

Looking to the future with hope



February has been a time of great change for St Barnabas as we said goodbye to our Vicar Erik and to Jane. It was good to have the chance to celebrate and be thankful for the many ways in which God has blessed St Barnabas over the years and also to acknowledge the sadness felt by so many of us as we said goodbye.

Times of change can be difficult and it's important that as a church we support one another. To help us think about how that might work in practice, around 60 people who are involved in leadership at St Barnabas met at the end of January. We spent some time in small groups talking about our hopes and fears for the future and then praying about them.

Here are some of the themes that emerged from that meeting. Perhaps some of them resonate with you?

Fears

People drifting away, possible drop in numbers

That the vacancy will be longer than expected and place a strain on everyone with increased confusion and uncertainty

I fear for the people who find any kind of change difficult and those for whom the vicar was the first port of call.

Division/ lack of unity/ power seeking/ cliques emerging – people pushing their own agendas (*this was the comment that came up most frequently*)

That people will get stuck in the past or be overcautious, clinging to the past and not seeing what God wants to lead us into now

Finding the right balance between creativity and keeping things the same for the sake of stability

That we will work in our own strength rather than seek God's help through prayer

That our desire to find a new vicar will blind us to whether any candidate is the person God wants for St Barnabas

Hopes

My hope would be that the vacancy will be a time when we learn how to lean on God more.



That it will be a time of spiritual growth and not standing still

The opportunity to do things differently. Maybe we will be more aware of asking is this still what the Lord wants?

People will pull together and there will be a sense of unity and reliance on the Holy Spirit with a greater awareness of God's love for each one of us (*this was repeated many times*)

New people will get involved in leadership and service (*also repeated many times*)

Fellowship will be strengthened as we have to rely on each other

That God will work in all of us and that the vacancy will be a time of growth

Fresh ideas and energy – God isn't leaving the church!

That we will use the time of the vacancy to pray together as a church

That God will lead the right person to apply to become our new vicar

I was really moved by the honesty with which people were able to express their hopes and fears. One theme which emerged many times was the hope that as a church, we will grow closer to God as we trust in him for the future. Related to this is a strong emphasis on prayer as a way to draw closer to God and to one another.

St Barnabas is a wonderful church and Gerard, the children and I

have all received so much from you over the last three years. As we too look to the future and our next adventure in ministry we do so strengthened and encouraged by the time that we have spent with you.

My hope for you all is that you will remain faithful in prayer and united in love throughout the vacancy and for many more years to come as you continue to make disciples for life and to share God's love in Linthorpe and Ayresome.

Tessa

Thank you

Thank you so much for a wonderful send off. The surprise party was just great. It was so good to spend that time with our church family and we treasure many happy memories of the occasion. Our last service, though difficult, was full of the joy of the Lord for us. We are assured of the Lord's good purposes for St Barnabas.

We were overwhelmed by the generosity of your gift to us. It was however typical of the enormous generosity and love we received throughout our time at St Barnabas. We will remain ever grateful to God for our years in Middlesbrough and for the privilege of being able to share in the life and worship of such a wonderful church.

With much love

Erik and Jane



The Vacancy...

update and moving forward in the Lord's strength

The vacancy is now upon us as we move together into an unknown period of time without a vicar. Fortunately, this has not been thrust upon us suddenly, so we have been able to put plans into place to try to ensure everything runs smoothly during this time. We are very fortunate and grateful to have many gifted people within our church family, people willing to take on increased responsibilities and/or step into new roles during the vacancy.

During this time, it is us your churchwardens who, together with Dominic Black (Area Dean), have overall responsibility for the running of the church during a period of vacancy. In particular, we should like to emphasize that Sam Tyndall, our curate, remains 'in training' and whilst he has agreed to take on some additional responsibilities, he is not 'the temporary vicar', so please be aware that he may suggest that someone else, such as another member of the staff team or one of the Ministry Leaders or even a churchwarden, is the person to speak to.

We will also be losing Tessa in March, as she moves to take up her new role as vicar of St. Mary's Nunthorpe. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Tessa for her valued ministry and service as our Associate Minister and wish her well in her new role.

We are of course aware that no plan is perfect, and it may be that something has been overlooked, so should you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to bring the matter to the attention of either of the churchwardens.

As regards the process to find Erik's successor, we are able to confirm that the PCC has chosen us, your churchwardens, to be the two parish representatives on the interview panel. Also, the parish profile (the document which forms the basis of the post when it is advertised) has now been approved by the PCC and submitted to the Bishop and Archdeacon. We therefore expect the post to be advertised in the very near future and certainly before the end of March.

In the meantime, we would encourage you to continue praying for both the vacancy process and the church as a whole during the period of vacancy. In particular please pray for:-

- unity and the Lord's protection during this period of vacancy; may we all seek to encourage one another and as it says in Ephesians 4:3 "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace", being very aware that we are in a spiritual battle, where the forces of evil will see a period of vacancy as an ideal opportunity to sow seeds of division amongst us.
- wisdom and guidance for those who have taken on new or increased responsibilities during the vacancy and that we will encourage and support them as they 'find their feet' in new areas of service
- the person who God wants to be our new vicar, that they will have open ears to not only hear God's call, but also a heart that is willing to respond.
- us all as members of God's church, that we will seek to discern the role he wants each of us to play during the vacancy
- the PCC, for continued wisdom in discerning our priorities during the vacancy
- Erik and Jane, as they enter into a new phase in their lives away from St Barnabas
- Tessa, as she starts her new role as vicar of St. Mary's Nunthorpe

Alistair & Graeme, Churchwardens

PCC in February



The February PCC meeting included the Section 11 meeting, at which the parish representatives for the process of appointing the new vicar were appointed. The parish profile was approved.

As this was Erik's final PCC meeting he expressed his gratitude and to the PCC and churchwardens over the past nineteen years.



Easter Services at St Barnabas

Maundy Thursday, 29th March

Holy Communion, 7.30 p.m. in church

Good Friday, 30th March

Easter Crafts and Activities, 10 a.m. - 12 noon
in the church hall.

2 p.m. An Hour at the Cross

Easter Sunday 1st April

8 a.m. Holy Communion

9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

11.15 a.m. All Age Holy Communion

6.30 p.m. Evening Praise

Dorothy McLaren

Dorothy attended St Barnabas for many years, coming to the 9.30 service. She loved crafts and was a member of the Lydia Group and a supporter of Barney's Shop. We were shocked and saddened by the accident that led to her death and we continue to hold her sons, Ian and David, and all Dorothy's family and friends in our prayers at this sad time.

From the Registers

Wedding

10th February Daniel Martin Telford and Abigail Durant

Funerals at St Barnabas

8th February Dorothy McLaren aged 89

14th February Victor McCall aged 79





Diary

Monday 26th February	Welcome Break, 10 a.m.—12 noon in the narthex
Wednesday 28th February	Lent Prayer Together, 8 pm in church
Week beginning 4th March	Life groups meet
Sunday 4th March	Lunch Together
Monday 5th March	Welcome Break, 10 a.m.—12 noon in the narthex PCC meeting, 7.15 pm in the Reid Room
Monday 12th March	Welcome Break, 10 a.m.—12 noon in the narthex
Wednesday 14th March	Lent Prayer Together, 8 pm in church
Week beginning 18th March	Life groups meet
Monday 19th March	Welcome Break, 10 a.m.—12 noon in the narthex Prayer Team meeting, 7.30 pm in the Reid Room
Monday 26th March	Welcome Break, 10 a.m.—12 noon in the narthex APCM, 7 pm in church
Thursday 29th March	Maundy Thursday Holy Communion, 7.30 pm in church
Friday 30th March	Good Friday Crafts and puppets, 10 am—12 noon An hour at the cross, 2 pm in church
Sunday 1st April	Easter Sunday 8 am Holy Communion 9.30 am Holy Communion 11.15 am All Age Communion 6.30 pm Evening Praise