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St Barbara's Newsletter

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Celebrating Christmas

At Christmas, we celebrate that God has come to be with us in the birth of his Son Jesus Christ. At St Barbara's, there will be services for all ages taking place over the Christmas period. Everyone is warmly invited to come to celebrate with us.

29 NOVEMBER
6.30pm Advent Service - Hosted by Churches Together in Earlsdon and Chapelfields, with hymns and reflections

13 DECEMBER
4.00pm Buzz@St.B's service for families with young children - the Christmas story with crafts, carols and decoration of the Christmas tree

20 DECEMBER
6.30pm Christmas Carol Service with readings, choir and brass quintet

24 DECEMBER
5.30pm Community Nativity Service - a re-telling of the Christmas story you can take part in, including carols and readings

11.30pm Midnight Communion - A beautiful, quiet service

25 DECEMBER
10.00am Christmas Day Communion - a celebratory service of just over an hour, suitable for all ages

17 JANUARY
10.00am Christingle Service - a celebration of light at a dark time of the year, suitable for all ages

Thought for the season - Christmas Presence

by Revd Andrew Krauss

One of the things that has struck me about Earlsdon is how many interests, needs and concerns are catered for in the community, including a wealth of community-run or community-supported initiatives. Something is present for a very wide range of requirements.

Approaching the season of Christmas, the theme of presence becomes central. **God communicates his love for us in becoming present to us in the newborn Christ** and there is great symbolism in the presence at the manger scene: Mary and Joseph, wise men, shepherds, probably others in the wider vicinity, plus animals in and around the stable. It is an iconic scene. Consider for a moment the distinctive place and perspective of each representative group. These perspectives are made present to each other at the manger gathering. They come into contact and mutual wonder by the presence of the newborn baby at the centre.

'God communicates his love for us in becoming present to us in the newborn Christ'

As human beings we have a deep need for presence – one that can sustain and accompany us, that we can find in, and share with, others. A few years ago, the lockdown posed the question of how people could be present to each other under significant constraints. Many organisations dedicated to promoting good mental health have responded to emerging insights from psychology. We understand far better now the complex interaction between our nature and our environment. We know the need for an integrated approach accounting for biology, social context and what environment best supports personal growth.

Pressure on resources, given these insights, is considerable. This makes the deep symbolism of the Christmas manger scene all the more significant. Christmas emphasises both presence and gift. The tradition of giving gifts at Christmas reflects the fact that **the child in the manger is God's gift for us.** As both the early church and many generations of Christians since have discovered, Jesus is the gift of a presence that endures and sustains. The manger scene provides the first glimpse of this gift of presence, to be further explored and discovered. The presence of the child at the centre of the scene holds together the presence, the place and the perspectives of those gathered there. Likewise, we too are moved to seek what really holds together the presence that we need now in our own context.

Christmas is a time to reflect on how to make the best of what is available, of the gift in what is present. It is offered as **a message of hope, a renewing of perspective in a continuing journey through a life together**. This can at times seem very daunting but it also holds the potential for deeper discovery and fulfilment, and for understanding more about the deep love God shows us in Christ. A very blessed Christmas season and New Year to you all.

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

11.30am Holy Communion - a pause for prayer and reflection in the middle of the week

Once a month

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

4.00pm 13 December

5.00pm 21 February

5.00pm 21 March

Special services and events

See page one for all of our Advent and Christmas services



Welcome Andrew!

We are delighted to welcome Revd Andrew Krauss as the new vicar of St Barbara's. Andrew was previously living in Germany, having ministered before then in the Diocese of Oxford. Andrew is married to Anna and brings a wealth of experience and many interests. He was installed on 15 October in a service where we also celebrated Revd Jeremy Bevan's confirmation as Associate Minister. If you see him in Earlsdon, do say hello!

St Barbara's Contact details:

Revd Andrew Krauss: andrew@stbarbaras.com
Hall bookings: stbarbarashallbookings@outlook.com

Come together for Christingle



Christingle is a joyful celebration involving candles set in oranges that brings families and communities together to share the light of Jesus and spread a message of hope. Christingle services originated in Germany in 1747 when Moravian Bishop Johannes de Watteville created them as an attempt to get children to think about Jesus. Originally, it didn't involve oranges, just a red ribbon wrapped around a candle

Each element of a Christingle has a special meaning and helps to tell the Christian story:

- The orange represents the world
- The red ribbon (or tape) symbolises the love and blood of Christ
- The sweets and dried fruit represent all of God's creations
- The lit candle represents Jesus's light in the world, bringing hope to people living in darkness.

Christingles have been popular in the UK since the 1960s when it was adopted as a fundraising tool for the Children's Society of the Church of England. Thousands of Christingle Services are held in churches across the country every year.

Christingle services are usually held any time between the start of Advent (around the end of November) and Candlemas (in February). At St Barbara's we usually hold our Christingle service at the start of December but are going to try holding it in January this time round, which will hopefully be a less busy time for people but still a good moment to come together as a community and share light in the darkness.

Our service will take place on Sunday 17 January at 10am and we would love you to join us.



Supporting St Barbara's

St Barbara's, like so many of us in our own households, is having to make difficult decisions. As the prices of many goods and services rise, we face increasing challenges to maintain the buildings and services we offer.

You have an opportunity to support St Barbara's to continue to serve Earlsdon. If you think you could spare the cost of a cup of coffee once a month, this could make an enormous difference. Details of how to give are available by scanning the QR code or visiting https://stbarbaras.com/how-to-give-to-st-barbaras-church/.