ST. BARNABAS CHURCH

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PARISH PROFILE 2017
Parish Summary
We are a diverse, friendly, inclusive congregation. We seek to love God and our neighbours in the spirit of the commandment given to us in the Gospel. Everyone from every background is welcomed at St Barnabas. Our Sunday Family Eucharist at 9:30am is our main service, which is relaxed but traditional in structure with a variety of music. We have a dynamic Sunday school and our children actively participate in the main service. Our focus is on sharing Communion in prayer and song, exploring Scripture, being of service and seeking fellowship in church, and bearing witness to the world.

We are looking for a priest who will continue the catholic tradition of our parish as manifest by:

1. Our emphasis on the Eucharist as central to our worship;
2. The wearing of vestments in accordance to the liturgical seasons;
3. The celebration of the major feasts and saints’ days;
4. The complete cycle of Lent starting with Ash Wednesday, Stations of the Cross leading up to the great feast of Easter.

We look forward to welcoming a thoughtful and energetic priest who will continue in our tradition.

Our church building is large and beautiful – a surprise compared to its somewhat modest exterior. The building was designed by Sir Ninian Comper in partnership with William Bucknall at the beginning of the 20th Century. We have recently carried out major structural renovation, but more work is needed to make the building more flexible for greater community use, while maintaining the sacred space and the architectural heritage. The church is used throughout the week by different community groups, including a pre-school, the textile arts project, an Indian classical dance troupe, a Tae Kwon-Do school, a karate school, two local bands, and a Traidcraft stall (selling Fairtrade goods).

The Borough, Parish Boundaries and its Population
St Barnabas is in the London borough of Newham. In fact, Newham was created fifty years ago from the union of the old West Ham and East Ham boroughs. The parish is in the old East Ham borough area and the parliamentary constituency bears that name.

Newham Council has been regenerating the borough. In the southern area, there have been housing developments in the Docklands, University of East London buildings, exhibition centre and yacht marina. In the north-western area, the 2012 Olympic Games provided a boost for new housing. There have been varying socio-economic impacts on areas of the borough outside of these development hotspots.

East Ham High Street has become lively over the years with more cafés and restaurants. Plashet Park has been renewed with Heritage Lottery funding. A Cross Rail link will open in the next few years at Manor Park station (in the neighbouring parish) which is likely to
increase movement into the area. The two main train links are at Manor Park Railway and East Ham District line stations.

The parish boundaries are set by railway tracks on the north, south and east sides and by Plashet Park on the west side. The parish is bisected north to south by part of East Ham High Street. The area is mainly residential and most of the housing date back to 1890-1910, when the area was being built up between the two major rail routes. A newer 1960s council housing development in Hathaway Crescent is in the semicircular eastern part of the parish, also bounded by railway lines.

High Street North in East Ham is the main shopping area with stores and businesses selling international produce and wears, some of which are run by local Asian families. At the local newsagents’ you can buy newspapers in a wide variety of languages, including Urdu, Arabic, Tamil, Serbo-Croat, and Albanian. Newham borough is a multi-ethnic area, and Manor Park is one of the most diverse parts of the borough.

On an index of deprivation (where 1 is the most deprived and 12,554 is the least deprived) the parish is ranked 1,583. The parish population stood at 12,077 in the most recent census. In terms of age groups, 24% are under 17 years, 68% are 18-64 years, and 8% over 65. There are 3,176 occupied households. This includes families, single people living alone, older people in couples or alone, and students sharing a house.

The nearest hospital building is the East Ham Care Centre in Shrewsbury Road. There are good bus connections to Newham General Hospital in another part of the borough.

The two pubs in the parish are The Ruskin Arms and The Overdraft Tavern (a newer pub, named for its previous incarnation as a Barclay’s Bank branch). The nearest banks are in the main shopping area in the neighbouring parish of St Paul’s (still not too far away).

**Schools**
There are three schools in the parish. Kensington Primary in Kensington Avenue is nearest to the church, but Essex Primary School on Essex Road is not much further away. The third school is Plashet Grove Girls’ secondary, which OFSTED graded ‘outstanding’. Little Ilford secondary school (mixed gender) is nearby in the neighbouring parish, which was also graded ‘outstanding’ by OFSTED (in 2012).

**Community Centres**
The Trinity Centre, on East Avenue, was founded about forty years ago as part of the Newham Renewal Community Project and is well used by numerous local groups. Members of the congregation have been active on the Management Committee. The Shalom Centre, on High Street North (junction with Strone Road), was initially nurtured by the United Reformed Church and is now the base for the Newham Renewal Programme. The Manor Park Christian Centre, on High Street North (junction with Berkeley Road), is nurtured by a Baptist congregation.
Ecumenical
St Barnabas shares the E12 postal district with the Anglican parish of St Mary's and St Michael's Manor Park and the churches support each other’s social events. There are good links with St Stephen's Roman Catholic Church, on Church Road (opposite St Mary's); Manor Park Methodist Church, on Herbert Road; and Little Ilford Baptist Church, at the junction of Romford Road and Dersingham Avenue.

Deanery
St Barnabas Church has a good record of participation in the Newham Deanery Synod programme.

Social Concerns
St Barnabas members have participated in the following socially concerned organisations: Turnaround (night shelter); Friends of the Earth; Newham Renewal Programme; The Children’s Society; and Christian Aid. Our Communion Alms are decided annually and we ensure that we support a wide range of local, national and international charitable organisations on a monthly cycle. We actively participate in the USPG prayer diary and make annual donations to this work for the world church.

The Arts
The arts have lively expression at St Barnabas. The textile project has exhibited in several places in London, including at St Martin’s in the Fields. St Barnabas produced a play about King David which combined acting, music, dance and artwork. A jewellery project has recently started with local community outreach.

A Band based in the Church, with a varied repertoire, has performed in many places in Newham and at a flower festival at Aldborough Hatch. Several St Barnabas musicians have composed Eucharistic canticles, anthems and instrumental pieces for the Sunday services. St Barnabas is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music and hosted a singing workshop in September 2017 led by Essex composer Alan Bullard.

In 2016, the Church published A Brief History of St Barnabas Church with illustrations of some of the oft-overlooked heritage features. At the same time, the St Barnabas Church, Manor Park and its Neighbourhood 1897 – 2016 Past and Present was written and created by Sonia Tuttiet in conjunction with Sir John Heron Primary School, Essex Primary School, Little Ilford School and Manor Park Library Textile Group, and designed by Celia Ward. This high quality formatted pamphlet was jointly published by the Church and East London Textile Arts.

The Building

The Church’s centenary was celebrated in 2000. Over the last five years, the extensive restoration works have brought congregation members close to our building’s heritage,
which was designed by eminent architect Sir Ninian Comper. Various projects with textiles have celebrated that heritage and taken motifs from the architect’s work as inspiration for creative, artistic expressions.

Although the three phases of the restoration of our church building have been completed, the fourth phase remains. Therefore, we would expect the incoming priest to bring this phase to a conclusion. Amongst us, we have some experience of fundraising and so the associated applications for grants and organising fundraising activities continues to form a crucial part of our focus going forward. Looking ahead, a new kitchen, toilets and vestry extension are a priority. Furthermore, given the multiple use of our building, we need distinct access for both the church congregation and the community user groups.

**The Life of the Church**

Over the years at St Barnabas, clergy and laity have strived to make sense of the Christian Gospel and have tried to practice what we have learned both in our personal lives and in the life of the church. The result has seen a lot of experiment and many changes, mostly beneficial to the life of the community.

### Five Priorities for St Barnabas in 2017

1. Reaching into all parts of the community
2. Guiding children and young people
3. Nurturing prayer life and Bible study
4. Growing the arts
5. Maintaining worldwide vision

**A liturgy that makes sense**

A service of worship is likely to be the first contact people have with the Christian community. It is very important therefore that our worship, particularly our Eucharistic worship, has meaning and relevance to their daily lives. For regular worshippers, the Eucharist is not only an act of worship and a means of sharing in the life of Christ, it is also the springboard for all we set out to do in the world.

**Liturgy: the work of the whole people of God**

We must emphasise that our Eucharistic worship is the work of all members gathered together for this purpose. The word "liturgy" literally means the "the work of the people". Therefore, no single member of the church is more or less important than the others. We all have a part to play and our worship would be lacking if some are either absent or not making a full contribution.
At St Barnabas, the laity have for many years played a major part in our service. Lay members serve at the altar, read all the readings (including the Gospel), and lead the intercessions, they join with the priest in saying much of the service, including a large part of the Eucharist Prayer as well as taking part in the offertory procession, and leading the music. Young church members take on roles as Crucifier, act as acolytes at the reading of the Gospel, deliver First and Second readings, and lead the congregation in the prayers of intercessions.

**House Communion**
There is always the opportunity for a House Communion in the home of a member.

**Festivals**
At St Barnabas, we celebrate the Eucharist on all festival occasions. During Holy Week, and through to Easter Day, we make a point of holding together as a unity the four great celebrations of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day. The Maundy Thursday service has been modelled on a Jewish Seder. On Easter morning, we have an early morning vigil.
Joining the Family of God
St Barnabas welcomes infants, children and adults for baptism with instruction offered to candidates and their families.

Communion before confirmation
There is an active programme for instructing children about the Eucharist as preparation for receiving communion before confirmation.

Bible study
During Advent and Lent, a group meets after church at our “fellowship table” to study the Bible and discuss church and world issues on themed topics.

Breakfast church
We have developed special service gatherings to promote fellowship at a café-style prelude to the Eucharist. The breakfast church has worked well several times in recent years, including on a Mothering Sunday, at the Feast of St Barnabas, and for the Harvest Thanksgiving Festival. The young church members have taken a leading role during these all-age worship services.
Young church
Our young church is dynamic with our children being pre-school and primary school ages. We have developed an approach that brings the generations together to bear witness to God’s love with shared teaching activities, including a communion preparation programme. Our children are enthusiastic and committed and take active part in the life of the church, including leading on fellowship activities such as Breakfast Church and our annual family picnic (2017 pictured below). At Pentecost 2017, 25 of our children received annual attendance certificates and gifts for their dedication to St Barnabas. Our children actively participate in the life of the church and we are constantly seeking ways to nurture their growth in faith.

The World on our Doorstep
Over the last forty years or so, the community population within St Barnabas’ parish has changed dramatically to become more diverse. We have the world on our doorstep as families from all over the world have settled in Manor Park. This fact has helped the area to grow steadily into a vibrant and varied community. Our own church community has been enriched by our members who originate from many different nations.
Living in a Multi-Faith Area
The most recent census indicates that only 17% of the parish population is Christian but this is spread across several denominations. In the parish, there are large numbers of people who are adherents to other religious traditions. Within a one-mile radius of the church, we have a Sikh Gurdwara, two Hindu temples (including one newly built on High Street North), four Islamic mosques, and further small communities of other faith traditions. Therefore, we have had to ask ourselves at St Barnabas: what is our attitude towards people of other faiths and how should we approach them? Although the influence of a parish based Faith in Community project in the 1980s and 1990s is still felt, sadly, there is currently no formal programme of interfaith dialogue at St Barnabas.

World links
St Barnabas has developed a link with the parish of the Good Samaritan in Mbere, Kenya. The Kenyan church’s pastor, Canon Stevenson, visited St Barnabas and one of our own congregation members visited the Good Samaritan parish. We exchange greetings and prayers, but it has proven difficult to maintain communications as regularly as we would like across the international borders. A consignment of clothes was sent by shipping, but we continue to battle for these much-needed offerings to reach their intended destination due to customs restrictions.
There is a well-established *Traidcraft* stall selling Fairtrade goods after the Sunday service. As well as promoting the virtues of buying Fairtrade, this also provides a regular income to church funds.

The Young Church regularly promote awareness raising campaigns and link to international charitable organisations, such as our annual Harvest *Farm Africa* fundraising. We have jointly written dedicated prayers, which we have sent to our link parish of the Good Samaritan in Kenya, and individual cards that we released at Pentecost on helium balloons to share the good news of the coming of the Holy Spirit with the world (as photographed above).