

Bexley Team News

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood
St James, North Cray
St John the Evangelist, Bexley
St Mary the Virgin, Bexley

Sunday 28 June 2020 Issue 15

The Third Sunday after Trinity

**We welcome our new Team Curate Matt Hodder and his family,
as they settle into their new home!**

IT HAS NOW BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO OPEN FOR PUBLIC GATHERED WORSHIP (WITH SOME RESTRICTIONS) FROM 4TH JULY ONWARDS. WE ARE AWAITING DETAILED GUIDANCE FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

FOR THE MOMENT, AND IN LINE WITH CURRENT GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE TEAM CHURCHES CONTINUE TO BE OPEN FOR **PRIVATE PRAYER ONLY**-

St. Barnabas- open on Saturdays and Sundays 9.00 am – 11.00 am

St. James - open on weekdays midday – 1.00 pm

St. Johns - open on Sundays only from 9.00 am – 3.00 pm. *Full details of social distancing restrictions are on our website, please read them before you visit. We are grateful for the time and talents of those who have volunteered to assist with ensuring we can open in a safe and appropriate way. If you would be able to volunteer an hour on a Sunday, please email fr.edwardbarlow@gmail.com.*

St. Marys - open on Sundays and Wednesdays 10.00 am – midday

The Collect

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin,
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father:
give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,
that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Bible Readings for this Sunday

Old Testament: Genesis chapter 22 verses 1 to 14

New Testament: Romans chapter 6 verses 12 to end

Gospel: Matthew chapter 10 verses 40 to end

Reflection

"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."

We welcome our new Team Curate Matt and his family to Bexley as they prepare for his duties to begin very soon. Despite the social distancing restrictions and lockdown limitations I'm confident that across the four churches we will make that a warm, Christian welcome – as my own family and I were welcomed last year: A welcome for which we continue to be grateful.

Welcome, Matt.

In essence, a 'Christian' welcome, is a welcome infused with Christian Love, a love by which we love another person as if we are Christ, and as if they are Christ too: He sets the pattern for our being as that we allow ourselves to be like Him.

As the Church has engaged with the current discussion surrounding racism we have been reminded once again of the uncomfortable sledgehammer truth that there are many who don't feel welcomed in our churches: Those who feel that their ethnicity has made them ineligible to be loved in predominantly white congregations. These painful stories of deep-rooted discrimination resonate with those who have excluded from Christian communities due to their sexuality, gender-identity, disability, social standing, and a whole host of other characteristics right down to simply being *'different' or not fitting in.*

For those of us on the inside, who may already feel a sense of spiritual belonging at our church, this often comes as a shock: Our own experience may have been one of welcome and love, we may not consider our churches to be racist, homophobic or in any way intolerant – but all of us carry ingrained prejudices and unconscious biases which are further blinkered by whichever lenses of privilege we wear. To identify where we fall short of being able to love as Christ and seeing others as Christ will requires an intense and unsettling process of self-examination and confession.

To be perfectly frank it should be easy for us to welcome Matt, as it was to welcome me a year ago: We inhabit the church as clergy and are here to serve – part of the establishment with a return! But how easy is it to welcome those whom we might not normally choose to worship alongside or sit down for a coffee with? To see Christ in those whose needs are such that we should be serving them.

As we continue to emerge slowly from lockdown, we will see a change in our church communities: In all four churches we have recently said goodbye to long-standing friends, and as we see the ongoing spiritual impact of all that has happened we will no doubt meet new friends who come seeking sanctuary and refreshment amongst us.

Our churches will soon enter a new stage of being. As churches in the post-lockdown world we will be called to exercise a welcome of radical inclusion: A Christian Welcome grounded in Christian Love, as inclusive, free and unconditional as the abundant, all-encompassing Love which all people receive in the heart of God.

Rev'd Edward

Prayers

Creator God, we are troubled by the conflict in the world
Help us to confront and challenge prejudice, greed and hatred
and all that prevents people from living fully and freely.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Faithful God, your son Jesus Christ,
called ordinary people to follow him as disciples.

Help us to respond to that same call
and to share your gospel of hope in our communities.

We pray for our new curate Matt Hodder, and for his family as th

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Healing God, we pray for all those who are sick.
that they might be deeply aware of your presence with them.

We pray also for those who care for the sick and the broken.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Eternal God, your love reaches beyond the grave.

At the end of our days on earth be with us,
with those we love, and with those whom we love who have gone before us.

We hold before you those who have recently died and those bereaved.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Almighty God,

May we all be changed and transformed to become, day by day, more like your Son Jesus Christ.

Merciful father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**





Messy Church

We hope you are all enjoying the glorious weather. This week the messy church at home team have some lovely activities called Messy Paul. To join in please see the link below:

<https://www.messychurch.org.uk/resource/messy-church-home-paul>

Katrina

Matt Hodder and his wife Jen would like to thank everyone for the moving-in gifts that they received. They are now spending some time settling into their new home. Matt is to be licenced as a Lay Minister for the first three months of his time with us before he is ordained as a deacon on Saturday 26 September.

Church Security: Please continue to be watchful, prayerful and alert.

St. John's Giving to St John's: You can give financially to the continuing upkeep and ministry of St John's via our Just Giving page: www.justgiving.com/stjohntheevangelist-bexley

Suspended Sermons are posted each Sunday at fatheredwardbarlow.wordpress.com

Social Media - engage with us via Facebook (/stjohnsbexley) and Twitter (@stjohnsbexley).

Help offered/needed If you or someone you know **needs help** or if you **can offer assistance** please contact-

St. Mary's Bexley contact Christine Wood 01322 270942 chrisawood2003@yahoo.com

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood- contact Rev'd Ren or Kevin Clarke 07791582546 kacrat@btinternet.com

St. James, N Cray- contact Rev'd Ren or David Stevens 0208300 0867 davidstevens112@aol.com

St. Johns, Bexley- contact Revd Edward Barlow contact details below

THE BEXLEY TEAM CLERGY

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