

St James's Church, Biddenham

Virtual Church News

Sunday 18 October

19th 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

Harvest Appeals

It is not too late to support the Foodbank and Bishop's Harvest Appeals - details of both appeals are set out on page 4.

A Reading for the Week

Matthew 22.15-22

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. **16** So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. **17** Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' **18** But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? **19** Show me the coin used for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius. **20** Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' **21** They answered, 'The emperor's.' Then he said to them, 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' **22** When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

All Saints Annual Meetings

Notice is given that the Annual Meetings of All Saints will be held online via Zoom on **Tuesday 20 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 Virtual services.

All Saints Church, Kempston



Message from Rev Eric Lomax

In 2012, I remember visiting Manhattan Island in New York, and seeing the Imagine Memorial in Central Park. It was dedicated to the great singer songwriter John Lennon who was murdered by a crazed gun man, Mark Chapman, just a few hundred metres away. The memorial was very moving and a very bubbly American woman said to me; 'He was such a great New Yorker.'

I answered her by saying 'He was born just a few miles from me.'

The woman thought for a moment and replied 'You sound like you are English, but you were born in New York as well?'

The imagine memorial is named after one of his most famous peace songs; Imagine, in which he talked about the removal of those things that separate us and cause conflict; religion, wealth, nationalism and possessions.

The word Imagine comes from the Latin imago, which means to picture, and it is the same word as the Greek one that Jesus uses in our Bible story; 'Whose image is on this coin?' Jesus used it in response to a trick question by the Pharisees and the Herodians. They asked him whether it was right for people to pay taxes.

It was very strange that these people were working together in this as Pharisees and Herodians would not ordinarily talk to each other. The Roman Empire was a vast mechanism that required lots of money to keep its military and political cogs moving and that meant that the people in Roman occupied territories were stung for taxes. Most of the religious groups, especially the Pharisees, hated this imposition on Jewish communities by a gentile foreign power. Their take on it was that they should do all they could to avoid paying tax.

We do not know very much about the Herodians, but we do know they were Hellenistic Jews which meant that their religious ideology emerged from the Greek occupation of Judea under Alexander the Great. They were largely in sympathy with imposed Jewish monarchy of Herod the Great. The point is that Herod was actually a client King, part of the Roman machine; there to keep the Jewish people in order.

Continued on next page

Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued

Herod wanted the taxes because it was his job to want the taxes, so the Herodians believed that taxes should be paid. 'Is it right that we should pay taxes?'

It was a clever question because Jesus could not win. Either answer would offend one of them, so Jesus asked them the question; 'Whose image is on this coin?'

The Jewish faith is very clear, any kind of image of either God or a foreign God is Blasphemy, and is forbidden in the Torah (the Jewish Law). In Roman ideology Caesar is not only an emperor but is also a god, so for this reason Roman coins were forbidden in the Jewish Temple. On the outskirts of the temple you would find hundreds of money changers who would exchange Jewish coinage, with no image, for the Roman coinage, at grossly inflated prices. This was so the Jewish worshippers could pay tithes in the Temple with money that was acceptable to the Almighty. Nothing about God.



The image on the coin was Caesar's and both Pharisee and Herodian had to acknowledge this. Jesus replied; 'Then give unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and give unto God what is God's.'

If I had tried to teach on this passage before I took my degree in Theology I probably would have given a political sermon on paying taxes, but not now. Jesus had no interest in the question about taxes; He was interested in them, and he is interested in you.

In the creation story in Genesis one, we are told something beautiful about who we are, or rather who we are meant to be. John Lennon's Imagine may have presented an image of what the world might be, but it did not present an image of who he actually was.

Liverpool Airport was renamed 'John Lennon Airport,' in 2001, twenty one years after he was

murdered. People in Liverpool often joke about John Lennon saying that it is called John Lennon airport because it was the first place he went to when he saw the colour of money. Talented? Definitely! Wealthy? Absolutely! Narcissistic? Without doubt. His wealth utterly separated him from his Liverpool, lower middle class origins. The utopia of his song really was just in his imagination, so easy to see from the window of his expensive 72nd Street, New York apartment. The idealism of his song was not his real face.

In the creation we get a wonderful picture of what God wants us to be; 'So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.' (Genesis 1:27) The creation story then tells how humanity turns from God in disobedience. We turn from him, and God's image is distorted.

What image did Jesus see when he looked into the faces of the Pharisee and the Herodian? They were both Jews. They had responsibilities to the world, but as devout followers of the one God, Yahweh, they also had responsibility to their creator, the one whom they claimed to worship. Jesus, who sees all, so wanted to see the image of the creator in their faces, but instead he saw their anger, their arrogance, their greed, and their deception. Give to the world what belongs to the world, but do not forget your responsibility to him. When you look into the mirror; whose face do you see?

God bless, Eric

Services in Church

Sunday services in our churches are at 9.30am:
Sundays 11, 25 Oct, 8, 22 Nov - All Saints

Sunday 18 Oct, 1, 15, 29 Nov - St James

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 for the Track and Trace system. 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).

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!



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 One Who Heals.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise. Cheddar Gorge.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 21 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

For the Children (& young at heart!)

This week we are looking at another one of Paul's letters - this time to the Thessalonians. Chapter 1 verses 4, 5a, 6 and 7a are as follows:

For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers.

Thessalonians is the oldest book in the New Testament. It was written only a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus. The passage helps us to know that each one of us is chosen by God and that he wants us to be an example to others. How can we be a positive influence on our friends, family, community and society as a whole?

Activity

Think about who you see as 'influencers' in your community, the UK and internationally. Can you find pictures of them to make a collage with? You could write on the collage why you think each person is an influencer.

Song

My God is so big, so strong and so mighty
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbrPc1S06ol>

Prayer

Thank you Lord Jesus for my family who show me how to love. Thank you Lord Jesus for my friends who share their lives with me. Thank you Lord Jesus for everyone who influences me for good. Thank you Lord Jesus. 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 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

Faithful Lord,
whose steadfast love never ceases
and whose mercies never come to an end:
grant us the grace to trust you
and to receive the gifts of your love,
new every morning,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen



Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

Hymns/Songs of the Week

O for a thousand tongues to sing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4O9kw3clLpg>

Come Holy Ghost

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQyOiO_Y7NE

This is living

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN2tJQ2r0L8>

More like Jesus by Passion

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

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:

- Those worried about their jobs/businesses as a result of the latest Covid restrictions.
- Our Government and their advisers.
- All those around the world who are suffering as a result of Covid-19.

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

If you would normally give to our harvest food collections, please consider making a financial donation to the Foodbank this year 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