



ST BARBARA'S PARISH CHURCH EARLSDON // ISSUE NO.468 // EASTER 2021

ST BARBARA'S NEWSLETTER

stbarbaras.com



Celebrating Holy Week and Easter at St Barbara's

We are looking forward to celebrating Holy Week and Easter and would be delighted for you to join us for any of our Holy Week and Easter services.

Palm Sunday (28th March)

10am – Holy Communion (in church and online)

The service will include a dramatised reading of the Passion story from Mark's gospel.

5.00pm – Buzz at St B's Easter Craft Workshop & Service (in church only)

A service for young families. Due to Covid restrictions, pre-booking is required. Contact tulo@raistricks.com

Monday-Wednesday in Holy Week (29th, 30th & 31st March)

7.30pm – Compline (Online only via the link on the church website)

A short, meditative service, reflecting on the events of the last week of Jesus' life.

Maundy Thursday (1st April)

7.30pm – Maundy Thursday Communion Service (In church and on line)

An intimate and beautiful service reflecting on the events of the Last Supper.

Good Friday (2nd April)

2.00pm - Service of the Cross (In church and online)

A quiet and moving service as we remember afresh the suffering and death of Christ.

Easter Sunday (4th April)

5.30am - Easter Sunrise Service (In church only)

A service that begins round a bonfire before dawn and enters the church by candlelight, this is a wonderful way to celebrate Easter morning.

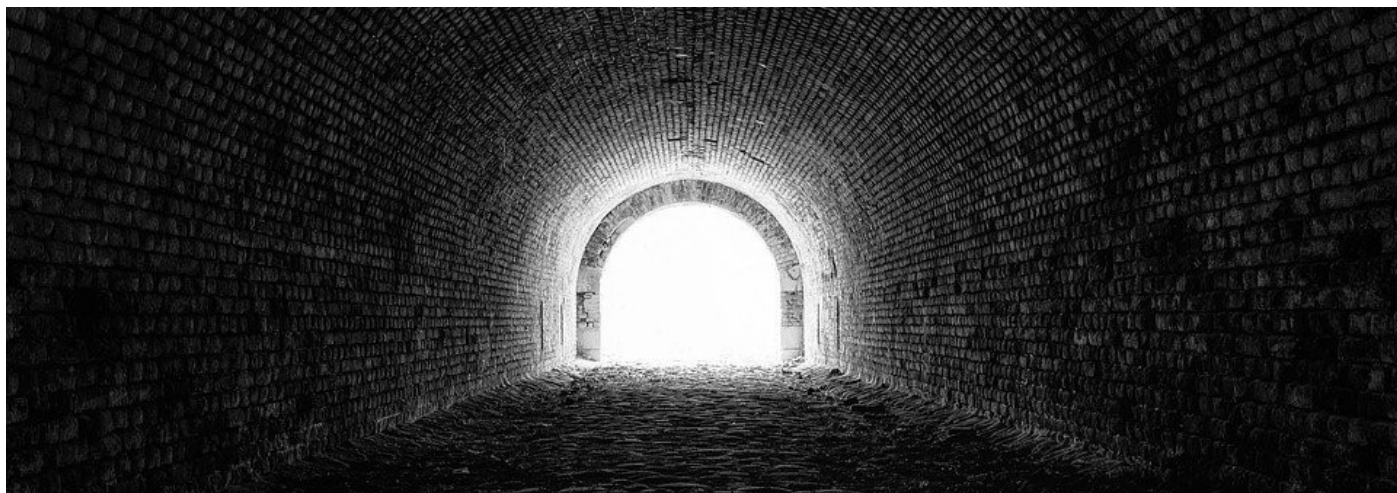
10.00am - Easter Sunday Service (In church and online)

We celebrate the resurrection of Christ in this joyful service.

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Thought for the Month: A Glorious and Certain Hope



We live in unusual times.

As I write it has been reported that over half the UK population have received their first dose of the Covid vaccination, an extraordinary logistical and medical achievement, that has contributed to hospital admission rates falling dramatically. It is news that brings us all hope of a somewhat brighter future.

At the same time, we are rightly urged to continue to exercise caution, to minimise our physical interactions with others, to refrain from meeting up with family and friends. Cafés, hairdressers, gyms and pubs all remain closed. A return to “normal life” a year after the first lockdown began still seems some way off.

And so we are all living with a strange mixture of hope and despair, anticipation and frustration. On some days, it is hope that seems to win through. I know that for many there was a sense of euphoria on the day they received the vaccine. But on other days, the limitations on our lives and the pain of enforced separation lie heavy on us. Like the Psalmist, we may cry out, “How long, O Lord, how long?”

The events of Holy Week and Easter may similarly evoke those emotions. We experience the despair and grief of Good Friday and the joy and hope of Easter morning.

The cross powerfully shows us that Christ knows what it is to suffer. He knows what it has been like for us over the last few months. He knows what it is to sometimes hit depths of despair – to feel almost God-forsaken at times. He knows what it is like to see loved ones grieve, as so many have this year, and to experience death himself. In our moments of frustration or despair, Christ is with us. He knows. He has been there. We look to the cross.

And the empty tomb of Easter morn? That brings us a hope way beyond that which any vaccine can bring. The hope that a day will come when all sin and suffering will be swept away, when not just virulent virus mutations but also our inhumanity to one another will be overcome. Hope of a day when there is no more death. Hope of a day when death, far from being the end, is the doorway into eternal and abundant life.

Like our current state of waiting for restrictions to lift, resurrection hope can sometimes feel a long-way off. We can sometimes wonder, “will we ever get there?” But as we spend time this week immersing ourselves in the Easter story, may we draw fresh hope in knowing that Christ died and rose for us, that our time of waiting will not last for ever, and there is a glorious and certain future on the horizon.

Rev Tulo Raistrick

Why not visit stbarbaras.com/church-services/talks to read more reflections on faith and life.

What do Lent and Easter mean to us?

Lent and Easter are special moments in our faith journey and their significance will be different for each of us. We asked some members of the community at St Barbara's to describe what Lent and Easter mean to them.

Lent is a much-needed annual spiritual spring clean for me. Inevitably by then I've got out of sorts so need to review my spiritual disciplines to rebalance myself for a closer deeper walk of faith in Christ my Lord and Saviour, becoming a refreshing reset by Easter Sunday! It gives me a spiritual springboard for the new season of life and journey ahead. The classic words of songs and hymns are poignant daily reminders to regain peace and perspective. These days of smart phones and a Bible App help me tune in upon waking when I listen first (before reading later) my daily bible reading. I also recommend Tulo's daily lent reading emails which keep us focused and encourage action. Worship can be difficult but listening to favourites helps. I have loved Norman's gift and contributions in online services. I've made a meditation time of listening to my recent favourite 'Be still for the presence of the Lord.'



Bashie Baines



As a child in a small country town in Suffolk I remember Good Friday as the quietest day of the year with nothing open, no play allowed outside the home and deserted streets. However Easter Day was special because of Easter eggs and a rare treat of a chicken as our Sunday meal. Today I look forward to Easter for reasons other than chocolate bunnies and prepare myself by trying to observe Holy Week as a time of reflection on God's gift to us of his son. I arrive at Easter day full of hope and joy with a renewed sense of rebirth surrounded by the signs of Spring and with those memories of all the other Easters that have gone

before – rejoice and be glad. Amen

Keith Wright

Easter/Lent, strangely enough for me, is first and foremost, an early reminder that I am soon to be another year older. This then leads me to reflect on life and whether or not I am still living it in an attitude of Christlikeness. I then solemnly reflect on the oxymoron of an entity that is omnipresent and omnipotent, deciding to take on the inherent constraints of being human, and then going on to pay the ultimate human sacrifice, in a way and manner that would have confounded both his friends and family. However, fellowshiping in Spirit and in Truth, here and now with fellow believers in Earlsdon, England, 2000+ years later, during a noisome pestilence, is perhaps the ultimate "raison d'être" for the profound decisions he made for humanity, way back then, to what would have been the utter chagrin of those close to him.



Michael Fabunmi

Until the Diocesan Retreat House at Offchurch was sold I had, for many years, attended the annual Pre-Lent Retreat. It was a wonderful place to stay for a few days in order to prepare for Lent/Easter. On one occasion we were asked to go outside and choose something to bring back with us. My choice was a handful of earth, something which is created by death but has the amazing potential to create life and provide food for humans and animals alike. The seasons of Lent and Easter, ending with the wonderful Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, are our spiritual supplies found only in a living personal relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ and only made possible by his Life and Death. It is a love story like no other. I can only hope and pray that I am worthy of His Love.

Sheila Maries

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.



A Prayer Journey in Holy Week

Every day during Holy Week the church will be open from 9.00am – 7.00pm for private prayer.

Even if you have not yet returned to the church building for services, you may like to come to church during this week for a time of personal meditation and prayer.

To aid this time, around the church are fifteen pictures of Christ with accompanying prayers and reflections on the theme of Christ's death and

resurrection. You may want to walk the whole journey that these pictures take you through, or simply choose one or two as an aid to prayer.

Blankets for Malawi and Liberia

For the last six months Marjorie Leitch and the Busy Bees (with Eva Nichols, Andrea Driver and Bashie Bains in the lead) have been knitting woollen squares, which join together to make blankets. Every six months a container of blankets and other goods goes alternately to Malawi and Liberia for children who have no bedding. Please be aware that in Malawi and Liberia winter nights can be very cold.



If you would like to take part in knitting these blankets, or if you have spare double-knitting wool that you can contribute towards it, please contact Marjorie at marjorieleitch@gmail.com



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