

Virtual Church News

28 February 2021

2nd 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

Mark 8:31-end

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"

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.



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



Re-opening our Churches

There are currently no services in church at the moment due to the Covid restrictions. We hope to gradually re-open our churches from Easter, starting with small services to bring the Christ Light into the Churches on Easter Day. After that we will have services in each Church on alternate Sundays at 9.30am. More details will be given nearer the time. If you need support in the meantime, please contact Rev Eric Lomax or email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com.

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

I was grateful to Sue Richards last week, talking about our need for repentance. She mentioned Tom Wright's commentary on Mark's Gospel, in his reference to Jesus going into the wilderness to share in our temptation as human beings. His temptation was different because he had the choice to build either a Kingdom of material power or a Kingdom of Love, founded on his willingness to go to the cross, and to suffer and die for us. That means; for you.

The Temple cult at the time was about raw power, while the faith of Jesus Christ was/is about God laying down himself for us. We, his followers, lay down ourselves for the world. At the heart of this is the message of the cross.

Paul writes; 'Jewish people demand signs, and the Greeks demand wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.' (1 Corinthians 1:22 -23) We must not, here lapse into anti-semitism. Paul is talking about the message of Christ's suffering which is at odds with the religious and social sensibilities of his time.

In our story today, this flawed understanding is embodied in Peter. Jesus had an absolute divinely appointed plan to bring us out of the lock-down which separated God from us, and that involved, according to Jesus; 'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected. and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.'

continued on next page

Message from Rev Eric Lomax *continued*

For a start, Peter had completely missed the promise of Jesus rising again, but to him, faith and suffering were simply not part of the equation. His voice echoed Christians who were the first to read these Gospel stories around AD 60. They were experiencing immense suffering for their faith, and for many there was the temptation to denounce their faith and go back to their safe, comfortable, old ways.

'You are thinking in human terms, and not as God thinks,' Jesus replied to Peter. You want signs, you want power and wisdom, you want the tangible, feel good factors of faith, but you do not want to pay the cost of God's redemption and healing. Actually, redemption requires love, and love requires the suffering of the cross.

Over the last twelve months we have seen so much sacrifice from people who have enabled us to live. We know about the NHS, the fire service, the ambulance service, and the police. My heart was drawn to a girl of around seventeen or eighteen, who sat behind a till in Tesco, during the first lock down, with a queue of frustrated, angry customers queuing up to buy what they wanted at the expense of everybody else. Yes, I was part of that queue. She had no mask, but just a water bottle, and it was she who had the responsibility of telling people that they did not really need nineteen rolls of toilet paper, or four bags of dried pasta.

I am often saddened by the focus of our churches in the past. In many ways they have become clubs for the insiders rather than Christ-like servants of humanity, reaching out with sacrifice. We have become obsessed with the material aspects of faith, our buildings, our liturgies and our structures have become our precious possessions, and the means of our power. They are not, in themselves, bad, but they can so easily become idols.

What if we actually did genuinely repent of our religious and secular materialism? What if we laid down our sacred cows, the trimmings of religion, and those things that lie between ourselves, God, and our neighbours? Not only this, but what if we focused less on the feel good factors of religion, and actually laid ourselves at the feet of Christ as servants of him and the world?

Jesus asked a similar question when he said; 'What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?' You must instead, he said, 'Take up your cross and follow me.'

God bless,
Eric



Please pray with me

Dear Christ

We thank you that you laid down your life for us.

As your followers,

help us to lay down our lives for you.

Amen.



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.

Further details can be found on their website: <https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk/>

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>



#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](https://bedford.foodbank.org.uk)



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



Registered Charity in England & Wales 1179538.

Easter with All Saints Church

Sunday 28 March

11am Palm Sunday service

Monday 29 March

9pm Complin with reflection

Tuesday 30 March

9pm Complin with reflection

Wednesday 31 March

6pm Holy Communion

9pm Complin with reflection

Thursday 1 April

11am Maundy Thursday service

7pm Maundy Thursday service

Friday 2 April (Good Friday)

12noon Stations of the Cross

10am – 3pm Church open



Sunday 4 April (Easter Day)

8.00am Christ Light carried into Church*

9am – 12noon Church open

11am Easter Day Celebration

*All services except those marked * will be held on Zoom. Use Login ID 998 074 6039. Church open for private prayer only.*

Alleluia! He is Risen!

Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

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

Sunday 28 February

- 8.00am Three Counties Radio - weekly service.
- 8.10am BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship.
- 11.15am BBC 1 - Sunday Worship.
- 1.15pm BBC 2 - Songs of Praise.
- 3.00pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong .

Wednesday 3 March

- 3.30pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Ringling for the funeral of Captain Sir Tom Moore

In response to a request from the Bishop of Bedford to all Bedfordshire churches, a bell at Kempston will be tolled 100 times on Saturday 27 February at 12 noon to mark the life of Captain Tom on the day of his funeral.

For the Children (& young at heart!)

Today we are looking at the same bible reading as the adults and this can be found on the front page (or you can read it from your own bible if you have one). This is the story of Jesus predicting his own death. Jesus knew that what he was saying to his followers was true, that his time on earth and his death on the cross were all part of God's plan, but that didn't mean it was easy for him. We heard before how he was tempted in the wilderness, here Peter was encouraging the same thing. But Jesus knew that God was calling him to remain faithful and to walk the path that God had prepared for him, even though it led to his death on a cross. Ask your parents/carers if they can think of a time when they gave something up or chose a difficult path because of their faith?

Activity

Spend some time being creative and making or decorating a cross shape. Look around you for crosses in your home/outside. We would love to see your photos!

Song

Wonderful Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qZWK8ZE2Pk>

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the story of Jesus predicting his own death which reminds us that everything Jesus did on earth was part of your big plan. Help us to remember that we are part of your big plan too and to choose each day to follow you and live for you. Show us the areas in our hearts and lives where you want to see change. Help us to grow more like you and to draw closer to you. Amen.

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

I the Lord of sea and sky

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgLwH5RdtPk&t=49s>

O Jesus I have promised

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trs17OEHe7E>

Mighty Cross

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI_SQrRUOt0

#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

Mothering Sunday with All Saints Church & St James's Church

We would like to offer children a craft pack to make a Mothers' Day card and a posy of paper flowers.

Request a pack (see below) and join us at the 11am service on Mothering Sunday when we will have a group craft session to make these items.



To join the service just log in to Zoom with meeting ID 998 074 6039.

To request a craft pack or for further details, email stjameschurchbiddendenham@gmail.com or call/text Jacqui on 0778 6886 710.

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

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