

Virtual Church News

Sunday 8 November

3rd Sunday Before Advent

Remembrance Sunday

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

Remembrance Sunday in Biddenham

An Act of Remembrance will be held at the War Memorial, but due to social distancing rules, only key people will be able to attend. Members of the public are asked not to attend.

The Act of Remembrance will be streamed live to the usual Zoom service that day.



Message from Rev Eric Lomax

A couple of years ago I was on a train coming back from Chester and a student was sat on the same table as me. She talked to me, telling me that she was a Muslim who was in her third year at University. I told her I was an Anglican priest and together we talked about faith. Her story of faith was powerful and moving, but then she asked me; 'Are you not afraid of God?'

I said that I was not, which she found strange; 'How can you not be afraid of a God who is so great?' she asked me.

I asked her if she feared God.

She said, 'yes, because he is terrifying!'

I have to say that this young woman's faith was much stronger than mine and I contemplated her fear of God for some time afterwards. The vastness and power of the creator of all things, whether we name him Allah, Yahweh, or simply God, is a terrifying concept. I remember being in Sicily around five years ago and walking around the crater on Mount Etna. It was a grey and smouldering giant. I could smell the sulphur and the sense of threat and power. A week after we left, the volcano had a minor temper tantrum, nearly burying some of the nearby villages. There were no casualties as far as I am aware.



Services in Church

There will be no services in our churches during November. We hope to resume our 9.30am Sunday services as follows:

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

A Reading for the Week

John 15:9-7

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit - fruit that will last - and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

Is this the kind of God we worship?

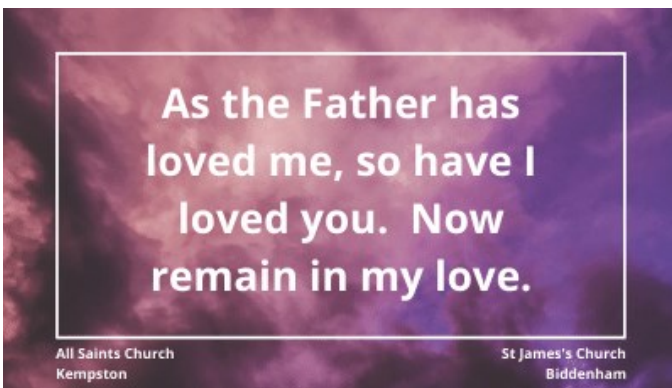
From the Old Testament, one would certainly think so, and there seems to be an emphasis on fear throughout the Bible, but let us look at this gentle discourse (part of a much larger discourse) in John's Gospel.

Here Jesus places the emphasis on relationship and love lies at the heart of that relationship. Jesus talks first about his relationship with his father. 'As the Father has loved me,' he said, 'so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.' *Continued on next page*

Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued

Anybody who has done any form of pastoral counselling, whether religious or secular, will know about the emotional damage that is caused by the destructive relationship between a dominant father and a child. The Father's (God's) relationship with his son (Jesus) is not like that. It is a bond of perfect love, an unbreakable relationship of deep understanding.

We also become children of that same heavenly father in relationship with Jesus Christ. In Galatians 3:26, the writer states; 'So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

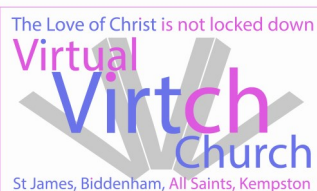


If this is the case, then the model of Jesus's relationship with the Father should be the model for our relationship with one another because we are all one in Christ. 'Love each other as I have loved you.' This is a radical model for how we should behave in relationship with one another because it refuses to operate on the principle of power and control, but rather on the principle of servanthood. Jesus puts it simply: This is how you love one another, 'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.'

This has been used as a reading for remembrance for as long as I remember because it so easily fits into the principles of sacrifice that were demonstrated by soldiers of freedom in times of war. Still, it goes far beyond this. It is the story of Christ's death on the cross.

Virtch

Zoom services are held at 11am on Sunday and 6pm on Wednesday. Simply go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.



It is our instinct to disbelieve, or simply to fear, the power of such a God rather like a child who is terrified of a fearful and dominant father. Because we are unable to reach out to him he reached out to us and his motivation was pure unconditional love. So Jesus laid down his life for us on the cross. He died for you because he loves you.

That then is the model for how we should love one another.

God bless

Eric

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

Shine a light of hope!



Christingle Celebration

4pm Christmas Eve (via Zoom)

Email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com, call/text 0778 6886 710 or message us on Social Media and we will deliver your Christingle to you.

Join us for our Christingle Celebration when we will make our Christingles and celebrate the light of Jesus together, or make them in your own time.

St James's Church, Biddenham
All Saints Church, Kempston
Raising funds for The Children's Society

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 from the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell.
- 1.15pm on BBC 1 - Songs of Praise from the Brecon Beacons for Remembrance Sunday.
- 3.00pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from New College, Oxford.

Wednesday 11 November:

- 3.30pm on BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong from Ely Cathedral.

Delivery of Parish Christmas Cards

Can you help?

St James's Church is hoping (subject to lockdown restrictions) to deliver its usual parish Christmas Cards in early December - but we need your help!

Could you deliver cards to the houses in your street/neighbouring streets?

If you are able to help, please text 0778 6886 710 or email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com.

Thank you



Christmas

with **St James's and All Saints Churches**

Sunday 20 December
4.00pm Nine Lessons and Carols

Christmas Eve
4.00pm Christingle
11.30pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day
10.30am Family Service

All services will be held via Zoom
To join, just go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039

Unfortunately we will not be able to hold our usual events and services in church this year

For the Children (& young at heart!)

This week, rather than thinking about the Bible reading, we are going to think about Remembrance Sunday. On the Sunday nearest to 11 November (the day when World War 1 ended) we hold our Remembrance Day services, either in Church or at our local War Memorial, when we remember all those who have died in wars. We usually hold a two minute silence at 11am during the service. This year our Remembrance Service will be held online. Do join it if you are able to.

Activities:

Think about why we remember those killed in wars. Why do wars still happen? Can it ever be right to go to war? Jesus was a peacemaker - can you think of anyone alive now who could be called a peacemaker?

Many people mark Remembrance Day with poppies. Why not make a poppy cross - draw and colour in a poppy flower, make a cross out of two lollipop sticks and stick the poppy flower onto it.

Can you make a poppy flower out of food? Try it with fruit (black grape with strawberry slices as petals) or vegetables (black olive and sliced tomato).

Song:

Let there be peace on earth

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

Prayer:

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth, from despair to hope, from fear to trust, from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our hearts, our world and our universe. Amen.

(resources from BRF/Messy Remembrance)

Hymns/Songs of the Week

Peace, Perfect Peace

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Dwa8oWu1nQ

O Lord, The Clouds are Gathering

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CRqpMaNbJg>

Be Still, My Soul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqgC1tqifV8>

Let There Be Peace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jR-wUErMFyA>

Please pray with me

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the father,
we thank you that you have reached out to us in love.
Help us to love one another in the just the same way,
by being servants and friends.
Amen.



Month of Prayer for the Nation

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York invite you to participate in a month of prayer as the second lockdown in England comes into force.

The Archbishop of York says "*At this challenging time when all of us are fearful and anxious, and when so many are suffering, [prayer] is the one thing we can all do... Let's pray together at this difficult time.*"

Daily prayer themes are as follows:

- Sundays: Family, friends and loved ones.
- Mondays: Schools, colleges, children and young people.
- Tuesdays: Elderly, isolated and vulnerable.
- Wednesdays: Businesses, the workplace and economic wellbeing.
- Thursdays: NHS and other key workers.
- Fridays: National and local Government.
- Saturdays: The grieving and those suffering with ill-health (physical and mental).

To find out more, go to [churchofengland.org/PrayerForTheNation](https://www.churchofengland.org/PrayerForTheNation)

ST JAMES'S CHURCH



Biddenham Tea Towels
Mugs/Coasters
Jotters

Contact Jane: 359014

Village Christmas Cards
Marmalade/Jam
Jelly/Chutney

Contact Sue: 342373

Christmas Handicrafts
Contact Trissa: 950612

Also on Sale Outside St James's Church
after Sunday Services (approx. 10.15am)

There will be no Christmas Bazaar this year

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

Prayer Group

Join our prayer group at 8pm on the 1st/3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Contact us for login details or if you 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.



Alternatively please consider making a financial donation. Further details can be found on their website: <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