

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

Virtual Church News

**13th February 2022
3rd Sunday before Lent
(2nd 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 Normal Sunday Services

1st Sunday of the month

- 8.00am Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion at All Saints
9.30am Joint 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
6.00pm Choral 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.

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

Tel: 01234 328452
Mob: 07805 879537
Email: Rev.ejloxmax@gmail.com

Reading for the Week

Luke 6.17-26

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

- 'Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
'Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.
'Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

All Saints' Table Top Sale

The next All Saints Church 'Missions Table Top Sale' will be this Sunday, 13 February. 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.



Roast Lunch - Sunday 6 March

Roast Lunch in St James's Church Barn at 1.00pm. Tickets £15.00 each. Bring your own drink. Raffle. Numbers are limited.

Please sign the list at the back of the church or

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.



Message from Rev Eric Lomax

This is Luke's version of the beatitudes. In Matthew chapter 5, the Gospel writer gives a much longer version of this on the top of a mountain. Matthew wanted to show Jesus as the new Moses delivering his new law just like Moses when he threw the commandments on tablets of stone from the top of Mount Sinai.

Luke does something different. He directly addresses the poor; 'Blessed are the poor,' and he does it on level ground, the same level as them, rather than on a mountain. Here there is no danger of authoritarianism. In this he speaks to the people who stood before him, in complete solidarity with those who had nothing.

Of course we know what brings happiness and security in our society. We know that a house of our own with the mortgage paid is everything. We know that security is an education which assures our children of the best possible future, and an expensive car that gives us just enough kudos to safely, and in comfort, overtake the guy in front, a good job with a reassuringly large pension plan.

On one level this is happiness, but as the Beatles once sang, money cannot buy you love, and there is a richer principle of blessedness that transcends the hedonism of 21st century happiness, and the narcissism of the 'me' approach to life.

We do not have to look far beyond ourselves (though sometimes that is a much too distant horizon) to see that many people do not have these things which are counted as so important in relationship to the spirit of this age. If we take time to look beyond our hedges, we find those who struggle to make ends meet, to feed those they love, and those whose tears we can only see as a passing glance through the corner of our eyes. There are different types of poverty and hunger, and there are different types of tears. Sometimes the apparent wealth or power around us is only a fragile veil to disguise a true and tangible poverty of spirit. In Matthew's Gospel, Matthew 5, Jesus is recorded as saying just that; 'Blessed are the poor in Spirit.' This is translated in some versions of the Bible, as 'Blessed are those who know their need of God.' This kind of poverty and hunger requires a genuine spiritual awareness of how actually dependent we are on love; God's love.

Let us pray...

Eternal God,
whose Son went among the crowds
and brought healing with his touch:
help us to know the wealth of his love,
and the power of his healing in our lives.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen



'Blessed' is the word that Jesus uses. To be blessed is an absolute illustration of what it means to know that the lord of life is right there with you. We see this in the story of creation in Genesis one, where this ancient tale tells us of a universe filled with chaos and disorder. This is not a scientific document, so if you are looking for a formulaic, 21st century account of the beginning of the universe you are, of course, looking in the wrong place. This does tell us, however, that before the formulation of the universe, the Spirit of God moved over the face of the chaos. That is what it means to be blessed.

When we see the newly liberated Israelites wandering lost through the wilderness, we see that the Shekhinah (presence of God) is there with them in the wilderness. That is what it means to be blessed, and in the New Testament, we witness the turmoil and oppression of the people of Judea, and there, on Golgotha, we find the Lord of life on the cross, suffering alongside the people, yet still proclaiming love and forgiveness, that is truly what it means to be blessed.

Jesus's words echo through two generations; Firstly as the Messiah speaks to his poor and oppressed disciples, and says 'blessed are you who are poor, hungry and in distress. They were blessed because Jesus was there with them. Thirty years later, when the ink on the page of this Gospel was still wet, Jesus said the same to the broken, poor persecuted Christians of the early church.

Now, if we listen we find that those words resonate through history to the 21st century, to those who are in poverty, those who are hungry and those who weep in the modern world. The Lord Jesus Christ is right there with you, and because the Lord is here then do not be afraid, because when he said you are blessed, he meant it. Amen

God bless,
Eric

Plants!

The St James's Social Committee are planning a tea party in May/June (more details to follow) at which they hope to have a plant stall. If you are taking cuttings or sowing seeds, it would be great if you could do a few extra! Thankyou.



Bedford Foodbank

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



Food urgently needed includes: Milk (Longlife), Fruit Juice (Longlife), Cup-a-Soup, Tinned Potatoes (large), Coffee (100g), Teabags (40/80), Hotdogs (Jumbo), Tinned meat in sauce (e.g. curry, chilli), Shower gel, Sponge Puddings.

www.bedford.foodbank.org.uk

In association with Bedford Quakers & Malawi Orphan Fund

"Unlock Uni"

Alex Mnatzaganian & friends present

A concert in aid of disadvantaged young people in Malawi



3 - 4.30pm, Sunday 27th Feb 2022

Christ Church, 140 Dudley St
Bedford MK40 3SX
Donations welcome



Imagine this...

You've got the grades, you've got the tuition loan,
but you don't have a family.

You can't afford a laptop, books, food.

So, no uni for you?

Learn more and donate at unlockuni.org

Suggested Music

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAxIN0egN-I>

Be still

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zcHHp0GTuc>

And can it be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dC8HSEKtuio>

God of the Poor (Beauty for Brokenness)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MO1G-o7Yj-c>

The Beatitudes

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

Prayer Group

Our joint online prayer group will now be meeting at 8pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month (note change of day). If you would like to join us in praying for our churches, communities and beyond, you will be made very welcome. For further details, or to request prayers, email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com



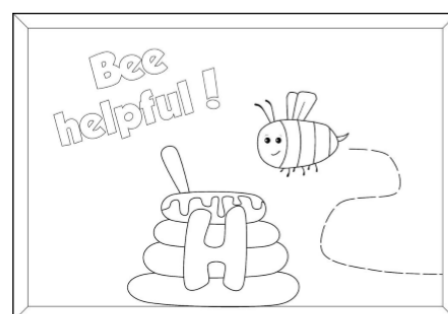
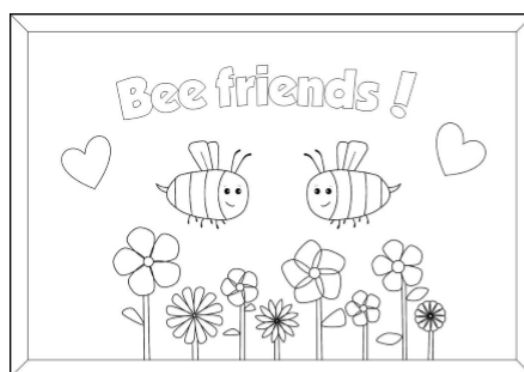
Front cover Photo by [Alex Shute](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The All Age Bit

This week we are again using the same reading as the adults. You can find this on the front page, or look it up in your own Bible. As Rev Eric says at the start of his message, this passage is Luke's version of the Beatitudes. Have you heard this word used before? It sounds very complicated and confusing! But, it is actually very simple - the Beatitudes are short, but powerful, descriptions of what it looks like to live life how God wants you to. Jesus talked about being blessed. A simple way to think about blessing is any way that we are provided for and cared for by God. Sometimes it is easy to forget the every day ways that God blesses and provides for us. Perhaps take some time this week thinking about what God may have blessed you with. You might include your family, your friends, a nice house, enough food to eat, being healthy, having a pet, being able to go out for a walk.

Activities

Why not colour in the following Bee-attitudes and then try to practice them during the week!



Resources from Roots and Journey Together (www.tath.co.uk)