

Virtual Church News

Sunday 17 May

6th Sunday of Easter

Welcome to Virtual Church News for the 6th Sunday of Easter.

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 14.15-21 The Promise of the Holy Spirit

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

Christian Aid

If you would normally have attended one of our events for Christian Aid week, please consider making a donation to Christian Aid. Go to www.christianaid.org.uk



Join us for Online Services

Zoom services are held at 11am on a Sunday and also 6pm on a Wednesday.

Login details will be sent out in the covering email to those who are already members of our church community. If anyone else would like these, please do get in touch. Everyone is welcome!



Photo taken by
Rev Eric Lomax

Hymns and Devotional Music



Tim Grant-Jones, organist at All Saints, and his wife Irene are live streaming hymns and other devotional music at 10am each Sunday (before the Zoom service). Find this and other music on Facebook by searching for Grant-Jones Musical Services or entering #gjmusicalservices. You can also request hymns in advance!

Did you Receive The Loop?

If you are a Loop subscriber you should have received your copy of the May issue by email. If you haven't, please check your Spam Folder. If you still can't find it, do contact loopeditor@gmail.com and we will post a hard copy to you.

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

For anybody with any degree of empathy, the most painful thing to see is a helpless child.

A young girl, who could not have been older than fifteen came to me in a street in India and held out her hand asking for money. In that situation there is always the temptation to think that this person's need is being run by somebody else. This may also have been the case with a child I encountered in Istanbul. In a busy street, she was emptying the contents of a bin looking for food. A man started shouting at her and she looked terrified. He was large and overpowering. The thing I noticed about her was that she had bare feet. Somebody told me that these street children were mostly refugees from the terrible fighting in Syria. They were people who had fled danger in order to find safety and hope, but instead they found isolation, loneliness, and frequently, abuse.

Continued on next page...

Message from Rev Eric Lomax *continued...*

Even for us who have much, we have learned how fragile our institutions are. Those stable pillars of our society, which we trusted in, have proved themselves to be fragile over the last few months. Many people who thought their jobs and careers would last for life, have found their hopes run through their fingers like sand. Nothing is certain, nothing is stable, nothing is guaranteed to last.

The disciples had high expectations of their Messiah, Jesus. Through his miracles, and through his words, they had invested everything they had in him. He would deliver them from foreign rule. He would restore the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and their religion would be an unstoppable force. The trouble is that, in a moment, it all fell apart. One moment he rode like a prince into Jerusalem and, in the blink of an eye, he was hanging from a roughly cut wooden cross while these invading enemies played cards for his blood-stained robe. It was an expensive, seamless, robe, we are told (John 19:23-24), but of what use is an expensive coat to a tortured and dying man. For the disciples, all their hopes and dreams were gone.

Jesus, in our passage, had warned them countless times that all would end on Golgotha, the hill of shame, but he had constantly reminded them that he would be raised up again. They had not believed! They had not listened, because they could not get past the idea of failure and weakness.

We know about selective hearing, don't we? Our dog, Meg, can respond to the command to sit, but she only sits when she wants too. Liz, my wife (the phrase 'my' wife is meaningless, because she belongs to herself and not to me!), will tell me something that I do not hear, and will then remind me that I would have heard it, if I had wanted to. Jesus, however, wanted them to know that it would end right, and that fear would be short lived. The disciples had selective hearing. They did not want to know that everything would fall apart, and that Jesus would die. The message of resurrection, therefore had completely passed them by.

The God of the Bible is always a God of hope; 'Will a mother forget her baby? the bible says, 'yet even if she forgets, I will never forget you.' (Isaiah 49:15). The trouble is that in the Bible, tragedy is always the narrative forerunner of hope. Exodus to promised land, exile to resettlement, The fall in Eden to redemption, and death to life.

The disciples of Jesus could not get their heads round the failure of the cross, and because of that, their minds could not reach out towards resurrection. It is not simply resurrection that we believe in, it is the resurrection of the crucified Jesus.

Here in John 14 we see another promise, deeper and longer lasting than an empty tomb. John's Gospel was written late in the first century, when the memory of the empty tomb was lost in the cloud of the past.

The early Christians were experiencing their own cross, in that they were facing suffering and persecution for their faith. The writer of John's Gospel was reminding them of another promise that Jesus made; 'I will not leave you orphans,' he said, for 'I will send you an advocate.' By advocate, he was saying that in difficult, painful, and hopeless times, he will not leave you on your own, His Holy Spirit of hope, and life, will always be with you until the end of time (Matthew 28:20).

It is heart breaking to see children who are lost and abandoned and when the God of love sees us facing uncertainty there is always the reminder that he will not forget you. When we face a difficult and challenging journey, like we face now, there is the promise that we will be taken, like sheep, to safe pasture. When we face the cross of uncertainty in our lives, he promises us that there will be resurrection of new life, and new possibilities, and if we feel alone, then there is the reminder that we have an advocate who speaks for us, the Spirit of life, hope and meaning. You are not alone. So just believe.

God Bless

Eric

*Those who
love me will
be loved by
my Father*



Daily Hope



The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a free national phone line as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes while church buildings are closed because of the coronavirus. Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.

For the Children (& young at heart!)

Today's passage is about love. Jesus explains how us loving him enables us to keep his commandments (his rules). He tells us that he doesn't expect us to do this on our own, but with the Holy Spirit (or the Spirit of Truth).

The heart is a symbol of love. What symbols can you think of that represent the Holy Spirit?

Activities

Make and decorate some heart shaped biscuits to share with your family.

Make a chain of people:

1. Take a sheet of A4 paper and cut it in half lengthwise.
2. Fold one piece into quarters accordion (pleated) style.
3. Draw a figure of a person on the top layer. Make sure that the arms touch the folded edges.

Cut the figure out (making sure that you don't cut the ends of the arms) and unfold. You will get a chain of people holding hands.

Colour in the people and think of four people who you know who don't yet know Jesus. How can you show Jesus' love to them? Pray that they will know they are loved and will come to know Jesus .

Songs:

Lord I give you my heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZGzu6ol9b4>

Little Life (for you Jesus)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lcqxg12EG_Q

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 - The gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- 10.45am on BBC 1 - Sunday Worship from St David's Cathedral, Pembrokeshire.
- 11.15am on BBC 1 - Sunday Morning Stories - Kate Bottley hears the inspiring stories of people trying to unite the people around them.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise - Modern Hymn Writers.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from St Pancras Church, London.

Wednesday 20 May:

- 4.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.

Hymns/Songs of the Week

Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spE-BE23qxA>

Peace in Christ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Waitmz6C100>

May the Grace of Jesus Christ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INPoOfjFJ5s>

Online Services

Join the Church of England on its website or Facebook page for this week's 9am Virtual Service.

You can also download the order of service and the sermon in pdf format from the Church of England website.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online>

Many other churches and cathedrals across the country are also providing online services.

Discovery Group

Meeting via Zoom on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of the month at 8pm (after the clap!). Get in touch if you would like the login details.

Please pray with me

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art--
thou my best thought by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my great Father, I thy true son;
thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Amen



For your prayers

- Our country, as we start to re-build our economy and seek to move towards a 'new normal'.
- All those who are suffering physically, mentally or financially, and their families and friends as they try to support them.
- All those who we love. Help us to show Jesus' love in our communities.

Our prayer group meets at 8pm (after the clap!) on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Get in touch if you would like the login details or have any prayer requests.

Access Church of England Services, Prayers etc. via a Smart Speaker

Use your Alexa or Google Home smart speaker to ask the Church of England for prayers, explanations of the Christian faith, location-based information about local church events and services, and more.

To get started, just say:

*"Alexa, open the Church of England" or
"Hey Google, talk to the Church of England"*

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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Bedford Foodbank

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

Donations of food can now be placed in a box which in St James's Church Porch, taken direct to the Foodbank (off Manton Lane) or put in the boxes in the supermarkets. Items currently needed include cup a soup, long life sponge puddings, UHT fruit juice, squash, tea-bags (40/80), spray cleaners, washing up liquid and washing tablets.

Alternatively please consider making a financial donation. More information can be found at

[https://
bed-
ford.foodbank.org.uk/](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