The Buzz From St B's

Online

Winter 2026



St Barnabas Parish Church
Church Road, Hadleigh SS7 2EJ

Here For Everyone!

www.stbarnabas-hadleigh.org.uk



A Lamp on the Stand

By the time this reaches you, the clocks will have gone back and the dark will have settled in for the winter. Many of us leave the house in the dark and come home in the dark. And yet there is a moment every December that I love: the first evening the lights go up along the road. One house, then another. A string of bulbs round a door, a candle in a window, a tree glowing behind the curtains. A street that has looked closed all November suddenly looks as though someone is at home.

Jesus said something about lights that has been on my mind. In the Sermon on the Mount he says to his friends, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house." It is a slightly comic picture. Imagine lighting a lamp in a dark room and then putting a bucket over it. The lamp is still burning. Nothing has gone out. It is simply doing no good to anybody. And notice that Jesus does not say "try to become a light". He says you are one. That is already settled. The only question is where the lamp is put.

I have been talking about this with both our congregations these past weeks, so some of you will have heard me say it already. When we looked at the parable of the wedding feast, where the king sends his servants out to the roads to fill his hall, we noticed that not one guest found their own way in. Every one of them was there because somebody went and asked. And when we heard Paul tell the Thessalonians that he was determined to share with them "not only the gospel of God but also our own selves", we saw that the message and the messenger always travel together.

If we are truthful, many of us keep our faith under the basket. Not because it has gone out, but because we were brought up not to talk about religion, or we worry about seeming pushy, or we assume people know where the church is and will come if they want to. But people rarely find their own way. Those who run the Alpha course have found that nine out of ten people who come along do so because somebody asked them. Not a leaflet, not a poster, not a website. A person they knew.

And there is no easier time of year to ask than this one. People who would never think of coming to church on an ordinary Sunday will come to a carol service, bring their grandchildren to a Christingle, or slip in late on Christmas Eve. Some will be carrying grief into this season, and our Blue Christmas service is there for exactly them: a quiet space for anyone who finds Christmas hard. The times are all in this issue of The Buzz. What is needed is not a better poster. It is you.

So here is my ask, and it is a simple one. Think of one person. A neighbour, a friend from your club, the family across the road, someone you know will be on their own this Christmas, someone who has had a hard year. Ask them to come with you to one of our Christmas services. Offer to call for them, to sit with them, to have a cup of tea afterwards. If they say no, that is fine; you have still let them know they are wanted, and that matters more than we realise. If they say yes, you may be giving them the first Christmas in years that has felt like Christmas.

None of this asks you to be a preacher. A lamp does not have to do anything clever. It only has to be put where it can be seen. Jesus finishes that same saying like this: "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." The point is not that people notice us. The point is that, through us, they find their way home to God.

The world can feel very dark at this time of year, and not only because of the evenings. But the whole of Christmas is the story of a light that would not stay hidden: a child born in the dark of a stable, of whom John writes, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." We have been given that light. Let us not keep it under a basket this winter. Let us put it on the stand, and invite someone in.

Lord Jesus, light of the world,
you have lit a lamp in me.
Give me the courage not to hide it.
Bring to mind one person who needs an invitation this Christmas,
and give me the words, and the nerve, to ask.
Amen.

Every blessing,

Mark



CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL
22nd September 2026
Canon Pete Hillman Licensing Service

L to R
Revd Canon Pete
Rt Revd Bishop Adam
Revd Marcus
Revd Mark



BRING & SHARE LUNCH
JOINT SERVICE 30th AUGUST 2026



Congregations from St Barnabas and St James the Less came together at St Barnabas on Sunday August 30th for a lively service of Holy Communion led by Revd Mark Smeed. After the service all shared an excellent 'bring and share' lunch. No matter if anyone hadn't brought food, there was food in abundance, including a large pot of curry made by Thomas. A great time for people from both churches to get to know one another better.

Thank you to Revd Mark, all who provided the food, all who came, and most importantly, thanks be to God.



Then there was the fish or chicken and chips lunch in October - another occasion of friendship and fellowship. Thanks to Ann for organising and to Peggottys, our local chippy, for the lovely grub!



Coincidence

A documentary on Netflix tells the story of MS Costa Concordia, a large cruise ship wrecked in January 2012 through catastrophically bad seamanship and a panicked Captain.

37 passengers and 5 crew members died and many other people were injured. The captain was subsequently sent to prison for sixteen years,

The ship hit rocks very close to the Italian Mediterranean island of Giglio. News reports at the time of the Concordia disaster triggered memories for me because I visited Giglio in 1966 in HMS Shavington, a minesweeper based in Malta.

Giglio then was not a tourist destination. With a sister minesweeper we could just squeeze into the small harbour. The main town was at the top of a rocky hill. Invited to a reception by the Mayor, we had to walk a very steep path to get there.

In the absence of roads and vehicles, goods from the harbour were transported to the town by donkeys, snapped en route.





Another snap shows island ladies busy in the communal laundry – all done by hand!



The Children's Society

In 1881, Sunday School teacher and civil servant Edward Rudolf was appalled by the poverty he saw affecting children in London. Determined to do something about it he founded what became known as the Society for Waifs and Strays, which later changed its name to the more acceptable Church of England Children's Society, now just called The Children's Society.

This year marks its 145th anniversary and that same determination still drives everything they do. Young people are at the heart of their current workload, as too many teenagers are being let down by the failing systems provided by the state.

On Saturday 17th October the local fundraising Committee was invited to attend a special presentation being hosted by the Chief Executive Officer, Mark Russell OBE, to launch their new programme called Save Teenhood. This is designed to help teenagers experiencing difficulties during those turbulent teenage years. Many are trapped in poverty, facing abuse both on and off-line, and are missing trusted adults to turn to. In 2025 the Society supported 73,186 young people, and also helped 5,749 parents and carers to better support the young people in their lives.

St Barnabas has supported this charity for well over 50 years and long may it continue.

Richard and Caroline

Starry Night

(thoughts from a personal anthology)



Looking upwards on a clear night, how fascinating are 'stars in their courses' - a book title remembered from boyhood days (first published 1934). Scientists and astronomers liken planet earth to a mere speck of dust in a universe millions of light years across and *(perhaps)* constantly expanding – *'to infinity and beyond!'* to quote the fictional Buzz Lightyear. It has no end and its origin too is shrouded in mystery – the biggest black hole of all.

Painting by William Blake (1757 - 1827)



We might ask: *where is God in all of this?* If he is the Creator and Lord of all, then our knowledge of God may be no greater than the earthly speck, an atom of dust floating in a universe of unknowing. Perhaps Alexander Pope was right when he wrote:

KNOW THYSELF

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man.
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise and rudely great;
With too much knowledge for the stoic's pride,
He hangs between: in doubt to act or rest,

In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer,
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
Still by himself abused or disabused;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled:
The glory, jest and riddle of the world!

(Alexander Pope 1688 - 1744)

Sadly, in spite of never ending study, mankind does not know itself; there remains as much confusion as ever in attempting to answer the most basic human question of how we may live together peacefully in our common humanity on the same planet we all share. Within the universe, vast beyond measure, and yet of which we are a part, albeit infinitesimally minute, the question we should perhaps ask is: *where is mankind in all of this?*

The answer appears to be beyond us; there is however no alternative but to continue searching.

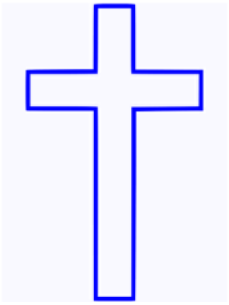
'Know then thyself …..'

The proper study of mankind may be man, but such study cannot, I believe, be properly undertaken without including God, who one way or another has always been part of the human equation.

Footnote: Another work, Pope's Essay on Criticism (1709) is not well known except for the very familiar first line: 'A little learning is a dangerous thing'. The essay continues: 'drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring' (a mythological sacred spring), i.e. much learning is required; a little learning is a dangerous thing.

Mike

THE CROSS IN MY POCKET



I carry a cross in my pocket,
a simple reminder to me,
of the fact that I am a Christian,
no matter where I may be.

This little cross is not magic,
nor is it a good luck charm.
It isn't meant to protect me
from every physical harm.

It's not for identification,
for all the world to see.
It's simply an understanding,
between my Saviour and me.

When I put my hand in my pocket
to bring out a coin or a key,
the cross is there to remind me
of the price he paid for me.

It reminds me, too, to be thankful,
for my blessings day by day,
and to strive to serve him better
in all I do and say.

It's also a daily reminder
of the peace and comfort I share
with all who would know my Master,
and give themselves to his care.

So, I carry a cross in my pocket,
reminding no one but me
that Jesus Christ is Lord of my life,
If only I'll let him be.

Attributed to Verna Mae Thomas

Submitted by Sheila Moore. The original poem does not show the final two verse above. These may have been added at a later date. (Ed).

REMINISCENCES OF BROWNIES/GUIDES 1945 TO 1951

When I was around seven or eight, I joined the Benfleet Methodist Brownie pack. We would bring five shillings (25 pence) a week towards the cost. The first camp was at Munden, near Maldon in Essex. We travelled by lorry, with our kitbags and equipment, singing campfire songs on the way. We put up our own tents which had a centre pole with a home-made hanger for our clothes. We also made a shoe rack from wood, with tripods at each end. Another rack was for washing up, with a bowl and draining board. Meals were cooked on an open fire. Water came from a standpipe 400 yards away; we had a 'water chain' passing buckets from one Brownie to the other until we had enough for cooking and drinking, kept in large containers.

Midnight feasts were fun, with one tent crowded out with Brownies. If we made too much noise, Brown Owl made us stop. At Munden we were on a farm. My blouse with elasticated waist was ideal for concealing apples from the orchard. I can't remember whether we were ever found out. To go into Maldon, you put your hand out to stop the bus. After a few days the Mums would arrive by coach to see us. I am still in touch with three of my Brownie friends.

Aged eleven and in the Girl Guides we were more adventurous. It was great to go on a train which travelled so fast you could not stand up in the carriage. Once, at Padstow, we got on a bus which took us to Treyarnon Bay. Some years ago I visited the same place but it had really changed. One afternoon we walked six miles to Padstow. On our return, all the tents had blown down and it was raining cats and dogs. W e moved further up the hill, and about ten of us crammed into one tent until morning and better weather. Whilst we were there we went up a lighthouse named Trevose; when we got to the top, I was told I looked green. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Brownies and Guides. *Pat Pedder*


Treyarnon Bay
1951

From the Parish Magazine of St James the Less, Hadleigh, dated February 1959:

YOUNG WIVES GROUP


Woodworm

Our Meeting this month will be on Monday 23rd February in the Rectory at 7.30pm, when a representative from the 'Woodworm and Dry Rot Centre' will be coming to give us a talk and demonstration, illustrated also by a film.

Husbands and friends will be welcome to this interesting meeting.
Sylvia Hammond

Sandra Harvey from St James kindly gave some old parish magazines to Marion who is interested in the history of Mothers' Union at St James, where she was once the branch leader.

Sylvia Hammond, RIP, was still a faithful worshipper at St James when I arrived in 1995. I hope the talk was not as boring as it sounds, and those who attended left the meeting better equipped to deal with boring insects!

Ships with wooden hulls face a much worse parasite called Teredo navalis, a marine mollusc that bores into wood causing serious damage. Protective paint can be harmful to other marine creatures. Copper sheathing is a common but costly alternative. The wooden minesweepers in which I served had their hull planking clad with a nylon sheath to combat the 'marine woodworm' problem.
Mike

A Smile

A smile costs nothing, but gives much.

It enriches those who receive it, without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.



None is so rich or mighty that they can get along without it, and none is so poor but that they can be made rich by it. A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business, and is the countersign of friendship.

It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and it is nature's best antidote for trouble. Yet, it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away.

Some people are too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of yours, as none needs a smile as much as those who have no more to give. *(Anon)*

Submitted by Kathy Carrington



CHRISTMAS AT ST BARNABAS & ST JAMES

ST BARNABAS

Saturday 28th November
10.00am-12.00 noon Nativity Festival
(Bring nativity scenes to church on Friday morning)

Saturday 12th December
6.30pm Riding Lights Theatre Company
'A Very Crooked Christmas'
A hilarious play for all ages
Tickets £3 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/bthgroup

Sunday 20th December
6.00pm Carol Service

Thursday 24th Christmas Eve
5.00pm Christingle

Friday 25th Christmas Day
09.30am Family Holy Communion

ST JAMES THE LESS

Sunday 6th December
6.30pm Blue Christmas

Sunday 20th
3.00pm Carols by Candlelight

Thursday 24th Christmas Eve
2.00pm Christingle
11.30pm Holy Communion

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



Minister to St James-the-Less
and St Barnabas
Revd Mark Smeed
mark.smeed@bth-group.org



Churchwarden Sandra
churchwardenstbs@gmail.com



Safeguarding Officer
Marion 01268 211009
marionketley157@gmail.com

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 14th December
Monday 11th January
Monday 8th February
Monday 8th March

4.00pm - 6.00pm

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