



ST BARBARA'S PARISH CHURCH EARLSDON // ISSUE NO.477 // SUMMER 2023

# ST BARBARA'S NEWSLETTER

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## *Lent tap twidders and Easter early risers!*

For its Lent Appeal this year, St Barbara's decided to twin its taps. Tap Twinning helps improve access to clean water and handwashing facilities for communities that don't have safe water and sanitation and who often have to walk several miles to collect water, often from unclean sources. Having twinned our church toilets a few years ago, our goal this Lent was to twin our church taps.

The most effort was made by the children of the church (and a few adults) who walked round the outside of the church in sponsored circuits carrying containers of water which both helped raise money and helped them gain an insight into the lives of children who lack taps and have to walk long distances to collect fresh water. They managed an impressive 101 times between them! An amazing total of £1,589 was raised altogether, more than enough to twin all our church taps. Many thanks to all who contributed.

Many of St Barbara's regular congregation and a few visitors had an early start on Easter Sunday, arriving at church at 5.30am for the traditional Easter Sunrise service on Sunday 9 April. The service began with everyone gathered round the brazier at the front of the church. The bonfire was lit and the dancing flames watched in fascination by children and adults alike as a variety of Bible readings were read. The Easter candle was lit from the fire and, in turn, individuals lit their small candles and took them into the darkened church. The service combined ancient liturgy and joyful singing as we welcomed in the dawn and celebrated the resurrection of Jesus. Afterwards there was a hearty breakfast for all in the vicarage which everyone gratefully enjoyed.

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## *Old Testament prophets – coming soon to a pulpit near you!*

What does the phrase "Old Testament prophet" conjure up for you? Wild-eyed, bearded men? Fire-and-brimstone preachers of judgment and inevitable doom awaiting an indifferent or hostile crowd?

Beards apart, those images are a long way wide of the reality. At our Sunday services in June and July, we'll be exploring what the Old Testament prophets were really like – and why their message is still surprisingly relevant today.

Jeremy Bevan, our curate, writes: 'As I've pulled this series together, what's impressed me is the way that message so often seems to glow with the love and mercy of God. Yes, there's strong, urgent exhortation to the people: "change your ways". But why? The prophets believed our loving creator God knows our lives' deepest needs. That's why they call the people of their time (and us?) back to their 'best selves', in order that they might flourish under God's life-enhancing guiding care and rule. I hope the prophets' wisdom and encouragement will excite and encourage us all as we explore their message together this summer.'

## *Tending a thing of beauty - your life*



It was beautiful in a sharp, early morning December frost, and it's beautiful now. In different ways, my walking route from home to St. Barbara's is a continual source of delight and inspiration through the changing seasons.

As spring has turned to summer, I've marvelled at the wayside 'weeds' springing up in the most improbable places, like those in the photo here, growing in Osborne Road. Somehow, bedded in the barest minimum of earth, with a mere toe-hold on life, these poppies and cornflowers have found a way not just to live, but to thrive gloriously - a beautiful, contrasting ensemble of vivid red, violet and blue.

They won't last, of course. Even if they bloom for a while yet, the city council's pesticide sprayer buggy, a sort of botanical grim reaper on wheels, will eventually come for them. But it did that last year, and still they return, seemingly more beautiful and vigorous than before.

"Is my life beautiful like one of these flowers?" That might seem a strange question to ask ourselves, even a rather pointless distraction if we or loved ones are going through very tough times. The blight of ill-health, relationships deteriorating, or the harsh economic climate can make such a question seem a luxury, or not worth our time just now.

But Jesus, having observed the beauty of the wildflowers of Galilee, insists the question is neither the preserve of the comfortable nor a waste of energy. "I tell you", he says, "not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these". And then he frames the issue for his hearers: if God's care extends to 'clothing' transient, seemingly insignificant flowers with such beauty, can God not make your life a thing of beauty, too? However precariously rooted it may seem, however unpromising the outlook?

As Jesus sees it, we're made by God, made for relationship with God. Tending that relationship - watering and weeding it, so to speak - by spending time with God in prayer, and reading the Bible, whatever our circumstances, keeps our life on course to becoming a thing of beauty in God's sight. Just like those wayside weeds in Osborne Road.

Rev Jeremy Bevan

Why not visit [stbarbarasearlsdon.com/talks](https://stbarbarasearlsdon.com/talks) to read more reflections on faith and life?

## *A special service at Coventry Cathedral*

On Sunday 2nd July at Coventry Cathedral, Jeremy Bevan, our curate here at St Barbara's, will be being ordained as a priest. This will be a very special moment for all of us at St Barbara's as we have gained so much from Jeremy's ministry over the last year. As a priest, Jeremy will be able to lead and preside at our communion services, and will continue to work alongside Tulo, our vicar, in serving the church and wider community.

Jeremy writes: "Pray daily that your heart may be enlarged" are the words Bishop Christopher will say to those being priested on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. It's a great prayer. Please make it yours for me, too, as I prepare for the day, and continue serving the people of St. Barbara's parish."

To show our support for Jeremy, the whole congregation will be attending the priesting service at Coventry Cathedral at 10.30am on 2nd July. As a result, there will be no 10.00am Sunday service at St Barbara's on that day, so do come along to the cathedral to support Jeremy.





## What's On

### **Every Sunday**

#### **8.00am Holy Communion**

This is a quiet, meditative service.

#### **10.00am Parish Communion** (also available online at [stbarbaras.com](http://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 16th July, 20th August & 17th September)

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.

### **Special services and events this summer**

**Saturday 1st July, 8.00am - Churches Together Morning Prayer and Breakfast** (at St Barbara's)

**Sunday 2nd July, 10.30am - Ordination Service at Coventry Cathedral** (see p2)

**Sunday 9th July, 10.00am - Love into Action family service, followed by Sports Day & Barbecue** (see p4)

**Sunday 10th September, 10.00am - Love into Action family service**

**Sunday 24th September, 10.00am - Dedication Service, followed by Bring & Share lunch**



## May Day 2023

Our May Day Fete took place on 1 May this year. The church, hall and garden were filled with an interesting variety of stalls, including several local groups, a mini model train display, a visit from the energetic Morris Dancers, and a range of tasty refreshments including sizzling sausages on the barbecue. Thanks to everyone who helped and to all those who came along. It was great to have so many from the community pass through our church, we hope you enjoyed yourselves. The day raised an impressive nearly £2400.

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



Teresa, Fabien, Matt and Etienne

## Meet the Rogers family

### **How did you come across St Barbara's?**

We first came to St Barbara's in August 2022. We were looking for a local, friendly church, with good music and opportunities for our children to feel involved too. Needless to say, we felt welcomed straight away and Fabien, our then one year old, soon felt at home (the noisy ramp leading up to the altar was an exciting bonus for him!). Our youngest son, Etienne, who was born in November 2022, will without doubt follow in his older brother's footsteps!

### **What do you like about St Barbara's?**

St Barbara's feels like the perfect place for us to bring Fabien and Etienne. Not only do we enjoy the activities in Hive during the 10am service (decorating biscuits are a hit with Fabien!), but the monthly Buzz services have been a great way to take time in the week to reflect, as well as meet other members of the congregation. Tulo and Sarah (also known as Superwoman in our family) have made us feel so welcome and from the moment we stepped in to the church, have taken the time to talk to us. We are looking forward to the Buzz weekend away and Fabien has already started talking about his 'holiday with Tulo'!

Going to church has become something we look forward to as a family. Whenever we leave church to go home, Fabien often asks if we can 'go to church again?'

### **What do you like to do outside church?**

Matt's hobbies include playing the oboe and piano, running marathons (although, much to his dismay, Teresa has the fastest marathon time), and he even has a bronze medal in Latin and Ballroom dancing! However, he has given all of that up now to change nappies, complete DIY projects with a strict supervisor and sort out our never ending pile of washing!

Teresa plays the flute and enjoys exercising. At the moment she goes to Buggy Workout at War Memorial Park on a Wednesday to keep fit and entertain Etienne! She also has a passion for languages and travelling. After university she visited South America and South East Asia and has lived in France twice. When the boys are a bit older she would love for them to join her on a backpacking adventure!

Although we've had to adapt what we do in our free time since having children, we still enjoy going on runs with our running buggy and often try out different Parkruns. We also try and speak French at mealtimes and go to Bilinguasing, a baby French singing class.

## Sports day and barbecue



Are you faster than Usain Bolt? Can you jump higher than Michael Jordan? Can you hit a ball further than Ben Stokes? No? Then the St Barbara's BBQ and Sports Day is the event for you!

On Sunday 9th July, straight after our 10am family service, we are holding our summer BBQ and Sport's Day in the church garden. This is always a great fun time, with an assortment of fun races (egg and spoon races, sack races, crazy relays), in which everyone is welcome to take part, whether children or children at heart. And this is all followed by a delicious barbecue (with vegetarian options). Do come along and enjoy the day with us. (And unlike the cricket, we do have wet weather options available!)

## CONTACTS

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