

Bexley Team News

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

Sunday 16 August 2020 Issue 22

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Announcing a **Team Bible Study** in September. We will be studying the book of Nehemiah over five Wednesday's, 10.00 -11.00 am at St. Mary's. There will be a service of Holy Communion after our final study on 30th September. To help with numbers please let Clive know if you are planning to join us. Come along and discover more about Nehemiah as he rebuilt the ruined places!

Services in Team Churches this Sunday-

St. Barnabas 10.45 am Holy Communion

St. James 9.30 am Holy Communion

St. Johns 8.00 am and 10.00 am Holy Communion. 3.00 pm Evening Prayer.

St. Mary's 10.00 am Holy Communion

- these will all be said services with no hymns/songs

Team Churches open for private prayer-

St. Johns Sundays between Morning services and Evening Prayer

St. Mary's Until midday after 10.00 am service and on Wednesdays 10.00 am to midday

The Collect

Let your merciful ears, O Lord be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you; 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.

The Additional Collect

Lord of heaven and earth, as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer, give us patience and courage never to lose hope, but always to bring our prayers before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Bible Readings for this Sunday

Old Testament: Isaiah 56 1, 6-8 New Testament: Romans 11 1-2a, 29-32 Gospel: Matthew 15 [10-20] 21-28

Reflection

If you were to ask me to create a list of all of the New Testament passages I'd like to write a reflection on, today's story from Matthew's gospel of Jesus' interaction with the Canaanite woman would comfortably be at the very bottom. (*with the possible exception of the bit where Jesus gets cross with a fig tree for seemingly no reason at all.) There is a temptation that we could skim over this one; to put it down to a translation error or to chalk it up to some regional ancient religious practices which we don't quite understand the context of.

But we probably shouldn't do that. Let's face it, Jesus doesn't come across at all well in this story. After reaching the region of Tyre and Sidon, which for reference is very much non-Jewish territory, Jesus is almost immediately confronted by a gentile woman who asks Him to heal her daughter. He ignores her. But yet she persists and in the face of His disciples urging Him to send the woman away, she continues to ask for help.

And then He says it. Jesus looks at the woman asking for help and compares her to an annoying dog, sniffing around the table while the people are eating. He says that He has come to help the lost sheep of Israel, and questions why He should take the bread saved for them and toss it to her? I imagine the disciples were a little shocked. I know I wouldn't know how to respond to that. But thankfully the persistent woman does. *"Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."* she says. Suddenly the tone of the encounter changes. Jesus praises the woman's great faith and sends her on her way, having already healed her daughter from where He was sitting.

Despite the discomfort, I'd like to suggest there are two ways we can look at this. I suspect, if you're anything like me, that we subconsciously put ourselves in Jesus' position far more than we put ourselves in the place of the woman asking for help. We can be quick to find annoyance in the interruptions of the day. We can see the differences between us and others more than the similarities we share. We can look down on those who are not like us, whether they vote for a different political party, follow a different understanding of God, or are desperately crossing the English Channel in a rubber dinghy in search of something that they do not have. We ignore and rebuke, rather than listen and love.

But in truth I suspect that we're far more like the Canaanite woman than we are the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Maybe over the past few months we might have come to realise that our relative security is not as unbreakable as we thought it was. We have seen how tragedy and illness can strike indiscriminately and unexpectedly. Rather than focussing on the finer points of Jesus' retort, we should look to the woman who knelt before the Lord and asked Him for the tiniest crumb from His table, for she knew that would be enough to satisfy and to heal.

The Canaanite woman is an example to us of a person of great faith. May we kneel before the Lord this week, desperate for a crumb that satisfies our soul.

Matt Hodder

Prayers

Dear Father,

We praise you for each new day you give us, for every fresh opportunity to appreciate your world and all the beauty in it. We ask for forgiveness when we fail to look after it properly, and for courage to stand up and be counted when we see things that need to change.

We remember the people of Lebanon at this time. We pray for those wounded and the families of those killed; for those whose homes were destroyed and livelihoods lost; for the

relief workers and all who are willing to help that they will be strengthened, encouraged and supported by each other. We pray that the government will reform its ways, and put the good of the people first. Amen Pray for our government here in the UK: that God will give them wisdom in the decisions they make, and for guidance to control the coronavirus.

Lord God, whose Son, Jesus Christ, understood people's fear and pain before they spoke of them, we pray for those in hospital; surround the frightened with your tenderness; give strength to those in pain; hold the weak in your arms of love and give hope and patience to those who are recovering; we ask this through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.



God of love and light, in this time of fear, give us your peace. In this time of isolation, give us your presence. In this time of sickness, give us your healing. In this time of uncertainty, give us your wisdom. In this time of darkness, shine your light upon us all. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Messy Church at home is having a summer break and will return in September!

Annual Parochial Church Meetings.

The Annual Parochial Church meeting for St James, North Cray will be at 8pm on Thursday 17th September

The Annual Parochial Church meeting for St Barnabas will be at 7.30pm for 8pm on Friday 18th September

The Annual Parochial Church meeting for St Mary's will be at 11.30 am on Sunday 20th September.

The date for the St John's APCM will be announced shortly.

St. Mary's

We have heard that Sylvia Mitchell is doing well in her new home near Peterborough.

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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Team Curate/Licenced Minister:

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