



St Barbara's Newsletter

www.stbarbarasearlsdon.org.uk

St Barbara's Parish Church, Earlsdon

Dec 2018 –Feb 2019

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Celebrating Christmas at St Barbara's

Christmas is almost upon us once again. The shops have been decked out with tinsel for a few weeks now; some homes are already putting up their Christmas lights; and the cold nights are drawing in.

You may be someone who gets caught up in the excitement and the wonder, the expectation and the anticipation of Christmas. Or you may be someone who worries about the cost, or the loneliness that this season induces.

But for all of us, whatever our feelings, it provides a good opportunity to step back and think about what life is really about. To ponder: if there is a God, what kind of God are they? The Christmas story gives pointers worth thinking on.

So do come and join us at St Barbara's for our Christmas services. We would be delighted to welcome you. Here is a flavour of some of the services we will be holding this December:

Christingle Service (2nd December; 10am)

A great way to begin December's build-up to Christmas, come and join us for our All Age Christingle Service, as we think about the meaning of Christmas using oranges, ribbons and sweets as visual aids! An additional collection will be taken in aid of the Children's Society.

Christmas Craft Workshops and Buzz at St B's (16th December; 4pm-5.30pm)

This is a wonderful fun-filled and special service for families. We begin with craft workshops that help to tell the Christmas story and finish with gathering around the Christmas tree to hang decorations and sing carols. Suitable for all ages, we finish with tea and mince pies!

Christmas Carol Service (23rd December; 6.30pm)

Come and join us for a beautiful service of carols and readings, led by our excellent choir.

Christmas Eve Nativity Service (24th December; 5.30pm)

Our most popular service of the year, we begin the start of Christmas proper with this service of carols, drama and prayers, suitable for young and old alike. Come early to get a seat!

Christmas Eve Midnight Communion (24th December; 11.30pm)

This is a beautiful, quiet service with which to usher in Christmas Day, as we celebrate the birth of Christ among us.

Christmas Day Communion Service (25th December; 10am)

Suitable for all ages, come and join us for a joyful celebration on this special day. The service will be finished by 11am, so no need to worry about that Christmas roast!



Do go onto our website to find out more.

Thought for the Month: Catching Our Attention

When one of our children was two, he had the most extraordinary tenacity to connect with others. It didn't matter whether they were one of our close friends or a total stranger, he just wanted to make eye contact, to elicit a response, to make a connection.

One time on a bus, there was a man sat behind us, lost in his own world and thoughts, staring vacantly out the window. Our boy started looking behind at him. He tried to wriggle into his line of vision. The man, a little embarrassed and unsure what to do, kept moving his head further round to the side to avoid eye contact. Not to be thwarted, our son stood on the seat and bent right the way round. I tried, unsuccessfully, to pull him back, to distract him, but he was having none of it.

Eventually he got eye contact by bending himself up and under the man's nose. Once achieved, he gave the man a big shy smile. The man had little choice but to smile back. The connection made, our boy turned back round and continued to sing away happily on my knee.

I've sometimes wondered whether God must feel the same way about getting our attention. That whilst we most determinedly want to live our own lives, keep ourselves to ourselves, here is God trying to get into our line of vision, trying to elicit a response from us.

For centuries he had been speaking through the prophets of the Old Testament, telling people of his love and concern. For centuries, too, he had been guiding the leaders of God's people, encouraging them, offering them support, wisdom. But to little avail. People continued to look the other way, to stare out the window, to avoid eye-contact with the Almighty.



So, ultimately God catches our attention in the most extraordinary, attention-riveting way possible – he becomes like one of us, a human being, God with us. The God who created the heavens and the earth, the God who is before the beginning of all things, the God who holds eternity and infinity in his hands, this God becomes one of us in Jesus.

This is the Christmas story, the one that left the shepherds agog with astonishment and then overflowing with delight. The one that led to a great company of heaven bursting out in jubilant praise. Jesus comes into our world to make God known.

And why does God want our attention? Well, maybe, just maybe, like my son on the bus, so that we will see his smile, and will smile back in return.

This Christmas, let God catch your eye.

Rev Tulo Raistrick

Why not visit www.stbarbarasearlsdon/talks to read more reflections on faith and life.



Coventry Winter Night Shelter—a light in the darkness

Coventry Winter Night Shelter (CWNS) opens its doors once more on the 1st of December. A project of Hope Coventry, CWNS provides the homeless with a warm evening meal, a bed and breakfast during the winter months. Each night a different church around the city hosts the shelter, and a team of volunteers work in shifts to provide support from the evening until the next morning. These shifts are: 18:30-22:00, 21:30-07:00 and 06:30-09:00.

Bernardo Cañas, a member of St Barbara's, is the Coordinator of the Winter Night Shelter. "It's so humbling to see many people's lives being touched and changed by the generosity of the volunteers who give their time and skills to a worthy cause. Paradoxically, our guests they transform us as much as we help them."

If you would like to volunteer (even just as a one-off), you can contact Helen on 07713 340065, or email cwnshelen@hopecoventry.org.uk. The shelter is in particular need of volunteers for the night shifts. For info about making a donation, please contact Bernardo on cwnsbernardo@hopecoventry.org.uk, or 07450 693897. You can also donate directly by PayPal at hopecoventry.org.uk/donate.



WHAT'S ON AT ST BARBARA'S

Every Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion

This is a quiet, meditative service which takes place in the beautiful side-chapel inside St Barbara's Church. The service lasts about 40 minutes and is attended by between 10-15 people each week.

10.00am Parish Communion

This is our main Sunday service, lasting just over an hour, attended by adults and children of all ages. We sing hymns and modern songs, led by an excellent choir, there is a thought-provoking talk, and time for prayer.

It is attended by about 100 people each week and children are especially welcome. We have groups that cater for pre-school, primary and secondary school ages, that meet during the service.

Christmas Services

Details of all these services on p1

2 Dec 10am: Christingle Service

16 Dec 4-5:30pm: Christmas Craft Workshop & Buzz at St B's

23 Dec 6:30pm: Carol Service

24 Dec 5:30pm: Christmas Eve Nativity Service

24 Dec 11:30pm: Christmas Eve Midnight Communion

25 Dec 10am: Christmas Day Family Communion

Special Services

3 Feb 6.30pm: Choral Evensong

A beautiful service of psalms, prayers and readings

Every Month

All Age Service 2nd Dec 10am

13th Jan 10am

10th Feb 10am

An informal 55-minute service with drama and music, ideal for all ages.

Buzz @ St B's: 16th Dec 5pm

20th Jan 5pm

24th Feb 5pm

17th Mar 5pm

This is a fun, creative and interactive service for families involving lively songs, craft, drama and other activities. It lasts 40 minutes, and is followed by sandwiches and cake.

Social Events

Fellowship Group (Every fortnight in Earlsdon Methodist at 2.15pm)

12 Dec: A Celebration of Christmas

6 Mar: Rev Graham Gee

No meetings in Jan & Feb

Film nights

7pm for 7.15pm

6 Dec: Christmas with the Coopers (PG)

3 Jan: Peter Rabbit (U)

7 Feb: The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society (12)

7 Mar: Book Club (12)

Mid-week Services

Prayers and Bears:

Every **Wednesday** in term-time at **9.30am** at Earlsdon Methodist Church.

A service for the under-fives and their parents/carers, followed by snacks and crafts

Holy Communion: Every Wednesday at 11.30am

This is a small, intimate communion service. It provides a space of quiet and stillness in the middle of the week to receive communion, pray and reflect.

From the Registers

Baptisms

Bella Devane (16th September)

Jacob Jones (23rd September)

Charlotte Field (4th November)

Funerals

Gerald Bromfield (6th September)

Carol Butcher (2nd November)

Churches Together in Earlsdon & Chapelfields

Prayer Breakfasts Saturdays 8am

5 Jan: Hearsall Baptist Church

2 Feb: St Barbara's

2 Mar: St Mary Magdalene

United Services Sundays 6:30pm

2 Dec: Advent Service - All Souls

20 Jan: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - Hearsall Baptist

1 Mar: World Day of Prayer, Hearsall Baptist, 7pm

Would you like prayer for someone or for yourself?

Feel free to email Christine on prayerchstb@gmail.com or telephone the vicar on 024 7501 7889. Prayers can be said in church services or confidentially—just let us know.

Celebrating Harvest



At St Barbara's we celebrated our Harvest Festival this year with an all-age service on Sunday 14 October, welcoming rainbows, cubs and scouts to join us. Some special visitors, Canon Sarah Hills and Cerys Smith, came from the Community of the Cross of Nails at Coventry Cathedral to help with our service and share about the

work the Community is doing in Burundi and worldwide. Burundi has had a lot of conflict and people there asked for help in reconciliation. The Community of the Cross of Nails is seeking to equip people in Burundi to assist others by running workshops which included practising facilitation, learning about conflict escalation and teaching them how to explore different perspectives.

At the service we also learnt how to say "Peace be with you" in many different languages and reflected on which was most important: justice, relationships, food and health or education. The links between them were demonstrated by a dance in a circle. The dancing theme continued with the congregation dancing in the aisles, which combined with traditional harvest hymns and a collection of harvest gifts made for a fun, informative and thought-provoking service. The fresh

produce that had been gifted was auctioned off after the service, with some very competitive bidding, and raised an impressive £63.50 for the work of the Community of the Cross of Nails. The tinned and dry produce was donated to Coventry Foodbank.



Contacts

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For more information go to

www.stbarbarasearlsdon.org.uk

People of the Parish—Jessica Moore, from *Good Neighbours*

I have been involved with St Barbara's for about two years. I enjoy being able to worship in a community in our neighbourhood and being part of a group that has a wide range of people, I think diversity and mutual respect is at the heart of the Christian message. It's good that St Barbara's welcomes people of so many different backgrounds and life experiences. I especially like the fact that I come away from services or groups with something real to think about, challenge me and/or inspire me in my life.

My faith has always been part of my identity, but it has changed over time as I've changed. I've realised that it's a foundation and influence for me – helping me to think things through, make decisions and plan next steps. If I'm honest, that's harder to do at some times more than others. But that's the gift of being part of the St Barbara's community, it's a patient and understanding place that offers compassion, friendship and fun.

I have been a Good Neighbours Coventry coordinator for 18 months. The churches in our area funded the local Earlsdon and Chapelfields post for the first year. It's been one of the best jobs I've ever done: I really like being actively involved in the area, meeting older people, getting to know volunteers who are generous enough to give their time each week. Working in these times of austerity has really sharpened my appreciation of how lucky I am compared with many people in our neighbourhood and across the city.

We've got a new coordinator taking over from me, Jackie Kemp. I'm still working for HOPE Coventry, supporting all the projects: the Winter Night Shelter, the Prayer House, Christians Against Poverty. But I'm keeping in touch with Good Neighbours, as I've made friends there too precious to lose!

