

The Buzz From St B's
Summer 2020

Online



St Barnabas Parish Church
Woodfield Road Hadleigh
Here For Everyone!

www.stbarnabas-hadleigh.org.uk



When the Miraculous Becomes Ordinary

There is a peculiar kind of blindness that comes not from darkness, but from too much light. It is the blindness of familiarity - the gradual dimming of wonder that happens when the extraordinary becomes routine.

The Israelites of the Old Testament knew this well, though they would not have named it that way. These were people who had watched the Red Sea divide before them, who had eaten manna that appeared each morning on the ground, who had drunk water that flowed from bare rock in the middle of a desert. And yet, surrounded by miracle upon miracle, they complained. They grumbled about Moses, about Aaron, about the food and the journey and the wilderness itself.

It is tempting to read their story with bewilderment — how could they? — until the honesty of it becomes uncomfortable. Because the truth is that the miraculous, once it becomes familiar, stops feeling like miracle at all. Imagine if tomorrow the whole world woke to find food appearing spontaneously on the ground, or water springing from stone in places where there should be none. Scientists would study it. Governments would scramble. The world would stand in awe. For Israel, it was simply Tuesday.

This is the quiet tragedy that runs through Numbers 17, where God causes Aaron's staff — dead wood, cut from a living tree — to bud and blossom overnight. The sign is given not to impress, but to remind. The people had forgotten who was with them. They needed to see life break from what appeared lifeless, because they had lost the capacity to see it in the provisions surrounding them every day.

The same loss of wonder can creep into the life of faith today. It is possible to come to church, to say the prayers, to hear the Scriptures read Sunday after Sunday, and slowly cease to be astonished by any of it. The cross becomes a symbol rather than an event. The resurrection becomes a doctrine rather than a dawn. Grace becomes assumed rather than received with any particular gratitude. The extraordinary fades, not because it has gone, but because we have stopped looking.

Easter morning at Hadleigh Castle offered an unexpected corrective to that tendency.

The weather that morning was, by any measure, against us. Storm David had swept across the country that weekend, and at the Castle the wind was fierce, the clouds dark and rolling. Lighting the baptismal candles — those small flames meant to symbolise the light of Christ — felt close to impossible in the conditions. The honest thought, standing there in the wind, was that this was not going to work

The congregation renewed their baptismal vows nonetheless. They proclaimed again the hope of the resurrection. And then, as they spoke, the clouds began to break. Light poured across the sky. The sun rose over Hadleigh Castle in a way that made people physically turn around to look — a breathtaking, almost silencing moment of beauty that several afterwards said they had never witnessed at the dawn service before.

It was, of course, a sunrise. The sun rises every day; that is not news. And yet in that moment it did not feel ordinary at all. It felt holy — as though something was being said through it about resurrection light breaking through storms, about Christ still rising upon his people even when the clouds gather. The extraordinary had been hidden within what seemed ordinary all along. It simply needed the right conditions — and perhaps the right eyes — to be seen.

That, perhaps, is the invitation that Aaron's budding staff still extends. The question it poses is not whether God is at work, but whether we have retained the capacity to notice. The breath in our lungs, the people who love us, the beauty of a morning sky, the grace extended to us in bread and wine and word — none of these are small things, however familiar they have become.

The God who fed a wandering people in the wilderness, who brought water from rock, who raised Christ from the dead on the third day, is not less present now than then. The same life that broke from Aaron's dead staff is at work in the world still. The question each of us is left to answer for ourselves is a simple one, though it requires honesty to sit with it properly: when did we last actually stop and see it?

Every blessing,

Mark

COVER PICTURE - FIGS



'Though the fig tree does not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord. God the Lord is my strength.(Habakkuk 3:17-18)

We bought a sapling fig tree and planted it in a large pot. The tree flourished. Surprisingly, it produced edible figs after just one year.

Then we were given another sapling fig tree. As winter was approaching, we kept the pot in the conservatory. This tree also flourished, enjoying the warmth of the conservatory, growing even more prolifically than the first.

No blossom appeared on either tree. Step up Mr Google! It transpires that: *'fig trees do have blossoms, but they are hidden inside the fruit. The fig itself is actually a syconium, - a fleshy, inverted, bulbous stem containing hundreds of tiny flowers that eventually produce the crunchy seeds. Because these flowers bloom inside, they rely on specialized fig wasps for pollination.'* Modern fig varieties are self-pollinating; no wasp is required.

Given the uncertainties and fearfulness we face in life, Habakkuk's ancient exhortation to rejoice in the Lord, even when everything appears to be falling apart, seems to me a good standpoint today, many centuries later. Fear may still linger within us, we are human, but all is not lost. We have a God who loves, who cares, and who will provide, a God in whom to rejoice. God the Lord is our strength.

4Mike



CHRISTIAN LEADERS' CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 2026

At the end of February Revds Marcus, Mark and Pete took the opportunity to attend the New Wine Leaders Conference in Harrogate. New Wine is a national network of churches focused upon renewing the Church, grounded in the Word (Bible) in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Harrogate Convention Centre played host to engaging and inspiring speakers who encouraged us with stories of what God is doing across the nation accompanied by biblical teaching.

Breakout seminars were also available featuring themes such as working with children and young adults, power dynamics and other relevant topics aimed at growing the ministry of the church in healthy and sustainable ways.

It was obviously a great opportunity for the three ministers to be able to chat about new ideas for the BTH Group and a good way to get to know one another better. Networking with other leaders and accessing new resources were additional benefits of the trip.

We returned encouraged and enthused and trust that God will use the event to inspire us to share what we gained with others. Our thanks to the Parishes for releasing us for these three days.

Pete, Marcus & Mark

FLYING THE FLAG

London Road, Hadleigh, is awash with Union Flags and St George's Flags fixed to lamp posts, presumably by well-meaning citizens as a sign of the English/British credentials of the town.

Christian faith does not have a specific flag to fly, it has the cross, prominent in every church. The cross is often worn as a lapel badge or brooch, symbolising that the wearer identifies as a Christian. The cross is also used simply as an item of jewellery, not necessarily as a sign that the wearer is a Christian, but nevertheless symbolic of the Christian heritage of our nation.



On Good Friday this year, as in very many previous years, all the Christian Churches in Hadleigh joined together in worship before processing through the town, led by a large cross. This cross reminds all who see it that on Good Friday, Christ was crucified.

Good Friday is a solemn day, a holy day. The joy of Easter is of course celebrated across the world on Easter Sunday. Yes we know that Jesus died a cruel death, but we also know that his death was not the end, it was the beginning of new and eternal life. Christians believe that their own death is not the end either. The end of life on earth similarly marks the beginning of a new and unending life. The Christian 'flag' of death is also the Christian 'flag' of life.

The Easter Sunday cry is: 'Alleluia, Christ is risen!' We also proclaim: 'Alleluia, we are risen!'

POTHOLE PLANTS

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

But wait, not daffodils, bestrode,
'tis council workers, yellow clad,
Filling potholes in the road.
My eyesight must be very bad!



*Submitted by Jean Murray
(With apologies to William Wordsworth)*

Jean also shared some long remembered camp prayers or 'taps' from her long involvement in Guiding:

A NEW DAY

God has created a new day,
silver and green and gold.
Live that the sunset may find us,
worthy his gifts to hold.

A NEW NIGHT

God has created a new night,
silver and dark and still.
Live that the morning may find us
ready to do His will

DAY IS DONE

Day is done, gone the sun.
from the lakes, from the hills,
from the sky.
All is well, safely rest.

SLIDING DOORS

The film 'Sliding Doors' focuses on how decisions we make can fundamentally affect our future, and considers the 'what ifs' and 'if only' alternatives (it is available on Netflix).

Some personal 'sliding door' moments



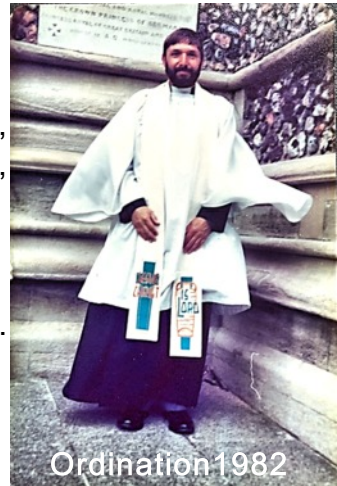
Aged 15½, having passed the entrance examination and convinced a panel of interviewers, I joined the Royal Navy in January 1955 to begin a 4 year shore-based apprenticeship as an Engine Room Artificer. I joined my first ship in January 1959. After service in most areas of the world in various ships, in 1978 I decided that I would end a successful career in the Royal Navy at the first pensionable break point (August 1979, after 22 years' service from the age of 18), and seek approval from the Portsmouth Diocese to apply for full time ordination training'

The precursor to this was meeting with a group of Tamil, and Chinese Christians when my ship visited Singapore in 1975. These humble,, caring, Christians, showed me the love of God in action, something I had never experienced. This was reinforced in the church I attended after returning home. The decision to leave the navy was made without knowing whether or not I would be successful. After a short course and a series of interviews in the diocese, there were more interviews at a selection conference in different diocese, and at the three theological colleges I visited.

In the event, and to my surprise, I was accepted and went straight from the Navy to Oak Hill College in North London. This also involved my wife and two children moving with me from our own house in Gosport to a property near the college, a huge emotional and practical upheaval for them.

The college course was demanding, studying disciplines I had never had to think about; the previous 24 years plus had been all about marine engineering and the Royal Navy. The Lord being my helper, I survived.

I was ordained Deacon in 1981 and Priest in 1982 and served my curacy at the church of St Thomas, Bedhampton in Hampshire. Ministry in different dioceses, and events in life, had high and low points, including divorce. I finally retired from full time parochial ministry in March 2008 at the age of 68, following 12½ years as Rector of St James the Less, Hadleigh. After 9 years living alone, Marion and I were married in April 2008 – another ‘sliding door’ moment, and with a very happy outcome.



Retirement

Having been granted PTO (permission to officiate) in the Chelmsford Diocese by the Bishop, early retirement years were busy leading services in a number of parishes, including St Barnabas, my ‘home’ church. After some health issues, ministry settled at St Barnabas, with some visits by request to other parishes,

The Latest ‘Sliding Door’ - A New Chapter

Aged 86, rising 87, and with my PTO expiring in June 2026, the time has come to change direction. I have decided not to renew my permission to officiate. I will no longer lead services, but I will not sit back and do nothing! St Barnabas is still my home church and I have a deep respect, appreciation and love of our friends there. I will continue with background tasks as long as I am able, and of course support Mark, our Parish Priest, Marion in her ministry, and the congregation at St B. These are exciting times!

Pauline Swenson submitted this poem:

DO YOU REALLY TRUST ME?

I watched you quietly, as you knelt in prayer
your furrowed brow revealing your worried heart.
I heard your prayers as they rang out in the stillness
and as I observed your broken frame,
my Spirit joined with yours - in sadness and grief
as each burden was laid at my feet.

After you had emptied yourself of your worries,
I stooped to take them and deal with them,
To give you instead my peace, but you picked them up
again
tucked them into yourself and walked away
heavy and cast down.

My child, my child.
How I long to carry your burdens
they are too heavy for you to bear.
But you will not let me.
You give them to me, then repossess them
not trusting me to deal with them.

That is not the way!
Pray out your problems - then leave them with me
and watch in delight as I, your loving Father,
answer your requests in ways you have never even
thought of!

Christian Herald

MAY I RUN THE RACE BEFORE ME

In the record breaking heat of the late May Bank Holiday weekend, my son-in-law, Adam, was running from Birmingham to London. He'd signed up to do it months ago and had of course been training.



One practice run was in Malta while we were there on holiday in March. He ran the Valletta Marathon, and since then has completed several longer solo runs. But the 150 miles along the Grand Union Canal towpath in the heat did have us worried. I was checking my phone frequently to see where he was - was he still moving along? Had he stopped at a checkpoint? Might he give up? (I confess I was hoping he would!) But no, he carried on, though he walked the last section or so (about 15 miles) to arrive at the finish line in Little Venice in time for the 3am cut-off on the Monday morning. This was 44 and a half hours after leaving Gas Street Basin!

Adam is a good runner. He enjoys the challenge. He doesn't want to give up. The following Sunday in church, the first reading was from Acts 20. One phrase stood out - *"my only aim is to finish the race"*; exactly Adam's mindset during his gruelling run.

This made me think of the exhortation in Hebrews Chapter 12: *"And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."*

It isn't the only time we read of the Christian life being compared to a race. Adam's run made me rethink the whole concept of sticking at something you think is worthwhile, not losing focus, and has encouraged me to be more disciplined in my Bible readings. And, being realistic; not to bite off more than I can chew!

WE ARE SURVIVORS

(for those born before 1940)



We were born before TV, before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, plastic, videos, contact lenses, frisbees and the pill.

Before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams, ball point pens, dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip dry clothes, and before man walked on the moon!

We married first, then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought 'fast food' was what you ate at Lent, a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat, and 'crumpet' we had for tea. We existed before house-husbands, computer dating, dual careers, and when 'meaningful relationship' meant getting along with cousins, and when 'sheltered accommodation' was where you waited for a bus.

We were before daycare centres, and disposable nappies; before FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, before word-processors, yogurt and young men wearing earrings. A 'chip' was a piece of wood or a fried potato, hardware meant nuts and bolts, and software wasn't a word.

Before 1940 'Made in Japan' meant junk, 'making out' referred to how you did in exams, 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and 'going' all the way' meant staying on the bus to the bus depot. Pizzas, McDonalds and instant coffee were unheard of. In our day, cigarette smoking was 'fashionable',

'grass' was mown, 'coke' was solid fuel, a 'joint' was a piece of meat, and 'pot' was something you cooked in.

Eldorado' was an ice-cream, a 'gay' person was the life and soul of the party, while 'aids' just meant beauty treatment, wooden legs, or help for someone in trouble.



We, who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the ways in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today,- but by the Grace of God, we Have Survived!

Submitted by Pat Pedder

Thanks Pat, me too! 1939 vintage.

The pace of change in our lifetime is astonishing, and can be baffling - for example, text speak is beyond me! We manage to live with constant change, though some things may be difficult to accept.. We can (and do!) take refuge in the past, but however old we may be, we can still look forward to the future:

*"For I know the plans I have for you" says the Lord; "plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."
Jeremiah 29:11*

One great pleasure with increasing years is seeing future generations grow and achieve. In spite of all the bad news that we see and hear, life has such great potential. There is a future and a hope.(Ed.)

EILEEN BALDOCK

Sadly, Eileen Baldock, a very good and faithful friend at St Barnabas for many years, has died at the full age of 102 (and a 1/2) at her care home. Alison and myself were with her, together with Alison's sister Elizabeth. There was a sudden decline within the last week, and palliative care for the last few days.

John Kemp

Alison and Elizabeth are Eileen's daughters. John is her son-in-law.

ALL AT SEA



Some years ago I was sailing in a race organized by Thorpe Bay Yacht club. My sailing partner and I were about a mile out in the Thames estuary in glorious weather when I suddenly became aware of some frenzied activity near us. I looked around and was startled to see three lifeboats, a hovercraft and a helicopter all converging on my patch of water. I thought we were perfectly in control so I said to my crew "Do they know something I don't?"

I wasn't expecting to capsize or require immediate help from the RNLI. It turned out that the local lads were having a full on emergency training session which was a great comfort to me to know that if ever I had need of their services they were there and ready to go whatever the weather.

Barnacle Bill (AKA Richard Ambrose)

St Barnabas Parish Church Church Road Hadleigh SS7 2EJ

www.stbarnabas-hadleigh.org.uk

Parish Office - 01702 558591 (Hall Bookings / Enquiries)

Messages left will be answered

Associate Priest
for St Barnabas & St James-the-Less

Revd Mark Smeed

mark.smeed@bth-group.org



Churchwarden

Catherine

churchwardenstbs@gmail.com



Churchwarden Sandra

churchwardenstbs@gmail.com



Safeguarding Officer

Marion 01268 211009

SUNDAY SERVICES

1st and 3rd Sundays 9.30am Holy Communion

2nd and 4th Sundays 9.30am Morning Service

Mid-Week Service

Thursdays 10.30am Holy Communion

For more information please visit:

www.stbarnabas-hadleigh.org.uk



**MESSY CHURCH
DATES**

**MONDAY 13th JULY
MESSY WATER SPLASH**

4.00pm - 6.00pm

**NO MESSY CHURCH
IN AUGUST**

CRAFT - STORY & SONG - COOKED MEAL

ALL WELCOME

Children must be accompanied by an adult



'KETTLE'S ON'

Cuppa

Refreshment & Chat

at St Barnabas

EVERY TUESDAY

10.30 - 12.00



We are sorry that, except for some copies in church, The Buzz is no longer published in printed form - distribution became impossible. *Mike*

info@stbarnabas-hadleigh.org.uk

Need a Hall for your organisation to use or for a special function? St Barnabas Church has a large hall with kitchen and toilets for hire. **Please contact the Parish Office & leave a message**

01702 558591