

Bexley Team News

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

Sunday 20 September 2020 Issue 27

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

Team Churches services 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. Church open for private prayer between Morning services and Evening Prayer

St. Mary's 8.30 am BCP Holy Communion 10.00 am Holy Communion 11.30 am APCM

Wednesday at St. Mary's 10.00 - 11.00 am Nehemiah Bible Study 4. Chapters 7-8 'Family history' and 'Revival' Edward leading. Do feel free to join us for this study.

The Collect: God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; 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 God, defend your Church from all false teaching and give your people knowledge of your truth, that we may enjoy eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Bible Readings for this Sunday

Old Testament: Jonah 3 v10 – 4 v11 New Testament: Philippians 1, v21-30 Gospel: Matthew 20 v1-16

Reflection

Take a moment to think of all the words you could use to describe God.

Go on, I'll wait.....

Did any of these come to mind?

Creator....sustainer....almighty....generous....loving....caring....powerful....unending?

They're all good ones, most definitely. How about the word 'unfair'? God is UNFAIR! I suspect that this one was most likely a bit further down the list, if it was even there at all, but according to our Gospel reading today Jesus confirms that God is unfair. Well, unfair in our understanding anyway.

Jesus tells us another story, and this one is about what the kingdom of heaven is like. It's like a landowner who goes out in search of workers. He looks and finds some eager early birds ready to start. In exchange for a full day's work they'll receive a full day's pay. So far, so good.

But the landowner needs more workers. So he goes out again at 9 am and at noon. He hires them and promises them also a full day's pay. Yet still, the landowner seeks out more workers, so we find him searching the market place for people at 3 pm and even 5 pm. Surely anybody half decent at agricultural work wouldn't still be hanging around as the sun begins to set? But this doesn't seem to matter to the landowner.

So, when the day is finished the landowner gives to each a full day's pay. Each one. Everyone gets the same, regardless of whether they worked for twelve hours or six, or even just one! Each worker gets their pay.

Now to our ears and to the ears of those in the crowd that day, this is completely unfair. We are used to a system which gives people credit for what they deserve. But God doesn't give us what we deserve. How wondrous it is that we don't get what we deserve.

I suspect that this parable is less about the fairness of God and more about the issues we have with one another. We don't expect to be treated equally. We differentiate ourselves by how many hours we work, how much money we have or even by how long we've been going to church. We expect to be rewarded for what we do. But God says that there's an abundance to go around, enough for everyone and then some. We all receive in abundance from our generous God.

This week, notice the things that seem unfair to you, and consider how God might react to them. Let us look upon our brothers and sisters as being of great value, and think of ourselves as the least. Matt Hodder

Prayer

Lord, like the Old Testament Jonah and the New Testament labourers we are shocked and offended by your amazing generosity. Forgive us we pray and open our hearts to trust you more, loving ourselves and others with that same generous Spirit. Amen

Rev'd Ren writes-

Thank you to everybody who sent messages of loving support to the family and friends of our dear Percy Hicks who died on 27 August. On Wednesday 16 September a limited number of mourners were able to gather at St Barnabas Church to give thanks for Percy's life and Christian ministry in our churches, our communities and in our Deanery. He has been a faithful servant of God, and a friend and encourager to so many of us over the years. This song, sung by Jonathan Veira, is dedicated to him, who 'saw everyone through heaven's eyes'. May we do the same. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8CDkndEEAs>

Please hold Matt Hodder and his family in your prayers this week as he prepares for his Ordination as Deacon on Saturday 26 September at 11 am. Although it is hoped this will still take place in the Cathedral, this cannot be the big celebration we would have wished for him, but it will be special nevertheless. We will send the link so you can join in on-line. I know that Matt has really enjoyed getting to know the four parishes, and during his three months as a Lay Minister we have made sure that he has preached and assisted at all four churches on Sundays, as well as participating in midweek events. We look forward to seeing Matt's ministry develop in the months ahead. Any gifts and cards for Matt on his Ordination can be passed on through the clergy.

Thank you to everybody for continuing to abide by the regulations when you attend worship. Those regulations do seem to change quite often! We realise that wearing a face-covering is uncomfortable, however it is essential to wear one **to protect others**. (although we recognise that some are exempt). Here is the latest Church of England Guidance about the style that should be used... "A face covering should: • cover your nose and mouth while allowing you to breathe comfortably • fit comfortably but securely against the side of the face • be secured to the head with ties or ear loops • be made of a material that you find to be comfortable and breathable, such as cotton • ideally include at least two layers of fabric (the World Health Organisation recommends three depending on the fabric used) • unless disposable, it should be able to be washed with other items of laundry according to fabric washing instructions and dried without causing the face covering to be damaged

Beryl Parry

We have received the sad news via her son Steve that Beryl Parry died last Wednesday. Beryl was in a care home in Maidstone. Beryl and husband Keith were for many years members of St. John's and St James before Keith was ordained. They lived in Bexley until care became difficult. Keith died earlier this year. Please remember the family in your prayers at this time.

Messy Church at home is having a break and will return soon

Annual Parochial Church Meetings.

St James, North Cray 7.30pm for 8.00 pm Thursday 17th September. St Barnabas 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm Friday 18th September. St John's 11th October after the main service.

St. Mary's services for September/October

27th Sept. 10.00 am Family Service 3.30 pm Holy Communion

4th October 8.30 am BCP Holy Communion 10.00 am Harvest Thanksgiving Holy Communion. 11th Oct 10.00 am Holy Communion 3.00 pm Messy Church in hall. 18th Oct 8.30 am BCP Holy Communion 10.00 am Holy Communion. 25th Oct 10.00 am Family service 12.30 pm Baptism of Ethan Pollitt 3.30 pm Holy Communion

Harvest gifts – information to follow

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

Sermons are posted each Sunday at fatheredwardbarlow.wordpress.com

Social Media - engage with us via Facebook ([/stjohnsbexley](https://www.facebook.com/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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