

Virtual Church News

Sunday 27 September

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

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



Honey bees - see page 4

A Reading for the Week

Revelation 21. 1-7

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children."

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

There seems to be an almost constant stream of new series on Netflix. Each one about eight episodes long, and the beauty of them is that you can literally watch all episodes together. The last episode, then, rarely resolves the narrative, because they want you to watch season two six months later, then season three and four. Thirty two hours you will never get back, with rapidly deteriorating script writing towards the end.

Our life as Christians and our common faith is very similar to this. Each year we follow the narrative of faith from Advent to Christmas, and from Lent to Easter. We walk with one another in those beautiful moments in the Church year that remind us of the presence of Jesus. The flag moments of Christmas and Easter are particularly important because they also link our faith with the subversive religious consciousness of the secular world. *Continued on next page*

Annual Meetings/Electoral Rolls

Annual Meetings

Notice is given that the (postponed) Annual Meetings of both parishes will be held via Zoom as follows:

All Saints - Tuesday 20 October at 7.30pm (note change of date)

St James - Wednesday 14 October at 7.30pm

Zoom login details will be the same as for the Sunday Virtch services.

Everyone in our church family is welcome to attend these meetings, although you will only be entitled to vote if you are on the Electoral Roll.

Electoral Roll

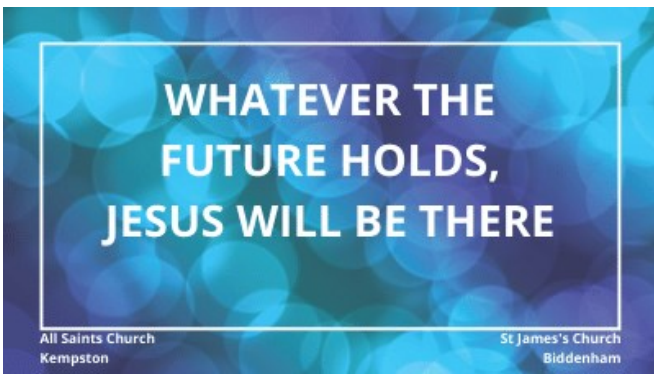
Notice is given that the Church Electoral Rolls (membership lists) of both parishes are currently being revised by the Parochial Church Councils. After the revision a copy of the Roll will be published by each PCC and will be available for inspection on a reasonable request being made by email to stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

Any person is entitled to have their name entered on the roll if they are a) baptised, b) aged 16 or over and c) either i) a member of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with it and is resident in the parish; ii) a member of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with it, is not resident in the parish, but has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months or iii) a member in good standing of a Church which is not in communion with the Church of England but subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and is also a member of the Church of England and has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months.

If you are not sure whether your name is currently on the roll (if you completed a form last year you do not need to do so again this year) or would like your name to be added, please email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued

For just this reason we fill our Churches on Christmas Eve and on Easter Sunday because these festivals are part of their story too; The Word became Flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth, we read at midnight on Christmas Eve, while the memorial acclamation in so many ancient liturgies calls us to continue the Christian story; Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again. Our terrible problem is that this year, 2020, the narrative was broken for the first time, The Church could not meet to sing and proclaim the most powerful celebration in the Christian Calendar, the story of the resurrection at Easter. The key episode in our box set is missing, and this has not happened since 1208 under the reign of King John.

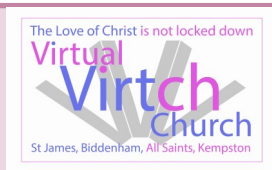


I was heartbroken today, coming to the realisation that we may lose Christmas this year as well. The Church may be stripped of another episode in our story. It may be that the singing of 'Oh Come All Ye Faithful' will be forbidden for the first time since it was written in 1744.

I have had so many people saying to me over the last few weeks that they would not engage with either the limited Sunday services that we currently provide, nor the online services that we have provided every week since lock down, online. I have written a sermon every week, that has gone out to everyone who has provided an address, and I hope that everybody has taken time to read the words I have been given, even when I have been away on holiday. I understand people who are frightened, or do not engage with technology. I am saddened, however, by the phrase, 'I do not take part, because this is not church as I understand it.'

Virtch

Zoom services continue to be held at 11am on a Sunday and 6pm on a Wednesday. Login details are sent out in the covering email to members of our church community. If anyone else would like these, please do get in touch. Everyone is welcome!



The truth is that Church is not perfectly ordered traditional services, nor is it the buildings that are so precious to so many of us. Church is the life we lead, together, as Christians, and as members of that community, it is our job to be together in whatever ways we can. We are not just observers or consumers of the Christian story, it is our story that we share together as Christians.

The missing episodes of the story will one-day soon come to us again. We will celebrate Easter and Christmas together again and the character that holds the story together will never leave us or abandon us, so please do not abandon him. He was there in the beginning, He is here in the midst of this crisis, and He will be there at the end. Whatever the future holds, Jesus will be there.

God bless

Eric

Services in Church

Sunday services in our churches (churchyards if good weather) will be at 9.30am as follows:

Sundays 27 Sept, 11, 25 Oct - All Saints

Sundays 4, 18 Oct - St James

Please read the following important notes on what to expect when attending Church

Face coverings must be worn by all those who attend when the service is inside (this is a legal requirement) (if you are exempt please bring some evidence with you). A few disposable face masks will be available for use by anyone who has been unable to obtain one.

Please wash your hands before leaving home and sanitise your hands on entering/leaving church.

A one-way system will operate in both the Church and the Churchyard. Please note the signs in place and follow the directions of the sidesmen. Please adhere to social distancing requirements at all times when in the Church and Churchyard.

We are required to keep a register of attendees' names and contact numbers which can be used for the Track and Trace system if required. These details will be stored securely and disposed of after 21 days.

If you are in a vulnerable category we advise you not to attend these physical services, but this is ultimately your decision to make.

Please do not attend if you feel unwell.

At St James's, once the services are inside the church, numbers will be very limited (we can only fit approx. 20-25 in church safely). We advise you to arrive early and apologise in advance if there is insufficient room.

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. A new heaven and a new earth.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Saltaire.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 30 September:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

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

For the Children (& young at heart!)

This week we are looking at a different reading to the adults - Paul's letter to the Philippians 2.1-13. If you have a bible at home, or access to the internet, look it up and read it, but here is a small part of it...

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

What do you think Paul meant by these words? Can you think of any examples of people putting the interests of others first?

Activity:

Play the chocolate game with your family/carers. You will need a large bar of chocolate on a tray, a hat, scarf, gloves, knife, fork, dice and plates. Put all the items in the middle and give each person a plate. Roll the dice in turn. When someone rolls a 6 they put on the hat, scarf and gloves and try to cut the chocolate with the knife and fork. Any chocolate they cut before the next person rolls a 6 is put on their plate. The winner is the person with the most chocolate on their plate at the end. Think about whether this is a fair way of sharing the chocolate? How could you share the chocolate so it is fair to everyone?

Song:

Shout to the Lord

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn5CMSSAx_c

Prayer:

Dear God, sometimes I get very involved in what I am doing and sometimes I don't take notice if other people are feeling lonely or left out. Forgive me God and help me to think more about others. Amen.

Alpha Online

Do you want to find out more about the Christian faith? Do you want to be able to ask questions in a safe environment where all views are listened to and nobody is judged?

It's not too late to join our new Alpha Online Course (via Zoom).

For further details and to book your place contact Jacqui at stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com or on 356993.



See for yourself.
Try Alpha

THE FRIENDS OF ST JAMES,
BIDDENHAM

A registered charity raising funds for the fabric of St James church and barn

ZOOM QUIZ NIGHT

An online quiz to suit the whole family

All you need is a little general knowledge, some inspired guesswork, and a little bit of luck!

Saturday 24th
October



7:30 to 9 p.m.

Free entry - but donations welcome to *The Friends of St James* by GoFundMe: www.bit.ly/StJamesQuiz
To register and for participation details, contact John Barkas at stjamesquiz@mail.com

Please pray with me

God and Father,
We are saddened that we have lost so much that was important this year.
We pray that you heal our world and bring an end to this crisis.
Help us to know that you are our Christ,
the Christ who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.
Help us also to remember that we are your people.
Strengthen our faith and keep us faithful to you.
In the name of Jesus Christ
Amen.



For your prayers

Please pray for:

- Our communities, as restrictions are tightened, particularly the sick, the lonely and the anxious.
- Wedding couples, as they are forced to rearrange their plans again.

Our prayer group meets at 8pm 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.

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

Bishop's Harvest Appeal

Creating a Buzz in Nepal. Helping the Nepalese people keep bees to help maintain the fragile biodiversity, enhance crop production and create an income from sales of honey. Donate online or by putting your donation (marked Bishops Appeal) in the donation box at a Sunday service. For further details: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/bishop-s-annual-harvest-appeal/>

Hymns/Songs of the Week

Father hear the prayer we offer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPPZt-j2lPI>

To thee O Lord

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

You laid aside your majesty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Asy9EQSvrZ4>

Be still and know, by Amy Grant

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF1duZuGqAw&list=PLR5wKhyNaO42RiPKxLHhxZ6>

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.

Items currently needed include fruit juice (longlife), tinned spaghetti, cup a soup, tinned rice pudding, coffee, rice (small), hand soap, anti-bac spray cleaners, washing up liquid, laundry wash tablets.

Alternatively please consider making a financial donation.

Changes for This Year's Harvest Collection

This year the Bedford Foodbank has asked that, rather than us supporting them with collections of food for harvest, we support them financially. If you would normally give to our harvest food collections, perhaps you would consider making a financial donation instead.

More information including details on how to make a financial donation 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: 328452 or 07805 879537

Alison/Brenda Walker: 851597

Alan/Anita Lowe: 857212 or 07751 659695