

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

Virtual Church News



1 August 2021

9th Sunday after Trinity

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 call Jacqui on 0778 6886 710 or email her at stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

A Note on the Covid Relaxations

Following the relaxation of the Covid laws, you are no longer required by law to wear a face covering when attending the 9.30am services. It is also no longer a legal requirement that we hold your details for the purposes of Track & Trace. However, the Church of England is urging caution on relaxing these requirements. We would therefore request that you consider continuing to wear a face covering and providing your details when attending services. We would also ask you to maintain a sensible distance from other attendees. Please help us to keep all members of our church family safe and well. Thank you.

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

I am no fool. I know that God does not seem to paint neon signs in the sky, or strike people down with lightning. Frankly I am rather glad, because there are probably a number of times I have deserved that. No, I am afraid I am intelligent enough to know that lightning is a natural process to do with electrical discharge in the clouds, though I have absolutely no idea how it happens. Perhaps google would provide the answer to me. As for rainbows, I know a little bit more about this. If you mix different coloured paints, and keep mixing them, you would end up with a muddy sort of brown colour. It would then be virtually impossible to separate those colours out again. Light is, of course different. It was Isaac Newton who first discovered that white light was composed of lots of different colours and, by shining a bright light through a prism, he was able to separate those component colours onto a white sheet of paper. A rainbow is effectively the same process. After a rainstorm, the bright sun shines through the moisture in the atmosphere and the complete spectrum of light can be seen as a bow of colour in the sky. Always a beautiful, and strangely reassuring thing to see.

Continued on next page...



This Week's Services

- Sunday 9.30am: Service at All Saints, Kempston
- Sunday 11.00am: Virtch (Zoom)
- Monday 9.00am: Morning Prayer (Zoom)
- No Wednesday service.

A Reading for the Week

John 6:24-35 (New Revised Standard Version)

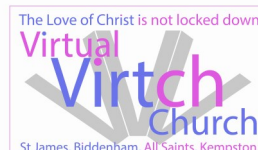
So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Virtch

Zoom services are normally 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 Rev Eric Lomax cont...

In the story of Noah's ark, after the ark has settled and the 40 day rain storm has ceased, the book of Genesis tells us that God places a rainbow in the sky as a sign of God's promise. There is no doubt that such a spectacle would have been the consequence of rain, but if we have a belief in the God of all creation, then it seems reasonable to believe that he speaks to us through the natural beauty of creation. Many artists will tell you that there are hidden wonders in our world, and that you can find the presence of God hidden in the movement of the air, the sound of the sea, and the changes of the seasons. Perhaps we should not always expect other miracles if the miracles are already there to be taken,



I love modern worship with new, contemporary, hymns and freedom of expression. Somehow, however, I feel that it would be so good to find a synthesis of expression that engages with those things that we also count as traditional sacraments. It is not just about pleasing people who are satisfied by different forms, but rather it is about engaging with the beauty and colour that God has already given us, to engage with his profound revelation of truth. The water of Baptism, the light of a candle, and the bread and wine of our communion are just signs, but those signs often serve to draw our limited vision to something so much deeper and more powerful.

The fourth Gospel, from which we read today, often does this for us. The writer points to the things, and the objects that we count dear. The conversation that Jesus has with the Samaritan woman at the well is one example of this. They talk about water and refer us to how we are overtaken by thirst in the heat of day. Jesus and the woman then talk about the physicality of Temple Worship, and remind us of how two nations, two communities, can be so divided by that physical understanding of walls and sectarianism. Water becomes so much more important in the conversation because it is used as a picture of the life and dynamism of the Spirit which crosses borders and allows us to be together and united; 'The time is coming,' he says, 'when we will no longer worship on this mountain or that mountain, but in Spirit and in truth.' (John chapter 4)

A little later, (John chapter 6) John addresses his followers with the symbol of bread from heaven. He refers directly to the feeding of the five thousand. None of the other Gospels deal with it in quite this way. He gives us the miracle, which is a direct re-enactment of the story of God feeding the Israelites with manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16). After the miracle in John, Jesus, for our benefit, completely takes that miracle apart; "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then he continues, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

I spoke to somebody the other day who was not short of physical possessions. All of a sudden he had been confronted with his own mortality and he said to me that he was deeply unhappy.

The physical things that he owned, and we own, are simply not enough to provide for our deepest needs. We need food to survive, but the ample we receive is simply not enough to provide for our deepest hunger and thirst. The sixteenth century reformers were so right when they said that while the sacraments of the church, or our buildings, are incredibly beautiful that beauty is of no worth unless it points to the deep, deep beauty of God's love and grace and mercy. The problem is that if we cast aside those images completely, then we may be so blind that we fail to see the spiritual treasures of God altogether.

God bless
Eric



Let us pray...

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen



All Age Reading

2 Samuel 11 v 26 to 12 v 13

When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she cried for him. After she finished her time of sadness, David sent servants to bring her to his house. She became David's wife and gave birth to his son. But the Lord did not like what David had done.

The Lord sent Nathan to David. When Nathan came to David, Nathan said, "There were two men in a city. One man was rich, but the other was poor. The rich man had very many sheep and cattle. But the poor man had nothing except one little female lamb he had bought. The poor man fed the lamb. It grew up with him and his children. It shared his food and drank from his cup. It slept in his arms. The lamb was like a daughter to him.

"Then a traveler stopped to visit the rich man. The rich man wanted to give food to the traveler. But he didn't want to take one of his own sheep or cattle to feed the traveler. Instead, he took the lamb from the poor man. The rich man killed the lamb and cooked it for his visitor."

David became very angry at the rich man. He said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this should die! He must pay for the lamb four times for doing such a thing. He had no mercy!"

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I appointed you king of Israel. I saved you from Saul. I gave you his kingdom and his wives. And I made you king of Israel and Judah. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you even more. So why did you ignore the Lord's command? Why did you do what he says is wrong? You killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites! And you took his wife to become your wife! So there will always be people in your family who will be killed by a sword. This is because you showed that you did not respect me! And you took the wife of Uriah the Hittite!'

"This is what the Lord says: 'I am bringing trouble to you from your own family. While you watch, I will take your wives from you. And I will give them to someone who is very close to you. He will have physical relations with your wives, and everyone will know it. You had physical relations with Bathsheba in secret. But I will do this so all the people of Israel can see it.'"



Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."

The All Age Bit!

This week's we continue with the story of David and Nathan. In this passage Nathan wanted David to know that his behaviour had been wrong. He knew that sometimes we need to see things from somebody else's point of view. When David heard the story he knew straight away that the behaviour was wrong, but he didn't recognise that the man in the story represented him. Nathan had found a way to make David recognise and understand his own mistakes. Good friends are those who help us to recognise our own mistakes and to make good choices. It can sometimes be hard to hear, but when shared with love our friends' words can help us live better for God.

Activities

What's missing? Put some random items onto a tray and have a tea towel or something similar to cover them with. Let everyone look at the items so they can try to remember what is there. Then cover the tray with the tea towel and take one item away. Remove the tea towel and see who can guess which item has been taken away. Take it in turns to be the person who takes an item away.

Find the sheep Nathan told David a story about someone who owned sheep. David used to be a shepherd so he would have understood how precious the lamb was to the man in the story. There are 10 sheep hidden in this week's Virtual Church News. Can you find them all?

Song

I lift my hands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KI0HtGWhcsU>

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the story of David and Nathan which reminds us that it is good to have others around us who hold us accountable for our actions. Help us to be good friends who support others in living right for God, encouraging them to do the right thing and make good choices. Thank you that you love us and forgive us even though we make mistakes. Help us to say sorry to you and others when our actions are not pleasing to you. Amen.



Above resources (and more) can be found at Together at Home. www.tath.co.uk

Virtual Sunday School

Check this out at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMu2bG8L2dp7ywUZVa9uXDA>

There will also be a Virtual Holiday Club from 9 -13 August on the same Youtube channel.

Daily Hope Phone Line Still Available

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.



Suggested Music for this week



Great is thy faithfulness
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4ox4es1jo8>

There is a redeemer
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0LA3GvAUGU>

Be thou my vision
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxvXGgSIRcs&t=34s>

Everlasting arms
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvNfjLmlvil&list=RDXvNfjLmlvil&start_radio=1

One Family
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43D5e9XMVSU>

Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

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

Sunday 1 August

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

Wednesday 4 August

- 3.30pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.



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



Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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Bedford Foodbank

Items currently needed: UHT Milk, Cup-a-Soup, Fruit Juice (Longlife), Tinned Carrots/Peas/Sweetcorn, Tinned Tuna, Tinned Fruit, Rice 250g/500g/1kg, Ham (Small Tins), Coffee, Biscuits, Shampoo, Washing-Up Liquid, Anti-Bac Spray, Deodorant (Unisex), Tin Openers.

Please continue to support this valuable charity and help them prevent hunger in our community.



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) or Alan/Anita Lowe (857212).