

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

Virtual Church News

29 August 2021

13th 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

This Week's Services

- Sunday 9.30am: Service at All Saints, Kempston
- Sunday 11.00am: Virtch (Zoom)
- Monday 9.00am: Morning Prayer (Zoom)
- Wednesday 6.00pm: Virtch (Zoom).

A Reading for the Week

Mark 7

When the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?' He said to them, 'Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines."'

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



Services In our Churches From 1 September (Updated)

Now that the country is re-opening more fully we will be increasing the number of services so that, in time, there is a service held every week at each church.

We have, however, decided not to go back to the old service structure/timings, but to try something different (with a proposed three month trial period).

From 1 September services will be held each month as follows:

1st Sunday

8.00am Service at All Saints

9.30am All Age Service (followed by said Holy Communion) at St James's

2nd Sunday

9.30am Holy Communion Service at All Saints

9.30am Lay led Service at St James's

6.30pm Service of Evening Prayer at St James's

3rd Sunday

8.00am Service at All Saints

9.30am Holy Communion Service at St James's

4th Sunday

9.30am Holy Communion Service at All Saints

9/30am Lay led Service at St James's

5th Sunday (when there is one)

9.30am Service at St James's

We hope you will join us at these services as we explore a mixture of both traditional and new ways of worship.

Virtch (Updated Details)

From 1 September our Sunday Zoom services will cease as we will have services in each of our churches every Sunday.

Midweek Zoom services will however continue at 9am on Mondays and 6pm on Wednesdays.

Simply go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.

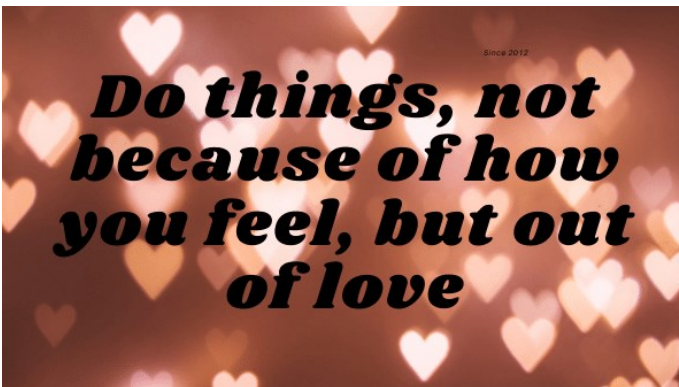
Message from Rev Eric Lomax

How much have we moved on from that first lockdown in March 2020, when we were first encouraged to sanitize our hands, to wear masks, and to stay away from groups of people? Now it seems we are weary of performing these rituals. Now we feel safe, many have been vaccinated, and many of us no longer feel it is necessary. I could also say, however, that we sometimes wear our masks or give people that extra space to protect the vulnerable from harm, or so that they feel safe and secure. Then ritual becomes a labour of love, enacted because we are showing care for those around us.

Some years ago, a vicar who was a very good friend of mine, asked me if I prayed every day in the morning. I thought about his question; 'Some days,' I said, 'but some days I simply don't feel like it.'

'You should do it more,' he said, 'but you should do it, not because of how you feel, but out of love.'

Of course, my friend was right, and by doing that he was separating emotional love from the kind of love Jesus asks us to show. We so often define love as just a feeling, or an emotion, but the love that is written about in the Bible is something different altogether.



We do things for the people who are closest to us, partly at least, because we have that emotional feeling of love. On either valentine's day or our wedding anniversary I will, of course, send cards to Liz with little red hearts all over them, or I will give her a bunch of flowers to show her that I love her. Sometimes when I do give her flowers and it isn't our wedding anniversary, she will look at me suspiciously and say something like; 'What have you done wrong?'

Tim Minchin, the Australian comedian and musician once wrote a love song to his wife called 'If I didn't have you, I'd probably have somebody else instead.' A snappy title, and probably accurate, but perhaps flowers and little red hearts would be a better choice. The card I did send to Liz for our anniversary last Sunday just had the words; '18 years and we still haven't killed each other.'

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After my dad had been married to my mum for 55 years I watch him caring for my mum as she suffered with Alzheimer's. He did not always get it right, but he had to make sure that she was comfortable and well fed. He was exhausted and ultimately the experience of that resulted in his death, but that, whether we like it or not, is love. Love for him was not simply an emotion but a verb as well. It was something that he did at great cost to himself.

Jesus also followed the ritual of love, in which he carried the sin and suffering of humanity to the cross. We know that this was not something he wanted to do. If you remember, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed that God would take the cup of suffering away from him, but clearly that did not happen because within hours he was arrested and condemned. His response ultimately was obedience to death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8), and he did this out of love for God, and ultimately out of love for us.

I am not a great fan of religion. In fact, I find many of our practices inexplicable. The minute people come into our worship they are handed a bundle of books that they do not understand, and the words of our hymns and our worship may as well be completely foreign to them. We try so hard to welcome people, but sometimes we fail to understand the walls we build by our religious actions and exclusivity.

The message that we really want to give to people is that we are a family, with the Lord of love at our centre. We can only do this by reflecting that love to those who come to join us. This is really not dependent on age because the message of love that we give should be from the youngest to the oldest. Our language, our worship and our music must be accessible and easy for the stranger to grasp. Equally it must be sincere, because people will be able tell straight away if we are worshipping with our lips, but our hearts are far from him.

God Bless
Eric

Let us pray...

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ
reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen



All Age Reading

Song of Solomon 2: 8-13

⁸ I hear my lover's voice.

He comes jumping across the mountains.

He comes skipping over the hills!

⁹ My lover is like a gazelle or a young deer.

Look, he stands behind our wall.

He stares in through the windows,
looking through the blinds.

¹⁰ My lover spoke. He said to me,

"Get up, my darling.

Let's go away, my beautiful one.

¹¹ Look, the winter is past.

The rains are over and gone.

¹² Blossoms appear through all the land.

The time has come to sing.

The cooing of doves is heard in our land.

¹³ There are young figs on the fig trees.

The blossoms on the vines smell sweet.

Get up, my darling.

Let's go away, my beautiful one."

Church Services etc. on TV/Radio

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

Sunday 29 August

- 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 1 September

- 3.30pm BBC Radio 3 - Choral Evensong.

Suggested Music for this week

God be in my head, and in my understanding

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQ5GF3gVlbc>

O Jesus, I have promised

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oti-K_VvyCI

Purify my heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qCdr5FEXic>

Reckless love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6SSHuZvQE>

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.

The All Age Bit

This week we are exploring a passage from King Solomon's book about love. It is sometimes called Song of Solomon, but also Song of Songs. It is written a bit like a play script with different speakers. The book is about a man and woman describing their love. How many ways can you find in the passage that they describe love? How would you describe the way you love your parents/carers/siblings/friends? The Bible teaches us that God loved us enough to send his only son Jesus to die on the cross. Jesus died but rose from the grave defeating death - God's love for us is 'stronger than death'.

Activity

Elsewhere in this book the woman says that the man brought her to a banquet. Why not have a picnic together, feasting and enjoying being together.

Song

You can reach out with a heart of love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3WhVRC51Is>

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the book of Song of Songs which reminds us how important love is to you. Thank you that your love for us is greater than we can understand or imagine. Thank you that you loved us enough to send your son Jesus to die on the cross. Help us to share your love with others this week, with kind words and actions. We pray for those who feel alone at this time that they would be comforted and know love and friendship. Amen.

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

Bedford Foodbank

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

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

