



## Easter Hope

My sister-in-law is a teacher and she told me how her school teaches with the windows open to try to blow COVID away. 'I was completely nithered!' she exclaimed. Even if you haven't come across the word 'nithered' before, I think you can work out what it means. And nithered or not, we've all discovered a new respect for fresh air as we've learnt how great it is for blowing away the virus.

The Holy Spirit is described as 'wind'. We celebrate Pentecost in a few weeks and it is a good time to consider which way the Holy Spirit is blowing in these strange times.

One of the little-recognised fruits of the Holy Spirit is 'self-control'. That has a lot to say to us in COVID. It means that, as we begin to ease out of lockdown it remains important to follow all the guidance we are getting as to how to curb the virus. Equally, showing self control in following the guidance does not mean exceeding the guidance. The lockdowns have done a lot of damage as well as being necessary. As restrictions relax, a

little, this is good. It is OK to start doing some of the things we've had to give up – *provided we follow the guidance*. Part of living in the Spirit is showing self control.

The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of unity, binding scattered Christians together. Each of us has had different challenges during the pandemic. Some have needed to return to worship, others cannot – for very good reasons. But Christian faith holds that, whether or not we need to stay away from church, we need each other. We are incomplete without each other. Hence the Spirit brings us into unity. That decision you make to pick up the phone, or meet outside for a coffee or Zoom someone is a prompt from the Holy Spirit. What is the Spirit saying to you about how you can make the fellowship of St Barnabas more united - especially in days when the virus has forced us to live such individualistic lives ?

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of mission. Look at the way the



Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

first Christians whizzed out from Jerusalem after that first Pentecost, as if fired from a rocket. Never has our community needed the good news of Jesus more than it does now. The church council has been discussing ways in which we can take forward our Mission Action Plan and there are exciting ideas bubbling up which will be shared at St Barnabas' Annual Meeting on 24th May.

It's been a long and, for many, tough year. Let's pray for openness to the Holy Spirit this Pentecost to guide us and energise us for the months to come.

David

# Annual Church Meeting

On Monday 24th May our Annual Parochial Church Meeting will take place on Zoom at 7pm. We will elect two churchwardens for one year and three members of the PCC to serve for 3 years. Please think and pray about who you might nominate.

To vote at the APCM you need to be on the electoral roll by Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May. Nomination forms and electoral roll forms are available on the website or from the church office.

If there are elections for PCC this year, voting will be done by email and, as agreed at last year's APCM, postal voting will be allowed. If you would like a postal vote, please ring the church office on 01642 651818 or write to Barbara Edwards, 33 Claude Avenue, Middlesbrough, TS5 5PT as soon as possible, but by Sunday 23rd May at the latest. Postal votes will be sent out on Tuesday 25th May.

## PCC in April



The PCC discussed gains and losses during the last year, things that had been particularly missed and things that might usefully be continued.

Mark Walley reported that Sunday groups for children and young people would be restarting at the beginning of May and Mini Praise would also be starting.

The PCC approved Ali Ward going forward to the discernment process for Reader training.

David thanked those members for the PCC retiring at the APCM.

# Update from Rachel in South-east Asia

Rachel has finished her term teaching English in the capital of the country where she lives and has just moved north to the new city. Please pray that she settles quickly and is able to discern what to get involved in there.

Thank God that Rachel was able to get a space on the last bus out of the capital before a lockdown came into force due to the rapid spread of covid there, and please pray for protection for her country, which has to date escaped the worst of the pandemic. Thank you for your support.

*Naomi Smith*

## From the Registers

Baptism

25th April

Ranyechi Sophia Nwankwo



St Barnabas Church Office, 1A St Barnabas Road, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough, TS5 6JR  
Phone: 01642 812622 E-mail: [office@st-barnabas.net](mailto:office@st-barnabas.net) Website: [www.st-barnabas.net](http://www.st-barnabas.net)