

## Virtual Church News

21 March 2021

5th 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](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com) or call Jacqui on 356993.

### Re-opening our Churches

There are currently no services in church at the moment due to the Covid restrictions. We plan 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 starting with All Saints Church on Sunday 11 April and then St James's Church on Sunday 18 April. If you need support in the meantime, please contact Rev Eric Lomax or email [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com).

### A Reading for the Week

**Matthew 17.14-21**

*Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy*

When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

"You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.

Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

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



### Message from Rev Eric Lomax

I cannot help feeling that Mental illness has become one of the most prolific issues in our society. When I was much younger, one of the phrases I often heard was 'It is all in the mind, it is not real.' Now, thankfully, we are becoming more aware that mental illness is not just a superficial factor that people need to 'get over,' rather, potentially, it can kill, it breaks relationships, it destroys families, and it can drive any one of us into addiction or dysfunction. Mental illness, at its worse is a crippling disability that prevents people from living, and diminishes their self worth.

In the Bible, there is no concept of mental illness, but we do often hear about demon possession. Here is a boy who has lost control of himself. He suffers immensely, we are told, with random seizures, and walks into fires or a pit. This boy, in his day would have been a lost cause. People would not have allowed him into their home, because if he had a demon in him, that to them was as transferable as Covid; then the last thing they would want in their home was a demon. We read of other demon possessed people in the Bible, and we know even that one of them was living amongst the gravestones, isolated, and separate from the community (Mark 14).

*continued on next page*

### 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 *continued*

The disciples, in dealing with this boy, had been quite useless, and this is mentioned in an almost throw-away comment, almost like a direct complaint about their performance; 'I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him.'

Jesus, we know, went to the boy and healed him, as simply as that.

I think about how we should place ourselves in that narrative. These last few weeks have been non-stop. It strikes me that people have a great deal of time on their hands, and almost every moment I have stopped, day or evening, somebody has phoned, or an email or a message has pinged into one of my devices. The trouble is, that the one thing guaranteed to impact on our performance as human beings is having no head-space and no freedom of thought, creativity or ideas. When we are tired we send the wrong email to the wrong person, we bump our car because we are not concentrating, we raise our voices at the person who needs gentleness instead, we fail to see the sun behind the clouds, and even the rainbows appear drab and grey. Before us we cannot see the road ahead, but only the mountain that we have created. We find ourselves somewhere on the spectrum of mental illness, and we become actually devoid of life.

The next stage is we find ourselves isolated, because those around us have enough dealing with their own issues, without having to cope with ours. We are closer to that poor boy than we would really like to think.

Jesus comes into our story at this point. The Lord of love reaches into the heart of that boy with everything he needed at that moment, to give him healing and wholeness. Indeed, Jesus rebuked the disciples for their uselessness. It seems that their religious platitudes had served no purpose at all, but he points out that, as much as anything else, they needed to look past the boy's utter hopelessness, and see the Lord's power to mend the irreparable. Jesus said 'Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.'

Put yourself again in the place of this boy. Whatever your needs, whatever you feel, when you have the capacity to see only the immovable mountain that you have constructed, recognise how you are loved by God, and all he asks is that you trust in him just a little, because he has the power to save.

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](http://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.

# QUIZ

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April 7:30 to 9 p.m.**

**The Friends of St James, Biddenham**



**Our second online Zoom quiz with a Spring flavour! Suitable for all the family.**

Free entry – but donations welcome to The Friends of St James at GoFundMe: [www.gofundme.com/stjamespringquiz](http://www.gofundme.com/stjamespringquiz)

To register and for participation details, email John Barkas at: [stjamesquiz@mail.com](mailto:stjamesquiz@mail.com) (alternatively phone Peter Leverkus on 01234 353662)

The FOSJ is a registered charity raising funds for the fabric of St James' Church and barn

## All Age Reading

### John 12. 20-33

There were some Greek people, too, who came to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover Feast. They went to Philip. (Philip was from Bethsaida, in Galilee.) They said, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." Philip told Andrew. Then Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

Jesus said to them, "The time has come for the Son of Man to receive his glory. I tell you the truth. A grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die. Then it makes many seeds. But if it never dies, it remains only a single seed. The person who loves his life will give up true life. But the person who hates his life in this world will keep true life forever. Whoever serves me must follow me. Then my servant will be with me everywhere I am. My Father will honor anyone who serves me.

"Now I am very troubled. What should I say? Should I say, 'Father, save me from this time'? No, I came to this time so that I could suffer. Father, bring glory to your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have brought glory to it, and I will do it again."

The crowd standing there heard the voice. They said it was thunder.

But others said, "An angel has spoken to him."

Jesus said, "That voice was for you, not for me. Now is the time for the world to be judged. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown down. I will be lifted up from the earth. And when this happens, I will draw all people toward me." Jesus said this to show how he would die.

## St James's Church Easter Egg Hunt

### Be an Easter Egg Host!

Do you live in Biddenham/ Great Denham/St Mary's or St Andrews? Could you create a large (A4) size Easter egg picture and clearly display it in a window over the Easter weekend? If the answer is yes, then we would love you to take part as an Egg Host!

Please complete the Egg Host Form\* and email it to [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com) no later than Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March. We will then add your egg to the Easter Egg Hunt list.

Decorate your egg however you would like to and clearly display it along with a letter that we will give to you nearer the time.

### Take part in the Hunt

Over the Easter weekend we will publicise a list of all addresses displaying Easter Eggs.

Walk/cycle/scoot around the parish hunting for the eggs and collecting the letters.

When you have collected all the letters, rearrange them to give a word or message associated with Easter.



\* Available on our Social Media pages or by emailing us.

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

This week we are looking at a different Bible story to the adults. You can find this story in your Bible in the book of John, chapter 12, verses 20 to 33. This is a story where Jesus speaks about his own death. Jesus often used pictures to explain things to his followers and those he was teaching. Many of those listening were farmers or fishermen and so the pictures that Jesus used often reflected this. Most seeds need to fall from the plant and be buried in the ground in order to produce new plants. Jesus knew that the time was coming when he would die and be buried. He also knew that this sacrifice would make a way for many people to discover God's love and return to relationship with him.

### Activities

Jesus spoke about the wheat seeds. Why not go for a walk with your family/carers and see if you can find any seeds around you? You could also try planting some seeds from the fruit or vegetables you eat during the week e.g. tomatoes?

### Song

Faith as small as a mustard seed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPylxzfN-Oo>

### Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the story of Jesus speaking about his death which reminds us that Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection were all part of your big plan for us. Thank you, Jesus that you were willing to suffer death on the cross so that many could come to know you and receive the promise of eternal life. Help us to be seed planters, sharing your love and story with those around us. Amen.

*Resources from Together at Home.*

*For more free resources visit [tath.co.uk](http://tath.co.uk).*

## Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

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

Sunday 14 March

• 8.00am Three Counties Radio - weekly service.

• 8.10am BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship.

• 11.30am BBC 1 - Sunday Worship.

• 1.15pm BBC 2 - Songs of Praise.

• 3.00pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong .

Wednesday 17 March

• 3.30pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

## Volunteer Vacancy

We are looking for a new Barn Bookings Officer. This is an unpaid voluntary role. If you would be interested in finding out more, please contact Jacqui on 0778 6886 710.

## 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

Mighty to save

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AW2LEU5v8VA>

Lead us, Heavenly Father, Lead us

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SE1sISZFkja&t=9s>

In Christ alone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWiFYJMGas0>

You Say (by Lauren Daigle)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZvKJl1kK8g>



**#LIVE LENT** 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

## 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.



## Let us pray...

God our Father,  
thank you for loving us.  
These times seem impossible to us,  
and it is so hard seeing the path of hope before us.  
Give us faith to move that mountain.  
Clear a path for us,  
and give us healing and hope.  
In Jesus name,  
Amen



## Easter with All Saints & St James's Churches

### 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

Please use our outdoor cross at St James's Church for prayer and reflection.

On Easter Day we will be decorating the cross with flowers. Please feel free to visit the cross during the day, bring some flowers to place on it, and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

**Alleluia! He is Risen!**



### 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 All Saints Church\*  
8.45am Christ Light carried into St James's 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.*

## Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

*Please note that we have unfortunately had to cancel the 11am Maundy Thursday service. If you would like to watch a service at this time, a service from St Albans Cathedral will be streamed via Youtube. For further details head to <https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/event/maundy-thursday>*

## 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