



## How are we waiting?

How are we waiting ? When I hear that COVID is going to last a good while longer, I find it depressing. So much is being damaged as a society and in the lives of individuals.

We are in the season of Advent and it has much to teach us about how we can wait well.

When we hear the voices of the Old Testament prophets talking of the future Messiah, a key thing to remember is that they were writing hundreds of years before the time of Jesus. When Isaiah said that the people who walked in darkness had seen a great light, he was talking in faith. The light for which he hoped was nowhere in view. When Micah told Bethlehem Ephrathah 'out of you will come one who will be ruler of over Israel', this was some 700 years into the future.



The prophets give us a model for how to wait. They wait faithfully, sure that light will follow darkness. And they wait with a generous spirit – hopeful of salvation which will touch all peoples, most especially the poor of the earth.

Advent is a season of waiting. Corona is a time of waiting. And we need to learn how to wait well. As the light came to Israel after centuries of waiting, so we need to follow the Israelites' example of faithfulness, and not lose hope.

And as they hoped for salvation across the earth, most especially for the poor, so we must hope for and work for the same. Isaiah and Micah were sure God had not given up on Israel or the earth and so waited expectantly. That good waiting was rewarded with the coming of Jesus.

We, who are tempted to lose heart and become mean-spirited, can learn from Isaiah how we are to wait expectantly amidst corona this Advent.

*David Goodhew*

# God and COVID:

## a Sermon Series for the New Year

On Sunday mornings from 10 January, we will explore how we as Christians can make sense of COVID. We'll be looking at the Old Testament book of Job which unflinchingly asks where God is in the face of suffering. We'll look at the gospels and we'll finish with 1 Peter, written to a church facing much hardship. COVID makes us face hard intellectual questions: how do we square suffering with a God of love? But those questions are never just intellectual. We each have to learn how to survive and, somehow, live well amidst hardship – whether that is the hardship of the pandemic or the other hardships we face in life. Job, the Gospels and 1 Peter are a huge resource in doing just that. So, do make use of this upcoming teaching series and encourage others, who are asking where God is amidst COVID, to do the same.

## Kingdom Mission Giving

St Barnabas has a longstanding commitment to give 10% of its income to mission work, primarily overseas. This year, we will be giving £24,000 away – primarily to our main mission partners in Ghana, Peru, Thailand and South East Asia. In fact the extent of our financial giving as a church is significantly greater than this, as there are various other ways in which money is given away. Thank you to all who give and all who oversee our finances. In such a disrupted year, it is fantastic to know that this money is going out and doing good.

# Caring in Covid

We are blessed to be part of a caring church family. Thank you for all you are doing to support and look out for friends and neighbours. If you have a particular concern for anyone, or would value practical support or prayer yourself please contact Lindsey or David Goodhew on 01642 817306 or email the Church Office [office@st-barnabas.net](mailto:office@st-barnabas.net)

## Thanks to St Barnabas Foodbank

The foodbank run from St Barnabas has fed over 2000 people since the Lockdown in March 2020. That is an extraordinary figure. St Barnabas' Foodbank has kept going right through the pandemic. Thank God for this ministry, for all the volunteers and for all who have supported Foodbank by their gifts. Let's pray and work for the day when this ministry is no longer needed.

## PCC in November



The PCC approved the accounts for 2019 in advance of the APCM. David thanked the PCC members who were retiring at the APCM.

There was a discussion about the role of churchwardens. Revd Mark Walley reported on ministry to children and families. It was agreed that ministry to the under 25s would be a priority for 2021.

# Daily Hope



A free phone line offering hymns, prayers, and reflections to tens of thousands of callers after church buildings closed because of the coronavirus is still available. Daily

A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

Hope, launched by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in April, has now received 173,000 calls from over 37,000 people – with calls topping more than two million minutes.

The service – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – was set up as a simple new way to bring worship and prayer into people's homes, especially older people and anyone unable to join online church services.

Stories sent to the Archbishop from across the country share how the service has brought comfort and support during these difficult times. Many who wrote in said they had recommended the line to others.

Callers to the line are welcomed with a short greeting from the Archbishop before being able to choose from a range of options, including hymns, prayers, reflections and advice on COVID-19.

New material to the service continues to be updated, including mental health reflections voiced by Pam Rhodes, as well as prayers from the Mothers Union.

## St Barnabas Church on the Phone

Don't forget that you can listen to the 9am service on the phone for the cost of a local call, by calling 01642 130011. There was a delay to the service being available when we returned to church in September, but it should now be available from 5pm each Sunday.



## Christmas Services at St Barnabas

### **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December**

Carol Service 9am

Carol Service 11.15am

Service of Lessons and Carols 4pm and 6.30pm

### **Christmas Eve**

Online Crib Service 4pm

Midnight Communion 11.30pm

### **Christmas Day**

Holy Communion 9am

Family Worship 11.15am

We look forward to welcoming you to St Barnabas this Christmas.

You must book to attend a service in church. All services will be streamed on Facebook and YouTube.

See [www.st-barnabas.net/christmas](http://www.st-barnabas.net/christmas) for details of how to book or telephone 01642 651818.

## Would you value talking to someone who will listen?

A reminder that listening ministry is available for anyone who may have a particular need to talk to a trained Christian listener. It is a free and confidential ministry. For further information, please contact the Church Office or Ali Ward ([allisonward@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:allisonward@tiscali.co.uk)).

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