

Bexley Team News

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

Sunday 23 August 2020 Issue 23

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

A Team Bible Study in September

We will be looking at the book of Nehemiah over five Wednesday's, 10.00 -11.00 am at St. Mary's. This is for everyone, whether you are new to Bible studies or an old hand! To help with numbers please let Clive know if you are planning to come. Study guides are now available price £4. There will be a service of Holy Communion after our final study on 30th September. 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 4.00 pm Sunday@4

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 12.30 pm Baptism of Violet Goldsmith 3.30 pm 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

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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

God of glory, the end of our searching, help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom, and to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond all price, through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Bible Readings for this Sunday

Old Testament: Isaiah 51, 1-6 New Testament: Romans 12, 1-8 Gospel: Matthew 16, 13-20

Reflection

If you read through the gospels you will quickly realise that Jesus has a knack of asking awkward questions. In today's gospel reading, first Jesus asks the disciples *'Who do people say I am?'* A simple enough question surely? And the disciples just report what they'd heard said, the word on the street, so to speak! People are saying that Jesus was a bit of a celebrity, like John the Baptist, the next big thing, the talk of the towns! Or maybe one of the prophets has returned.

But then Jesus followed that first question with another. But this time, he makes it personal. *'But what about you... Who do you say I am?'*

You can imagine the disciples shuffling about, avoiding eye contact. Oh, dear, it's about me now, about what I believe. I can't avoid the question. What shall I say? Wonderful that here Peter is granted a flash of divine

insight, and he says... v16 *You are the Christ, the son of the Living God!* It's a really great answer from Simon Peter who was known for 'opening his mouth and putting his foot in it'!

All of us struggle to express just what our faith in Jesus means to us. And I think that's all right, that's OK. The depth of our faith is not measured by the extent that we can explain it, in neat and well-argued theological arguments. I'm not sure that our faith is actually 'measured' by God at all! Faith 'as small as a mustard seed' is sufficient.

And that was Peter's declaration of faith, the best he could come up with. Not what everyone else was saying but what he believed to be true at that moment.

And Jesus responded with approval:

"Blessed are you...." Blessed are you... you will be Peter, the Rock! And moreover, you will have the great privilege and the great responsibility of 'holding the faith' on earth, and in heaven.

So now imagine if Jesus asked **us** that same question now. "*Who do you say I am?*"

The best answer I could give Jesus, here and now, is this... "Jesus... There's a power of love in you that has called me to live my life seeking to know you better. It is you, Jesus, who offers a kind of hope, and healing and love to the broken places I find in the world and in myself."

But who Jesus is to ME is not really the question, is it?

The real question is, for each and every one of you.

If Jesus asked you.... "Who do you say I am??" what would **your** answer be?

Rev'd Ren Harding

Prayers

Lord Jesus, You are the Lord who walks beside your people. So we pray for people who walk for justice, remembering the people of Belarus at this time.

You are a Lord who raises up those who are bent low. So we pray for those held down by the grindings of life and the indifference of the world.

You are a Lord who feeds the hungry. So we pray for all who long for bread, and the means to provide it.

You are a Lord who celebrates the small and the insignificant. So we pray for the children and for those who are never noticed.

You are a Lord who says 'Follow me'. So we pray for courage and faith in our hearts that we may take up the cross and find it leads to life.

~ posted on the Christian Aid website. <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/> (adapted)

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

Annual Parochial Church Meetings.

St James, North Cray 8.00 pm Thursday 17th September. St Barnabas 7.30 pm for 8.00 pm Friday 18th September. St Mary's 11.30 am Sunday 20th September. The date for the St John's APCM will be announced shortly.

St. Mary's

We are having another work party to finish clearing the box hedges morning of Thursday 10th September starting 9.30 am. Please let Clive or John Bowerman know if you plan to come.

St. Mary's – services for September

6th 8.30 am BCP Holy Communion, 10.00 am CW Holy Communion with prayer for healing and wholeness

13th 10.00 am CW Holy Communion (Matt Hodder to preach) 3.00 pm Messy Church tea in church grounds

20th 8.30 am BCP Holy Communion, 10.00 am CW Holy Communion

27th 10.00 am Family Service, 3.30 pm CW Holy Communion

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](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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