

# The Buzz From St B's

Winter 2024



Online Edition



Nativity Festival Exhibit 2023

St Barnabas Parish Church  
Woodfield Road Hadleigh

**Here For Everyone!**

[www.stbarnabas-hadleigh.org.uk](http://www.stbarnabas-hadleigh.org.uk)

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[www.stbarnabas-hadleigh.org.uk](http://www.stbarnabas-hadleigh.org.uk)

Parish Office - 01702 558591 (Hall Bookings / Enquiries)  
Messages left will be answered



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## SUNDAY SERVICES

1st and 3rd Sundays      9.30am Holy Communion  
2nd and 4th Sundays      9.30am Morning Service

### Mid-Week Service

Wednesdays 10.30am Holy Communion  
*(alternating with St James the Less Hadleigh)*

It is regretted that Zoom services are not possible at present

Please visit our website or our 'A Church Near You' page:  
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/6383>

## CHRISTMAS SERVICES DECEMBER 2024

### CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday 24th 5.00pm Christingle & Nativity Service  
(11.30pm Holy Communion at St James the Less Hadleigh)

### CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday 25th 9.30am Holy Communion

SEE ALSO PAGES 6, 7 & 8 FOR CHRISTMAS EVENTS

## What? No Vicar?



Interregnum is not a word familiar to most people! It means the period in the church between one Vicar leaving and a new one arriving, also known as a vacancy.

St Barnabas has now begun an interregnum. Importantly, it doesn't mean that church services and activities come to a halt pending a new leader taking up the reins. In fact, the church continues to function in much the same way during an interregnum. It is able to do so because churchwardens, lay ministers and members of the church who unobtrusively carry out so many of the tasks necessary in the running of the church, up their game and take on additional responsibilities ensuring as far as possible that everything continues as before.

Arrangements are made for a priest from another parish, or a retired priest, or lay minister to lead services and officiate at weddings, funerals and baptisms.

The process of selecting a new priest for the Parishes of St Barnabas Hadleigh and St James the Less Hadleigh is progressing. Reorganisation of ministry and resource sharing is taking place in local Anglican churches, and it may take some months before an appointment is made. In the meantime, rest assured that all church activities and services will continue.

Contact details for all enquiries are on the opposite page, together with times of church services.



# BTH Group

BENFLEET - THUNDERSLEY - HADLEIGH  
CHURCHES BETTER TOGETHER

BTH is a new scheme of working for St Barnabas, and St James the Less, together with St Georges Thundersley, St Peters Thundersley with St Michaels Thundersley.

The parishes will remain separate entities, but resources will be pooled and there will be additional paid and unpaid appointments, both clergy and lay people, sharing in the work and mission of the whole group.

For example, the vicar responsible for St Barnabas and St James the Less will have a wider ranging ministry within BTH; similarly other leaders will also have team responsibilities.

It is intended that additional team appointments will include youth leaders, family workers, pastoral assistants and administrators, with coordinated events and activities, and single point contact for arranging weddings, baptisms and funerals.

A Team Leader, Revd Peter Hillman, has been appointed and implementing the scheme has begun. It will take time to put all the changes envisaged into place. In the meantime, the normal pattern of services, pastoral arrangements and events will continue at St Barnabas and at St James the Less.

Community life in our society is markedly different than in previous times. The church must adapt to meet the challenges this presents. The new way of working outlined above is designed to meet these challenges now and in future years, and be of great benefit to the local communities and the congregations involved.

## Thinking About Christmas

Christmas is a marvellous mixture of the profound and the tacky, the sacred and the secular, the hedonistic and the generous. In other words it's a bit like each of us, who have so many different facets that we're about as hard to sum up as Christmas. It's a time of wonder and yearning, and although it coincides with the pagan mid-winter festival, its symbolism is enormously richer. There aren't many people so hard-bitten that they aren't moved by the birth of a baby, a bearer of new hopes, new dreams and new beginnings.



The historical Jesus was born a very long time ago; and like all births it was a once-and-for-all thing, never to be repeated. The Jesus of faith, however, is free of such constraints. Through the medium of imagination he can be, and is, born again each and every year, as the focus of our new hopes, our new dreams and our new beginnings.

It doesn't actually matter if the words of the carols we sing are often sentimental, or talk about a world that no-one lives in any more (if indeed they ever did), of 'angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold'. The reality is, of course, that the world does not (and never did) 'in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing'. But the carol is not giving us a bit of history. Rather, it's a word picture of love; a way of expressing awe and wonder and the deeply held conviction or feeling (and feelings are so much more important on this occasion than facts) that love is the ultimate reality; that love matters; that love is the way forward; that a world in which love is dominant will be a much better place to live in than one in which fear and hate and greed and selfishness are the driving forces.

*from the Online Winter 2020 'Buzz' - no printed copies were made or distributed because of covid*



Present An Afternoon Of  
Christmas Music



Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 3pm  
St Barnabas Church, Hadleigh

Join us for An Afternoon of Christmas Music  
A mixture of traditional and modern carols and music  
and several well-known carols for the audience to join in

Tickets £10, Children free

Telephone: 01268 751303

**Return of Popular Christmas Event**  
**NATIVITY FESTIVAL**  
**Bring Your Own Nativity (BYO)**  
**Festive Event for Families**

**Friday 29th November 10.00am - 12.00**

We would love you to bring your Nativity Scene to display in the Church. It would be helpful if you can provide a few details about where you got your Nativity Scene and what it means to you, to be read out at the BYO event tomorrow.

**Saturday 30th November 10.00am - 12.30pm**  
**Bring Your Own Nativity Event**

The church will be open for family, friends/ and neighbours to see the Nativity Scenes. PLUS coffee/hot chocolate, mince pies and carols.

**Sunday Service 1st December 9.30am**

The Nativity Scenes will be blessed during the service. We would very much like the display to continue through to the following Sunday, 8th December, and to be returned to their owners in the following week They may of course be left on church until after Christmas if preferred.





Nativity  
and  
Christingle  
Service  
Tuesday  
24th December

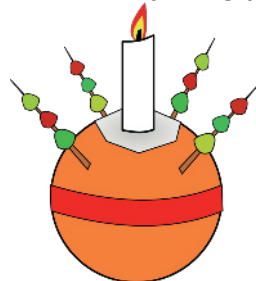
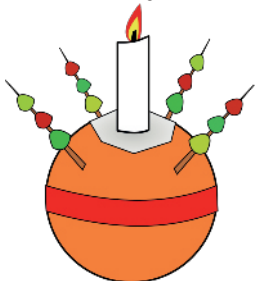
This year St Barnabas will welcome Christmas with a Nativity and Christingle service, perfect for children and tired parents! The Nativity or Crib Service is one of the best loved services at St Barnabas.

The service will be on Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24th December at 5.00pm. A special family occasion for everyone.

The Nativity takes us back 2000 years to a genuinely world changing event when Jesus was born like one of us, to be one with us. Christians around the world will be celebrating Christmas.

Everyone, without exception, is accepted and loved by God, who in Jesus was born twenty centuries ago in the humblest of circumstances, vulnerable and dependant like all babies.

Whether you believe or not, you are welcome to share the wonder of the Christmas story at St Barnabas. Christingle supports The Children's Society in their very important work with young people.





## LEAVING OUR MARK

Behind the carved oak pulpit in an old church there was a mark on the dusty wall. At first glance it looked as if it was a shadow on the stone, but then it became clear that it was the outline of a cross which had probably hung there for many years. When taken down, the cross had left the mark on the wall.



We don't have to be a showbiz star or a social media sensation in order to leave our mark. As individuals, Christian or not, we too can leave a mark, even if we live a relatively unremarkable life, as most of us do.

Each of us has something of value to give, unsung qualities, gifts that we have within us. They may not be headline grabbing, but little acts of kindness that we receive, and hopefully some that we ourselves are able to do for other people, the visit or phone call or cup of tea and chat, make such a difference. Giving lifts the spirits of both the receiver and the giver.

I am sure most of us can recall kindnesses that we have received from relatives, friends, neighbours, or even strangers. One simple, thoughtful gift I received was a bowl of jelly from a friend, brought when I was recovering alone, from a serious bout of pneumonia. She knew I was very unwell and decided her jelly would be easy to eat. An act of loving kindness I will never forget, along with many I have been privileged to receive.

There may be times when we feel completely useless. We can't stop the world events that distress us, no-one listens to our small voice of protest, but we can make our mark where we live. However small it is, it is our mark and you never know you might just bring a little joy to someone's world nearer home.

Without realising it, our act of kindness, our self-giving, like the mark of the cross on the wall behind the ancient pulpit, may also be the mark of the cross.



## FORGIVENESS

*Some thoughts on the complex issue of forgiveness:*

Most people recognise the importance of forgiveness in mending broken relationships, restoring family harmony, and alleviating mental and physical anguish. Forgiveness can bring healing to both the perpetrator of wrong and the one on the receiving end. Stored resentment destroys the whole being.

While we understand the need for forgiveness, actually forgiving can be the most difficult thing to do. Some are able to forgive, even in the most extreme circumstance, others will never be able to do so. Pain and distress from hurt or abuse can be unbearable; grief lasts for a lifetime; forgiveness may be absolutely impossible.

The best-known Christian prayer, The Lord's Prayer, links the petition asking God to forgive our own sins with our forgiveness of those who have wronged us. Jesus exposed those who mistreated or mislead others and those who were sinful, but he also freely forgave. He didn't condemn wrongdoers out of hand, he offered a better way forward, beginning with forgiveness. One example is the incident of the woman accused of committing adultery. Jesus did not condemn her as her stone throwing accusers did, he simply said to her *"Go and sin no more."* He also pointed out that everyone is capable of sinfulness. The account is in St John's Gospel Chapter 8 of the Bible.

Tougher to accept is the response from Jesus to a question from the disciple Peter: *“How many times should I forgive a brother who sins against me, seven times?”* Jesus told him, *“Not seven but seventy times seven.”* He went on to explain what he meant in a parable, a story; read it in St Matthew’s Gospel chapter 18, verses 18 to 35.

Apparently, Jesus here suggests that forgiveness should be limitless; a very tough call. However, Jesus possessed amazing insight into human psyche, he knew very well that forgiveness without limits is not possible for mere mortals, you and me. I do not believe that he condemns us when we are unable to forgive, any more than he condemned the woman accused of adultery, and many others that he encountered who had fallen by the wayside. Unforgiveness too is forgivable.

We are not lesser beings when we cannot match up to Christian ideals. What we can do is accept the consequences of our actions, determine to make amends, put things right when possible, and change direction. We can prayerfully bring our whole self to God in the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that he accepts us and loves us just as we are, warts and all.

*Mike*

*‘God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy’ (Pope Francis)*

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*The Buzz is not now distributed around the Parish in printed form. It is available online only. In the final two printed editions, there were articles on ‘Wisdom’ and ‘Truth’.* These were intended to be part of a series in which the above article on Forgiveness is the third. *‘Wisdom’ and ‘Truth’ are reprinted on the following pages.*

## WISDOM



We sometimes say, or hear, that something is ‘proverbial’, meaning commonly known by many people, or expressing a truth known by a particular group of people.

The Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament of the Bible, is generally shortened to simply ‘Proverbs’ and is known as ‘wisdom literature’. Proverbs is a collection of pithy advice, admittedly from centuries past, yet often retaining validity and meaning today.

Proverbs chapter 8 has wisdom personified, speaking for itself: *‘Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights beside the way, beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: To you O people I call, and my cry is to all that live.’* Notice ‘her voice’ and ‘she cries out’ – the writer clearly sees wisdom as feminine in gender, and the same is true in other chapters of proverbs – a point for the male of the species to ponder! And if this female wisdom is divine wisdom, here we may be seeing something of the feminine in God.

Wisdom advises that we *learn prudence and acquire intelligence*; we might translate ‘think deeply and act wisely.’ Simple, yes, but nevertheless profound; I can think of occasions when I have unwisely rushed into something without giving it time and thinking it through properly. Sometimes of course, quick decisions have to be made, but more often there is time for proper consideration.

With or without religious faith, Intelligence is much more than knowledge acquired by diligent study. Intelligence is a combination of knowledge and wisdom, and is gained throughout life in

experience, encounter, and relationship. Frequently it comes in the wake of things we get wrong – learning by experience. The vital thing is not to become so fixed, so hide bound, that we are unable to go on building our intelligence bank, both in human terms, and, I would say, in our faith and belief in God.

Wisdom's claim is to be more valuable than worldly wealth:

*Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you desire cannot compare with her.*

apposite, it seems to me, in our topsy-turvy material world.

*Mike*

*'Who amongst us is wise and understanding? Let them show by their good behaviour that their actions are carried out with unobtrusive wisdom.'*

(James 3:13 (Berkeley (U.S.) Bible Version))



## TRUTH

One of the difficulties that we all have to face is discerning fact from fiction, finding truth. Spoken and written words and pictures (think much vaunted AI), can be manipulated such that nothing can be taken at face value. And yet, truthfulness is essential in maintaining successful relationships, in respect for others, in business, in meaningful study, and in securing and maintaining peace.

There is a need for constant awareness. Press and television, social media channels, politicians, advertisers and celebrities have their own agenda and look for the most favourable outcome in swaying opinions or selling products. Scammers use the internet and telephone systems, all too often successfully, to dupe unsuspecting victims.

The blurring of truth may be more devious today, but falsehood has been a feature of every age and time, sometimes with catastrophic results. Never ceasing wars are an example - 'the first casualty of war is truth.' At a basic human level, breakdown in relationship is most often caused by lying. Truth may hurt, but untruth is the more painful.

Faced with vociferous accusers and the frenzied crowd they had whipped up, Roman governor Pontius Pilate had to decide the fate of Jesus, the man unjustly accused. Puzzled because he could find no fault in Jesus, Pilate enquired: *what is truth?*" (John 18:38).

In his New Testament letter to the church in Philippi, St Paul wrote:

*‘whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things’* (Philippians 4:8).

Of any faith or none, the words resonate in human heart and mind.

Jesus famously said that when you know the truth, *“the truth will set you free”* (John 8:32).

Ultimately, lies are not beneficial. Truth may not be what we want to hear, but it is truth that sets us free to make right decisions, to be our true self, to love and to live.

*Mike*

*“Truth is like the sun. You can shut it out for a time, but it ain't goin' away.”*

*Elvis Presley*

Need a Hall for your organisation to use or for a special function? St Barnabas Church has 2 large halls and a smaller lounge for hire.

**Please contact the Parish Office:  
01702 558591**

If there is no answer, leave contact details and we will get back to you.



**'KETTLE'S ON'  
Cuppa  
Refreshment & Chat  
at St Barnabas  
EVERY TUESDAY  
10.30 - 12.00**

**We don't make it with holy water but our tea is divine!  
Come and taste for yourself**



We are sorry that The Buzz is no longer in printed form - distribution became impossible.  
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