

St Barnabas Church, Mitcham

Parish News



CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR 2020/21

ST BARNABAS PARISH NEWS

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

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SERVICES AT ST BARNABAS CHURCH

- Sunday Worship:** **10.00 am:** Parish Communion
 11.15 am: Sunday Eucharist via Zoom & Facebook
- Wednesday Service:** **8.00 pm:** Bible Study followed by Compline
 (Evening Prayer)



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

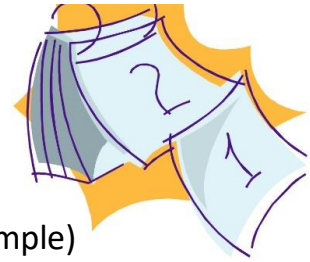
JANUARY 2021

Monday 18 - Week of Prayer for Unity begins

Sunday 17 – **Epiphany 3**

Sunday 24 – **Epiphany 4**

Sunday 31 – **Candlemas** (The Presentation of Christ in the Temple)



FEBRUARY 2021

Tuesday 2 - Candlemas

Sunday 7 – **Epiphany 5**

Sunday 14 – **Sunday next before Lent**

Wednesday 17 – **Ash Wednesday**

Sunday 21 – **Lent 1**

Wednesday 24 – Lent Course

Sunday 28 – **Lent 2**

- *School Half Term: Monday 15 February to Friday 19 February*

MARCH 2021

Wednesday 3 – Lent Course

Sunday 7 – **Lent 3**

Wednesday 10 – Lent Course

Sunday 14 – **Lent 4**

Wednesday 24 – Lent Course

Sunday 21 - **Lent 5**

Wednesday 24 – Lent Course

Sunday 28 - **Palm Sunday**

APRIL 2021

Thursday 1 – **Maundy Thursday**

Friday 2 – **Good Friday**

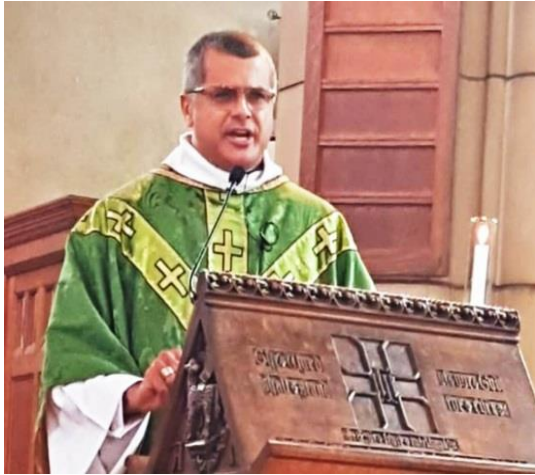
Sunday 4 – **Easter Day**

Sunday 11 – **Easter 2**

Sunday 18 – **Easter 3**

Sunday 25 – **Easter 4**

MESSAGE FROM THE VICAR



Dear Parishioners,

'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined.'
[Isaiah 9.2.](#)

'Stayin' alive' was the wish of a friend of mine when asked about what he wanted for the New Year. As you can imagine, he said that singing the song by the Bee Gees!

The truth is we have more than survived 2020. Indeed, we have had a uniquely difficult year and had to quickly adapt to a new way of living which we would have thought unimaginable a year ago. We were forced to curtail our leisure and hobbies, some of us had to work from home, others had to stop going to work and rely on the government furlough scheme, some lost their jobs, some got seriously ill and have thankfully recovered, and we watched horrified the number of cases and Covid deaths increasing globally.

We had to stop shaking hands and hugging and started wearing masks. We had to learn how to communicate and express our feelings through our eyes as more than half of our faces were covered. We acquired new words and terminology and they have now become part of our vocabulary. Medical terms such as asymptomatic, COVID-19, herd

immunity, droplet transmission, flattening the curve, fomite [a material capable of carrying the virus; Editor's note], ventilator. Then social expressions such as isolation, shielding, contact tracing, stay at home, social distancing; and the more technical ones, live streaming, online church, Zoom etc.

Yes, 2020 was a year of constant learning as we learned not just about the world around and beyond our geographical location, but also about ourselves, our partners, families and friends. It was a painful, frustrating and depressing year for most of us. It was also a year of resilience, courage, determination, compassion, solidarity, generosity, creativity and hope. We lived through 2020 as if forced to re-evaluate our own lives and restate what is really important to us. Often, it is when we are faced with the possibility of losing that which is important to us that we value what

we have got even more and we become more aware of what our priorities should be. Thus, despite the losses, 2020 was a year in which light shone through the darkness of fear and despair.

So, here we are, in a new year and still not quite sure when this crisis will end but a little more certain that the end of this dark time is not far away. Even though we are now experiencing a new national lockdown with new strains of coronavirus afflicting the country, we can be more optimistic about the future now that the vaccines have been rolled out. We must be thankful for the advances in medical science and the way scientists around the globe have been working so hard to create the vaccine against the virus SARS-Cov-2, and the cure for Covid-19. We are indeed grateful for those in the frontline, saving lives and making sure that we can continue to enjoy a quality of life even under the restrictions imposed by the virus. We must also be thankful for the rapid developments in Information Technology as without it we would find ourselves in a much harder place now. Just imagine if this crisis had happened 20 years ago, we would have not been able to communicate with each other in the easy way we are doing now, much less having services online as we have been able to do, worshipping

virtually even though we have had to close the church building.

So, at the beginning of this new year, it is good to look back, take stock and appreciate all that we have received, give thanks to God for his blessings and look forward, placing before God our wishes, plans, desires and dreams for now and the future. So, we pray for wisdom, for health, for better use of the resources we have and for God's reassuring presence in our lives. This sort of exercise should lead us to think about our neighbour near and far and find ways to help one another. God has blessed us and he wants us to be a blessing for other people.

We have just been through Christmastide which ended with the Feast of Epiphany (or the Feast of the Three Kings), and I was again reminded by a friend of that great Christmas poem by the Afro-American theologian, educator and civil rights leader, Howard Thurman:

***'When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,***

***To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.'***

Wishing you all a happy, safe and fruitful new year.

Blessings,

Fr Joabe

DIANE LOOKS BACK

The year 2019 was a memorable one for St Barnabas Church.

I don't think that we had any idea, either how hard it was going to be or how long it would take. Many of us thought that the renovation works would be completed by Easter. But how wrong we were! I remember seeing with a shock how extensive the scaffolding was (five storeys high) and the altar was completely sealed off. The amount of space in which we had to operate was very small. We watched with interest how the beauty of the ceiling was to become evident, the painting, the restoration of the Te Deum lettering which was put back in place by the sign writer, as were the signs on the ceiling above the altar that had been hidden for so long. The angels were painted and the grotesques were cleaned. It looked wonderful! Even surrounded by scaffolding we were able to hold the services on Sundays. Easter Day had a special feeling as we were aware that new life was coming into being in our church building. Meanwhile the walls were being washed, the pillars cleaned and slowly we could see how beautiful it was all going to look.

The next major job to be done was the sound system; this again was an extensive job as new speakers had to be fitted around the church and wiring put into place. When it was ready to be tested, we had a wonderful Saturday morning while it was tried out and the Church was filled with some wonderful music, although the whole installation was to take some time. The next piece of the jigsaw was the new electrical installation and the lighting. It was decided that the shades could be reused but that they needed to be refurbished, so they were sent away and as the rewiring took place, we had festoon lights around the church, which was quite interesting. The final piece to complete the works was the repointing of the North Wall, which was painstakingly done and

looks so good, (if you have not looked at it, I would suggest that you do, it is well worth a look).

For those of you who were at the Harvest Supper event, you will have heard Avril say that the previous two vicars were not able to take on the job of refurbishing the Church for various reasons. However, Father Joabe picked up the baton and pursued it. Throughout it all he gave it his constant thoughts, his attention to detail was phenomenal and he never accepted anything that he felt could be done better. However, any criticisms were always done with his usual diplomacy, so much so, that one of the stone masons offered to clean some of the flag stones outside the Church for free, which was an offer we could not refuse.

As a churchwarden, I know that we owe a tremendous amount of thanks to Father Joabe, for in spite of all that he did towards the work in the Church, he kept the services going and managed to do all the other things that being a vicar demands. As a churchwarden, I can tell you that there was hardly a day when he was not in the Church, sometimes two or three times a day, either attending meetings, giving his permission to changes or checking on progress. I can also say that Father Joabe hardly had a proper day off during the whole of 2019, as he gave of himself selflessly.

So, as we look at the Church today, we should realise that a lot of the attention to detail was given by Father Joabe. We want to thank him on behalf of us all for his self-sacrifice, his commitment, his dedication and for all the hard work that he gave to the whole project. We are truly blessed that 12 years ago he came, stayed and took on the massive job, which it turned out to be, and all that besides being a very empathetic and dedicated vicar.

In these unprecedented times I am also going to mention the online services. It was during the first week of lockdown that, after attending a meeting on Zoom, Father Joabe had the idea that it could work for the church. So, he enlisted Godwyns, the choir master, who has been a great help with the technology, and the online services came to be. The services have gone from strength to strength. However, what you have probably never realised is that each Eucharist is bespoke; the pictures and hymns are chosen to reflect the Bible readings and the theme of the week or season. The liturgy is put together

in a beautiful service booklet, and all this takes a lot of time and research. But it has paid dividends in the numbers of people who participate from different parts of the world. So again, our appreciative thanks for your efforts.

Finally, thank you, Father Joabe, for all that you have done and continue to do for us. We are very thankful, grateful and truly blessed, to have an exceptional vicar.
(Diane Cooper, Churchwarden)

EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to the first issue of the Parish News which covers Christmas and the New Year. The first thing I would like to do is thank my 'partners in crime' as Fr Joabe once called me. I mean, of course, my fellow editors. Fr Joabe and the wardens, Diane and Johnson, are old hands at this. And we have someone new: Pamela, who is one of our new members. And as always, my thanks to Delise who knows all about the process and can format text. I just tell the jokes. Between us we have made a great team. And thanks to Chris, who as always does the printing. This issue will be published online and paper copies will follow.

This is an unusual issue, because we live in unusual times. We are marking the end of one year and the beginning of the next. This, of



course, is something we do every year, but it has never been like this before. SARS-covid-2 has upended our world, moved the goalposts, made us scared and anxious, disrupted homes, schools and businesses and maybe even made us question our faith in God. But as Fr Joabe and Diane have reminded us, God's work goes on and *'the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end'* ([Lamentations 3:22](#)).

It's also an unusual issue because it is divided into Past, Present and

Future. We look back at what God has done for us in the past; we pause to reflect on our current situation; and we look at our hopes for 2021, in 21 words, theoretically. But we have spread these hopes around the magazine, to set you thinking – and you will see how many people have managed to write just 21 words (not many). But the section on the future starts in the North of England in 1961. There is a logic to this, as you will see. There are poems, prayers, cartoons, photos and of course our ‘spotlight’ interview.

My credentials for the post as editor are that, as a civil servant, I was used to preparing text for publication. I am, therefore, now in a position to say, with some authority, that the Parish News is far more fun than writing Government documents. And it’s got jokes and pictures. And as Pamela is new to us you may like to know something about what she brings to the magazine. Pamela

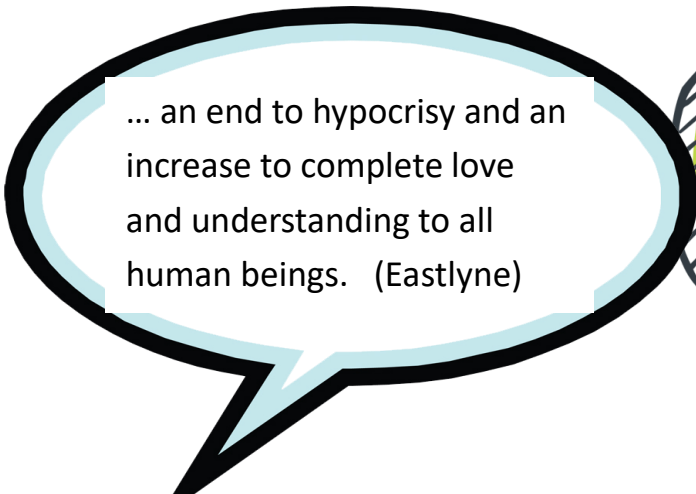
started proofreading marketing copy over 25 years ago and is currently responsible for marketing campaigns, business development, and writing marketing copy for a group of colleges in south London. So, I expect that jokes and pictures didn’t come into that either.

I think that’s all I have to say for now. Oh, Madame Editor, really...haven’t you forgotten someone? Of course, my thanks to my predecessor, Sally, for all the work she has put into the Parish News in the past. But don’t worry, she’s still here and has contributed an interview. Sally, you have been warned, the next issue will feature you being interviewed by me!

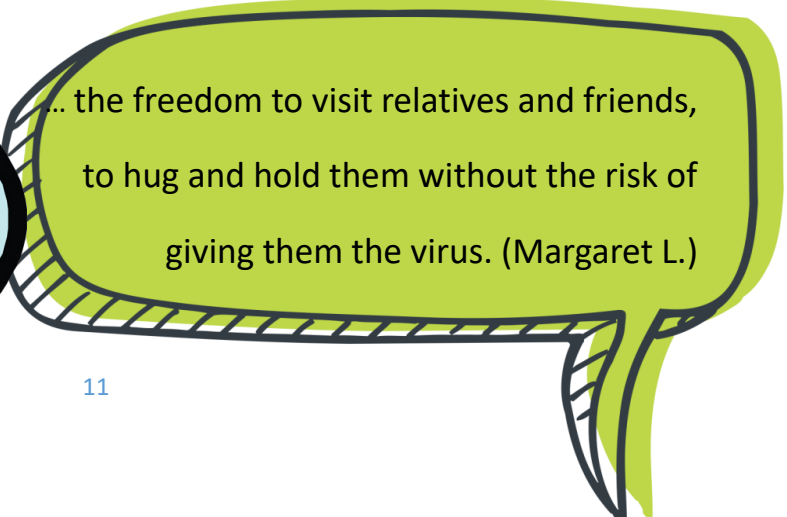
We hope you will enjoy the magazine. We plan to publish the next one after Easter (Easter Sunday is 4 April 2021). Like this one it will be published online with paper copies for those who would like them.

Revd Trudy

What I hope for in 2021 is ...



... an end to hypocrisy and an increase to complete love and understanding to all human beings. (Eastlyne)



... the freedom to visit relatives and friends, to hug and hold them without the risk of giving them the virus. (Margaret L.)

THE PAST

A Prayer during a time of Covid

‘Heavenly Father, the way the Covid Pandemic is affecting life throughout the whole world, it seems as if the tectonic plates of our social fabric are moving, and everything is being violently shaken. Things long familiar in our everyday life are being brought down and destroyed or changed, and the social landscape is slowly being recreated to become the new reality. Give us faith, Lord, that through all this time of upheaval and change, you will remain constant, and will be our strength and give us confidence to face all that befalls us as we support one another in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. In Christ's name we pray. Amen’. *(Alistair Wharton)*



Worship in a time of Covid

Praying for a brighter day.

At Sunday Service people seeking solace from their preacher,
pray sacrifice at Christmastime pays dividends by Easter.

Stained glass windows, long cast shadows where all our prayers were
answered;

collective beseeching from our homes, our prayers have not been hampered.

Congregation watching as the bread and wine's consumed
on behalf of everyone until normality's resumed.

Praying for a brighter day when the world is well again,
when we're rid of corona virus and we all will say, **Amen.**

(Pamela Hurley)



Our Christmas Services

Christmas at St Barnabas

We decided to have our **Midnight Mass Service** on Zoom, as that seemed most suitable for all, so at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve we gathered together. Father always gives the Eucharist service details twenty-four hours in advance, so that we can print the service if we want to. Various members of the congregation are asked in advance if they would take parts of the service. The Midnight Mass went so well; despite its being virtual there was a good warm feeling and we had many attendees, some from other countries.

The **Christmas Day Service** was to take place in Church, this was indeed very special. It was to be streamed, for the first time; this was set up by Father Joabe with the help of Jimmy, who is the newest member of our Church. They worked together at inserting the Carols in the relevant places during the Service (as we were not allowed to sing) and it worked so well. For me and for many who were there, it was an exceptional service, with Father singing solo the Agnus Dei and Sanctus, which was very special, and although we were not allowed to sing, I could hear members of the congregation humming and some quietly singing with him, behind their masks. It was a very moving service and the highlight of our Christmas.

The services during Christmas Week were all on Zoom: **The Holy Innocents**, the **Watch Night Service** and the service of **Epiphany** were all Presided over by Reverend Trudy. They were all well-attended and we were again joined by many people from around the world.

Altogether, despite the difficult circumstances which we are at present experiencing, the services were very special and helped us to celebrate Christmas in a meaningful way.

Diane Cooper



The Fourth Sunday of Advent

This was the day of the Nativity Play, but we had another treat too. The choir sang for us and Avril sang a lovely setting of the Magnificat (Mary's song). It was lovely to hear them. If you have forgotten what they look like, here is a reminder:



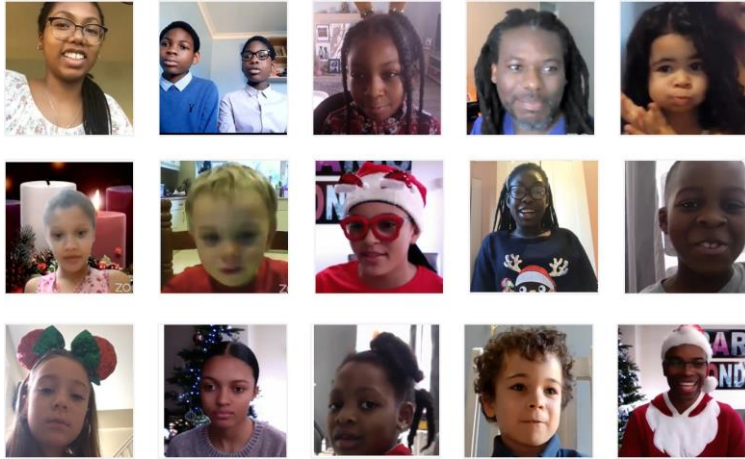
Our children and young people

The Nativity Play

Look, you've got reviews from our Facebook Community!

'I've Just watched the Nativity Play which was very good. I thought the performers were excellent especially 'Junior' and of course Magnus.' (Clive from Northampton who clearly thought Junior was a nickname because he was the oldest performer.)

'Where was your Christmas headgear then? I loved Junior's outfit. The girls are so beautiful. Everyone was brilliant and I liked the way, was it Lucas, gave a little bow.' (Linda from North Wales who was clearly expecting your Editor to wear a Santa hat.)



We have all missed, you, our funny, bright young people. But we've seen you on Zoom services, taking part, growing up, and growing in confidence. And this Christmas you took the 'Nativity Play' to a whole new level.

It was wonderful, right from the beginning as you all got ready, swapping roles, and showing us the Christmas headgear. You were joining from Hertfordshire and Surrey, all to tell us why Christmas hasn't been cancelled. It was a brilliant idea to set the story today, without angels or shepherds, or stars or stables. (Or someone dressed as a donkey.) We loved the way the narrative progressed, from Junior telling Covid to go away, through presents and birthdays, to a growing realisation that Christmas can't be cancelled because it's about Jesus. And it finished with Magnus conducting 'Joy to the World' with two pencils! It was energetic and thought-provoking. There was a real sense of dialogue and interaction, a mix of accents and voices and, although we weren't actually there, we could feel close to the action.

So, thank you, all of you, who wrote, directed and performed. And thank you, parents and Junior Church leaders, who have supported the younger ones during such a difficult time.

(Rev'd Trudy)

What do we do on Wednesday evenings?

Cathy finds out...

After a few weeks of being welcomed at Sunday morning services remotely from the wilds of Kent, I became aware of people talking about seeing each other on Wednesday night. Curious to know

what was going on and expecting a service, I logged on to Zoom and found some very lively debate going on! I realised that this was full-on bible study and then a service of Compline (Night Prayer) to finish, a

service I had not really taken part in since my Uni days. I am not one to hold back in discussion and was asked immediately to lead the next week's discussion on Purgatory. Nothing like throwing someone in at the deep end! Intending to spend an hour or so preparing something, I ended up getting more and more involved in the topic as I researched and ended up with pages of notes and a number of hours spent. It was good for me. I had not given myself time to read and research for a long time and I really enjoyed it.

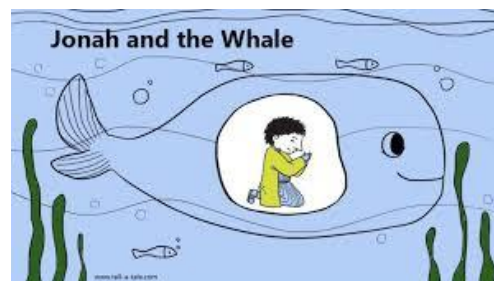


I am not sure that I managed to put myself across very well that night [You did. Ed.] or indeed to cover half

of what I had discovered but suffice to say, I have been welcomed ever since on Wednesday nights (along with my evening meal!) and taken part in discussions over a wide range of topics including the Apocrypha, Just War, Racism and Christianity, the concept of Grace, Jonah, Women in the Bible and Liturgy.

This has been fulfilling on two levels for me: firstly, to learn more deeply from others and grow as a person; and secondly to experience true fellowship at a time of real isolation. I am deeply grateful.

(Cathy Cheeseman)



I know It was a fish, not a whale, but I loved the picture [Editor]

The virtual Harvest Supper

The setting might have been virtual, but the fun and fellowship were real. We were encouraged to bring our own food and drink (virtual champagne having proved a real disappointment), or post photos afterwards – lovely! There were jokes, poems, funny stories and farewell tributes to our dear friend, Avril

Shipton, seen here looking glamorous in a restaurant, glass of champagne in hand. And, in true St Barnabas fashion, Fr Joabe presented her with a gift from the church and spoke movingly of all that she means to us.



Avril will soon be moving to live with her family and we will miss her so much, both for what she has done for the church, and for being a good friend. She has sung in the choir, arranged flowers, baked cakes and acted as PCC Secretary. She is a true servant of God and his church. Yes, we will miss her, but hope that she will be able join us sometimes on Wednesday evenings and perhaps follow us on Facebook.

Someone else has already moved, Margaret Longdon. She and Avril both sang in the choir, Margaret since she was very young. And here they are together.

(Rev'd Trudy)



Life goes on(line)

To stay safe, shut the door,
Keep your distance, hug no more!
Wear a mask to cover your face,
Don't sing with friends in any place.

No gatherings, or sharing of food,
No dancing, or laughing, just time to brood
On what life was like before the bug,
When if you were down a friend gave you a hug.

But seven months on and it's harvest time.
We all come together – it's just on line,
On laptops, tablets or even your phone.
Get on the Zoom, no time to moan.
We chat, laugh, sing and dance if we like,
Read a poem, tell a joke, but into a mike.

We can hold a gathering of more than six,
Wear national dress, and we all can mix.
With our favourite food to share on screen,
Which we cannot taste, which is a bit mean!
But we're all together at Harvest time,
In our little box, on the screen, on line.

But does that stop us from having a laugh,
From leading each other up the garden path?
Will Nii have an Afro upon his head?
Will Cathy be wrapped up ready for bed?
Will Avril be elegant, ready to shine?
Will the vicar's internet work this time?

We can't join together in the church space,
But join the Zoom from all over the place,
Camberley, Kent and even Brazil,
Laughing, talking, and eating our fill.



All will enjoy this season together,
No need to go out in the cold evening weather.

We can drink what we like, we don't need to drive home,
For Harvest supper we are not alone.
We cannot share food or a simple hug,
But as friends together we'll survive this bug!

(Margaret Longdon)

What I hope for in 2021 is ...

... to see my best friend again because
it's been 15 months already (Revd Trudy)

New World:

from Houston, Texas to London, England



HOUSTON, TEXAS – FOURTH MOST POPULOUS CITY IN THE USA

Oh! Hello, my name is Arella!

I know, I know. Some of you probably have no idea who I am. Well, let me introduce myself. I am thirteen and I am from Houston. I just moved to London this year, and I will be sharing my experience, along with some differences between London and Houston.

Let's start off by saying that I've been to London many times before, and I have a lot of family here. I arrived in London in May.

In the beginning, coronavirus made everything so boring and restricted. It felt like this for everyone, of course. Meanwhile, my grandma (that's Mopile Walter) was helping me look for a school. It was a long wait, but in July, the virus settled down and I was asked for an interview at St. Mark's Church of England Academy. I now attend the school and have amazing friends. However, I have noticed some peculiar differences between the ways of London and Houston.

For starters, there are not any sidewalks, or as you might know them, pavements. We don't have those in Houston. The only time you will see pavements are in neighbourhoods or in big areas, such as downtown. The reason for this? We drive. Not by bus or taxi. We hardly use those. We drive cars. You know what that means. Children don't walk to school. Our parents drive us. However, parents have to spare a little time to get us to school and get them to work!

Furthermore, most of us don't live in apartments (flats). We usually live in detached houses. Where I live, most of us live in two -storey houses. In other parts of Houston people live in apartments, some of which are called Projects (Council Houses).

To end this off, I know this article is quite short, but I hope you enjoyed it. I hope this little article gave you an idea of how I lived a bit of life in Houston, then in London.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

(Arella Walter)

[I think it's fair to say, Arella, that a lot of us do know you because we have seen you on Zoom and in the Nativity Play! Editor].

A trainee Reader's impressions of St Barnabas

'A lay reader is a person authorized by an Anglican bishop to lead certain services of worship, to preach, and to carry out pastoral and teaching functions. They are formally trained and admitted to office.'

[The Church of England definition]



I have been invited to write a few words about my impressions of St Barnabas as an outsider. Well, I don't see myself as an outsider! Right from the beginning you have made me feel very welcome and I have enjoyed getting to know you, at least as much as anyone can when all they see is the top half of people's faces behind masks or in little boxes in Zoom meetings. However, I have seen the inside of several of your houses so I suppose that is really getting to know you!

As many of you know, I come from a very different church tradition and it is quite strange for me to worship in the way that you do. Even your simplified services during the pandemic are more elaborate than my experience – my vicar rarely wears a dog collar, let alone the colourful vestments that Fr Joabe dons for services!

...Different styles, one church.

It is natural to look down on the way others do things as though somehow inferior and often we fall into the trap of caricaturing others. What I am beginning to learn is that, despite our different styles, we are one universal church. We all love Jesus and want to honour him. We all want to see His Kingdom be extended in the places where we are. We all trust in His grace and mercy as forgiven sinners as He builds us to be more like Him and we should all embrace each other's way of doing things and learn from each other. I hope I have started to do that as I have begun to understand and appreciate the

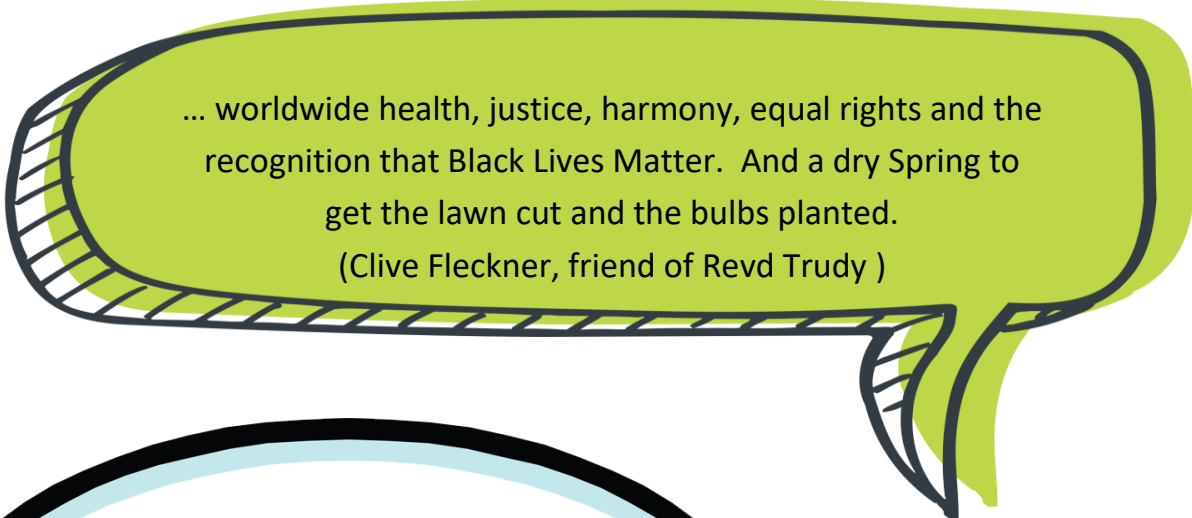
richness of the symbolism of your services. Fr Joabe's explanation of the Liturgy on Wednesday evenings in November was invaluable in helping with that and I would encourage you all to ensure that you really understand why you do what you do.

So, the greatest lesson for me being with you is summed up by St Paul: *'As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.'* (Gal 3:27-28)

We could extend this list: no longer from Wimbledon or Mitcham, no longer Nigerian or English, no longer low church or high church. We are all one in Christ and I thank you for accepting me as one of your own. You are a delightful community. But you can't get rid of me that easily - I'll be back!

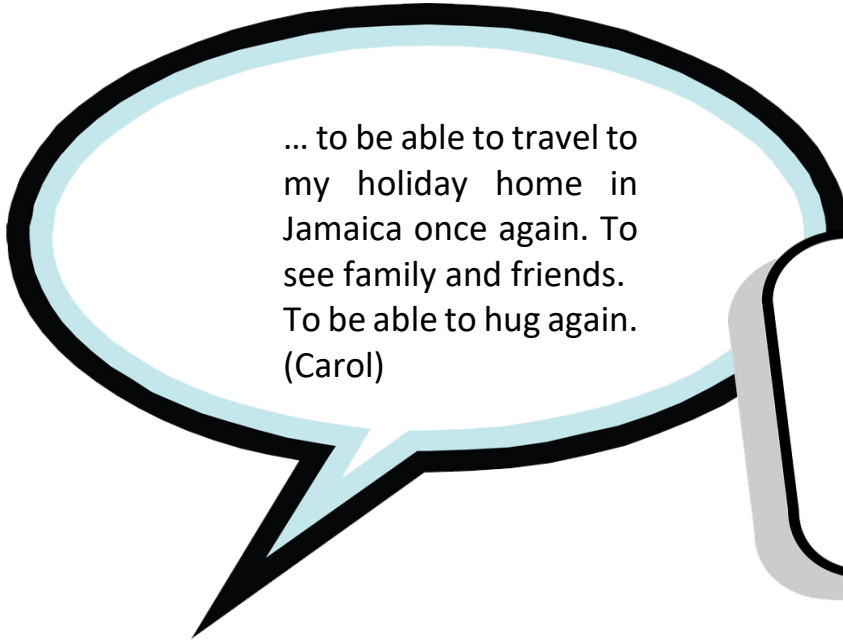
(Gary Carpenter)

What I hope for in 2021 is ...

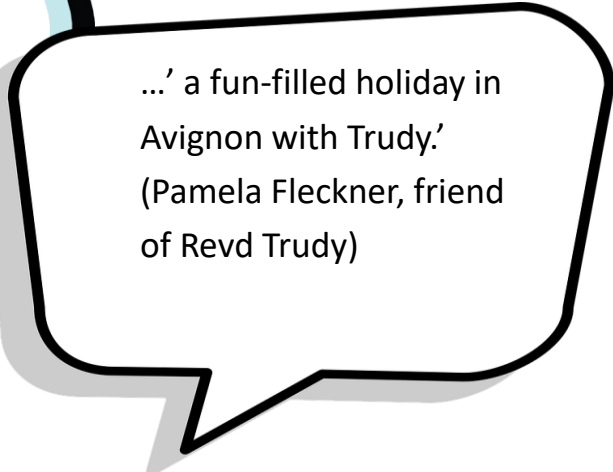


... worldwide health, justice, harmony, equal rights and the recognition that Black Lives Matter. And a dry Spring to get the lawn cut and the bulbs planted.

(Clive Fleckner, friend of Revd Trudy)



... to be able to travel to my holiday home in Jamaica once again. To see family and friends. To be able to hug again.
(Carol)



... ' a fun-filled holiday in Avignon with Trudy.'
(Pamela Fleckner, friend of Revd Trudy)



One of our Mission Partners, Christian Care, works with disadvantaged families in Merton, providing food, clothes and furniture and (in normal) times parties and holidays. We support them at Harvest and Christmas. This article is written by Lesley Morrison.

This year has been a very difficult one for everyone, and we have all been affected in one way or another.

At Christian CARE, befrienders, of whom I am one, have not been able to visit our families and instead kept in contact over the phone. The office has been closed, with the Coordinator and Administrator working remotely from home. Food collections and deliveries for needy families have still been going on, but delivered to the doorstep and taken once a month rather than fortnightly. The Coordinators are always contactable for advice and help, if we need it.

With Christmas coming up soon, plans for the January Children's 2021 Party have had to be altered. The plan is to deliver hampers with all sorts of goodies, and food vouchers for the purchase of fresh food; gifts for children under the age 11 and tokens for the older siblings will also be enclosed. We will deliver them before Christmas so that some joy can come into the lives of the families in need.

(Lesley Morrison)



THE PRESENT

SPOTLIGHT ON

JIMMY HOWARTH



We have all suffered in one way or another during the Pandemic. But as Christians, we have our faith to lean on. It gives us hope that this too shall pass and hope of better times to come. The subject of this Spotlight went through his own lockdown experience, one which led him to embracing faith.

On the first Sunday back in Church after the first lockdown, Fr Joabe introduced Jimmy Howarth to us, the newest member of the St Barnabas Church family. You could see his joy as he told us Jimmy's story.

Father Joabe said he was so impressed by Jimmy's desire to join the Church that he was moved. Especially as this was during the Pandemic, when people are afraid to come to Church.

I remember thinking, 'A new Church member in Lockdown?' I must find out more. With Jimmy's permission, I have included his story as this edition's **Spotlight**.

A Lockdown Story with a Difference

At 18 years of age, and in his last year at school, Jimmy found himself experiencing the unprecedented situation of Lockdown.

Question: How did you feel when Lockdown was announced in March?

Answer: At first, I missed going out to play football. However, I was enjoying the time, not having much to do. It felt like I was on a long holiday, except that I couldn't go out to do different things with my friends.

Question: What did you do to fill the time?

Answer: I played video games and watched a lot of movies, and then played more games, and watched even more movies. As the weeks became months, I'm not exactly sure when, but my mood changed from being happy to being dissatisfied. After months of the same thing, these same activities were no longer enjoyable for me. I found myself staring at the TV screen without paying attention. I started to reflect on my life, and how the Covid-19 pandemic has changed normal daily living across the world. 'Will the coronavirus ever go away?' I wondered, 'surely things will eventually get back to normal'

Question: What made you decide to meet the Vicar?

Answer: I had a conversation with my grandmother. She's the only Christian in my family. It sent me into a deeper reflection on my life. I explored the possibility of joining the Church, and then decided to do something about it.

I found myself knocking on the door of the Vicarage without really knowing what I was going to say. I'd asked a friend to come with me to see the Vicar, and the fact that my mind was already made up, helped me to stay on my chosen path.

Question: What happened when the door was opened?"

Answer: I met Fr Joabe and told him that I wanted to be baptised. With a smile, he invited us both into the Vicarage, and provided me with the information I needed to set me on the path to baptism.

As I am not from a religious family, Diane Cooper, one of the Churchwardens, was identified as my sponsor to provide me with continuing support and

guidance until my Confirmation. With her by my side, I was baptised in Church by the Vicar.


Question: What did that feel like?

Answer: Like nothing I've ever felt before. As Father Joabe poured water onto my head, I tried to remain calm, but I was shaking as I was overwhelmed with emotion. It was an amazing feeling'.

I was delighted by how quickly Jimmy had settled into the St Barnabas family, when I walked into Church one Sunday after the spotlight interview and, to my surprise, found that he was working the sound system!

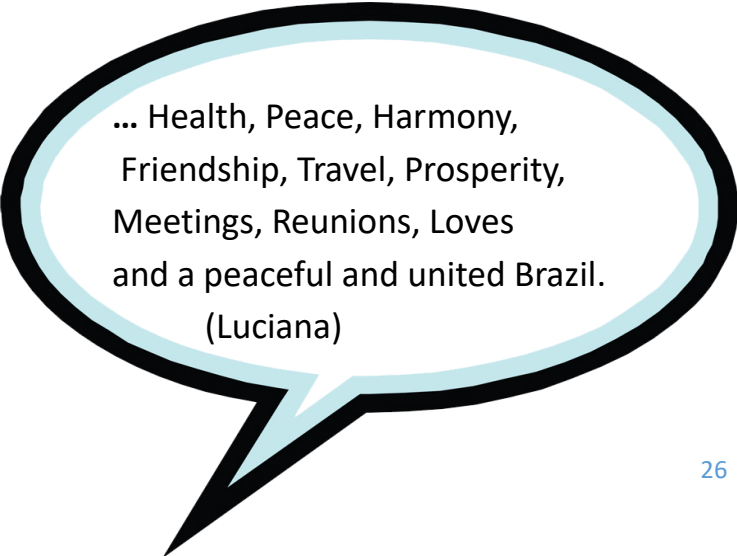
Thank you for sharing your story, Jimmy. On behalf of the members of the St Barnabas family, we welcome you. *(Sally Spain)*

What I hope for in 2021 is ...



...To be able to visit my friends and family
wherever they are.

(Linda, Revd Trudy's best friend)



... Health, Peace, Harmony,
Friendship, Travel, Prosperity,
Meetings, Reunions, Loves
and a peaceful and united Brazil.

(Luciana)

Our beautiful piano:

Avril remembers a piece of our history

Frank and I came to Mitcham to set up our home in 1953 when we were married. Until Clare was born in 1959 I had remained teaching. I joined St Barnabas in about 1960, but it wasn't until I went to the local post office to get Clare's child allowance that I met Mrs. Garden. She ran the chemist side of the shop which was where the Bridal Shop is now, on the corner of Eveline Road.

I don't remember how we came to talk about music and St Barnabas Church but she told me that the piano had been hers and that she had given it to the church. She must have been a good musician to have owned such a fine instrument and it was a generous gift.

We just accept it as 'being there', a part of the church, but it is lovely to hear it from time to time. It is part of our history and we look forward to the day when we can hear it again. *(Avril Shipton)*



HUMAN FAMILY:

a reminder of who we are, and what is important to us. There is only one human race: it's called 'homo sapiens' and everyone on the planet belongs to it.

I note the obvious differences in the human family.
Some of us are serious, some thrive on comedy.

Some declare their lives are lived as true profundity,
and others claim they really live the real reality.

The variety of our skin tones can confuse, bemuse, delight,
brown and pink and beige and purple, tan and blue and white.

I've sailed upon the seven seas and stopped in every land,
I've seen the wonders of the world not yet one common man.

I know ten thousand women called Jane and Mary Jane,
but I've not seen any two who really were the same.

Mirror twins are different although their features jibe,
and lovers think quite different thoughts while lying side by side.

We love and lose in China, we weep on England's moors,
and laugh and moan in Guinea, and thrive on Spanish shores.

We seek success in Finland, are born and die in Maine.
In minor ways we differ, in major we're the same.

I note the obvious differences between each sort and type,
but we are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.

By Maya Angelou

(Read by Pamela Hurley at the Harvest Supper)



Christmas in Southern Brazil:

a report from one of our overseas parishioners

Brazil is a large, diverse country and the cultural and behavioural differences between the regions can make it difficult to describe the way Christmas is celebrated. Each region, each state, and even each city has its own characteristics, so to explain what is done during the Christmas festivities, my account will be very specific and relate to the experience of my region, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the south of Brazil. The photos which follow show my family's Christmas feast, prepared by my cousin, Irumar.



Yummy Christmas food!

Families also prepare for the 'secret friend' exchange of gifts. So 'Secret Santa' isn't unique to the UK! (Ed.) Each person picks a name from a little box. When the moment comes for the gift-giving, on Christmas Night, the giver describes the profile and characteristics of the one who is going to receive the gift, which is a lot of fun.

The next picture shows aspects of the Christmas Festival here in Gramado. It's the middle of summer, but artificial snow makes Santa feel at home. The parades and shows are performed mostly by local people. The town has a special performing arts school to prepare the hundreds of actors! As you can see in the family picture (in the Photo Gallery), we usually hold hands in a circle, some light little candles, and pray before Christmas dinner.

(Yamil Doutra)



Christmas Festival in Gramado, Brazil

What I hope for in 2021 is ...

... the opportunity to travel to see family and friends in this country and abroad and to be able to give everyone a heartfelt hug. (Bernadette)

... that vaccines will be available to all in the world and that it will be the year that humanity will strengthen its faith in solidarity and science as important signs of the presence of God in every one of us. (Yamil)

THE FUTURE



In October 1961, Hull faced a shock outbreak of polio.

It was the most sudden and serious outbreak of the disease in the United Kingdom for almost two years. The number of cases rose from two to five, to nineteen in a matter of days and polio-panic ensued. An announcement was made by the Minister of Health. Hull would be the first city in Western Europe to use a new oral polio vaccine. In an extraordinary bid to protect the city, a target was set: 300,000 administered vaccines. Just one week after the first case had been reported, Hull was ready. Temporary clinics were established across the city in sites such as schools, churches and department stores. Some 3,000 people, mostly volunteers, were involved in providing the vaccine. It was a medical first.

And I was there, queuing with my mother and sister and hundreds of others in the largest department store in my hometown. It was very quiet, as we waited to receive a sugar lump with a drop of life-saving vaccine on it. It was the last polio epidemic in the UK. A friend of my mother's contracted it and spent the rest of her life in a wheelchair.

Polio has now effectively been eradicated. What human skill, determination and organization have done can be done again. As we look to the future, let us

thank God for the scientists, doctors, care workers and all the others who have helped us so much, and trust him for the future. *(Rev'd Trudy)*



Queuing outside a school in Hull in 1961.

What I hope for in 2021 is ...

Our final contributions come from Delise and Pamela:

... that humankind will learn the lessons that the pandemic has taught us and develop spiritually, with a deeper faith in our Creator.

(Delise)

... that neighbours continue to care for one another just as they did during the first pandemic lockdown of 2020.' This reminds me of The Good Samaritan

[-Luke 10:25-37](#)

(Pamela)

Finally ...

Pamela wrote about neighbours and in one of our Wednesday sessions we asked 'who is my neighbour'?

Jesus answered that in perhaps the most famous of his parables: the Good Samaritan ([Luke 10:25-38](#)). I think you will know it!

We started with a prayer as we looked at the past, and we will finish with one which looks to the future.

***'Heavenly Father, whose love is everlasting, accept our thanksgiving for all the blessings of the year that is past;
take our lives afresh into your keeping as we face the unknown future; and fit us by your grace for whatever lies before us in the days to come; for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ'***

AMEN



PHOTO GALLERY



Advent Wreath in Church

**The Longdons – Christingle
at St Anne's**





Yamil and Sandra in church



Christmas traditions in Brazil





More tea, Vicar?

**Does anyone know the way
to Bethlehem?**



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Wardens	Diane Cooper: 07477 785 787 Johnson Ayibiowu: 07506 930 471
Safeguarding Officers	Carol Phillips: 07957 970 851 Johnson Ayibiowu: 07506 930 471 Please go to them if you are concerned about the safety or well-being of a child or a vulnerable adult in the church.
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

