contact me any time you need to.

My numbers are 01234 852241/07805 879537

For the Children

NEW **Zoom Messy**

Church Group



We have now started an **online Messy Church** group via Zoom. If you would like to get involved in this, get in touch (email Jacqui.piper@btinternet.com) and we will put you on our contacts for it. Just like our usual Messy Church group, but online (and without the tea I'm afraid!).

Messy Church at Home

Messy Church at Home - great ideas for 'doing' church at home with the family. For more information and ideas go to <https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resources/messy-church-home-ideas> See also the Messy Church-BRF Facebook page.

Virtual Sunday School

The brilliant 4Front Theatre Group are doing a great Virtual Sunday School. Check it out on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMu2bG8L2dp7ywUZVa9uXDA>

Online Services:

Various services are being streamed on Easter Sunday including:

- 9am - Service led by the Archbishop of Canterbury from his Kitchen. Go to the Church of England website or their Facebook page.
- 11am - Easter message from York Minster led by the Dean of York, the Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Frost. Visit the York Minster website.
- 4pm - Audio service from York Minster led by Revd Canon Dr Victoria Johnson and the York Minster choir. Visit the York Minster website.
- 9.30am, 11.30am, 5.30pm - Various services from All Souls Langham Place in London.

You can watch all these services at the times stated or anytime afterwards.



Easter drawing by Val Fitzhugh

Thank you to Kate Smith who prepared this fabulous board to be displayed outside St James's Church over the Easter weekend.



Spring Harvest Home

Next week, a number of our church members would have been attending Spring Harvest, a Christian gathering where thousands of people from all denominations come together for bible teaching, worship etc. for all ages and abilities.

This year, Spring Harvest has been made accessible to everyone through Spring Harvest Home from 13 - 17 April.

Subscribe on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SpringHarvest> and see what Spring Harvest is all about!

A programme can be found on the Spring Harvest website at springharvest.org



Please pray with me

Lord of life

Who went to hell and back

so that we might live in hope.

Full of grace, hope, and love,

So that we may spread the life of hope,

That you have graciously given.

We worship your holy name and give thanks.

Amen



Church Services on the TV/Radio

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

- 6.35am on BBC Radio 4 - Easter Morning Sunrise Service
- 8.10am on BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship - The Archbishop of Canterbury's Easter Message and communion service from his own kitchen at Lambeth Palace
- 11.25am on BBC 1 - Sunday Worship from Bangor Cathedral
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise from Birmingham
- 1.30pm on BBC Radio 4 - Three Vicars Talking - Rev Richard Coles, Rev Kate Bottley and Rev Giles Fraser chat about Easter and how the current coronavirus outbreak challenges the church
- 3pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Norwich Cathedral

Some of our favourite Easter Hymns!

- God so loved the world
- How great thou art
- In Christ alone
- Great is thy faithfulness
- Christ the Lord is risen today
- Amazing grace (my chains are gone)
- Cornerstone
- Before the throne of God above
- Wonder of the cross

If you have access to the internet, why not look them up!

Bedford Foodbank



Please don't forget that we support the Bedford Foodbank, who will need our donations now more than ever. 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