

St Barnabas Church, Istead Rise.

Profile May 2021.



Who are we?

A loving, welcoming, contemporary, Anglican church with a vision to be “Making Jesus Known”

We meet on Sundays for worship and teaching and throughout the week to serve the local community, proactively connecting through offering church-based events and supporting the school, community groups and activities.

Some of our members like to participate in events such as New Wine and Spring Harvest.

Generously supporting our mission partners through our tithe, prayers and additional giving is a priority. We have developed strong relationships with these partners over many years and have visiting speakers annually to keep the whole church connected with their work.

We are keen to explore the wider issues affecting the church at the present time, for example engaging with “Living in Love & Faith” and “Thy Kingdom Come” and willing and able to adapt to changing circumstances.

Where are we going?

Our vision is to “Make Jesus Known” and we focus on three core strategic areas “Connect, Grow and Serve”.

We long to see God’s kingdom come through all we are and do as a church. We hope to build on our strengths in connecting so that more people experience God’s love through us and come to know Jesus. We are excited to see those within our church family grow in knowledge and love of God and to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring their gifts and abilities to bless and serve in the life of the church and community. We want to dream big with God but take each small step in His strength and timing to get there in a sustainable way.

We look forward to relaunching our church-based activities to connect with the community as restrictions allow: Mission Shaped Living Course, Menz Group, “Unforgettables” Singing Group, Community Leaders Gathering, Community Carol Singing, Hosting a Pantomime. In addition, we are preparing to open a new Community Café.

Who would we like to journey with us?

We are looking for someone who could contribute the following skills & qualities:

A heart to see growth in the local church both in the spiritual lives of those already attending and through additional people coming to faith in Jesus.

A genuine love of a variety of forms of worship across the spectrum, including but not limited to contemporary music with freedom for Spirit-led expressions of worship as well as more traditional hymns and liturgical patterns of worship.

A confident communicator: comfortable in presiding, preaching and teaching biblical truths within a service and in smaller groups; at home in conversation in a variety of community and church contexts.

Happy to engage with individuals and groups of any age or background.

Organised with experience of managing competing priorities and communicating these clearly.

Keen to support the development of our children’s and young persons’ ministry.

Willing to work with a leadership team to further God’s purpose in St Barnabas and the local community.

Experience of supporting congregation members to identify their gifting and facilitating their discipleship.

The Parish:

The parish is located just south of the A2 at Gravesend. It is surrounded by fields and farmland, making it well defined. It is a purely residential area with excellent travel links—road and rail, giving easy access to London and the rest of Kent.

The parish is compact with nearly all the housing being post WW2 and predominately owner occupied. The current population is approx. 3800 and reflects a wide range of ages and occupations. It is mainly a commuter village. As with any community, there may be issues of hardship and unemployment but these are not immediately obvious. Probably the biggest social issue here is loneliness and isolation of the many elderly residents who are alone.

Bluewater shopping centre is a few miles away and there are 3 large supermarkets close by. There is a small shopping area in the centre of Istead Rise with the main shop being a Co-Op incorporating a Post Office. In addition, there is an Indian restaurant, fish and chip shop, butcher, pharmacy, dry cleaner and there is a hairdresser, florist and dentist.

The parish has a primary school with over 200 pupils, a scout hut, a memorial hall and a community centre. These offer various indoor and outdoor activities, sports facilities with play grounds and sports fields. Nearby are 2 leisure centres with swimming pools, a cyclopark and various country parks. This rural area is crossed by many footpaths and bridleways. There is an active gardening club.

There is a large GP surgery next to the Community Centre.

Secondary education is available in Gravesend, Meopham and Longfield with a number of comprehensive schools, an Academy, grammar schools and Saint George's C of E School providing mixed, all ability co-educational facilities.

The premises

St Barnabas Church was founded in 1957 and built in 1961 to accommodate 160 people. It occupies a position near the centre of the village. In 1992 it was extended to provide a small hall, meeting room, vestry, kitchen and toilets. A new worship building was completed in 2004 and the original building became the church hall.



The new Church is of modern design with carpeting, under floor heating, a recently updated sound system and a video system incorporating two large screens. Chairs mean that the interior is easily altered and has made covid compliance much easier.

In response to the pandemic, livestreaming of services takes place and a dedicated broadband connection has recently been installed.



To the rear is a now redundant building only used for storage of garden equipment. There are plans to demolish it and replace with a smaller building for this purpose.

The Church Quinquennial Inspection is due this year (2021).

In recent years, a very comprehensive lightning protection system was installed to protect the church and vicarage.

All periodic checks on the lightning system, electrical and gas installations and fire detection/alarm are fully up to date and certificated.

St Barnabas does not have a burial ground or garden of remembrance.

The Vicarage

The vicarage was built in 1970 at the rear of the church. It is accessed via the car park. It has its own dedicated parking area with space for 3 vehicles. This house has a lounge, dining room, study, kitchen, four bedrooms, two toilets, a bathroom, plus a garage and a good sized garden.



Worship:

In normal times there is:

8 am Holy Communion every Sunday.

1st Sunday All Age Service at 10^{am}

2nd Sunday Holy Communion at 10^{am}

3rd Sunday Morning Worship at 10^{am}

4th Sunday Holy Communion at 10^{am}

5th Sunday Morning Worship at 10^{am}



There is a Sunday school (Jigsaw) during the main part of the 10 am service on 2nd-4th Sundays for children aged 4-11. This has been suspended due to Covid restrictions but plans to restart in the near future. There is also a Youth group during the 10am service two Sundays each month.

We have a monthly Worship and Prayer meeting at 7pm on 3rd Sunday of the month.

Every Sunday 8am Holy Communion (said) followed by 10am service. This follows a pattern and comprises Holy Communion, Morning Worship and All Age. In addition, there is a monthly Prayer service on Sunday evening. The early service is suspended due to the pandemic.

Numbers attending are 8-10 for the 8am and up to approximately 50 for the main service. The online service sees up to about 30 watchers each week.

Morning prayer Monday to Thursday at 9.30am with 3-6 attending. This has shared leadership and is currently meeting through a WhatsApp group

Currently we are using CD worship but are looking to develop the music group to utilise the modern keyboard and re-introduce singing.

Other occasional services are held as follows:

- Ash Wednesday: morning Holy Communion (with ashing)
- Good Friday: 2. p.m. Service "At the Cross"
- Late October: After-noon Thanksgiving service for those bereaved.
- Advent: Evening Carols and candlelight service on the penultimate or last Sunday before Christmas.
- Christingle
- Christmas Eve 10.00 p.m. Holy Communion
- Christmas Day: Service of the Word followed by shortened Holy Communion service.
- Home Communion are held occasionally.
- Istead Rise Primary School hold their 3 Christmas nativity concerts here



We acknowledge that sharing a Priest in Charge with St Nicholas, Southfleet may mean that both parishes have to vary service patterns and timing. We see the opportunity for joint services on occasions.

Other activities

There is currently a United Homegroup meeting on zoom. This brings together the 5 groups that would normally meet in person. This has proved very popular during the lockdown. There is also a weekly Fellowship meeting, again on zoom. It is hoped that in person meetings can start again, when allowed but the online meeting may also continue.

On Tuesdays, fortnightly, the Youth Group meet via zoom in the evening. This is for secondary school age children. There are games, videos and discussion. When the church is fully open, this will return to Sunday mornings, with toast!

Welcome Club meets regularly to provide fellowship for the older members of the community, with refreshments, quizzes and board games. During the lockdown, contact has been maintained with quizzes being delivered every 2 weeks to members.



Prayer is a very important part of life at St Barnabas and we join in with the wider church community in Thy Kingdom Come.

The church premises are used by Guides, Brownies and Rainbows and pre-covid, a craft club, country dancing and Unforgettable Songs Group. The Community Warden uses it as a base and holds surgeries here.

We have plans in place for a Community Café to open as soon as practicable.

We are fostering links with all the local community leaders so that we can work more closely together. Past activities have included community carol singing, family fun days and we host a pantomime each February.

We have 2 representatives on Deanery Synod and are keen to develop closer ties with our neighbouring churches.

Support for the Priest in Charge:

LEADERSHIP TEAM:

- Geoffrey Everest our Lay Reader
- Roger Mills evangelist, who is also involved with Healing on the Streets
- Rose Waghorn evangelist preparing to take on the role of Anna Chaplain, having recently completed training.
- Sandra Union Pastoral Assistant who visits the sick and elderly.
- Lorna Field Pastoral Assistant is part of the prayer ministry team.
- Jenny Douse leader for prayer in the life of our church to support and encourage.
- Chris Troy leader for Welcome Club and looks after the electronic office.
- Ant Holmes manages the website
- Tom Brown looks after sung worship

Mission Partners:

St Barnabas supports 4 charities with tithed income.

These are: Church Army, Compassion UK, Faith Mission and the local Ellenor Hospice. We also have a link with St John's, Iyenge, Tanzania, part of the wider Mpwapwa Diocesan link. In addition to regular updates, we have visits from our Partners. Two of the team assist our partners; One helping with Faith mission school visits and another a volunteer visiting speaker for Compassion. In addition, we collect for the food bank and will respond to emergency appeals, Christian, other Faiths or secular.

We are keen to restart our Men's Mission and support Christian Vision for Men (CVM).

FUTURE

Opportunities:

Continuing to seek God's guidance for how to work out our vision.

Building on the increased online presence established through the lockdown to Connect with those that are interested but may not come into the building yet.

Review and develop our structures and programmes of discipleship to support a greater number of the church community to grow in their faith. Find ways to help everyone to explore their gifts and calling and support them to engage with these both in the life of the church and further afield.

Re-establish and strengthen connections with the local community through networking, joint events and supporting community activities. Continuing to support our Community Warden and local councillor.

Learn from our sister parish of St Nicholas, Southfleet and be able to adapt to sharing a Priest in Charge

Challenges;

Leading worship with live music as the number of experienced instrumentalists has reduced.

Managing the day to day practicalities of church life with an ageing congregation and without overloading the relatively few active members.

Encouraging a return to regular attendance at church services whilst building on the online presence.

Recruiting and retaining Church Wardens.

Nurturing those who connect and are interested to grow deeper in their faith and develop a stronger connection within the church community.

