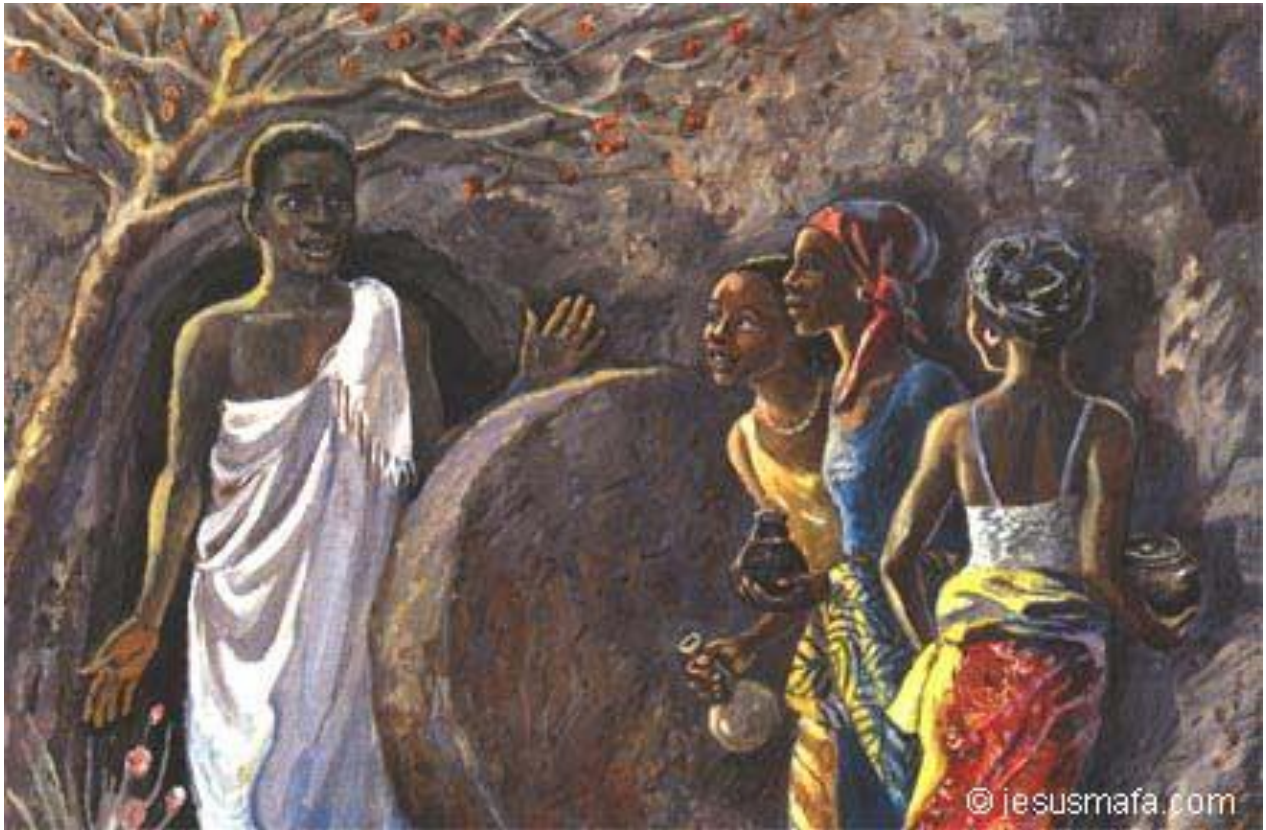


St Barnabas Church, Mitcham

Parish News

Christ is risen!



Jesusmafa.com/church@stmarysdunblane.org

And vaccines promise hope...

EASTER 2021

WHY WORSHIPPERS NEED TO BE VACCINATED AGAINST COVID

‘This is a call to my fellow worshippers, and to the BAME community as a whole, to take up the offer of vaccination. There has been a slow take-up of vaccination within the BAME community, my community, for a variety of reasons.

A little over a year ago we regularly met in our church at St Barnabas to worship and serve the Lord, mixed and interacted freely with one another and enjoyed the love and friendship we have between us. In March 2020 we were hit by the first national Covid lock down and our regular church services stopped.

In December 2020 the first vaccine was approved and soon afterwards vaccinations began with frontline NHS Staff, who throughout the year had been at the forefront of treating and protecting the sick. As an NHS Worker I have worked throughout the pandemic and was privileged to be among the first to be vaccinated; since then I have had my second jab to give me full protection.

We need to take up the offer to be vaccinated to be protected as a community. With a community vaccinated and protected, we would expect the country to open up, thereby allowing us to meet freely. And to worship the Lord in our fellowship at St Barnabas once again.’

(David Waluube, Deputy Churchwarden)

ST BARNABAS PARISH NEWS

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Diane Cooper

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Johnson Ayibiowu

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A big 'Thank You!' to all who contributed to this issue!

If you would like to advertise in The Parish News please send an e-mail to theparishnews@gmail.com with the subject heading beginning with the word 'Advertise' and we will send you the rates.

Whilst we very much appreciate the support given to the magazine by its advertisers, we are not in a position to vouch for the quality of the goods and services advertised.

The Editors reserve the right to edit, shorten or withhold a piece if necessary.

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CONTENTS

	Page
Services at St Barnabas Church	5
Church Dates for your diary	6
Message from the Vicar	7
Letter from the Editor	9
What we have been doing:	
Praying together	10
Celebrating Easter at St Barnabas	10
Exploring our faith	12
Sharing with others	15
Finding out about fast fashion	19
Remembering money changing	21
Moving house with Angie and Tina	21
Celebrating Easter across the world	22
Reflecting on spirituality ... and foraging	25
Seeing God	26
Praying together	27
Seeking God	28
Photo Gallery	30
Advertisements	35
People in the parish	Back cover

SERVICES AT ST BARNABAS CHURCH

Sunday Worship: **10.00 am:** Parish Communion in Church and Livestreamed [subject to circumstances].

Wednesday Service: **8.00 pm:** Bible Study followed by Compline (Night Prayer) on Zoom.



St Barnabas, Mitcham is the Church of England Parish Church of North Mitcham, in the Diocese of Southwark, comprising Graveney ward and parts of Figges Marsh and Lavender Fields wards.

St Barnabas is a member of Churches Together in Mitcham (an ecumenical body) and Mitcham Group Ministry (formed by the Anglican parishes of St Peter's & St Paul's, St Mark's, St Olave's and St Barnabas).



Our Mission Statement:

'St Barnabas is committed to encouraging and nurturing all people in their faith in God and their service to the wider community.'

CHURCH DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

APRIL 2021

Thursday 1 **Maundy Thursday**

Friday 2 **Good Friday**

Sunday 4 Easter Day

Sunday 11 **Easter 2**

Sunday 18 **Easter 3**

Sunday 25 **Easter 4**

MAY 2021

Sunday 2 **Easter 5**

Sunday 9 **Easter 6**

Thursday 13 Ascension Day

Sunday 16 **Easter 7 / Ascension 1**

Sunday 23 Pentecost

Sunday 30 Trinity Sunday

JUNE 2021

Sunday 6 **Trinity 1**

Friday 11 St Barnabas Day

Sunday 13 **Trinity 2**

Sunday 20 **Trinity 3**

Sunday 27 **Trinity 4**

JULY 2021

Sunday 4 **Trinity 5**

Sunday 11 **Trinity 6**

Sunday 18 **Trinity 7**

Sunday 25 **Trinity 8**



MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR



Dear Parishioners,
Happy Easter!

You know, at Christmas we celebrate ‘the greatest story ever told’, and at Easter, we celebrate, well, I could see someone saying, the greatest literary hoax in history? Jesus, the son of God who was born miraculously in a manger, son of Mary, a preacher, a miracle worker, who claimed to be the Messiah, died, was buried and now it is said that he was raised from the dead. As Peter puts it:

‘They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead’ (Acts 10:39-41).

It’s nearly two thousand years since this story was first told and it is still being told and celebrated. And from its very beginning there have been those who wholeheartedly embraced it and those who have rejected its claim.

The resurrection of Jesus has been debated throughout history with some trying to prove it and others trying to disprove it. The disciples were the first ones to be sceptical about it until they themselves saw the risen Lord. For the religious and civil authorities of the time they had to make sure that the disciples’ version of those events would be discredited by spreading the news that the body of Jesus had been stolen by his own disciples. This is what we would now call Fake News.

There have been other ways of disputing the narrative of the empty tomb, explaining it away in a way or another. Géza Vermes, a British scholar, presents six valid possibilities to explain the empty tomb narrative:

1. The body was removed by someone unconnected with Jesus;
2. The body was stolen by the disciples;

3. The empty tomb (the tomb visited by the women) was not the tomb of Jesus;
4. Buried alive, Jesus later left the tomb;
5. Jesus recovered from a coma and left Judea;
6. There was a spiritual, not bodily, resurrection.

In the end, Vermes states that none of these six possibilities is likely to be historical.

More recently, we hear some authors doubting not just the resurrection of Jesus but his very own existence. Then comes the idea that Jesus as a real person or historical figure is nothing more than a myth.

Three years ago, Cambridge professor, Simon Gathercole, wrote an article in The Guardian on Good Friday entitled 'What is the historical evidence that Jesus Christ lived and died?' He ends his article affirming that there are 'abundant historical references [which] leave us with little reasonable doubt that Jesus lived and died. The more interesting question – which goes beyond history and objective fact – is whether Jesus died and lived.'

Then, he points out that 'a recent survey discovered that 40% of adults in England did not believe that Jesus was a real historical figure.' I would say that one thing is quite clear here, they cannot claim that their belief, or lack of it, is based on scientific evidence.

Easter Sunday is the day prophesied by Isaiah six centuries before Christ, *'It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation'* (Isaiah 25:9). And it was on Easter Day, that three women, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, went to visit the body of Jesus and found his tomb empty.

Jesus was no longer in that sepulchre. That cold and dark cave could not hold him there because in him was the life that gives life to the dead. In him was the light that shines and overcomes the darkness. In him was the freedom that breaks the chains of oppression and frees us from the captivity of sin and death.

When the women arrive at the tomb they see a young man, whom they will understand later to be an angel, and he tells them:

'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you' (Mark 16.6,7).

That's what we celebrate at Easter, the empty tomb, the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, the victory over death, as again prophesied by the prophet Isaiah: 'he will swallow up death for ever.'

The Easter message for us today is not just about believing in the resurrection but sharing this wonderful news with others and as we do it, we see the risen Lord at work again.

Easter Blessings,

Fr Joabe

EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear readers

Welcome to the Easter edition of the Parish News. We still live in uncertain times, but we live, as Christians always have done, in the light of the Resurrection.

My thanks again to my colleagues, Fr Joabe and the wardens, Diane and Johnson, Delise and Pamela, and to Chris for doing the printing. And thanks also to Mopile, Nii and the Wednesday evening group, my collaborators in 'Exploring our faith'.

Now the news we have been waiting for: welcome to our newest member, Rowan Colette Best, born to Sarah and Adam on 8 April!

And here she is!



This issue answers the question: 'what have we been doing since the previous magazine?' You will also find Easter eggs scattered around – the egg is a symbol of new life, the shape symbolises eternity and both tell us of the real story of Easter. Can you find them all? Now read on...

Revd Trudy



PRAYING TOGETHER

*H*ear us as we ask for your help in our
*E*veryday lives;

*I*n making our world a better place to live,
*S*o humans can live in peace and harmony with all living creatures;

*R*estoring our world to its natural balance,
*I*n the hope that our actions now will improve our planet for those coming
after.

Send your blessings on all who have given their time and care (and in some
cases their lives) to those in need during the last year.

*E*nable us all to learn tolerance, love for our neighbour, and to put others'
needs before our own.

*N*ow at this Eastertide may the joy of the Resurrection fill us with hope, love
and the confidence to face the future. *AMEN*



(Margaret Longdon)

CELEBRATING EASTER AT ST BARNABAS

Palm Sunday was a very special day for us at St Barnabas Church, as we opened the church for the first time after three months closure. We had decided to close because of the rapid spread of the new variant of the Covid 19 virus.

To see each other after such a long time was emotional. We had to follow all the rules, social distancing, face masks and no singing. The atmosphere was very special, there was a warm, all-embracing feeling of fellowship. Father Joabe had produced one of his bespoke booklets which meant we could all take part. His homily was as usual very moving. We were impressed with the number of people who came to the service.

During Holy Week we decided to have meditation and Compline each evening with subjects to reflect the meaning of Holy Week; this was on Zoom, and led by the clergy. On Monday and Tuesday, Revd Trudy facilitated and chose as her subjects, 'where we can see God' and on Tuesday 'grey wolf, white wolf, which generated an interesting and lively discussion relating to making choices. On Wednesday Father Joabe facilitated, taking us through the whole of Holy Week from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, using paintings by Rubens which gave us a graphic description of the real meaning of Holy Week.

The Maundy Thursday service was held in the church and also on Zoom and Facebook. It was a very simple service, though sadly we were not able to have the foot washing. Father Joabe gave a moving homily during which he read a very thought-provoking poem he had written some years before. At the end of the service, when the altar was stripped of all its parements, Father Joabe read Psalm 22 (whose opening words: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?') were quoted by Jesus on the cross) and the church was left with a plain altar and the plain wooden cross, after which the congregation left in silence.

On Good Friday, we had the deeply moving, emotional and painful service of the Lord's Passion. Father Joabe officiated, assisted by Revd Trudy and we all took part. Father Joabe prostrated himself before the altar at the start of the service, before we followed the Stations of the Cross. Because of the restrictions, we had to stay in our places and could only turn toward each Station as both of the clergy reached them. Father Joabe then brought the wooden cross into the church and placed it against the altar. We were invited to go to the cross, stand before it and say a prayer. Sadly, we could not kiss the cross or touch it, but as we left the altar we could light a candle. This service was very moving and emotional and very well attended. The service was again live-streamed on Zoom and Facebook.



On Easter Sunday it was bright and sunny and there were more people in church than we expected, which was very special. The service was live-streamed on Zoom and Facebook. Father Joabe presided, assisted by Revd Trudy. We were able to have incense for the first time in a year, which I found very moving. We

could not sing, but at the relevant parts of the service the three ladies who have sung for us on Zoom each week, Cathy, Avril and Sarah, sang our Easter hymns. Father Joabe had produced the booklet with pictures and the Easter Liturgy. His homily was memorable with suitable stories and he sang one of the Easter hymns to illustrate a point. The fellowship in the church was tangible and moving.

We live-streamed the services for the first time this Easter. There were glitches but as the services continued so we improved. There is still a way to go to perfection, but I am sure that we will get there eventually. *[And we are very grateful to the tech team: Godwyns, Jimmy, Nii, Johnson, Cathy, Maci and Junior – it was lovely to hear him sing on Good Friday. Ed.]*

(Diane Cooper)

EXPLORING OUR FAITH

This section is based on some of the topics covered by the Wednesday Bible Study group, which meets at 8.00 on Zoom; the discussion is followed by a short service of Night Prayer.

‘It takes three people to make a riot’: exploring the Holy Trinity

This was an answer to the question ‘is there anything significant in the number three that is observable in human society?’ A legal source had a similar comment on the word ‘mingle’ as used in Covid regulations: ‘two people can’t mingle; it has to be at least three’. This rather gave away Revd Trudy’s punchline!

We looked at a common ‘threesome’: body, mind and spirit. Revd Trudy believed that it doesn’t really describe observable reality, not least because there is little scientific consensus on what ‘mind’ is (as opposed to the brain about which we know quite a lot). However, Alistair gave what he called a ‘controversial’ description of our thought processes, in terms of body, mind and spirit when we are making a decision. Revd Trudy didn’t change her mind, but was very impressed by the description!

Three is the smallest possible number for collective decision-making to take place. Three is the basis of human collective behaviour. It’s a number that forms the basis of grammar, the awareness of the self, the other and a third party. The Trinity models communication and cooperation; that’s what God is like and that’s what we should be like. The three persons of the Trinity are different, but equal; they are not a hierarchy. The Trinity is sometimes referred to as a dance which gives a lovely picture of the three persons moving as one.

We were all agreed that the Trinity was a difficult subject: we can never know God completely. But, as Fr Joabe reminded us, that doesn't mean we shouldn't try!



The Resurrection hope

The Oxford English dictionary defines hope as a feeling of expectation and a desire for a particular thing to happen.

Last Christmas I asked my godchildren what they would like from 'Father Christmas'. I got a long list and they all added that they hoped Santa would not forget them. This is what hope looks like to children! But that same feeling of anticipation is common to all God's children, non-Christians or Christians alike. And all societies and cultures have some sense of hope, though they will all describe it differently.

In the Hebrew Bible 'hope' is about an intense expectation of something. During Jewish history, in one of those periods of turmoil and exile when everything was failing around his chosen people, the prophet Isaiah wrote: 'I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding.' What Isaiah was waiting or hoping for was God himself, in a time when God really did seem to be hiding.

In the new Testament the followers of Jesus, after his ascension, cultivated the same concept of hope. They believed Jesus's life, death and resurrection were God's surprise response to our slavery to evil and death. Paul describes Jesus' resurrection as the good news that gives hope and glory, and the apostle Peter said that Jesus' resurrection opened up a living hope that people could be reborn to become new and different kinds of people - *1 Peter 13*.



This hope is based on a person who died and was raised from the dead, thus overcoming death. And Jesus' resurrection is a foretaste of what God has planned for the whole universe. It's a hope, based on the resurrection, that creation itself will be liberated from slavery and corruption into freedom where Gods children will be glorified!

So Christian hope is bold. it's about waiting for humanity and the whole universe to be rescued from evil and death!

(Nii Armar)

Christianity and racism, and the picture which I won't forget



The horrifying industry was also active in Europe. An African girl is shown at the 1958 Expo in Brussels, Belgium that featured a 'Congo Village' with visitors watching her from behind wooden fences

This photo was taken in 1958, yes, you read that correctly, 1958, within the lifetime of many of us, at the Expo Brussels which featured a 'Congo Village' where the little girl was 'shown' behind wooden fences. Why was she in Brussels? In the 19th century during the so-called 'scramble for Africa', the European powers carved up most of the continent for themselves. The people who lived there became their possessions. Yes, avowedly Christian societies 'owned' men, women and children, all children of God.

And even by the standards of the time Leopold II of Belgium was appalling, a murdering psychopath. Near the European quarter of Brussels is a park with at one end an enormous triumphal arch to the 'achievements' of Leopold II. I walked underneath it every day to go to work. I don't think anyone even noticed it or thought about what it represented. I wonder what happened to that little girl...

(Revd Trudy, based on material provided by Nii Armar.
The full text is available on request.)

SHARING WITH OTHERS



The Mothers' Union is still working for everyone around the world. During these Covid times, they have had prayer vigils and Zoom meetings for their leadership teams and services on line on Facebook.

2020 has been a very challenging year for us all and will remain with us for a very long time. It has been a very tough experience, with death, job losses, homelessness to solve along the way. It's as if we are in an endless quagmire without an exit.

Many world leaders have fought with great courage and fortitude to overcome the issues that everyone is facing, while others have fallen at the first fence and are still searching for the invisible exit.

Where will we be next year? Everyone is speculating. We are all hopeful that the New Year will bring a great season when we can laugh, talk and joke again, share meals with our families and friends and enjoy our community and worship with them. However, for now, we have to dig deep, find courage, inner strength and remember the Lord is watching over us and He will lead us home.

Then we can all rejoice in the love and fellowship of Jesus Christ.

(Etheline Baker-Harry)



During the last difficult year Christian Care has continued to support our existing families and new families which have been referred to us.

We have continued to receive very generous food donations, including those given by our local Islamic Muslim Womens' Association as well as from our churches and schools. These are sorted and distributed in large monthly deliveries to those in need. We have checked that children are either classed as vulnerable and are in school having cooked lunches, or are receiving the lunch vouchers to which they are entitled.

There are families who have been moved from temporary to permanent accommodation and have been assisted with furniture and other household goods that they lack, so that they have a reasonable home to start off with, bearing in mind that all the families have children.

We have given donated childrens' clothes to families to help during the winter period, as well as school uniforms. Newborn babies too have received clothes, as well as bedding and furniture like cots. Craft materials, toys, picnic packs as well as birthday and Christmas gifts, have been delivered with the food bags. We have checked that all the children have laptops, ipads or mobile phones so that they can benefit from the distance learning provided by their teachers.

(Lesley Morrison)



USPG (United Society Partners in the Gospel) is one of the Charities we support regularly. It was founded in 1701 by Thomas Bray as the SPG (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel), with the aim of extending Christian education and pastoral care within England and across the Atlantic.

Their geographical reach may have extended, but the focus on education and caring for others is still there. Their current title, however, reflects a shift in emphasis where the key word is 'partnership'. A recent magazine has articles from the Philippines, Bahrain and Ghana, among others. USPG works with partners overseas helping with the education and training of clergy and church workers; with defending Human Rights (particularly for women, children and indigenous peoples); combating climate change and caring for the environment.

Let's see what they are doing with the Church of South India.



USPG has been supporting the Church of South India (CSI) Green Schools programme since 2017. The idea behind Green Schools is to train students in environmental care; this the programme does by putting students in charge of conducting audits of their school. Each school participating in the programme appoints 60 students to assess its performance in areas such as air quality, energy efficiency and waste management.

You can find out more about them (and subscribe free to their magazine 'Koinonia') at this address. www.uspg.org.uk

(Revd Trudy)



Tooting Community Kitchen (TCK) is a charity supporting the homeless and needy by providing weekly hot food, essential food packs and other items, as well as signposting guests to other local agencies. We believe that everyone in our community deserves to feel cared for and valued without prejudice.

We run a weekly hot-food stall outside Iceland by Tooting Broadway Market's entrance on Saturdays and Wednesdays from 6:00pm to 7:00pm. We also facilitate outreach within Wandsworth and surrounding areas providing hot food, food packs, sleeping bags and other essential supplies.

We have a volunteer network of local residents who bake, cook, grow produce in their gardens and allotments, and use their professional skills to create nutritious and delicious dishes. In addition to this incredible support, we also have several regular sponsors, partners and donors who enable us to continue our work. Our volunteers neither get paid, nor claim expenses.

In the past few months, we have seen an increasing number of guests needing our support. In response to this growing demand, we have opened TCK food bank. These developments have enabled us to provide even more help and support to our guests at a time when so many are in need.

We are at 104 Upper Tooting Road, SW17 7EN.

<https://www.tootingcommunitykitchen.co.uk/>



(Kathleen Stevens, friend of Revd Trudy)

FINDING OUT ABOUT FAST FASHION

I've always been interested in fast fashion. It's very addictive and has always been a part of my life. Half of my wardrobe is filled with it because it's so cheap, easy to buy and be consumed by. When I was younger, I was always interested in the vast majority of fashionable clothes that were popular in society. Wearing what other people were wearing was something which created a satisfying feeling because it made me feel like I fitted in with other people.

Once I grew older and started to develop my knowledge of the clothing industry, I came to realise that something as small as clothes can create such a huge impact on the world we live in. This is something which I had never even thought about before. For example, to make a basic pair of jeans, about 1,800 gallons of water are needed just to grow enough cotton for a pair. Just imagine how many pairs of jeans are being made today! In my opinion, there needs to be a change in the production industry because one day there won't be a solution to save the environment that we live in.

I have also come to learn about how fast clothes accumulate around the world each year. When I was younger, I used to think things such as food, clothes and materials were produced in the UK which was very silly of me! I realised that most of the goods we have in the UK come from abroad and many are imported from low income countries. Most of the time these people are forced to work in atrocious conditions for endless hours and, most importantly, barely receive an adequate income. That is something that really struck me. This is when I realised I needed to change my habits.

When I had decided to take action, it was not as easy as I thought it would be. I thought it was something I could just jump into and proceed with but it wasn't so easy. I kept telling myself I would order this new top first and then I would start. Or I would see a new collection on a website and instantly spend hours looking for new clothes to buy quickly and then later start my fast fashion cleanse.

I soon came to realise that most of what I was buying was stuff I didn't truly want or even like. It was just the fact that it was something nice to have in my wardrobe. I realised this was an issue, that was damaging the environment and affecting others' lives. Just because something you're doing doesn't affect you it doesn't mean it won't affect others. It's better to think before you act, rather than doing something because you feel like it.

As a result I addressed my toxic obsession with fast fashion and followed these steps to help guide me on my journey:



- 1** Decluttering my wardrobe: I figured out what I actually have and like in my wardrobe. This is something that I highly recommend. It will help you find out what you actually need and the type of clothes you like to wear.
- 2** Ask yourself if you really need something before you buy it: When I started to do this, I realised that I started to wear more of what I already had.
- 3** Buying second hand clothing: Now this is something that would be considered as very unpopular for many people, I feel that shopping second hand has many benefits such as finding vintage items that might have been expensive before. It also gives you the opportunity to wear something that is unique and not something that everyone else has.

Fast fashion will always have a huge place in my heart. It's something I need to be more responsible about as a teenager because it does impact my future.

I've learnt that I have to consider my faith as well. Becoming a good steward is something that is important in Christianity. My journey has been slow and rough; however, every step I take counts.

Creating my own clothes is also something that I want to consider because I love textiles and fashion. It's something that I want to pursue in the near future that will help support the environment and my wellbeing.

(Abigail Ayibiowu)



REMEMBERING MONEY CHANGING

Something on the television this morning brought a memory to mind of a certain period in my life. It was a mention of the 50th anniversary of what we called 'D Day' at the time. On 15 February 1971, the old sterling currency (pounds, shillings and pence) was replaced by pounds and 'new pence'. Decimalisation had arrived. On the whole the change was handled really easily, with most people dealing with it pretty well. But there was one person I knew who absolutely refused to address it!



In those days (to save the church money) I used to go to a flower stall outside Smith's store in Tooting. They had excellent blooms from Covent Garden and the stall was run by a mother and son; she had been the original stallholder.

After decimalisation I always hoped that only the son was serving. If they were both there the mother would try to serve me telling me the cost in 'old money' and behind her was her son telling me the decimal total! I had to decide who to pay and keep two purses going until the elderly lady gave up and retired. At this point peace returned.

(Avril Shipton)

MOVING HOUSE WITH ANGIE AND TINA

We are still in exile in Prestatyn, North Wales. Pat (*their friend, and a friend of the church*) is still with us too; she had a fall, then other problems with her health, including a hospital visit to have her pacemaker checked and the batteries changed. And we are due to have our first vaccine soon. We are missing you all. [*As this is typed, they are still in Wales, but hope to be back with us in April, so possibly before this appears...now we'll get on with their news. Ed.*]

Tina has had her 60th birthday. We have taken Pat around Wales and then the Covid restrictions hit us. Pat had a fall and the after-effects have meant a delay in our return. I have done a knit-a-thon for Arthritis Support and raised £55. Tina has been gardening.

We are moving from one house into another. The old house is being turned into a B.&B, and the new one gutted.

[*You will find their photos in the Photo Gallery. Ed*]

(Angie Williams and Tina Philpott)



CELEBRATING EASTER ACROSS THE WORLD

Jamaica

In Jamaica attending Church on Good Friday and Easter Sunday is a must, and many non-church goers make the effort to worship on one of those days. On Good Friday the ladies mostly wear black and white. For the resurrection day Sunday service, they mostly wear white.

When it comes to eating fish instead of meat, fish replaces meat throughout the Easter period. That means fish and bammy (bammy is made from cassava). Bammy bun and cheese is a must; every house has bun and cheese.

No shops are open before noon, and no one does any cooking before noon. On a personal note, when I came to England as a young teenager it was a culture shock to see people going to work on Good Friday, because it was observed so strictly in Jamaica. Easter Monday too is a time for big celebrations all over the Island.



(Darrington Evans)

Hungary

Easter Traditions and Celebrations in Hungary are among the most exciting of the year. In Hungary, Easter always falls on the Sunday after the first Spring full moon, typically between 22 March and 25 April, and it is celebrated after 40 days of Lent.

One of the most popular Hungarian Easter traditions is 'locsolkodás' sprinkling ladies and girls with water or perfume, traditionally a bucket of water thrown on them, most often in villages. Boys will say a poem and afterwards ladies allow

them to sprinkle some water on them, to stay fresh all year; in return they give chocolates or eggs to the men.

Within the Christian tradition, we also dye eggs with red colour, with the colour symbolising the blood of Christ, and the eggs representing eternity, rebirth and new life. One of the oldest Easter traditions in Hungarian society is decorating Easter eggs. They are decorated with traditional Hungarian motifs such as embroidery or flowers.



In terms of food, you will find Easter lamb, smoked ham and boiled eggs and brioche, with mustard and horseradish.

(Mimi Kovacs)

Nigeria

When I was growing up, in Nigeria, believing in Jesus' death and resurrection was an absolute requirement. The village school and the church were closely connected. We had a chapel prefect who ensured that morning assembly and devotions were conducted according to the tradition of the church, with songs of praise and scripture readings. In recalling the children to a sense of moral and spiritual responsibility, this tradition meant that students were on the rota to read on Sundays, attend choir practice and serve on Sunday as we were led by the chapel prefect, all dressed in white, to the church.

I think of the season of Lent as a time of reflection on the suffering and the death of Jesus Christ: the biblical imagery of his death and resurrection, his bursting from the tomb and heaven as a new life and new hope for all Christians.

Traditionally, we abstained from eating meat on Good Friday; fish was the food of choice. To remind ourselves, we sang songs that named the animals that have blood, because on this day Jesus was crucified bearing our sins to save the world.

On Resurrection day, Christians would gather early in the morning with candles, lit and blessed, and march to the church cemetery. These candles were placed

on the graves or tombs of loved ones and families, as this represented the light of Christ coming into the world. It was usually a moving occasion mixed with joy and sadness for the departed. Easter Sunday was therefore a day of joy and celebration and it was customary to hear instruments and drums being played. Enjoying a lovely family Easter meal is expected as the celebration happens between loved ones and family and there is no shortage of food like amala, pounded yam, and rice with traditional stews.



(Johnson Ayibiowu)

Texas

I have been asked to write about Easter food in Texas, but I shall narrow it down to Houston, Texas – and include things we eat at any time! There are many different people in Houston, and many different types of food.

For example, there are fried chicken, barbecued ribs, baked macaroni and cheese, sugary fruit drinks, and sweet food, such as sweet potato pie; there are bagels, pizza, ranch dressing, peanut butter and celery, and pancakes with syrup. And of course, there are tortillas, salsa, crisps, and tamales.



My mom was Mexican and my dad and I used to go out to have tacos and tortillas at Taco Bell. He also makes the best tacos which he learnt from my mom. What do you like to eat? *[Thank you, Arella. I'll have a helping of each, please! Ed]*

(Arella Walter)

REFLECTING ON SPIRITUALITY...AND FORAGING

My connection to church is not strong, I am not an enthusiast for the creeds, or a biblical fundamentalist. My connection, however, is mainly about the rhythm, the recitation of the liturgy, the gospel reading reminding us of Yeshua of Nazareth, and meeting local people for a coffee afterwards. But I am not unspiritual. I struggle to construct a meaningful spirituality, which for me means principally contact with nature.

I walk. Not as often as I should. Either Saturday or Sunday usually has me on Mitcham Common or Streatham Common. My favourite is the wooded parts of Mitcham Common or the bird hides of Beddington. I've bought a monocular and watch the birds, and started trying to learn to identify them. There are various ecologies on Mitcham common: heath, woodland, lakes, acid grassland depending what has established itself on the industrial spoil heap that the Common became in the 19th century. Sometimes with a good friend. Sometimes I take a knife and a bag!

I am becoming conscious of what I eat and I've starting learning to cook. I make not just meals but bake bread, make jams, pickle things. I'm trying to get away from endless plastic containers (which are strangling our planet) so I grow things on my allotment. And I forage. Hence the bag and the knife. So far the local wild places have given me blackberries (jam), haws (ketchup), rosehips and crab apples (jam), nettles (soup and pesto), mica cap fungi (nice sautéed in butter, on fresh bread).



Spirituality is a word connected to breath. The Spirit of God and the breath I pull in every moment are the same. My spirituality depends on no longer distinguishing myself from the green air I pull into myself as I walk in the woods.

The Jewish mysticism of Kabbalah pictures God as, at one time, occupying all space. Then one day God made a place in the centre of his being that was not God. And the void filled with fire. And after the fire came creation. And the wind is her breath, and the sun his gift of energy. I have communion each time I eat

with consciousness, when I bite the fungi I collected and cut and sauteed. Some Christians, too, have paved the way with this kind of thinking. We have all, I'm sure, heard of St Francis of Assisi; one of his most famous works is the 'Canticle of the Sun' where he refers to Brother Sun and Sister Mother Earth.

God is not caught in some creed or infallible scripture, for the elect few to stand on and judge the rest. God is in the wind, the rain, the green parakeet invaders, the hawthorn berry, in the act of collecting, walking, eating. And in the act of breathing itself.

(Martin Best)

SEEING GOD

After tonight's reflection [about seeing the face of God in Jesus and elsewhere]



I realise God can also be in inanimate objects and places where there are no homo sapiens or other sentient beings, in the solar system, the stars and galaxies, but also in tiny particles, in DNA and in the Covid vaccine, in Avril singing, and even my mobile phone helping me to spread the word that I see him. I "see" his face and feel his love! God is quite literally everywhere! We're part of him and he of us! There is nowhere he isn't. Nothing exists without God.



(Nii Armar)

PRAYING TOGETHER

Dear Lord, thank you for always being with us and guiding us.

As we move through uncertain times, please keep reminding us of
your certainty.

May we find in all our activity, in the quiet and stillness of our lives, a
greater closeness to you, a deepening of trust, a valuing of life and all
the blessings we enjoy. May the Spirit of the risen Jesus release fresh
springs of love for you and for all creation, and awaken a deeper
experience of joy and hope, as we live in the light of the resurrection,
to the glory of your name.

Amen

(Alistair Wharton)



SEEKING GOD

Why should I believe in you?

Why should I believe in you when what I see around me seems to deny your existence?

Why should I want to feel you when my senses cannot reach out and grasp your presence, anyway?

I looked for you in the holy places but could not see you there.

I looked for you in churches, temples and mosques but did not find signs of your presence there.

I tried to find you in religion but I was left feeling suffocated by your absence in those great human institutions, which present themselves as speaking on your behalf.

I looked for you in books, even the holy books, and I realised that they reveal more about humans than about you.

I looked for you in nature, but it seemed to reveal as much as to hide you.

Then I thought, how could I find you in the holy places if they are sights of disputes, conflicts and wars? Even those sacred sites, which have been kept intact, have become places for money making.

How could I find you in temples when those there seem to be worshipping a self-God or a God that is there to serve them?

How could I find you in religion, when instead of being broad and open frameworks for life and pointers to the divine mystery, they seem to be only able to offer suffocating rigid structures, rules and regulations which include some and exclude others.

How could I find you in the holy books, if those scriptures can never properly express who you really are. The picture they offered of you sound more like a caricature of a god created in the image and likeness of men. Indeed, those sacred texts have been interpreted in such diverse ways as to give cause for division, oppression and even war.

How could I find you in nature as its behaviour is so erratic, moving from beautiful to terrifying, giving life but also bringing death and destruction?

Thus, tired of looking, I thought I would give up. 'Why bother'? I asked myself. Still there was, deep in my soul, this angst caused by an unquenchable thirst for you.

It was then that I opened myself up to other possibilities. Yes, I think I finally found you!

I found you in the stranger, far away, but still my neighbour.

I found you in the outcast, marginalised by society because of their appearance, social class, age, sexual orientation, gender, race, profession or life style.

I found you in the prostitute, those who sell their bodies taking risks, while the same society that uses them treats them with contempt and prejudice.

I found you in the torn bodies, hurt, damaged by others who abuse them.

I found you in those restless, anguished and tormented souls who complain against you by not believing anymore and in protest give up their search for you.

I found you in those who were tired of life, but still insist on living, hoping against hope, struggling as they dream of better days.

I found you in those who do not go to church, temple or mosque but live their lives for others.

I found you in men and women who were excluded from the life of their communities by those who consciously or unconsciously behaved as if they were better than others.

I found you in those who have no religion but dream of a better world, thus fighting for the wellbeing of others.

I found you in places, people and things I was not even expecting to see the signs of your presence.

Yes, I have finally found you and still keep finding...

(Fr Joabe)

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

This issue of the Parish News began with a painting of the resurrection and it ends now with the story as told in Matthew's Gospel.

'After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.'

So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

(Matthew 28: 1-10)

PHOTO GALLERY



Magnus builds a snowman and Renee and Kai look angelic.

Then and now



Darren Spain's graduation.....and with fiancée Rebekah



Nii enjoys a drink! And Bailey takes a drive

Yamil and his family – not sure about the hats, Yamil!



Welcome to Rowan Colette Best



And what to do with the baby knits...when the babies get older





Angie and Tina



The Knit-a-thon

And the garden



PEOPLE IN THE PARISH



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Parish Clerk	Delise Anderson, Parish Administrator Parish office: 020 8648 0119 Email: stbarnabasmitcham@gmail.com

Sunday Worship is at 10:00 am in church and 11.15 am on Zoom and Facebook. Mid-week worship is 8.00pm on Zoom.

Check out our website: www.stbarnabasmitcham.org.uk

