

## Virtual Church News

7 March 2021

3rd 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.

### A Reading for the Week

**John 2:13-20**

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com).

### Message from Rev Eric Lomax

What was Jesus' problem? In our story today, Jesus appears to have a violent temper tantrum in the Jerusalem Temple, but what was he so angry about?

Pilgrims from all over Israel would come to this Holy place to meet with God. It was the place where everything, where wealth and status were levelled before the Great God. There should have been nobody who was better than another, all were the same before God.

This, in the end, was far from the reality. From the moment they arrived, they were exploited so that they could meet with God. To come close to God, there had to be a sacrifice, and for this, the weak, the poor and the helpless were hit harder than the rich.

To buy a dove for food would cost a whole day's wages, but to purchase one fit for sacrifice, perfect and unblemished, would cost half a week's wages. The problem was, that to get close to God, that was required.

The minute you entered the Temple you were required to pay the Temple tax. For this you would need to pay two day's wages. The trouble is, when you turned up, even that was not good enough. The Temple authorities would not accept your money because it had the emperor's head on it. The Jewish law forbade images in the Temple, so these coins were forbidden in the Temple.

The pilgrims would have to spend their two days' wages on Temple coins, but to buy their two days' worth would cost them another day's wages.

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## Message from Rev Eric Lomax *continued*

It was pure exploitation of the pilgrims. These people longed to come close to the living God, but in order for them to do that they had to pay for the privilege. Of course the poor were hit much harder than the rich. Is that really what God is like?

Of course not, and that is what made Jesus so angry. Jesus, the son of the living God, brought the message that the love of God is a free gift, and the poor are as welcome as the rich.

The Jewish people believed that they were the chosen people of God. They believed that God had promised to Abraham, their founding Father, that through them all the families of the earth would be blessed. So Gentiles (non-Jews) from all the families of the earth would come from all over the Greco-Roman world to meet this great God in the Temple. The trouble was that they were forbidden from fully entering the Temple by a people who saw themselves as the chosen people. These Pilgrims could only come to the outer courts of the Temple, the court of the Gentiles. Instead of finding hospitality and prayer, they found these exploitative money changers and con-men. Instead of peace, they found a busy market.

This made Jesus angry because he wanted to welcome all into the presence of God. Only some were the chosen for the religion of Judaism, but everybody was chosen to be the recipient of God's love and peace.

So Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, came to the centre of the Jewish Religion, not to affirm the religious practices of Israel, but to turn that religion upside down. This is what he did. He turned over the tables of the money changers and, taking a whip of chords, he sent the market traders packing.

It seems like anger, but it was the ultimate act of love. He was throwing open the gates to God's presence to everybody; Jews and Gentiles, outsiders and insiders.

He was expelling those who demanded money and giving free entry to the presence of God. It no longer mattered if you were poor or rich, God placed everybody on the same level. It was now free to come into the presence of God.

Two thousand years ago, this was the case, and it is still the case now. God is not exclusive but loves and welcomes everybody because of what Jesus did. It does not depend on your wealth, your background, the ways you have succeeded, the ways you have failed. God loves you completely and unconditionally. You are welcome into his Kingdom. You are loved.

God bless,

Eric

### Please pray with me

Dear God

You love us more than we can know.

Help us to accept that love,

and as you welcome us,

help us to welcome

and show love to others.

In Jesus' name.

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 & 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.*

# Get Involved in the 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 the reading from John that you can find on the front page (or read it from your own bible). This is the story of Jesus clearing the temple.

It was usual for people to bring a sacrifice when they visited the temple, just like Jesus' parents brought an offering when they presented him there as a baby. Jesus was angry because the people in the temple were charging extra high prices to the people visiting the temple. People were making money from those who had come to the temple to worship God. Can you think of anything in the world today which you feel is wrong and which makes you feel angry?

### Activity

Play a board game together with your family or carers. Make sure it is one that you enjoy and that everyone can understand and join in with. Before you start, think about what makes the game fair and makes sure that everyone has an equal chance of winning. Encourage everyone to celebrate the winner!

### Song

One Way

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G689PIEXiXk>

### Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the story of Jesus clearing the temple. Thank you God that you care about justice. Help us to stand up for what is right and speak out when we see things that are not fair. Show us the areas where we need to stand up for fairness and justice in our world today. Help us to make our churches places of justice and righteousness. 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 7 March

• 8.00am Three Counties Radio - weekly service.

• 8.10am BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship.

• 11.30am BBC 1 - Sunday Worship.

• 1.15pm BBC 1 - Songs of Praise.

• 3.00pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong .

Wednesday 10 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

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nP0uEDHejEM>

All Heaven declares

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_Di3qmo\\_xg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_Di3qmo_xg)

Cornerstone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izrk-erhDdk>

# #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 [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@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 & St James's Churches

### A Floral Celebration at St James's Church

Over the Mothering Sunday weekend our main Churchyard gates at St James's Church will be adorned with flowers.

Do make sure you walk past on your daily exercise!



To request a craft pack or for further details, please email [stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com](mailto:stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com) or call/text Jacqui on 0778 6886 710.



### Children's Craft Packs

We would like to offer the children within our parishes 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.

## Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452

Mob: 07805 879537

Email: [Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com](mailto: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](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