



## You Can't Cancel Christmas

There is fevered debate in some quarters about whether Christmas might be 'cancelled'. This is first-rate premium tosh, bunk, garbage and dross. We can no more cancel Christmas that Canute could stop the tide.

We cannot 'cancel' Christmas because it has already happened. Jesus was born in Judea just over 2000 years ago. We know masses about his life. The church he founded has spread far and wide. And the Lord is here when we gather in his name – online or offline.

We cannot 'cancel' Christmas because the birth of Christ is a work of God, not a work by human beings. In Christ God reaches down to us. It is not about us reaching up to God. We modern humans endlessly, delusionally, put ourselves at the centre of the universe. But it is not all about us. At Christmas the one who flung stars into space comes to us.

We cannot 'cancel' Christmas because Christmas is not, at root, a cultural event, but worship of the God who comes to us in Jesus. Just as the kings were able to worship the infant in the mess of a stable, so we can worship the Christ-child in the mess our own lives and the mess of our anxious, fretting world.



Photo by [Robert Thiemann](#) on [Unsplash](#)

As you look towards Christmas, there is much uncertainty. You may be wondering how you will connect with family and friends. You may be worried about your health and money. You may be swamped by the anxiety which is so prevalent and which so easily invades our hearts. But Jesus has come to us at Bethlehem. We can rest in him, come what may.

This time of corona is sometimes likened to wartime. And in the suffering and deep disruption, that makes sense. What is rarely also noted is that the Second World War was a time of significant spiritual renewal for the Christian church. It was the age of Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. Churchgoing was more vigorous in the late 40s and 50s than for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Third Reich and Cold War made meaningful talk of sin and death and made people yearn for the coming of

Jesus. There is a sense of people drawing closer to God in those wartime Christmases. In our coming COVID Christmas we can, similarly, draw near to Jesus and, amidst all the fear, know his peace.

Your Christmas and mine will feel different this year. There will be disappointments, but that should not prevent us celebrating. The angels said 'fear not' to Mary and the shepherds. That is what God is saying to us amidst pandemic pandemonium.

I urge you to think over, pray over and plan how you will mark the coming of Jesus this year – for Christmas isn't cancelled. It can't be cancelled. And in the midst of strife we can know the joy of the Christ-child.

David

# Urdu Ministry

Members of St Barnabas Church have developed materials in Urdu to nourish faith in Christ and help people live life according to Christian principles.

These materials are produced by Simon and Lubna John. Born and raised in Pakistan, Simon and Lubna have lived in Middlesbrough in the North East of England for ten years. They have two sons and are long-standing members of St Barnabas Church.

If you would like to know more, go to the 'ministry' section of the church website – or use this link:

<http://www.st-barnabas.net/urdu-ministry-%d8%a7%d8%b1%d8%af%d9%88-%d9%85%d9%86%d8%b3%d9%b9%d8%b1%db%8c/>

## Christmas Plans

Plans for worship, children's ministry and care for the vulnerable over Christmas are being put in place. It is going to feel different this year, but need not make our celebrations any less whole-hearted. Keep an eye out for what is coming and consider how you can mark the Saviour's birth this year.

## Thank you to Elizabeth Atkin

Many thanks to Elizabeth Atkin, who steps down after many years overseeing the flower ministry at St Barnabas. How the church building is affects how we worship. The flower arrangements have an important role in making the space more beautiful and helping us worship God with eyes – as well as hearts and voices. Thank you, Elizabeth for all the hard work and skill you have put into this ministry. And thank you, too, to Mary Devereux, who takes over this role.

# New Media Worker

With the much greater need for IT during coronavirus, the PCC has approved the recruitment of a 'media worker', who will oversee the streaming of services and AV generally. Following interviews, Phil Hale has been appointed as 'media worker'. This is a half-time role for 12 months, in the first instance. Phil has extensive experience of IT and is currently working for the Tearfund charity. He is married to Imogen. Phil will start work in mid-December.



# Mail Order Craft Aid



Craft Aid is another casualty of Covid, but we still want to support Sister Aba and the work of the eye clinic in Jachie, Ghana. Some people have been busy making jam as usual. Perhaps you were busy with crafts during lockdown. If you have things that you would like to sell in aid of Jachie, please

email [barbara@st-barnabas.net](mailto:barbara@st-barnabas.net) and let me know what you have. If you have pictures, send those too and I'll make a page on the website circulate details by email and post and arrange delivery.

Gillian Moore is working on a quiz, details to follow.

So far, we have jam available, £2 for a 1lb (large), £1.50 for 12oz, and £1 for 8oz (small).

Seville orange and lemon marmalade 1lb

Orange marmalade, Lime marmalade, and Lemon marmalade (1 lb and smaller)

Victoria plum jam 1lb

Gooseberry jam 1lb

Apricot and grape jam 1lb

Raspberry jam 1lb

Raspberry jam 12oz

Blackcurrant jam and Blackberry jam (large and small)

Raspberry and strawberry jam (small)

Rhubarb and ginger ( mostly small)

Also, pictures and cards from Ken Whiteway (various)

Christmas cards from Pat Paylor (large £1.50, regular £1)

If you would like any of these, please email [barbara@st-barnabas.net](mailto:barbara@st-barnabas.net) or phone 01642 651818 and we will organize delivery. Payment can be made by bank transfer to the church account: sort code 40-33-01 for the credit of Linthorpe St. Barnabas PCC, account no 81164503, reference : 'Jachie'.

If you need to pay by cash, please put in an envelope marked 'Jachie' and hand to Barbara Edwards or Alistair Bolton.

# PCC in October



The PCC met via Zoom in October.

Phil Edwards, the treasurer, gave a financial update. The PCC agreed to advertise for a part-time media worker for 12 months. The Facilities Management Group reported on their first meeting since February. There was the usual review of worship, pastoral care, social action and children and families.

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Our annual church meeting (APCM) takes place on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 7.30pm on Zoom. As well as looking back at the last year, we will elect 2 churchwardens, 4 Deanery Synod representative to serve for 3 years and 3 PCC members to service for 3 years. Please be praying about who you might nominate. There are nomination sheets and details of eligibility on the website. Unfortunately, the rules do not allow postal or proxy voting. The annual reports presented at the meeting will be circulated by email. Please phone 01642 651818 if you would like them to be posted to you.

### From the Registers

#### Funerals at St Barnabas

9th October	Hal Jackson
14th October	Paul Stephenson



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