

Virtual Church News

21 February 2021

1st Sunday of Lent

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 email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com or call Jacqui on 356993.



A Reading for the Week

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'

Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."'

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'

Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."'

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Bible Study Groups

If you are interested in joining a bible study group please contact John Lambert by email at john.c.lambert@gmail.com

Services in Church

There are currently no services in church at the moment due to the Covid restrictions. We will resume services in church when we consider it safe to do so. If you need support during this time, please contact Rev Eric Lomax (contact details on back page) or email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com.

Virtch (Online Church)

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

The Love of Christ is not locked down
Virtual
Virtch
Church
St James, Biddenham, All Saints, Kempston

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

Some years ago, I was a youth worker in Beckenham, Kent. I walked into Costa coffee and there was a young girl I knew called Vikki. She was sat with her parents and they did not look happy. They told me in front of her that things were not good, and that they were unhappy with Vikki because she had failed one of her A-levels.

I felt embarrassed for her; not because she had not fulfilled their expectations, but because their love for her appeared, at this time, to be so conditional. When we fail, when we get things wrong, when we mess up, actually what we really need is love.

In the 1970s there was an area of psychological research (Clance and Imes) which exposed a mental state referred to as Impostor Syndrome.

continued on next page

Message from Rev Eric Lomax *continued*

The research focused on a sample of 150 high achieving women and revealed that most of them suffered from a deep sense of inadequacy, that somehow they were frauds, and that one day they would be found out.

There is an element of that in all of us. I have never been sure that I could live up to the high expectations of what a vicar should be, because I have access to all the dark recesses of my own life. One day, I am sure, people will find me out.

If there is one individual who has absolutely no sense of being an imposter it is Jesus Christ. He too lived with the pressure of expectations from others. He had grown up with the awareness that he was the Messiah, the Holy one of God, but he also knew that it was the expectations of what a Messiah should be that was flawed. In our reading today we see how, in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted to fit in with those expectations.

When Moses took the people of Israel through the wilderness they were fed with bread from heaven, satisfying their physical needs. The expectation was that the Messiah could turn stones into bread, therefore dealing with our physical needs. Jesus resisted this temptation recognising that we had a much deeper hunger for love that he would satisfy.

From here in the wilderness, he could see the distant, shiny pinnacles of the Temple. The expectation that was that the Messiah would take his seat of supernatural power in the temple. Jesus chose instead to follow the way of the cross and to reach out to us, again in love.

Some of Israel's greatest victories were achieved in the Wilderness, on the plains of Esdraelon. The expectation was that the Messiah would repeat these victories with an army of angels at his side. Jesus resisted this because, to him, the Messiah was not to bully people with divine military power but with non-violence. He would not force people into his Kingdom, they would be drawn in by that love.

Please pray with me

Lord, we are so aware of the pressures that people around us place on us.
We are even aware of the sense of inadequacy that we feel.
We submit ourselves to your grace, and recognise that you love us absolutely and unconditionally.
Help us to reach out to others with that same love.
Amen.

Ultimately all these temptations were about adopting love for us rather than power. By doing this, Jesus was equally not loading expectations on our shoulders, but loving us unconditionally. In whatever ways we fail to fulfil society's expectations of us, he accepts us just the way we are. We really have no need to suffer a sense of inadequacy before him, because it is not what we have done for him that counts, but what he has done for us.

God bless,
Eric



#40for40

40 PENCE FOR 40 DAYS

Can you take part in our 40 for 40 challenge this Lent?

By giving up 40 pence a day for the 40 days of Lent you can raise enough to help support a local family in crisis this Easter.

Bedford.foodbank.org.uk



All you have to do is find an old jam jar, or similar container and start collecting!



seeded by the trussell trust

Registered Charity in England & Wales 1179538.

Climate Change: What can you do?

If that question resonates with you, have a look at an article TearFund have produced [here](#).



Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

If you don't have access to the internet, try tuning in to the following:

Sunday 21 February

- 8.00am Three Counties Radio - weekly service.
- 8.10am BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship.
- 1.15pm BBC 1 - Songs of Praise.
- 3.00pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong .

Wednesday 24 February

- 3.30pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

All Age Bible Reading

Mark 1, 9-15

Not long afterwards Jesus came from Nazareth in the province of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, he saw heaven opening and the Spirit coming down on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my own dear Son. I am pleased with you."

At once the Spirit made him go into the desert, where he stayed for forty days, being tempted by Satan. Wild animals were there also, but angels came and helped him.

After John had been put in prison, Jesus went to Galilee and preached the Good News from God. "The right time has come" he said, "and the Kingdom of God is near! Turn away from your sins and believe the Good News!"

Prayer for the Nation



In response to reaching the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from Covid-19, the Archbishops invite all to call on God in Prayer at 6pm each day based on the following themes:

- Sunday: Family, friends and loved ones.
Monday: Schools, colleges, children and young people.
Tuesday: Elderly, isolated and vulnerable.
Wednesday: Businesses, the workplace and economic wellbeing.
Thursday: NHS and other key workers.
Friday: National and local government.
Saturday: All who are grieving and all suffering with physical and mental ill-health.

For the Children (& young at heart!)

Today we will be exploring the story of the beginning of Jesus preparing for his ministry. You can find it in your Bible in Mark 1 v 9-15 (or see below). Jesus chose to live his life as an example for us to follow, his baptism was a public demonstration that the time had come to begin his ministry. Baptism is a symbol of new life, a fresh start and commitment to God. Jesus showed his commitment by being baptised and God the Father spoke to all those listening, confirming that Jesus was his son.

Jesus took time to prepare himself for his ministry. He knew that it would not be easy and that one day he would die on the cross. God's plan involved Jesus living as a human and choosing to be obedient and not sin. Jesus' forty days in the wilderness remind us of the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness then they disobeyed God and his temptation reminds us of the temptation of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Jesus faced temptation and challenges but he was obedient and faithful to God, he never sinned.

Activities

Yes/No Game: What is the hardest thing to say no to? What is the hardest thing to say yes to? Jesus said yes to God's plan, he was baptised and lived his life for God knowing that one day he would die on the cross. Jesus was tempted in the desert but he said no and made good choices. Play the yes and no game. Have a conversation without saying the words yes or no. The last person to say yes or no is the winner. It's trickier than it sounds!

Follow the Leader: Jesus lived his life to be an example for us to follow. Can you be a good leader and example for others? Take it in turns to be the leader, everybody else must follow you and do exactly what you do!

Song

Follow Me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyHla0hmPfg>

Prayer

Dear God, Thank you for the story of Jesus' baptism and time in the wilderness. Thank you for this reminder that Jesus was fully God and fully human, that he faced challenges and choices just like we do. Help us to make wise choices this week and to live in obedience to you. As we enter Lent help us to find new ways to draw closer to you, to serve and love others and to live for you. Amen

As we are talking about baptism this week, why not use water as a point of connection with God and take a moment to pray every time you wash your hands!

*Resources from Together at Home.
For more free resources visit tath.co.uk.*

Prayer Group

Join our prayer group at 8pm on the 1st/3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Everyone welcome.

Contact us for login details or if you have any prayer requests.



Suggested Music for this week

Lead us heavenly father lead us

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGsvbqErM2A>

The Kingdom of God is justice and joy

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

Thine be the Glory

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

The Blessing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtll3mNj5U>

#LIVE LENT



God's Story Our Story

The Church of England's Lent campaign. Six reflections for each week including a short bible passage, a brief exploration of the passage and a prayer. Download the free App, see the Church of England's social media or obtain a booklet from Church House Publishing for £1.99. If you would like a booklet but are unable to purchase one yourself, let us know and we will obtain one for you. Call Jacqui on 356993 or email stjameschurchbiddendenham@gmail.com

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

Spring Harvest Home 4-8 April 2021

Sign up now to join in with Spring Harvest Home and enjoy the teaching, worship etc of Spring Harvest from your own sofa. For information and details of how to purchase your subscription go to <https://springharvest.org/springharvesthome21>

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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Email: Rev.ejloxmax@gmail.com

Bedford Foodbank

Sadly we have decided we cannot currently continue to collect items for the Foodbank in the St



James's Church porch, as it is too much of a risk to those who then take the items on to the Foodbank.

At this time we would ask that you make donations at the supermarket or by way of a financial donation.

We would specifically ask you to consider supporting the Foodbank during Lent (see p2).

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