

## Achieving Peace in Syria

At time of going to press, the first British air raids into Syria were being launched, in response to the terrorist attacks in Paris, Egypt and Africa. How do we respond?



We live in a city that knows too well the impact of bombing, the devastation and destruction that it brings. We know the cost to families, caught up in a conflict in which they are helpless victims. We know the time it takes to rebuild broken lives, flattened homes, and shattered dreams. No air strikes, no matter how precise, no matter how reliable the intelligence, can avoid such devastation. The loss of family homes alongside the loss of military compounds, the loss of water and electricity alongside the loss of guns and weapons, the loss of innocent lives alongside the guilty, is an inevitability.

And there is another form of collateral damage too. The damage of stoking yet further through civilian casualties the warped worldview of ISIL that sees the West as universally evil and corrupt, by which they can recruit yet more militants to their cause.



Coventry 75 years ago

So as a people who live in a city itself scarred by bombings, a city now known for peace and reconciliation, how do we respond? For one thing, by generous hospitality. The battle with ISIL is as much ideological as it is military. Our challenge is to live lives that vehemently deny the distorted view peddled by extremists of a western world hating Muslims and refugees of all kinds. St Barbara's, as part of a wider network of Anglican churches in the Coventry area, working with the City Council, is now supporting the opening of a church-owned building in Offchurch as a refugee welcome centre. Here, forty refugees at a time will receive two-weeks of training and support in helping them integrate into the UK before being settled elsewhere in the country. It's a small step, but an important one, nonetheless.

Secondly, through refusing to indulge in the language of hate, a language that only further stokes the fires of extremism. The words engraved in the ruins of our own cathedral serve as a powerful challenge to us all: "Father, forgive".

And thirdly, by working and praying for peace. Recent decades have shown with chilling regularity that violence begets more violence, that military force alone does not achieve justice or peace. We need our politicians and world leaders to prioritise finding a lasting, political and humanitarian settlement. Maybe that needs to be the focus of Parliament's next ten-hour debate.

We are known as a city of peace and reconciliation. May God help us all to live up to that name.

## Six years of sterling service

After six years of sterling service, St Barbara's Newsletter editor, Josie Howie, and sub-editor, Christine O'Brien, are stepping down. This is their last issue. Over that time Josie and Christine have produced over 30 high-quality newsletters, always packed with interesting articles and useful information. They have overseen significant changes in that time, including a re-design and re-launch of the newsletter in colour. We wish them well as they continue to serve the church in many other ways. And if the thought of helping to edit or design this newsletter, which goes to over 3,000 homes in Earlsdon every two months, appeals to you, then please do get in touch.

Rev Tulo Raistrick

## Contacts

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For more information go to  
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Syria today



# St Barbara's Newsletter

[www.stbarbarasearlsdon.org.uk](http://www.stbarbarasearlsdon.org.uk)

St Barbara's Parish Church, Earlsdon

January/February 2016 No. 449

## A Hive of Activity

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At St Barbara's church, children are an important and very special part of who we are. We love the joy and life they bring to us as a community.

Every week there are special activities for children – our Prayers and Bears service for the under 5s, our monthly Buzz at St B's Sunday afternoon service for young families, our EDGE youth group for young people, and our hosting of the St Barbara's Pre-School.

At our Sunday morning services, most weeks children participate in their own groups, coming back to the service later on, to share all that they have learnt and done. Called *Hive*, our children's groups are a buzz of activity, as the children spend time exploring the Christian faith for themselves. Some of the most popular activities include baking (and eating!), crafts, and games. The enthusiasm with which the children share what they have done with the rest of the church, helping us to learn from them, is a sign of just how much they enjoy it.



Hive caters for children from as young as 18 months up to 14 years of age, with younger children welcome to come along with their parents and carers.

And once a month, usually the second Sunday in the month, we have our Worship for All service. This is a service where we all stay together, from the youngest baby to those aged 100 and above. Through prayer, drama, visual aids, music and discussion, we share together the joy of being a community to which all are welcome.

Why not come along to one of our services and give our *Hive* a try!

## St Barbara's is Buzzing!



Buzz at St B's, our monthly afternoon service for young families, continues to attract new people keen to be part of church but who find getting to Sunday morning church just a bit of a challenge.



Whether its all the clubs and activities that take place on a Sunday morning, or the time to visit family and friends, or the opportunity for that once-a-week lie-in, Sunday mornings aren't always the easiest time for families to get to church.

However, 5pm on a Sunday afternoon seems to be an ideal time for many, especially when it is followed by tea, sandwiches and cakes!

The 30-minute service includes music, drama and craft, and is a relaxed and informal environment in which children and adults together can learn about and worship God.

Do come along. Our next Buzz at St B's services are Sundays 17<sup>th</sup> January, 21<sup>st</sup> February and 20<sup>th</sup> March, all at 5pm.

## Thought for the Month

## Play-people, Sprinklers and Wise Words

The Christmas holidays often give a good opportunity to catch up with family. Children and parents, grand-children and grand-parents, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces – Christmas can be a special time of reunions and memories.

I have to say that since I became a parent ten years ago, going to stay with the children's grandparents has become one of the best holidays we have as a family. Not only does it give us the possibility of a lie-in, but we get to see the unique bond growing and developing between our three children and their two sets of grand-dads and grand-mas.

It has also helped me to remember again the special times I had with my own grandparents. One of them, whom we called "Opa", in his eighties, would take me and my two brothers on a tram into the town, where we would go to a huge toy-shop, to look at all the play-people scenes, before buying us a set each, and then taking us to a café for cake and ice-cream. At other times, he would mischievously turn the hose-pipe and sprinklers on us while we were playing in the garden, soaking us to the bone.

Opa knew how to have fun. And he also knew when to speak words of hope and truth. At the age of 92, when

he began to sense he would not be around much longer, he called each of us 15 grand-children into his study one-by-one, sat us down, and shared with us his faith in God.

We didn't all listen at the time, but the memory of a grand-father sharing with us the most important thing he knew and believed, stayed with us.

At the end of January, the church remembers each year two very special older people and the words they said. Anna and Simeon, who had been waiting all their lives for someone to come and bring hope in the dark times in which they were living, encounter the baby Jesus. And in him, they see the hope and salvation of the world. "This is the one we have been waiting for", they both said. "We can now depart in peace."

Like my grandfather's words, their words may not have been fully taken in at the time, but they have been returned to time and again over the years, their truth and wisdom affirmed.

I wonder what words of hope and light we will want to pass on to our children and grand-children or loved ones? And how can we start doing that now?

Revd Tulo Raistrick

about de-cluttering our lives, about focusing on the bare necessities of our lives, and recognizing our need of God. It is about saying that at times we need to simplify our lives if we are to find them. It is about giving ourselves the time to focus on the things that really matter.

So you may not see many bill-boards or "Lent Discount Sale" signs, but whisper it quietly, Lent begins on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February.

Why not come along to St Barbara's on that day for one of our two services (at 11.30am and 7.30pm) or join us for one of our Lent study groups (see our website & page 3 for more details). You may find it to be a season of the year you will never want to forget again.



### Would you like prayer for someone or for yourself?

Feel free to e-mail Christine on cob27@mac.com or telephone the vicar on 024 7501 7889. Prayers could be said at the Wednesday or Sunday services as well as being added to the prayer chain that can be confidential if desired.



## WHAT'S ON AT ST BARBARA'S

## Every Sunday

## 8.00am Holy Communion

This is a quiet, meditative service which takes place in the beautiful side-chapel inside St Barbara's Church. The service lasts about 40 minutes and is attended by between 10-15 people each week.

## 10.00am Parish Communion

This is our main Sunday service, lasting just over an hour, attended by adults and children of all ages. We sing hymns and modern songs, led by an excellent choir, there is a thought-provoking talk, and time for prayer.

It is attended by about 100 people each week and children are especially welcome. We have groups that cater for pre-school, primary and secondary school ages, that meet during the service.

## Mid-week Service

**Holy Communion:** Every Wednesday at 11.30am

This is a small, intimate communion service that follows the Book of Common Prayer. It provides a space of quiet and stillness in the middle of the week to pray and reflect, and receive communion.

**Prayers and Bears:** Every term time Wednesday at 9.30am at Earlsdon Methodist Church. A service for the under-fives and their parents/carers, followed by snacks and crafts

## Every Month

**Buzz @ St B's:** 17th Jan 5pm

21st Feb 5pm

20th Mar 5pm

This is a fun, creative and interactive service for families. The service involves lively songs, craft, drama and other activities. It lasts forty minutes and is followed by

tea, with a delicious range of sandwiches and cakes.

**Soul Space** 10th Jan 6.30pm

14th Feb 6.30pm

13th Mar 6.30pm

A simple thirty minute service of silence, meditation, prayer and reflection, a place to allow one's soul to breathe.

## Special Services

**7th Feb 6.30pm Choral Evensong**

A beautiful service of readings and prayer set to music and led by our excellent choir

**10<sup>th</sup> Feb 11.30am & 7.30pm Ash Wednesday Service**

Two services to mark the beginning of Lent

**6th March 10am Mothering Sunday Service**

**25th March 10am - Good Friday Service**

**27th March 6am & 10am Easter Sunday Services**

## Other Events

## Friendship Group

This has merged with the Earlsdon Methodist Group which meets every fortnight in Wellspring at 2.15pm

The group will not meet in January and February

**Wed 2nd March 'This and That'** Rev A Charlesworth

**Film nights** - 7pm for 7.15pm in the church hall, on the first Thursday of the month.

**7th Jan "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" (PG)** Wonderful feel good film. A story about an ordinary man who finds the courage to leap into an extraordinary adventure

**4th Feb "Marley and Me" (PG)** A heartwarming tale about a young

couple and their dog and how the dog sees them through some of life's challenges

**3rd March "What we did on our holiday" (12)** Stars Billy Connolly and David Tennant. Two families share a holiday in the outer Hebrides where it soon becomes clear that keeping secrets with children around isn't an option!

## From the Registers

**Baptisms**

None

**Weddings** None

**Funerals**

10th Nov Ivy Wilding

## Churches Together in Earlsdon &amp; Chapelfields

**Prayer Breakfasts** Saturdays 8am

2nd Jan No Prayer Breakfast

6th Feb Hearsall Baptist Church

5th Mar Earlsdon Methodist Church

**Lent Lunches 12 noon 'til 1.30pm**

16th Feb Hearsall Baptist Church

23rd Feb St Mary Magdalen Church

1st March St Barbara's Church

**Lent Study Groups** will meet for five weeks in Lent

**Tuesdays 2-3.30pm** from 16th Feb at 45 Ainsbury Road

**Wednesdays 7.30-9pm** at Earlsdon Methodist Church

St Mary Magdalen Church

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

**Wed 20th Jan 7.30pm**

Taizé Service at St Mary Magdalen Church

**Sat 23rd Jan 6.30pm**

Fellowship Meal at St Barbara's Church

**Sunday 24th Jan 6.30pm**

United Service of Worship at All Souls' church