

Caring for Our Older Citizens

St Barbara's has an important ministry in bringing hope and companionship to many of the elderly in our community. Members of the congregation regularly take services in a number of residential homes in the parish, including Aylesdene Court, Belvedere House, Belvedere Park and Herald Lodge, and we recently hosted a Christmas lunch for residents of Melbourne House.

Many of the residents, though not physically able to attend church any more, have a deep Christian faith and real spiritual needs, and it is a privilege for the church to share with them through visiting and taking services, singing hymns, reading



from the Bible, praying and sharing communion. Church members also visit those who are housebound or unwell, bringing friendly conversation, prayer, communion or practical help, whatever is needed.

One resident said of the services: "You will never know how much we look forward to your visits and how much it means." But as one of our regular home visitors says, "Neither will they fully know the joy we experience in meeting many new friends."

Contacts

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The vicar is always ready to help in an emergency but would like to keep Monday as his day off.

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For more information go to
www.stbarbarasearlsdon.org.uk

Would you like prayer for someone or for yourself?

Feel free to telephone Katherine, (prayer chain organiser for St Barbara's) on 01926 851568. Prayers could be said at the Wednesday or Sunday services as well as being added to the prayer chain that can be confidential if desired.



From Earlsdon Methodist Church



After Advent, a thousand carol services, Christmas day and at the end of the twelve days of Christmas, we get the Feast of Epiphany on 6th

January. It is the festival at which we remember the wise men visiting Jesus in Bethlehem. Here is the best (?) joke I know about the wise men. Why were the wise men wearing bright yellow firemen helmets when they visited the baby Jesus. *Answer: Because they had come from afar.* Epiphany does not just recall the visit of the Magi. The church has traditionally also celebrated two other pivotal moments in the life of Jesus at this time. The first is his presentation at the Temple in Jeru-

salem which was an important custom for a new born Jewish baby. The second is his baptism in the Jordan by John.

During the presentation at the Temple, the gospel of Luke mentions two elderly characters, Anna and Simeon. Simeon, whom Luke calls righteous and devout, upon seeing Jesus is moved by the Spirit and proclaims, "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." This prayer is used throughout Christian worship and is called the *Nunc Dimittis*. It captures one of the key themes of the Christmas narrative, a light shining in the darkness, but also prepares the ground for the gospel to come.

For the New Year, there is perhaps one word that could stand out for us. Simeon says of Jesus, "my eyes have seen your salvation". We might be tempted to think of salvation in terms of going to heaven, but its use in the Bible is usually focused on the present, in the here and now. This worldly salvation is rescue, deliverance, liberation, protection, healing and being made whole. It is salvation from those parts of our lives which bring us down. It is a reminder of the good news of Jesus. In his life, teaching, miracles, death and resurrection, Jesus was born so that we might know salvation in our lives today. And as Simeon realised, such new beginning, such transformation and liberation is open to all. Happy New Year.

Rev Andrew Charlesworth

St Barbara's Newsletter

www.stbarbarasearlsdon.org.uk

St Barbara's Parish Church, Earlsdon January/February 2015 No. 443

A Place of Stillness and Peace

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Welcome to the New Year!

It can often come as a source of welcome relief. After all the rushing around to buy Christmas presents and food, the need to send out Christmas cards and emails, the parties and social functions, arriving in January can sometimes be accompanied by a sigh of relief. Life has a chance to return to something a bit more "normal".

And in the midst of all the busyness we may have forgotten the last time we sat and were still, when we allowed ourselves the space to sit and hear the sound of our breathing; or to slow down enough to pay attention to the beating of our heart; or when we appreciated the warmth of a mug of tea cradled in our hands; or the ray of sunshine that pierces through a cloudy day. Being still, being attentive to the small things all around us.



The recent rise in the modern mindfulness movement is a very welcome recognition of the need we have in life to pause, stop and reflect. We need space.

That is why at St Barbara's we hold on the first Sunday of every month an evening service especially for that purpose. Called Soul Space, it aims to be exactly that – space for the soul to breathe.



Centered around the beautiful tradition of Christian monasteries throughout the centuries, it is a service of simple words and profound silence, a place of stillness and peace.

And then once every three months, our excellent choir provides a musical context in which our reflection can take place, with the service of choral evensong. Our next **Soul Space** services are on Sundays 4th January and 1st March at 6.30pm.

Our next **Choral Evensong** is on Sunday 1st February at 6.30pm.

Do come along and find space for the soul.

To be a pilgrim...

"How wrong I was!" That was the conclusion of one member of St Barbara's recent Pilgrim Course, a course designed to help people explore and discuss faith.

But not, "How wrong I was in all I believed." Far from it. Rather, "how wrong I was to have thought such a group would make me feel scared and totally inadequate."

The thought of being part of a discussion group about faith can indeed terrify many, but the members of this six-week course quickly found the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly, the discussions open and honest, and the themes for discussion stimulating.

"I was sad when the course ended," one member said.

"I felt I had made new friends. I'm now looking forward to starting a new course and having more thought-provoking experiences."



On Wednesday 14th January a new Pilgrim Course begins at the vicarage exploring prayer. Meeting every fortnight for six sessions (from 7.30-9pm), all are welcome. Please let Tulo, our vicar know, if you would like to come, on 024 7501 7889 or tulo@raistricks.com.

Thought for the Month

Love and grumpy bears

There's a library book that has become one of my children's favourites. The dad, waking up in a distinctly grumpy mood, gradually over the course of the morning, morphs into a grizzly bear, his pyjamas bursting



apart at the seams, the dining chair splintering under his newly acquired weight. Needless to say, the bear has a sore head.

I have no idea why my children should like the story, but maybe, just maybe, they think it's a story that gets repeated occasionally in our home.

The other day was one such day. A week into the holidays, cabin fever growing, I woke up grumpy and short of patience, quick to anger, easily irked. My behavior needed censure, and when my little girl approached me, I fully expected her to tell me off, in the kind of way only little girls can.

Instead, she stretched out her arms, gave me a snug-

gling hug and whispered into my ear: "Daddy, I love you."

It was the thing I felt I least deserved but most needed to hear.

For all my grumpiness, she still wanted me, needed me, cared for me. She wanted me to know that I was still special to her, that I hadn't blown it.

It made me ponder how often do I look at my children, at those I love, and then whisper in their ear, that I love them, love them totally, fully, without ifs and buts.

For when we do so, we do something which is a sacred act. We are repeating back none other than the words that God speaks to us, every minute of every day. "I love you – without conditions, without caveats, without regrets, without fail."

Our loved ones, especially young children or grandchildren, for all their challenges and frustrations at times, give us a window into the love God has for us, for they show us what unconditional love can be like.

And it may even help me to be a less grumpy bear...

Rev Tulo Raistrick

A "Hive" of Activity

Ten days before Christmas saw St Barbara's church hall a hive of activity as fifty adults and children spent the afternoon making an amazing array of crafts and Christmas goodies.

From beautiful and intricate Christmas lanterns, to fun and festive Christmas hats, everyone's creative juices were truly flowing. There were cleverly designed rotating calendars for the new year, and Christmas card designs of every shape and size. And of course, there was glitter to sprinkle on everything!

Following the workshop, almost one hundred of us gathered round the Christmas tree in the church to sing carols, to put on decorations, and to hear the story of Christmas once again. It was a wonderful afternoon that captured both the fun and the joy of Christmas.

Do come along to our next Buzz at St B's service, when we will be doing more singing and craft making, at 5pm on Sunday 18th January.



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, 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.

Children are especially welcome, and we have groups that cater for pre-school, primary and secondary school ages, that meet during the service.

The service lasts just over an hour, and is attended by about 100 people each week.

Mid-week Service

Holy Communion: Every Wednesday at 9.30am

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

Every Month

Buzz @ St B's: 18th Jan 5pm
15th Feb 5pm

This is a fun, creative and interactive service for families. The ser-

vice involves lively songs, craft, drama and other activities. It lasts 40 minutes and is followed by tea, with a delicious range of sandwiches and cakes.

Soul Space: 4th Jan 6.30pm
1st Mar 6.30pm
5th April 6.30pm

Special Services

1st Feb 6.30pm – Choral Evensong

18th Feb 7.30pm Ash Wednesday
This service marks the beginning of Lent

15th March Mothering Sunday A special All Age Service

5th April Easter Sunday

Other Events

Friendship Group

The group meets once a month, on a Wednesday at 2pm in St Barbara's Church Hall.

Visitors are welcome (50p).

January 7th AGM

February 4th to be announced

Social Events

Film nights - 7pm for 7.15pm in the church hall

January - no film night

February 5th 'Love Punch (12)'

A great film for all those Valentines Romantics out there. Starring Pierce Brosnan (for the ladies) and Emma Thompson for those guys!! Its an unmissable romantic comedy.

March 5th 'The Two Faces of January (12)'

This atmospheric thriller, where a young couple on holiday meet a far from honest tour guide, is set to keep pulses racing with the twists and turns where all is not what it seems with the sinister goings on and dark secrets....

Our next family film event will show episodes of 'Shaun the Sheep' showing on **Sunday 11th January at 12 noon**. Nibbles and drinks are provided, entry is free. See you there!

From the Registers

Weddings: Samuel Brierley & Rebecca Prince (6th Dec)

Funerals: Margaret Norman (5th Dec)

Jim Arnold (10th Dec)

Churches Together in Earlsdon & Chapelfields

Prayer Breakfasts 8am

3rd Jan All Souls Catholic Church

7th Feb Earlsdon Methodist Church

Special Services & Events

Sat 24th Jan Fellowship Meal (Hearsall Baptist Church)

Sun 25th Jan Ecumenical Service (St Mary Magdalen Church)

Tues 24th Feb Lent Lunch (All Souls Church)

From the Editor

The excitement of Christmas is over and we now go into the uncertainty of the New Year. I am always apprehensive on 31st December, wondering what it will bring, but this soon evaporates into acceptance of the unknown - will one of my grandchildren get engaged, will I win the lottery (no chance as I never play!), or will I hear news from longstanding but distant friends. I can certainly do some long term planning for our next edition, (which will be approaching Lent and Easter) i.e. what to give up for Lent (?chocolate!) or does one add an activity instead, e.g. regular help for a neighbour or friend in need or regular charitable giving. Yours, in thoughtful deliberation! *Josie, ed.*

