

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

Virtual Church News

1 May 2022

**Third Sunday of Easter
(1st Sunday)**



Our Sunday Services

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 of Wholeness & Healing at St James's
6.00pm Choral Evensong at St James's

Reading for the Week

John 21.15-19

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

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Message From Rev Eric Lomax

Between 2012 and 2016 I made a number of visits to South India to build links with the Church there, and many of the very poor communities you find in that corner of the world. It is amazing how the religious culture of Hinduism permeates those communities. Hinduism is, in lots of ways, a very beautiful and vibrant faith with lots of cultural diversity, but like Christian religiosity it has its weaknesses as well. The fundamental weakness is, to me, the caste system which, in essence, separates people into different layers of worthiness. I remember meeting a woman in her twenties who had a child. When I started talking to her a local resident pulled me away and said to me; 'You should not be talking to her. She is Dalit.' Dalit is a term that is applied to lower cast people and means literally in Sanskrit, 'Untouchable.'

The principle is that we are assigned to particular positions in society because of our behaviour in a previous life. We are judged and, if found wanting, then that is the status we are given. Although Christians do not believe, like some Hindus (and Buddhists), in reincarnation, there are many Christians who seem to believe in a principle of reward and punishment in our present life. Although there is something in me that may find some sympathy with somebody like Vladimir Putin coming back as a one legged centipede,

Continued on next page...

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 *continued...*

I personally find the injustice of the caste system deplorable, and I find the Christian ideas of reward and punishment difficult to accept.

Look at Simon Peter, the disciple of Jesus, for example. At the start of his ministry Jesus reaches out to Peter and says to him; 'Follow me.' It was a simple call to discipleship, and God calls each of us in the same way.

When Jesus calls somebody to follow him, he asks that person to stay faithful to Jesus in whatever happens, even if that leads them to suffering and death. The journey of a faithful Christian is not necessarily going to be easy, but even in hard times we are expected to be faithful to Jesus Christ. That is as true today as it was 2000 years ago.

Two of Jesus' disciples clearly failed in this. One was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, and the other was Simon Peter. When Jesus was crucified, the Gospels record Simon Peter being approached by three separate people. Each time, Simon Peter denied that he had ever known Jesus. By the principles of reward and punishment, this should have been the end for Peter.

When Peter encountered the risen Jesus Christ, Christ confronted Peter on this, not by rejecting Peter or punishing him, but rather by forgiving him and reaffirming his call to discipleship. As Peter had denied him three times, Jesus asked him three times; 'Peter do you love me?' Each time that Peter said 'yes,' Jesus reasserted Peter's call to look after his followers ('Feed my sheep!'). At the end, Jesus says to him, as he did at the beginning, 'Follow me!'

No matter how hard we try to follow Jesus, we will inevitably let him down. Our God is a God of love and grace, and is always prepared to put the past behind us and lead us forward in forgiveness and hope. Even when we are unfaithful and fail him, he will never fail us.

Amen.

God Bless,
Eric

Suggested Music

How great thou art

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ed3EhviNGsl>

Just as I am, without one plea

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvpJMBzEPp8>

Bring it all to Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRYrQNXHbn8>

I will rise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcEUUVc98TA>

Ukrainian Easter Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWsZPFaANK0>

Let us pray...

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness
and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen



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

All Saints Missions Table Top Sale

The next All Saints Church 'Missions Table Top Sale' will be on Sunday 15 May. 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.

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The All Age Bit

Today's reading is from the new testament book of Acts, chapter 9, verses 1-20. In this reading, Saul was persecuting Jesus' followers; he was part of a group who imprisoned and even killed them. When he encountered Jesus he turned his whole life around. The story tells us that we can choose to turn away from our mistakes of the past and live for God too. It also teaches us that God will forgive all our sins, however bad they are. Do you find it easy to forgive people when they are not very nice to you?

Activity

Plastic bag bookmark: if you have old carrier bags, cut different coloured ones into strips and weave or stick them onto card to make a stripy bookmark to remind you that God can use anything, even things we think of as rubbish, to make something useful and beautiful.

Song

Nothing's too big

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yopo6DvV9Z8>

Prayer

This week why not write down on a piece of paper anything you are sorry for - perhaps you said something hurtful to someone? Then screw the paper up and throw it in the bin while saying sorry to God. Remember that no mistake is too great that God will not forgive you.

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

All Age Reading

9 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem.¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.²⁰ At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

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



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

