

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

Virtual Church News

7 November 2021

**3rd Sunday before Advent
1st 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 call Jacqui on 0778 6886 710 or email her at stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

Our Sunday Services

1st Sunday of the month

8.00am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion at All Saints

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

2nd Sunday of the month

9.30am Morning Worship at St James's

10.00am Holy Communion Service at All Saints

6.00pm Service of Evening Prayer at St James's

3rd Sunday of the month

8.00am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion at All Saints

9.30am Holy Communion Service at St James's

7.00pm Revive: Coffee/Bible/Fellowship

4th Sunday of the month

9.30am Morning Worship at St James's

10.00am Holy Communion Service at All Saints

5th Sunday of the month (when there is one)

9.30am Service at St James's

6.30pm Sung Evensong at St James's

We also hold online services during the week via Zoom at 9.00am on Monday and 6.00pm on Wednesday. To join these Zoom services, simply go to Zoom and enter meeting ID 998 074 6039.

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

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



A Reading for the Week

Mark 1.14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Message from Rev Eric Lomax

So many people I am talking to at the moment are suffering from Anxiety. Certainly this is not helped by the uncertainty and complexity of our world. Equally it seems that the focus on COVID over the last two years has caused us to take our eye off the ball in so many areas of our lives. Now reality has hit many of us, and presented us with an uncertain future.

In the Old Testament we have Israel's national epic of the Exodus. The people of Israel were in oppression and slavery in Egypt, and this oppression had lasted so long that they had almost lost the ability to hope for liberation. When would God act? When would he set them free? When would he fulfil his promises to them. The classic response is to lose hope, to expect the worst, to catastrophise. Any counsellor will tell you that this is a common feature of mental illness and depression; there is no hope, there is no future, and for religious people, there is no God.

For the Israelites this was not the end of the story. God raised up a man from among them, called Moses who, through the power of the Israelite's God, delivered them from slavery. This was only the beginning of the journey, but from then on they were free to establish their own identity and find their own land, with Jerusalem at its centre.

Continued on next page...

Message from Rev Eric Lomax continued

Every year, the people of Israel, the Jewish people, celebrate their freedom with the festival of Passover. Central to the Passover festival is the Seder meal, which has a number of elements that remind them of their freedom. One of these elements is the 'matzah' or unleavened bread. This is bread that remains flat because it has no yeast. The reason that it is unleavened is that it reminds them that God's liberation came so suddenly that they had no time to put yeast in their bread before escaping from slavery.

It is such an important theme in the New Testament that Jesus delivers us from the slavery of guilt and death, in such a sudden and surprising way, through his death on the cross. This same theme is demonstrated in the call of the disciples; Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John.

For these three men (I am sure that Jesus did the same with women as well!) it was a perfectly ordinary day. Probably the moment they set out to work, their only plan was to catch fish, go home and go to bed again. Their lives, however, were transformed by an encounter with Jesus Christ. There was no explanation, no warning, and not even a plan. Jesus quite simply came up to them and said, 'Leave everything where it is and follow me.' In this, Jesus gave these fishermen a brand new purpose as well, 'You will no longer be focussed on catching fish. Instead you will catch people.'

From that moment they experienced what St. Paul called 'The glorious liberty (freedom) of the children of God.' (Romans 8:21). Their lives were transformed completely, and things for them could never be the same again. As they found a new freedom and a new purpose, they had literally no time to leaven their bread. They simply had to respond obediently to the call of Christ.

I cannot tell who you are, who is reading this at this moment, but perhaps this is your time, when Jesus, the Christ says to you, 'follow me!' Your life will never be the same again, but in him you will experience a new power, a new freedom and a new purpose. Jesus says to you, 'Follow me!'

God bless
Eric

Let us pray...

Dear Lord,
in the uncertainty of life,
you call us to a new freedom
where you are the only cer-
tainty.
Guide me,
show me where you want me
to go,
and give a new purpose and
life in you.



Audio Visual System for St James's

Dear All

In November, St James's PCC will be discussing a proposal to install some significant Audio-Visual Equipment in our Church. Because discretion is important in our beautiful medieval building, and because we do not want to negatively impact on the liturgical character of our church, this not only requires significant expenditure, but also consultation with organisations like English Heritage and the Diocese of St Albans.

Many of us believe that it is not really an option in the 21st century not to have facilities that enhance some (though not all) expressions of worship, through digital means. The display of moving or still images, the projection of artwork, visual outlines for sermons and talks, and also the facilities to present material by visiting groups and speakers are all important ways that we use technology to support our work.

It is suggested that this will be immensely useful for our work with children and young people, which will serve to bring more families into our community of faith.

Potentially, this will give us the opportunity to livestream our worship when circumstances prevent some members of our congregation from taking part, and also give us access to online resources should the need arise.

This will not be the way we conduct all our worship, because in many cases, the peace and stillness of traditional worship will be more appropriate.

We would really like your views on this so please contact myself or Jacqui if you have any feelings either way. We genuinely want to hear people's views on this, and if the decision is to explore this, then we will do all we can to make sure the installation of equipment is as discreet as possible.

God bless
Eric

Revive - 3rd Sundays

A short act of worship over a coffee, then unfolding the scriptures together. 7.00pm in St James's Church Barn. Everyone invited.



Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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Email: Rev.ejlomax@gmail.com

The All Age Bit

This week we are going to think about listening to God. God is always with us and listening to our prayers, but God also wants to speak to us and encourage us. Why not take some time this week to practice listening and hearing what God is saying to you.

God can speak to us in many different ways. The more we practice listening to Him, the easier it becomes to recognise His voice. Just like you know the voices of people in your family, or your friends, we can learn to tune into God's voice. Here are some of the ways he might speak to you:

- * You might hear Him in your head using words or just one word that you think of clearly;
- * You might see a picture in your mind;
- * You might experience a feeling;
- * God might remind you of a Bible verse;
- * You might be able to smell or taste something that isn't there.

Sometimes you might not hear God but that does not mean that he is not with you. It is also good to just spend some time with God in silence—ask Him to help you feel that He is close to you!

Sometimes we need to ask God to explain what we have heard or seen, or talk about it with a grown up.

Find a quiet space away from distractions, make sure you are comfortable, pray and ask God to speak to you... wait and listen.

Song

Prayer is talking with God

[Prayer Is Talking With God - YouTube](#)

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

See also the following video from the Church of England—Jesus Calls the Fishermen.

[Jesus Calls the Fishermen - Third Before Advent, Year B - YouTube](#)

Volunteers Needed!

St James's are in need of additional volunteers to help out with the sound system during the Sunday services. If you can help (training will be given), please let us know!

All Saints' Table Top Sale

The next Missions Table Top Sale will be on Sunday 21 November. All donations of home grown and home made produce would be welcome. The cash proceeds from the sale of the produce will go to the PCC's chosen Charities.



Bedford Foodbank

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



The Foodbank is once again asking people to consider doing a Reverse Advent Calendar this Christmas. Contribute something each day of December and deliver your contributions from 4 January in order to replenish the Foodbank's stocks following Christmas.

For details of current requirements and the Reverse Advent Calendar go to www.bedford.foodbank.org.uk

Remembrance

On Remembrance Sunday the 9.30am lay led service at St James's will be slightly shorter than usual in order to allow people to go to the Biddenham War Memorial for an Act of Remembrance at 10.50am. There will be no coffee in the Barn after the service on that day.

At All Saints Church, the 10.00am service will end with a short Act of Remembrance.

Don't forget to come and see the poppies, which have been knitted and crocheted by the community, in the Biddenham Churchyard.



St James's Church Christmas Sale

St James's Church Barn
Church End, Biddenham

5 December

10.30am – 12.00pm

Free entry



Christmas Cards

Biddenham Village Gifts

Cakes & Produce

Decorations & Bulbs

Coffee & Mince Pies

Raffle

Suggested Music for this week

King of the Ages

[King Of The Ages - YouTube](#)

My soul find rest in God alone

[My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone \(FULL\) - with lyrics - YouTube](#)

O thou who camest from above

[O Thou Who Camest from Above \(Tune: Hereford - 4vv\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

Lead me Lord

[Lead me Lord \(in your righteousness\) - YouTube](#)

Scenes of Biddenham Christmas Cards



Raising funds for St James's Church
Mixed packs of 5 cards,
£3 per pack or £5 for two packs

Call Sue (342373) or Jacqui (356993)
for further details

Limited stock so buy early!

Christmas Tree Festival



St Paul's Church, Bedford MK40 1SQ

**Wednesday 1st to
Saturday 4th December**

10.00am - 5.00pm

Sunday 5th December

12noon - 4.00pm



Sponsored by



Admission: £3

Children under 16 free entry

**Daily Concerts by
Community Groups**

More information ... **01234 340163**

Tag us on ... Bedford Christmas Tree Festival

Christmas Gifts

In addition to the Scenes of Biddenham Christmas cards (see below), we also have various Biddenham Village gifts which would make great Christmas presents. Call Jane George on 359014 for more details.

Help Required for Christmas Sale

St James's Church Christmas Sale is on 5 December in the Church Barn (see left).

Would you be able to help on the day? Can you bake some cakes or make some jam/chutney etc. for the produce stall?

Please contact Sue Squire on 342373 if you are able to help in any way! Thankyou.