



ST BARBARA'S PARISH CHURCH EARLSDON // ISSUE NO.476 // SPRING 2023

ST BARBARA'S NEWSLETTER

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Join us for Easter

Over the next few weeks, millions of people all over the world will stop to remember and celebrate the central events of the Christian faith. Do come and join us for some of our services over this very special time.

Stations of the Cross (26th March, 6.30pm) - a quiet service reflecting on Jesus' journey to the cross through a series of images and readings.

Buzz at St B's Craft Workshop & Easter Service (2nd April, 4pm-5.30pm) - an afternoon for young families, beginning with craft-making in the church hall, exploring themes of Easter, before we literally walk through the Easter story, going to different parts of the church and garden to imagine and re-live the events of Easter, through drama and music. It is a wonderfully special way to introduce children to the Easter story. We finish with sandwiches, cakes and tea.

Holy Week Complies (Monday 3rd - Wednesday 5th April, 7.30pm) - A short, meditative service, following in the footsteps of Christian communities throughout the centuries, reflecting on the events of the last week of Jesus' life.

Maudy Thursday Communion Service (6th April, 7.30pm) - A service using drama, music and reflection as we share communion and reflect on the events of the Last Supper.

Good Friday Service of the Cross (7th April, 2-3pm) - A quiet and moving service as we remember afresh the suffering and death of Christ.

Easter Sunrise Service (9th April, 5.30am) - an unforgettable way to start Easter with a bonfire, candles and the welcoming of the dawn, and with a hearty breakfast for all afterwards. The service, which mixes ancient liturgy, inspiring readings, visual wonder and joyful celebration, is for many, children and adults alike, the most memorable service of the year. (Note that this replaces our usual 8am service).

Easter Sunday Service (9th April, 10am) - a wonderful, uplifting service as we celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the new life he brings, followed by an Easter bonnet parade.

Mothering Sunday

19th March is Mothering Sunday. What plans have you made? What plans are being made for you?

It is a special day when we can give thanks for our mothers, and recognize and value their unique contribution in our lives. Why not come and make St Barbara's part of your plans? Our Mothering Sunday service is at 10am - late enough to do that special breakfast in bed beforehand; and will be finished by 11am - so plenty of time to cook that special Sunday lunch afterwards! Do come and join us for a lovely service of song, prayer and reflection.

Thought for the Season: Grasping the nettle



One of our main holiday activities as children was walking. I remember us going on some pretty adventurous walks from quite an early age. By the age of ten, I had traversed across a glacier in Austria, been turned back by waist-high snow on Snowdon, been drenched and lost in the mists of Dartmoor, and crawled along a narrow cliff path with a 1000-foot sheer drop to our side in the Swiss Alps.

But it was one of our tamer walks – in the Suffolk countryside – when I particularly appreciated my dad's presence. Our woodland path was suddenly blocked by a huge bank of nettles – 6-foot high and venomous. There was no way round. And being a warm day, we only had shorts and T-shirts: no protection from these green monsters. The thought of

proceeding filled me with dread.

And then dad pulled up his socks, took a deep breath and walked straight in, trampling down as many of the nettles as he could, clearing a way. He disappeared into the dense undergrowth, to return a few minutes later, his arms and legs a rash of stings, but with a pathway clear. He was our saviour that day. We walked through to the other side of the wood, with barely a sting among us, whilst he bore the itches and swelling for a few days to come.

Over these next few weeks Christians remember an act of love on a completely different scale, an act where someone went ahead of us to beat down, to trample down, the sting of something far worse than nettles, of death itself. When Jesus died on the cross, he entered death to overcome it, to ensure that it did not end the journey. His death, his drawing the sting upon himself, opens up the way for us to walk through death to life on the other side. He has cleared the way.

It came at great cost, a cost beyond our imagining, but a cost that, as a parent would, he took for us. The marks of sacrifice are still visible on his risen hands and feet. He has gone before us, he has cleared the way, and he returns to guide us through.

As we approach Easter over this coming month may the stirring refrain from Handel's Messiah, quoting Saint Paul, ring in our hearts and minds: "O Death, where is thy sting?" The nettle has been grasped; death's sting has been drawn.

Rev Tulo Raistrick

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

Ever thought of joining a midweek study group?

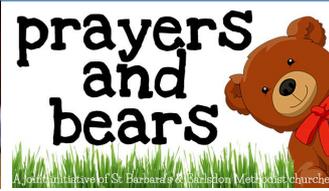
There is a lot more to our church than Sunday morning services. We have various groups, known as home groups, that meet midweek in people's houses. They provide opportunities to talk, drink tea, study the bible or other Christian books together and pray. Sometimes these studies follow particular themes or particular books of the bible. The groups are very varied, with one for men, one for mainly women, several mixed groups, older more established groups and newly-formed groups. They mostly meet fortnightly. Here are some comments from members of the groups about what they get from them:

"Being part of my home group gives me time to get to know some fellow Christians in Earlsdon and to discuss issues of faith in a supportive environment. I learn something every time from the other members of the group and appreciate their personal experience and their depth of knowledge." Dan Rathbone

"Dominic and I love being part of a home group. It's a great opportunity to develop friendships and grow in our faith all together. We find it very helpful to be able to share and pray for each other. We also really like being able to host and have the group in our home." Susan Finch Noyes

"I have been a member of the group for about eight years and have really enjoyed the friendship aspect, the cups of tea (sometimes with cake) and the lively discussions. Other members' knowledge of history always provides fascinating insight into any bible passages we are looking at. Most importantly, the group has provided spiritual support through difficult times." Natalie Friend-du Preez

All groups are open to new people who want to join, or even just come along for a week and try it out, whatever your knowledge or level of experience. Please contact Tulo, the vicar, if you are interested in finding out more.



Church Services

Every Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion

This is a quiet, meditative service.

10.00am Parish Communion (also available online at stbarbaras.com)

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. There is a Sunday school group for primary and pre-school children during the service.

Every Wednesday (in term time)

9.30am Prayers and Bears (at Earlsdon Methodist Church)

A short, fun and special service for the under-5s and their parents/carers, followed by snacks and crafts.

11.30am Holy Communion

A small, intimate service, providing space for quiet and stillness in the middle of the week.

Every Month on a Sunday Afternoon

5.00pm Buzz at St B's (on 2nd Apr, 23rd Apr & 21st May)

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.

Events and services in Lent

Tuesdays in Lent, 12noon-1.30pm - Lent Lunches

hosted by: St Mary Magdalen (28th Feb); St Barbara's (7th March); Earlsdon Methodist (14th March); All Souls (21st March) and Hearsall Baptist (28th March)

19th March, 10.00am - Mothering Sunday Service

26th March, 6.30pm - Stations of the Cross Service

Holy Week & Easter Services

2nd April, 4.00pm - Buzz at St B's Easter Craft Workshop & Service

3rd-5th April, 7.30pm - Holy Week Compline

6th April, 7.30pm - Maundy Thursday Service

7th April, 2.00pm - Good Friday Service of the Cross

9th April, 5.30am - Easter Sunrise Service

9th April, 10.00am - Easter Sunday Service

Events in May

1st May - Church May Day Fete

14th May - Annual Church Meeting

20th May - Quiz Night with Fish & Chip Supper

Would you like prayer for someone or for yourself? Feel free to email Christine on prayerchstb@gmail.com or telephone the vicar on 07869 603216. Prayers can be said in church services or confidentially—just let us know.



Tap Twinning - Making a Splash this Lent

Throughout Lent, St Barbara's Church is giving a particular focus to the issue of access to water. One in four people in the world lack access to safe drinking water. One in 10 people have to walk for more than 30 minutes from their homes to get to a clean water supply. This burden overwhelmingly falls on women and girls, leaving them at risk of violence and sexual attack and unable to attend school. 144 million people have no option but to get all their water from unprotected sources such as rivers or lakes, which leaves them at high risk of water-borne diarrhoeal diseases. Every year 297,000 children under five die due to diarrhoea linked to unsafe water and poor sanitation.

So this Lent, St Barbara's is supporting Tap Twinning - an initiative that helps improve access to clean water and hand washing facilities for communities in our world that don't have safe water and sanitation. Our aim is to "twin" each of our church taps - we have over ten - with a community in another part of the world, so that they too can access the clean water we take for granted.

Please do join us as we seek to make a difference. To find out more, visit the Tap Twinning website (<https://www.toilettwinning.org/tap-twinning/>), and to make a donation, click on our Just Giving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/st-barbaras-church-lentappeal2023>

What Lent and Easter mean to me

Lent and Easter are special seasons in the Church year and we asked some members of St Barbara's about what they mean to them.

"Lent is a time of personal reflection. Holy week to Easter Sunday is a time to remember why I follow the Christian faith and Easter offers me the hope for the future that new life brings." **Sarah Ballinger**

"What an enormous privilege it is to be loved by Almighty God. Lent gives us a great opportunity to look again at God's Word prayerfully and to take note of what it is saying to us now. My response to His invitation to "come" is, I believe, the most important of my life, though inconveniently timed, was my first reaction. God did not send Jesus to condemn us, or others, but to save us, perhaps even from ourselves. The Cross - the sacrifice - God granted of His Son to fulfil the Jewish Tradition and instigate the forgiveness of our sins is mind-blowing. All this for us to have life in all its fullness - through the presence of the Holy Spirit. This extravagant love of God is His gift for all of us. (What we do with it is our gift to Him.)"

Gwen Wells

"When I was young whilst I was familiar with Lent and Easter and what they meant, I would probably have to say that pancakes and chocolate eggs are the dominant memories!

Attending church regularly has given me an opportunity to reflect on what it means to me to be a Christian and what I can do personally to live out the values Jesus taught us. The Bible study group has also provided a great focus for this, and I find reading the events leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection both moving and uplifting. The culmination of the Easter Sunday sunrise service perfectly captures the celebration, even though the 5:30am start is a challenge!

Whilst I use Lent to reflect on the sacrifice made by Jesus, rather than giving up cakes, chocolates etc., this year I have personally chosen to read the prayers and passages that Tulo sends and try to find ways that I might be able to help others. Lent and Easter are times to consider my own relationship with God and also offer me the chance to reset and see how I can incorporate Christian values into my life throughout the whole year as well."

Chris Moorley

CONTACTS

Vicar: Rev'd Tulo Raistrick

07869 603216

tulo@raistricks.com

Hall Bookings:

Elaine Parnell 024 7671 5583

stbarbarashallbookings@outlook.com

Choir Director:

Katherine Owen 01926 851568

Organist:

Norman Owen 01926 851635