

# Virtual Church News

Sunday 11 October

18th 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](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com)

## A Reading for the Week

**Luke 14:16-24**

<sup>16</sup> Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. <sup>17</sup> At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

<sup>18</sup> "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

<sup>19</sup> "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

<sup>20</sup> "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

<sup>21</sup> "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

<sup>22</sup> "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

<sup>23</sup> "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. <sup>24</sup> I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

## Annual Meetings

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

**All Saints - Tuesday 20 October at 7.30pm**

**St James - Wednesday 14 October at 7.30pm**

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



## Harvest Appeals

It is not too late to support the Foodbank and Bishop's Harvest Appeals - details on page 4.

## Message from Rev Eric Lomax

What is the Christian message about? Is it just about being good and going to heaven? If we read it like that then we have utterly missed the point of God's Kingdom. The Bible tells us that creation is messed up, and that what we are looking for is a new creation. That new creation, according to the New Testament is embodied in the person of Jesus Christ. A good place to start in this understanding of Scripture is in the Gospel of St. Luke.

We don't know who wrote the Gospel of St. Luke. It was clearly written by the same person who wrote 'The Acts of the Apostles'. We know this because they both begin in exactly the same way; 'To me dear Theophilus.' We are not given the name Luke in the original Greek texts, but there is, indeed, good reason why we are given his name.

Luke is mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament, but not in the Gospels. In Paul's Letter to the Colossians (Col 4:14) Luke is referred to as a physician (from Greek for 'one who heals') and a follower of Paul. Choosing a doctor or physician is a perfect choice for a Gospel that seems to focus so much on healing.

In Jesus' time, as it is now, healing and wellbeing are essential. There are thirteen stories of healing in Luke's Gospel: 4:31-37; 4:38-44; 5:12-16; 5:17-26; 7:1-10; 7:11-17; 7:21; 8:26-39; 8:40-56; 9:37-45; 13:10-17; 17:11-19; and 18:35-43. These are all supernatural, in the sense that they do not reflect, in any way, the scientific practices of our medical technicians, but that is a reflection, largely of the limitations of the day. By healing people Jesus brings restoration to suffering people, and in a society that judged people's status by their health these healings represent the empowerment and freedom of the weak.

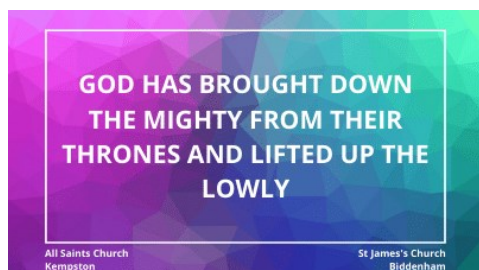
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## Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued

These healings are, to the Gospel writer, physical demonstrations of the coming kingdom of God, in which the relationships in community are restored and the power differential is reversed. The fulfilment of this is seen in Revelation 21 where sickness and injustice will come to an end. Ultimately this transformation depends on the power of God revealed in the power of his Spirit.

There is a sense that Jesus, in these stories, moves across the Judean countryside like a breeze, mending broken hearts, broken bodies and broken structures. It reminds me a little of the story of creation in Genesis where the author writes about the Spirit of God (Hebrew: Ruach, breath or wind) moving over the face of chaos, bringing order. In the ancient Near East, the origin of the Hebrew religion, it was the oceans that symbolised chaos and disorder.

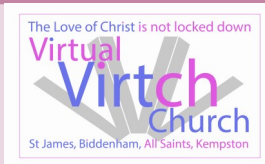
All of this extends far beyond the healing of the physical body. In Luke 4, Jesus declares himself the fulfilment of the words of the prophet Isaiah; "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free." In this, he proclaims the healing of the Human heart, the overturning of oppression and injustice and the restoration of our vision.



This echoes perfectly the Song of Mary, the Magnificat, in Luke Chapter 1, in which the mother of Jesus proclaims that in Jesus, God has 'brought down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.' The power of this song is that this is a woman in a deeply patriarchal culture who stands as the humble revolutionary who proclaims the power of Jesus to exalt the weak and crush the oppressor. To Luke, the physician, liberation from oppression is as much about healing as the healing of the woman with the curved spine (Luke 13). With analysis it would be easy to see that the two fall into the same category.

## 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 Theologian Jürgen Moltmann sums this up beautifully, by writing, "Jesus' healings are not supernatural miracles in a natural world. They are the only truly 'natural' thing in a world that is unnatural, demonised, and wounded." From Moltmann's perspective, these are substantial signs that through Jesus, God is putting our world to right. He is mending what is broken in our bodies, our hearts, our minds, and in the way our communities are constructed. Jesus' healings are revolution and re-creation

So, in this complex Gospel story today which I have barely touched upon, apart from its overall context in the physician's Gospel, the Kingdom is shown as a wedding banquet, with which the powerful have failed to engage, and the King throws open doors to the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame. As Jesus states, again in Luke's Gospel, it is not the healthy who need the physician, but rather the sick (Luke 5:30), and the physician will not fail to heal all who are broken. Trust him.

God bless

Eric

## Services in Church

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

Sundays 11, 25 Oct - All Saints

Sunday 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, 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. The Priory and the Pottery.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Prisons Sunday
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 14 October:

- 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](mailto:john.c.lambert@gmail.com)

## For the Children (& young at heart!)

In this week's passage from Paul's letter to the Philippians, he writes at chapter 4 verses 4-6 *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."*

This is at the end of Paul's letter and he is telling the Philippians what it is like to follow Jesus. He told them not to worry and that God is always with them. There will be times in our lives when we will do, or experience, something new. At these times it is comforting to know that other people are thinking of you. Just like the Philippians, if we follow Jesus then God will always be with us and we can talk to him through prayer about any worries or concerns that we have.

### Activity

Let members of your family know that you are thinking of them by writing something on a sticky note and leaving it somewhere they will find it.

### Song

Reckless love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6SSHuZvQE>

### Prayer

Lord Jesus, we bless you for the people in our lives who show us your wonderful love. Thank you for the sense of belonging, and the peace of mind that brings us. Be with us all, dear Lord. Amen.

*(courtesy of Roots resources)*

## 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](mailto: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](http://www.bit.ly/StJamesQuiz)  
To register and for participation details, contact John Barkas at [stjamesquiz@mail.com](mailto:stjamesquiz@mail.com)



## Please pray with me

Jesus Christ,  
Who heals all, restores all and mends all,  
Heal our blindness,  
So that we can see the possibilities of your Kingdom,  
And open our hearts to the broken.  
In Jesus name  
Amen.



## Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

## Hymns/Songs of the Week

Be thou my vision

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

Teach me O Lord

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1oDTZ\\_uVO4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1oDTZ_uVO4)

May the words of my mouth by Tim Hughes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6EkmvRxfHo>

## Produce/Christmas Cards Sale

Jams and marmalades, along with our Scenes of Biddenham Christmas Cards, are now on sale before and after the services at St James. If you would like anything but will not be at a service, please call Sue on 342373.

## 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/>

## For your prayers

Please pray for:

- Our NHS
- The lonely and isolated.

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.

## 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](mailto:help@biddenham.org.uk) with your name/phone number/address.

If you can volunteer, please email [help@biddenham.org.uk](mailto: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