

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

Virtual Church News

17th April 2022

Easter
(3rd 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 email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

Our Normal Sunday Services

From 1 April our normal Sunday services will be changing as set out below. Of course Easter falls in April this year so services over Easter weekend will be a little different to this - See right for our Easter Service details.

1st Sunday of the month

10.00am All Age Worship at All Saints
10.00am All Age Worship at St James's
11.15am Holy Communion at All Saints

2nd Sunday of the month

9.00am Said Holy Communion at All Saints
10.00am Holy Communion at St James's
6.00pm Evening Prayer at St James's

3rd Sunday of the month

10.00am Holy Communion at All Saints
10.00am Morning Worship at St James's
7.00pm Revive: Coffee/Bible/Fellowship

4th Sunday of the month

9.00am Said Holy Communion at All Saints
10.00am Holy Communion at St James's
(Explorers in the Church Barn)

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

10.00am Service Wholeness & Healing at St James's
6.00pm Choral Evensong at St James's

Please note that there will be no online Zoom services during Easter week (week commencing 18 April).

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.



happy
Easter

Message From Rev Eric Lomax

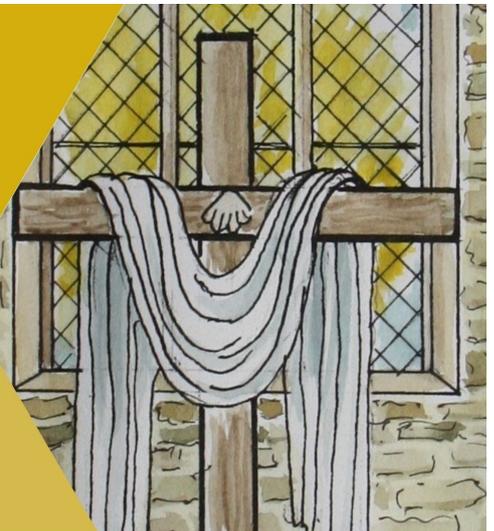
I cannot help but love this passage. I love the way that it is a woman who is given centre stage. Mary is the first to go to the tomb, she is the first to tell the other disciples that the tomb is empty, and she is the one who hangs round and meets the risen Lord. All of these things require an act of faith, and belief in the resurrection is always about an act of faith, and the faith in the resurrection is the faith that even when everything seems lost, God will intervene and bring life out of death, hope out of despair, and peace out of conflict.

There is always the choice when writing something for Holy Week. I have the choice to write about the horror of the cross, or the miracle of resurrection.

Continued on next page...

Alleluia
He is
Risen!

11th-17th
April



EASTER

Holy Week
Monday: 7pm Evening Prayer (All Saints)
Tuesday: 7pm Evening Prayer (St James)
Wednesday: 7pm Evening Prayer (All Saints)
Thursday: 7.30pm Holy Communion (St James)

Good Friday
10am Children's Event (St James)
12pm & 2pm Reflection (All Saints)
1pm & 3pm Reflection (St James)

Easter Sunday
8am Service of Light (St James)
9am Service of Light (All Saints)
10am Holy Communion (both churches)

Everyone
Welcome!

Reading for the Week

John 20.1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Message continued...

As if these were two things completely unrelated to one another. If you go into a Roman Catholic Church you will see a crucifix, a cross with Christ still hanging on it. If, however, you walk into a protestant church you will see a bare wooden cross, with no man on it because Christ has risen from the dead. Both ways of looking at things are right of course. It is important for us to recognise that it was Jesus who was crucified, and it was Jesus who cried out from the cross; 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me. This is important because we have to understand that Jesus was human and experienced all the things we experience including death.

This we must not lose. Because of the death and resurrection of Christ, we do not live in a loveless, hopeless world, but rather we live in a world where hope and love cannot be buried. Join us at Church on Easter Sunday morning to witness for yourself, love rising from the grave.

In the same way it is important to recognise that death and suffering cannot keep a good man down, and Jesus rose from the dead, so on Easter Sunday we don't only see an empty cross, but also an empty tomb. We have to have the story of the cross in the New Testament because if we did not have the story of death, we would not see that Christ has conquered the enemy that nobody else could defeat.

The Roman procurator, Pilate, ended up dead in the tomb, the high priest Caiaphas ended up dead in the tomb, Herod ended up dead in the tomb, Judas Iscariot ended up in the tomb, and even the Jewish temple was raised to the ground by the Romans in AD 70, but the difference between all these and Christ is that Christ is risen from the dead.

Prior to meeting Jesus, Mary had not been the most respected of women, but when she encountered Jesus, she found somebody who, as the son of God, had his father's eyes, and when he looked at her, he loved her unconditionally for what she was. For her, the death of Jesus was the death of love itself. For somebody like Mary, that was the ultimate tragedy.

When Mary went to the tomb to anoint Jesus's body on Easter Sunday morning, this poor tortured woman feared most of all that because Jesus had died, the love she had known in all the time she had followed him, was also buried in the tomb. Jesus is love just as God himself is love. For her, finding the empty tomb was the revelation that love had not died, but rather love was still the most powerful reality in the world.

In my view the story of Mary at the empty tomb is a beautifully written story. She did not recognise him initially, but then when they actually faced each other and he addressed her, she saw those eyes of love looking back at her again. Christ was indeed risen, and love was therefore risen.

Amen. God Bless, Eric

Let us pray...

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen



Suggested Music

Come and see (we worship at Your feet)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejCIBRsvkUM>

An Easter Hallelujah
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCPJ9jIPepA>

Jesus Christ is Risen Today
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duLZz7c-Uaw>

Alleluia Alleluia Give thanks to the Risen Lord
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzZYJSsW2YY>

Wonderful Grace
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdugliaCXUk>

Bedford Foodbank

Please continue to support this valuable charity. They fed 1,478 people in January (504 of them children). This is a huge increase on previous months and the same time last year. See their website for up to date details of what they need. www.bedford.foodbank.org.uk

Rev Eric Lomax Contact Details

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ST JAMES'S CHURCH BIDDENHAM SPRING TEAS



Plant Sale

Cream Teas

Tea Towel
Display

Sunday 8th May
2.30pm - 5.30pm
St James's Churchyard/Barn

PLANT CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME TO JANE (359014) OR
PAM (327035) OR DELIVER TO 49 CHURCH END

ALL PROCEEDS TO ST JAMES'S CHURCH

Ukraine Financial Support

To help meet the cost of supporting people fleeing the war in Ukraine, the Church (St James Biddenham) has launched an appeal for funds from the local community. Funds will be held in a restricted account and will be used only to help meet the many needs of those refugees arriving in Biddenham and Bedford for however long our support is required.

Please consider giving to this fund. There are a number of ways you can make a donation: By cheque – payable to "Biddenham PCC" (Please include a note of your name and address so as to allow Gift Aid to be claimed). Place your donation in a Gift Aid yellow envelope (available in Church). Please mark the envelope "Ukraine Support". By Bank transfer – sending your donation to the following account:

Biddenham PCC
Sort Code: 60-02-13 (NatWest Bank)
Account No: 51317710

In the reference field please enter "Ukraine" followed by your postcode and house number.

Gift Aid will be claimed where possible – adding 25% to the value of your donation.

Donations can be handed to a Church Warden or simply placed in the weekly collection. Alternatively, donations can be sent to the PCC Treasurer at 32a Church End, Biddenham, MK40 4AR. Thank you.



ST JAMES'S CHURCH BIDDENHAM

MUSIC FOR MAY

A concert by the Ouse Valley Singers
with soloist Philippa Jones

Saturday 21st May
Biddenham Pavilion, Deep Spinney
7.30pm

Tickets £10 (light refreshments included)

For tickets, contact:

Anne 214805 or Sue 342373

All proceeds to St James's Church



The All Age Bit

You can find our reading for this week on page 2, or look it up in your own Bible if you have one.

Take time this Easter weekend to think about the Easter story and what it means to you.

Activity

Create an Easter Garden: Gather items from your home, garden or from your daily walk to create your own Easter Garden together. You will need to select a stone to be in front of the tomb and roll away, a flowerpot or cup can make a good substitute for the tomb. You could do some junk modelling and use some items from your recycling or just build the whole thing from building blocks and toys.

Once you have built your Easter garden, use any toy figures you have to act out the story of Easter morning together.

Song

This is amazing grace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-rbmpzoQ5o>

Prayer

If you have never prayed a prayer of commitment asking Jesus into your life to be your Saviour here is a simple prayer you can say today:

Dear Jesus.

Thank you that you came to earth and died on a cross to take the punishment that should have been mine. I am sorry for all the mistakes I have made and the times that I have lived selfishly. Today I accept your free gift of forgiveness and friendship and the promise of eternal life. I choose to live my life for you. Amen.

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

Bishop Alan's Easter Message of Joy and Hope

The joyful message of Easter is that God has overcome sin and death and invites us to be people of joy and hope.

Yet this year, we celebrate against the background of bloody conflict in Ukraine and the harrowing pictures of refugees fleeing warfare. It is right that, as a diocese, we are responding to the crisis by collecting and delivering aid, and offering accommodation and hospitality, especially to the refugees arriving at Luton Airport which sits within the diocese.

The situation is all the more tragic because it appears that the war has the unquestioning support of the Russian Orthodox Church – or at least its leadership. When we are tempted to point the finger at others, we need to first examine our own lives; it is right that we reflect whenever our words and deeds deny the very good news we proclaim.

Inevitably, aggression begets aggression and it is likely that some Ukrainian soldiers may have retaliated either out of self-defence or in anger. All acts of aggression and revenge are to be deplored and condemned, whoever commits them.

Annual Meetings

The Annual Meetings will be held as follows:

All Saints: Tuesday 26th April* at 7.30pm in the Church Hall. **Please note the change of date from that previously published.**

St James: Wednesday 27th April at 7.30pm in the Church Barn.

Please contact the relevant PCC Secretary on the above contact details if you have any queries.

Prayer Group

Our joint prayer group meets online at 8pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. Join us in praying for our churches, communities and beyond. For details, or to request prayers, email stjameschurchbiddenham@gmail.com

All Saints Missions Table Top Sale

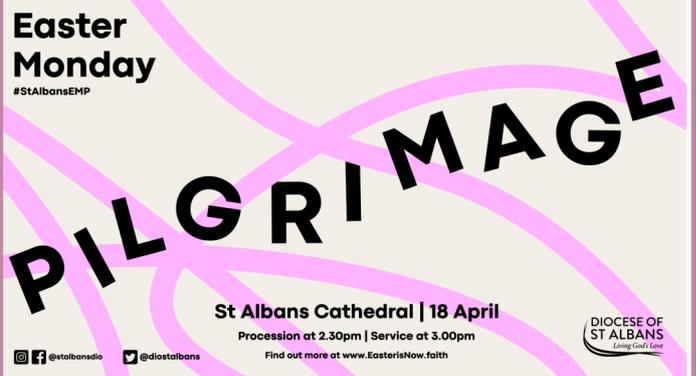
Please note that there will not be a Missions Sale at All Saints in April, but we plan to resume in May, date yet to be confirmed. Thankyou to all who contribute and donate.

Easter Monday Pilgrimage

Join pilgrims from across the Diocese of St Albans to celebrate the risen Christ on Easter Monday, 18 April, at St Albans Cathedral.

Drive or travel by train to St Albans and join everyone there, or travel to Harpenden and join people from a hub church to walk the rest of the way. For more details see

<https://www.easterisnow.faith/easter-monday-pilgrimage>



Yet the primary aggressor is the Russian state and we must do all we can to call on the Russian Orthodox Church to denounce the military incursion and indiscriminate bombing and work for peace. If not, the World Council of Churches may need to exclude and isolate the Russian Orthodox Church.

Although the suffering is terrible, our Easter faith assures us that evil is never the final word and that good will finally overcome. Somehow, in the mysterious purposes of God, even the pain and death will be caught up in the redeeming love of God and transfigured.

So this Easter, with dogged defiance we continue to proclaim in faith: Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!

+Alan St Albans