

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

## Virtual Church News

6 June 2021

1st Sunday after Trinity



### A Reading for the Week

#### Mark 3.31-35

Then Jesus' mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.' And he replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'

Families are very complex in the modern world. I live in relatively common family structure called a reconstituted family. Two of the children I raised are biological children and three come only from my wife's side. I am lucky. Our family relationships are good. The children (actually they are adults now) are content in each other's company, and both my wife and I permanently have the welfare of all of them on our radar.

We know this is not always the case, and even the ideal nuclear families can be founded on profoundly unhappy relationships. It was heart breaking the other day talking to the head teacher of a secondary school, who informed me that as a consequence of lockdown, the incidents of self harm and domestic abuse have doubled in his school. For many people, the family is a painful place to be, marriages can be abusive, parents (blood or otherwise) can be bullies, and homelife can be a prison. Blood can indeed be so thick that for spouses, partners and children, negotiating family life can be like wading through treacle.

Christians will sometimes talk about it being too easy to leave a marriage, but the truth is that in the complexities of our world, where good and bad decisions are seldom absolute, those who follow Christ should never be supporters of violence and abuse.

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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.

### This Week's Services

- Sunday 9.30am: Service at All Saints, Kempston
- 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 All Saints 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

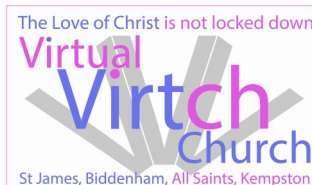
You need never be alone.

'Blood is thicker than water,' was a phrase often used by my dad, and implies that the family relationships are much more powerful and significant than friendships. I do think that this kind of mindset is particularly common in the North of England. My father raised me in Merseyside which is the same place that the writer Willy Russell came from. In 1986 he wrote a very famous play called 'Blood Brothers,' which was about two sons separated at birth. One of the boys was brought up in a very wealthy family; another was raised in an extremely poor family. Of course, their upbringing impacted on the outcome of both of their lives, though when they were united because they fell in love with the same girl, the story reached a tragic conclusion.

We had a discussion recently about whether we should name our inclusive services either 'Family Services' or 'All Age Worship.' The problem is that the word family is, for many people, very emotive. In churches we make the assumption that the nuclear family is somehow the Godly ideal; 'Mum, dad, two children called Poppy and Sam, and a dog called Rusty.' The reality is that we have, perhaps, been sleeping too long.

### 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

In our Gospel reading today, Jesus appears to completely reject his blood in favour of those who follow him and serve. We know that his family was complex, because we know the story of Mary and Joseph. We know that both his parents (if Joseph could actually be called a father!) were good people who responded obediently to the call of God. We have no idea what happened to Joseph, but we do know that Jesus had brothers (probably lots of them) and there was no mention of any sisters.

Another thing about Jesus' family that I almost forgot to mention, was that they were a Jewish family. We know he was not a proselyte (somebody who opted to be a Jew), but a Jew by birth. We only have to read his genealogy at the start of Luke and Matthew's Gospels. To the Jew, the family was essential. They were, by descent part of God's elect people, chosen and appointed by God. If Jesus were to reject that heritage, surely that would mean that he was rejecting his Jewish descendency, and his place amongst God's chosen people.

Mark's Gospel deliberately avoided using a Jewish genealogy at the start of his Gospel because his Gospel was 'good news' to those who were cut off from God (Mark 1:1). Mark does much to explain Jewish customs and his Gospel focusses on the Gentile communities, the outsider, those who are not of Jewish descent. Ordinary people, outside God's chosen Israel are called to have faith in him, and to receive salvation by God's grace and love to the outsider, to the fatherless, to those who have no family.

It is not that Jesus rejects his family. Of course he loved them, as he loved (and still loves) the Jewish people (Romans 11). It is just that he extends his family to us, whom he calls to respond to his love. There is now a new, extended family, not descended by blood, but adopted through grace and love. We call this the church, the new people of God. We are united by living water, the Spirit of God (John 4:14), who gives life and power to his people. Now, therefore, water is well and truly thicker than blood. The Church is God's family. It is the family of Jesus Christ, united by the Spirit, and you are welcome to join us. There is no need to be alone.

God Bless

Eric

## 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](mailto:help@biddenham.org.uk) with your name/phone number/address.

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

## Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

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

### Sunday 6 June

- 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 9 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!



## 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.



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



## Let us pray...

Lord Jesus Christ,  
thank you for meeting us in our brokenness and loneliness.

Thank you for welcoming us into your family,  
as adopted children of our heavenly father.

Thank you that because of your love  
we are never alone.

Amen.



## Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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## All Age Reading

### 1 Samuel 8 v 4-20

So all the elders came together and met Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "You're old, and your sons don't live as you do. Give us a king to rule over us like all the other nations."

When the elders said that, Samuel was not pleased. He prayed to the Lord. The Lord told Samuel, "Listen to whatever the people say to you. They have not rejected you. They have rejected me from being their king. They are doing as they have always done. When I took them out of Egypt, they left me. They served other gods. They are doing the same to you. Now listen to the people. But give them a warning. Tell them what the king who rules over them will do."

Samuel answered those who had asked him for a king. He told them all the words of the Lord. Samuel said, "If you have a king ruling over you, this is what he will do: He will take your sons. He will make them serve with his chariots and his horses. They will run in front of the king's chariot. The king will make some of your sons commanders over 1,000 men or over 50 men. He will make some of your other sons plow his ground and reap his harvest. He will take others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. This king will take your daughters. Some of your daughters will make perfume. Others will cook and bake for him. He will take your best fields, vineyards and olive groves. He will give them to his servants. He will take one-tenth of your grain and grapes and give it to his officers and servants. He will take your men servants and girl servants. He will take your best cattle and your donkeys. He will use them all for his own work. He will take one-tenth of your flocks. And you yourselves will become his slaves. When that time comes, you will cry out because of the king you chose. The Lord will not answer you then."

But the people would not listen to Samuel. They said, "No! We want a king to rule over us. Then we will be the same as all the other nations. Our king will judge us. He will go with us and fight our battles."

## Suggested Music for this week

I love you Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYV0ce3ybEA>

Praise to the holiest in the height

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVP6nQj1a\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVP6nQj1a_c)

How can it be (Lauren Daigle)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Rmstl47Q0M>

Teach me thy way, O Lord

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

Only a Holy God

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jxn\\_fu6rdCU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jxn_fu6rdCU)

## The All Age Bit!

This week we will be exploring together the story of the Israelites asking God for a King. You can find it on the left, or read it in your own Bible if you prefer.

Why do you think the people asked for a King in the story? There were two reasons. Firstly they didn't believe that Samuel's sons would make good leaders, and secondly they saw that the other nations had Kings in charge of them. They wanted to be like the other nations rather than standing out and being different and living God's way. When they asked for a King they were rejecting God's plan for how he wanted their lives to be. God knew that no human King would ever be as good a leader as Him, but He honoured the Israelites' request. Can you think of any other Kings in the Bible? Do you think they were good leaders or not?

### Activities

**Follow the leader:** Play a game of follow the leader, taking it in turns to be the leader and have everyone else copy you in various actions, silly ways of walking or dancing. Think about what makes a good leader - can you make sure that everyone is able to keep up with you?

**Musical Crowns:** God's people wanted a King. They didn't want to be led by Samuel's sons. Play a game of musical crowns. Make a crown out of cardboard (or just use a hat you already have at home). Put on some music and, for as long as the music is playing, dance around passing the crown or a hat between you. When the music stops, the person holding the crown or hat is the King or Queen for the next round and controls the music.

**Word changer:** Change one letter at a time to turn the word 'rule' into the word 'lead'.

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### Song

Jesus is the King

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z56AWDpHzCE>

### Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the story of the Israelites asking God for a King. Thank you that even though we make mistakes you can still use us as leaders in the world. Help us to listen to you and be guided by you, recognising you as the King of Kings! We pray for all those who are leaders in our schools, workplaces, churches, nation and world. Would you be with them and help them to live for you and serve you this week. Amen.

Resources from Together at Home. [www.tath.co.uk](http://www.tath.co.uk).