

All Saints Church, Kempston
St James's Church, Biddenham

Virtual Church News

30 May 2021

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

This Week's Services

- Sunday 9.30am: Service at St James, Biddenham
- Sunday 11.00am: Virtch (Zoom)
- Monday 9.00am: Morning Prayers (Zoom)
- Wednesday 6.00pm: Virtch (Zoom)

Services in Church

This Sunday we warmly welcome you back to St James's Church with a service at 9.30am. There is no need to book. Please remember your face covering (unless you are exempt from wearing one).

We look forward to seeing you in person!

Message from Revd Eric Lomax

Many would have seen the very emotive series on TV this week in which a team of researchers headed by Davina McCall, seek to reunite adults, who were abandoned as babies, with their birth parents.

Many of the stories are deeply moving and from the accounts of the foundlings we gather deep and tragic stories of lost childhoods, pasts that can never be truly mended except by a connection with somebody who could answer the question 'why?'

Yesterday I found myself pulled into the story of a beautiful young woman from Liverpool who so desperately wanted to find her birth mother. DNA technology had only been able to connect her with her birth father who lived less than ten miles away. They were kind to each other and he was clearly proud to welcome her into the fold, but there was a sadness that he was confronted with the true emotional cost of his carelessness as a young man and his apparent failure to maintain relationships during his 57 years. The girl's presence in his life clearly transformed him, but her guarded expressions hid decades of pain and resisted the possibility of further rejection.

Continued on next page...

A Reading for the Week

John 3: 1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

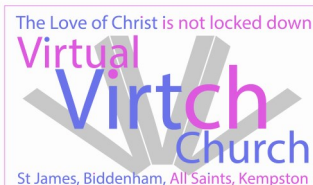
'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Virtch

Zoom services are held at 11am on Sunday, 9am on Monday and 6pm on Wednesday. Simply go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.



Message from Revd Eric Lomax continued

We need to belong, we need to be loved, and that is a deep hunger in all of us, especially when all the evidence reveals otherwise.

It is Trinity Sunday, and the habit of ministers is always to try and explain the mechanism of the Trinity; One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a bit like an excerpt from the Haynes Manual of God, or a summary of two thousand years of Theological research. Certainly, the minute that we walk into churches, we get the sense that some of the most vocal Christians in there seem to fully understand God and the mechanics of how he works. Ephesians 3:18 reads; 'and I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.' Clearly his love alone is so much deeper than the mere pages of our Bible. Trust me, that in your journey of faith you are not redeemed by your formulaic understanding of the Trinity, but purely by your acceptance of this oceanlike love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. All we need to know in that respect is that God himself meets us in three separate ways; The Father who loves us, the son who embraces us, and the Spirit who fills us. Not one of these is any less than God himself.

The reading for this week is from John's Gospel chapter 3. It tells of a man called Nicodemus who came to see Jesus by night. The night and the shadows are a common theme in the fourth Gospel, culturally not difficult for us to understand. 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it,' it says in John chapter 1.

The reading gives us all those three elements of God's trinitarian Grace. Jesus responds to Nicodemus in the darkness of his life. It is important to say that whenever we face darkness, sorrow, pain, despair, we will encounter the Jesus who suffered alongside us on the cross. We will find him in the darkness.

Secondly it talks about Nicodemus being born of the Spirit. The reading uses the term wind (the wind goes where it wants to, and you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is for people who are guided by the Spirit (verse 8)). Wind is a lovely illustration because Wind is the name given to the Spirit of God in the Old Testament, The Hebrew word is Ruach (Genesis 1:2).

If you see it like being driven by the sails of a ship. God will be our guide, our driving force, and our momentum.

Nicodemus was a deeply religious man who believed that he was a son of Israel, a member of the family of God's chosen people. He clearly wanted to ask Jesus something but he only got as far as saying that clearly Jesus came from God. Jesus cut him off by saying fundamentally, that we all must come from God, we must be 'born from above.'

This was revolutionary to Nicodemus. He had not realised that in effect, he was a spiritual foundling or an orphan. Jesus said in John 14:18. 'I will not leave you as orphans.' The one way that Nicodemus, and we can flourish is by recognising that our true Father is God himself. If we explore our Spiritual DNA, we will discover that the Spirit in us comes from him, that Jesus does indeed come from God, and that our birth parent is the Father of all creation. We are loved, cherished and redeemed by him.

God Bless
Eric

Prayer/Bible Study Groups

Join our prayer group at 8pm on the 1st/3rd Thursdays of the month via Zoom. Everyone welcome. We also have Bible study groups which are open to everyone.

Contact John Lambert for further details, or with any prayer requests.

John.c.lambert@gmail.com



Let us pray...

Holy God,
faithful and unchanging:
enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth,
and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love,
that we may truly worship you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen



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Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

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

Sunday 30 May

- 8.00am Three Counties Radio - weekly service.
- 8.10am BBC Radio 4 - Sunday Worship.
- 10.00am BBC 1 - Sunday Morning Stories
- 1.15pm BBC 1 - Songs of Praise.
- 3.00pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Wednesday 2 June

- 3.30pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Marmalade/Chutney Sale!

Sue Squire will be selling home-made marmalade and chutney after the 9.30am alternate Sunday services at St James's in aid of the St James's flower fund. If you would like some, make sure you remember to bring some cash!



Suggested Music for this week

Hymn to the Trinity (Tchaikovsky)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-n42dr-NA1g>

10,000 Reasons (Matt Redman)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE_IRI0E

May the mind of Christ my Saviour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE5fOXSymBc>

Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord, God Almighty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmUOnZLv4og>

Bedford Foodbank

Items currently needed: UHT MILK, Cup-a-Soup, Jumbo Hotdogs, Tinned Tuna, Tinned Fruit, Squash, Ham (Small Tins), Jam, Coffee, Shampoo, Washing-Up Liquid, Anti-Bac Spray, Shower Gel

Please continue to support this valuable charity and help them prevent hunger in our community, either with donations of food or financially.



Covid-19 Support Networks

If you need support with shopping, loneliness or anything else at this time please do get in touch!

Biddenham: Ring 01234 815393 (daytime only) or email help@biddenham.org.uk with your name/phone number/address.

Kempston: Contact Rev Eric Lomax (328452), Alison/Brenda Walker (851597) or Alan/Anita Lowe (857212).

The All Age Bit!

This week we are looking at the same reading as the adults. You can find this reading on the front page, or alternatively if you have a children's Bible you may wish to read it from there.

Nicodemus was an experienced teacher but even he struggled with what Jesus was saying. When we are first born we have a clean slate, our whole lives ahead of us with so much we can do. It does not take long to fill our lives with the things that we want to begin to plan our days, our weeks and futures. Each day we make choices and fill our lives with all the things that we want to do.

When we are born again, it is a brand new start, we choose to live for God instead. We follow Jesus' example offering our lives to Father God and inviting the Holy Spirit to be our guide.

This Sunday is Trinity Sunday. The concept of the Holy Trinity can be a confusing one - how can God be three and one at the same time? Why not use yourself as an example for your family. Children might know an adult in the family as 'mum' or 'dad' but to a work colleague the adult will be known by the name or by a title. To other family members they will be known as something else e.g. brother/uncle etc. They can also be described by what they are like. Think of words to describe a member of your family or a friend. Then think of how you would describe what God is like.

Activities

Wind race - Jesus described the Holy Spirit like a wind which you can hear but not see. Have your own wind race. Make balls from crumpled up paper and choose a table or surface to use as a course. You could even set up an obstacle course using household objects. Racers should take turns to blow the paper balls along the table or round the course and see who can do it the fastest.

The Holy Trinity - go around your house and garden and look for things that come in threes or have three sides. How many can you find?

Song

Trinity Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnUVJLJ6Kas>

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the story of Nicodemus who wanted to learn more about you. Help us to seek to know you more and to ask questions which help us to learn. This Trinity Sunday help us to come to know all of who you are. Help us to connect with you as your loving parent, our Saviour and our helper guide. Give us wisdom to share what we know about you with others and to answer their questions just like Jesus did. Amen.

Resources from Together at Home. www.tath.co.uk.