

Issue 485 • WINTER 2025

St Barbara's Newsletter

stbarbaras.com



Celebrating Christmas

Amidst the busyness of preparations and festivities, it can be easy to lose sight of what Christmas is all about - that God was born among us. At St Barbara's, there will be services for all ages taking place over the Christmas period and we would be delighted to welcome and celebrate with you.

7 DECEMBER

10.00am Christingle Service - A service for all ages, as we prepare for the build up to Christmas using oranges, sweets and ribbons!

14 DECEMBER

4.00pm Buzz at St B's - Family Christmas crafts, tree decoration and carols

21 DECEMBER

6.30pm Christmas Carol Service

24 DECEMBER

5.30pm Christmas Eve Nativity Service - A short service of carols and readings including a community nativity play.

11.30pm Christmas Eve Midnight Communion - A beautiful, quiet service.

25 DECEMBER

10.00am Christmas Day Communion - A 55-minute service of thanksgiving and celebration, suitable for all ages

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Thought for the season – Risking it this Christmas

by Rev'd Jeremy Bevan

A year ago, I retired from a long career in the Civil Service, much of it spent advising employers about managing risk. Now, for the first time since I finally walked out through that office door, I find myself thinking about risk again. Only this time, it's the risk involved in Christmas.

We may think this time of year has more peril than a season of peace, goodwill and merriment really needs. Will the turkey cook properly? Can I find the perfect gift for that hard-to-please relative? Will there be arguments again this year?

Head back 2000 years, though, and the risks involved in God becoming human, as the Christmas story proclaims, were far greater. For everyone involved. Mary, mysteriously pregnant, assents to the Lord's will for her. But it would have been only human to worry about what lay ahead, not least given the terrible infant and child mortality rates of the time. And Joseph? Would business suffer, with people whispering about what he and Mary had supposedly been up to?

And what would the sheep's owners think of shepherds abandoning their flocks to see the Bethlehem baby the angel had told them of? It was a threatening time for Herod and the wise men, too, in this new order of things.

Health. Making a living. Grumpy bosses. Politics. So many of the dimensions of human life in play. And for a time, all certainty seems gone: the world holds its breath as God risks Jesus surviving the perils of birth and childhood; not opting for the safe, obscure life of a village carpenter; choosing to see his mission through.

That 'gamble' ends with Jesus' resurrection, God's declaration that evil doesn't have the last word. But it all starts with risk, with God willing to put everything on the line for our good. Sending Jesus to point the way to life 'in all its fulness', to the kind of life we were always meant to live.

If God had the courage to risk all for us, will you do the same this Christmas and respond to God's offer of love for you? Why not have an honest conversation with the God who's always ready to listen? Dip into the Bible's accounts of the Christmas story in Matthew's and Luke's gospels? Join us at a service at a service this Christmas? It's a risk worth taking.



St Barbara's contact details

General enquiries: admin@stbarbaras.com

Hall bookings: stbarbarashallbookings@outlook.com

Church Services

Every Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion - a quiet, simple service.

10.00am Parish Communion - hymns, choir, Sunday school (also livestreamed at stbarbaras.com)

Every Wednesday

9.30am Prayers and Bears at Earlsdon Methodist Church - songs, activities, crafts & prayers for the under-5s

11.30am Midweek service - a pause for prayer and reflection in the middle of the week

Once a month

14th December, 18th January, 15th February, 15th March

5.00pm Buzz at St B's for young families - crafts, drama, songs and tea

NB On 14th December, Buzz at St B's will start at the earlier time of **4pm**.

Special services and events

See page one for all of our Advent and Christmas services



Recruitment update

After our last vicar, Rev Tulo Raistrick, left in May to become Chaplain for Myton Hospices, we have been progressing through the long process to recruit a new vicar. This involves writing a detailed profile of the parish. This is now complete and the post will be advertised in December and January with a familiarisation day and interview date for shortlisted candidates scheduled for the start of February. Of course, it might still take much longer before a new vicar is in post due to long notice periods.

We are grateful for the hard work of Jeremy, our self-supporting curate, the churchwardens Ed and Andrea and many other members of the church who have stepped up during this vacancy period.

Let the little children come

There are lots of opportunities for children at St Barbara's. Our Sunday School is known as HIVE and caters for all children of pre-primary and primary age, with the occasional older one. This takes place during the 10am Sunday morning service, leaving a short way into the service and coming back in time for Communion. We generally do a mixture of Bible story, games and crafts.

Buzz at St B's is our monthly service for families with primary school-age children, younger ones are welcome too. This takes place on usually the third Sunday of the month at 5pm (see page 3 for details of all upcoming dates and times) and features a variety of activities including drama, craft, prayer and songs. At the end, there is a bring-and-share tea and an opportunity for the children to play informally.

Prayers and Bears is a service for pre-school children and babies, and their parents and carers which we run with Earlsdon Methodist Church. It is a wonderful mix of songs, treasure hunts, prayers, stories and crafts, lasting for 20 minutes, and followed by time for refreshments and play.

Other children's activities include Easter and Christmas craft workshops, Sports Day, Pancake race and an Easter Bonnet Parade, as well as the chance to get involved in our Christmas Eve Nativity service. Please see the listings on Pages 1 and 3 to see upcoming events or contact us (admin@stbarbaras.com) to find out more. We would love to welcome you to St Barbara's!

What Christmas means to me

We asked some people from the parish what Christmas means to them...

"Christmas is a time of remembering -

Time with family and friends, young and old

Time with loved ones who are no longer with us

Time to look forward with hope for the next generation - those who have just arrived in this world and those yet to be born.

Times of hope for all peoples around the world to live together peacefully."

Thelma Briggs

"When I was little, I remember going to church during Advent, and my mum telling me how important it was to prepare for the coming of Jesus. Advent and Christmas are to me the two sides of a coin. I cannot conceive of Christmas without thinking about preparing for it. For what? For Jesus to be born in my heart, in my life, once again.

Bernardo Cañas

Christmas holds deep significance for us, especially as a family. It's a magical season when we come together, filling our home with joy and affection. I cherish our traditions, such as decorating the tree with festive music, baking cookies, and preparing Nigerian spicy jollof rice and pounded egusi soup — we often end up eating too much.

For us, Christmas is about more than exchanging gifts—it's about sharing meals, playing games, and recalling memories. We also embrace giving back by volunteering or helping others, which enriches the season. In the end, Christmas reminds us of what truly matters: family, love, and unity. It's a time to pause, appreciate one another, and create treasured memories.

John Agboola and Rebecca Ayinde

