

Virtual Church News

Sunday 6 September

Thirteenth 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



Photo of Normanton Church (see page 2)
taken by Rev Eric Lomax

A Reading for the Week

Romans 12: 8-14

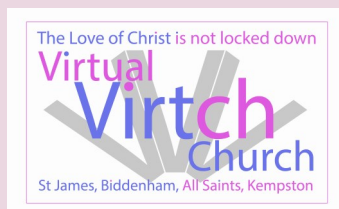
Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not covet,' and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

And do this, understanding the present time: the hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

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!



Service at St James on Sunday 6th

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

Sundays 13, 27 Sept - All Saints
Sundays 6, 20 Sept - St James

Please read the following important notes on what to expect when attending St James's

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

Please wash your hands before leaving home. You will be asked to sanitise your hands on entering and leaving the church.

A one-way system will operate in both the Church and the Churchyard. Please enter the churchyard via the entrance opposite the Church Barn. Entry to the church (if the service is inside) is by the main door. Please note the signs in place and follow the one way system once inside. You will be asked to exit via the Chancel door and the main Churchyard gates. Please adhere to social distancing requirements at all times when in the Church and Churchyard.

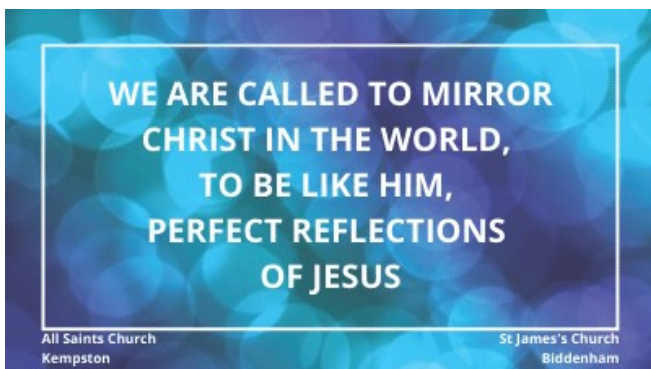
We are required to keep a register of attendees' names and contact numbers which can be used for the Track and Trace system if required. These details will be stored securely and disposed of after 21 days.

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.

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

On Bank Holiday Monday, Liz and I went to one of our favourite haunts. It is only about fifty minutes up the A1. Just North of Stamford, you turn off to the smallest county in England, Rutland. Not far away is the lovely little town of Oakham and East of that is one of the largest man-made reservoirs in Europe, Rutland Water. It is surrounded by gentle rolling landscape and, when it is still, it reflects the surroundings like a mirror. We stopped off at a place called Normanton. Bank Holiday Monday had brought a plague of water sports people and cyclists so it was difficult to find a seat in the café. Nearby there is Normanton Church, a very beautiful nineteenth century, classical church dedicated to St Matthew, which was due to be demolished when the reservoir was constructed in 1975. Public outcry protected the building from the bulldozers and it now appears to float on the surface of the water. In the perfect stillness of the reservoir, despite the Bank holiday crowds, the church was mirrored perfectly in the water. We sat there for some time.



As much as anything we are called to mirror Christ in the world, to be like him, perfect reflections of Jesus.

Paul has spent 12 chapters of his Letter to the Romans telling us how following the rules and regulations of the law do not get us to heaven. What gets us to heaven is the grace of God manifested in the death of Jesus on the cross. Quite simply, Jesus died for us. Now Paul changes direction and starts talking about the rules and regulations again: Don't steal, don't murder, don't commit adultery. Why does Paul seem to be putting the emphasis on these things again? His answer is clear; love.

Paul is not inviting us to an amoral faith where all permissible. Clearly there are so many things that

are incompatible with who God is, and what God is about. When there has been so much about abuses of power in the established churches it makes our institutions the complete antithesis of the Christ who allowed himself to die on the cross for us. The God of the Bible is the perfect lover of the loveless, the healer of the broken, the forgiver of the unforgivable, and the father (and mother) of the fatherless, and we should be the perfect reflection of him.

Paul, here, turns the law (the commandments) on its head. He has already stated that this is not a ticket to heaven. That ticket, as he stated, was sent to us without any prior requirements. He tells that the commandments are quite simply a summary of what that love is. Matthew 22:40 states simply that all the Law and the Prophets hang on the two commandments to love God and to our neighbour.

A man told his wife that he loved her, and she replied; 'I don't even know what that means. Don't tell me, but show me.'

The love talked about in the Bible is never a weak, passive emotion, but an active demonstration of power. This power is demonstrated in the outward action of God's love; 'But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.' (Romans 5:8).

Our call is to reach out to others with the power of that love; 'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.' (John 15:13).

We consider the law and the commandments and ultimately, we act on them so that we are perfect reflections of God's love in the world.

God Bless

Eric

A Very Different Bike 'n Hike

Saturday 12 September

The Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust sponsored Bike 'n Hike will go ahead but will simply involve visiting over 600 (potentially!) churches and chapels.

If you wish to take part - either by hiking or cycling, sponsor forms and a list of churches and chapels taking part are available from Michael Hurford (271746) or at <http://www.b-n-h.co.uk/>



Sponsored Bike 'n Hike
BEDS AND HERTS HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST
Bike 'n Hike in Beds 'n Herts

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. Heaven is a noisy place. Finding inspiration in the religious art of the National Gallery.
 - 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Eden Project.
 - 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.
- Wednesday 9 September:
- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

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?

Then join our new Alpha Online Course which will be starting in September. For further details contact Jacqui on 356993 or at stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com



Gospel Reading

Matthew 18.15-20

'Imagine', said Jesus, with his disciples gathered about him, 'that somebody in the church has done something to upset you.' The disciples had just been asking about who was the most important in the church, and Jesus had shocked them by saying it was the children. Now he was teaching them about relationships.

Jesus continued, 'Speak to the person alone and tell them what they've done wrong. If they listen, you'll have solved the problem and got a brother or sister back.'

'What if they don't listen?' the disciples asked.

'Take along one or two other people, who can hear what you say to one another,' Jesus replied. 'If the person still won't listen, then tell the whole church what has happened. If they won't even listen to the church, then that person is not like a brother or sister to you. They are like a Gentile or a tax collector, and you shouldn't treat them as family.'

Jesus told the disciples that they would be the ones making judgements in the church. 'You are in charge of deciding what is forbidden and what is allowed now. Whatever you forbid on earth, will also be forbidden in heaven. Whatever you allow on earth, will be allowed in heaven. And remember, if two of you agree when you ask for something on earth, my Father in heaven will give it to you.' Looking at the group listening to him, Jesus said, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

From Roots Resources

For the Children (& young at heart!)

In this week's Gospel, Jesus is teaching us that we should love one another within our community and he gives us advice on how to mend broken relationships, saying that we need to tell people if they have hurt us and talk to them about it.

There may be times, perhaps at school, when someone hurts you or says something that makes you sad? How can you deal with that? Can you speak to them? Perhaps ask a friend or a teacher to help you? This is what Jesus is telling us to do.

Activities:

You will need a few sheets of different coloured paper. Think of a time when you have been hurt by someone or they have said something which has made you sad. Tear off a small bit of paper for each of these times. Out of this 'brokenness' can you make a mosaic of something beautiful (e.g. a flower, butterfly, heart) with the pieces of paper? Think about how sometimes beautiful things can come from having to deal with things that have upset us.

Make a balance scale (by hanging a yoghurt pot off either side of a wire coat hanger and hanging it on a rail). Place a big stone in one side; then add small stones to the other side to see if it will balance. How difficult is this? Would it be easier just to take all the stones away? When someone upsets us, taking revenge will never achieve balance. The only way to do this is to forgive.

Songs:

God loves me and I love you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXnyJuvYFN8>

We really want to thank you Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aolyj1EYebM>

Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, we don't have to see you to know you are with us. You bring us all together, as a community, in your love. Thank you . Amen.

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



Discovery Group

Meets via Zoom on Thursday evenings 8pm. Contact john.c.lambert@gmail.com for details.

Please pray with me

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen



For your prayers

Please pray for:

- Our children and teachers who are learning new ways of teaching.
- Our neighbours and wider community.
- Those who are sick and those who care for them.
- The recently departed and their families.

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.

Hymns/Songs of the Week

Make me a channel of your peace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNagMjn1zXg>

As we are gathered, Jesus is here

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_Phj2x_1Lo

Jesu, joy of man's desiring

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSZg6sQ5J2k>

Hold me together by Royal Tailor

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEzas-F_aKA

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

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 Cup-a-Soup, Jellies (pre-made), Tinned Rice Pudding, Coffee, Rice (small), Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Hand Soap, Anti-Bac Spray Cleaners, Washing Up Liquid, Deodorant, Laundry Wash Tablets, Shampoo and Shower Gel.

Alternatively 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: 328452 or 07805 879537

Alison/Brenda Walker: 851597

Alan/Anita Lowe: 857212 or 07751 659695