
PARISH PROFILE

for

ST. BARNABAS, SUTTON

ST BARNABAS ROAD, SUTTON, SM1 4NP



The Diocese of
Southwark

About Sutton and the parish of St Barnabas

St Barnabas Church is situated in what used to be known as Sutton New Town and is a short stroll from the centre of town. Sutton New Town grew up in the second half of the 1800's and was mainly populated by working class families, with several laundries and dairies. By about 1880 several leading local residents felt that a church was urgently needed with "a clergyman to care for the moral and spiritual life of the people". The foundation stone for the church was laid in January 1882.

Today, the parish is home to over 7,500 people, from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and living in a mix of privately owned houses, rented accommodation and small blocks of flats.

There is a good mix of local shops, including a pharmacy, cafes and pubs as well as many small businesses. There are several GP practices and dentists within easy reach. We are fortunate in Sutton to be close to three hospitals - St Helier and Queen Mary's Hospital for children (part of the Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust) is just outside the parish, as is the Royal Marsden Hospital (Sutton Branch). Slightly further away, St George's Hospital, Tooting is a designated heart attack centre and also offers a wide range of other specialist services.

The London Borough of Sutton has a population of over 209,000. Unemployment is slightly above the UK rate of 3.7% at 5.2% and the poverty rate is 22%, which is lower than most London boroughs. Sutton is the second safest of all London boroughs.



Sutton is a good place to live with several attractive parks and open spaces. Benhill Recreation Ground is literally up the road and is

used by many dog walkers and youngsters playing football. It also has a children's play area with swings etc for little ones. There are at least two other larger, parks within a pleasant stroll. The Wandle Walkway is a surprisingly diverse wildlife habitat if the parks seem a little tame!

In common with many High Streets throughout the country, Sutton High Street has until recently been in decline, many commercial and retail outlets as well as restaurants, pubs and nightclubs having closed down in the past couple of years, but there is currently a lot of redevelopment taking place. The refurbished Central Library, the Civic Offices, SCOLA (which offers a variety of courses for adults), a multi-screen cinema and the Divisional Police HQ are also within the town centre together with a new cinema, a shared workspace and several new eating places. There are a number of sports centres and gyms locally, both public and privately owned. Sutton is also home to the UK headquarters of Subsea 7, an international deep sea pipeline company.

There has recently been a lot of investment in the area; some older commercial buildings are being replaced with modern medium/high rise flats and high spec office accommodation – although little of this is within the parish, the influx of people could have an impact on St Barnabas. We do know that there has been a considerable influx of Chinese people in recent years, and we would very much like to welcome them to St Barnabas, as at other local churches.

Transport links to and from Sutton are excellent – Sutton Station can be reached on foot in 10-15 minutes; Southern Rail runs a good and relatively fast train service to the City and Victoria Station and Thameslink trains take you to places such as St Albans and Bedford. There are many bus services, including the new Superloop bus service to Heathrow Airport and several hail and ride local services.

The tube is easily accessed by taking a 154 bus from the top of St Barnabas Road to Morden Underground Station, which is on the Northern Line, with trains every two or three minutes.

You can be out of the urban environment of Sutton and surrounded by lavender fields and

smallholdings or on the edges of the North Downs within a 10 minute drive. The M25 (Junction 8) is about 7 miles away and you can be on the coast at Brighton, Bognor or Littlehampton in little more than an hour.

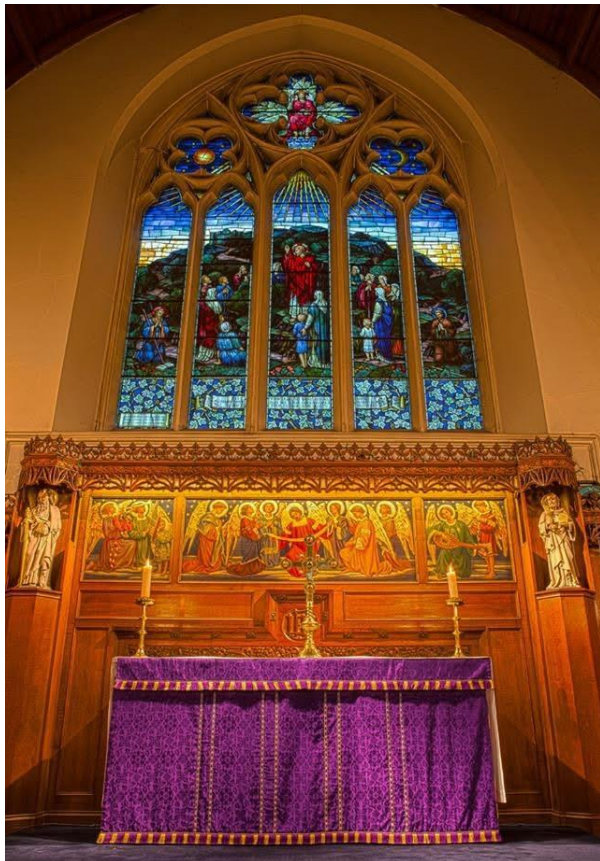
The problem of homelessness has not passed Sutton by but it does have one of the lowest rates of the London boroughs. There is no permanent drop in centre for the homeless in Sutton; St Barnabas donated chairs and tables for a temporary centre that was set up in the Secombe Centre (formerly a theatre, now closed) for the Christmas period 2017; we also supported Sutton Nightwatch for a couple of years. We continue to support Sutton Foodbank with our Harvest donations and also via our Charity of the Month scheme.

There are plenty of play opportunities for younger children – in parks, playgrounds, even a few play groups but in common with many places, there is little provision for teenagers. We have space that could be used by youth groups, although at the moment we lack leadership to form any group ourselves.

We have no schools within the parish, but there are several primary and secondary schools (selective as well as non-selective) within the borough – and within walking distance of St Barnabas Vicarage. Carshalton College is also quite local. St Barnabas Church halls have housed a pre-school for over 35 years and we have good links with them. Several of our children attend either All Saints Benhilton or All Saints Carshalton Primary Schools. We had formed a good relationship over the years with Manor Park Primary School, which is only just outside the parish, although this has faded away since Covid. Sutton has an extremely good education record amongst London Boroughs and some of the grammar schools are amongst the best in the country.

To sum up, found in Zone 5 with good transport links in and out of London, Sutton boasts award winning parks and open spaces, low crime rate, affordable housing and great schools. “The Times” recently named Sutton as number eight on a list of England’s best places to live.

About the church and halls



St Barnabas Church is a wonderful Grade 2 listed building with a spectacular East window and the only Memorial Chapel in Sutton. Also on the church site are the church halls which are well used by the local community. St Barnabas Pre-school runs during school hours Monday to Friday. This followed by a range of after school clubs including Rainbows and Guides. In the evenings there are adult fitness classes and a Model Railway Club. On Saturday mornings there is a chess club and yoga classes. At the weekends we allow families to hire the halls, mainly for children’s birthday parties.



The outside of the church is illuminated during the Christmas season to promote its presence in the local community



The refreshment area in St Barnabas church



We were very fortunate to be able to raise the money – from the generosity of the congregation, fundraising and a grant from Marshall's Charity – to install a servery and toilets in the narthex in 2023 which have had a great impact on our ability to host community events, as well as making our refreshments after the Sunday service more enjoyable. We have a small band of volunteers who make hot

drinks each week and serve biscuits and often homemade cake for everyone to enjoy in the servery area and there is also space for anyone wanting a quiet chat to be able to do so discreetly.

St Barnabas Church also owns land in Westmead Road which it leases to 5th Sutton (St Barnabas) Scout groups.

Worship



The outside of the church is illuminated during the Christmas season to promote its presence in the local community

We really look forward to you joining us at St Barnabas and being able to foster a great relationship with our own, dedicated vicar. With the same vicar all the time, people are more willing to join in the life of the congregation and parish. Pastoral care is just as important for the more 'established' members of the congregation

and many of us are already eagerly anticipating this part of your ministry,

We enjoy a traditional, 'middle of the road' style of worship at St Barnabas. Our main worship is a 10.30 a.m. service on Sundays, mostly Eucharistic but with a few parade services during

the year. Most of the congregation say they prefer a Eucharistic service, but we are still open to trying new things when they are presented sensitively. We would prefer our vicar to wear robes rather than jeans and jumper for Sunday services

Parade services are held regularly and attended by 5th Sutton Scouts and 3rd Sutton Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. There is a "Bible Stories for Children" group for children organised by a member of Mothers Union and volunteers to help. Parents stay with their children and everyone comes in for Communion and to tell the congregation what they have been doing. With the help and support of a new vicar, we hope to be able to offer more to a wider age group.

Over the past couple of years, we have also had a regular Evensong service on Sundays at 6.30, although it must be said that very few of the regular parishioners attended; there was a small group of 4 or 5 people who came, as well as a couple who continued to participate via Zoom, even after Covid restrictions were lifted. This may be something you would like to reinstate – we would do our best to support you.

Some of the well-loved traditional services that have formed part of our worship together include an Easter Vigil on Good Friday, St Barnabas Day, Harvest Festival, Christingle and Advent carol services. The Wiggly Nativity on Christmas Eve is a well-loved institution with the local community, with up to 200 people from all generations of local families. Midnight Communion attendance on Christmas Eve by regular members of the congregation has dwindled over the past few years, mainly due to most of us being in the older age range, although there are usually several local people. For many years we shared the Christmas Day service with either Christchurch or St Nicholas, but Dave reintroduced it when he came to us. In 2023, about 24 people came to the service.



The 3rd Sutton (St Barnabas) guide company participating at a Harvest parade service

HAND SIGNS FOR THE COMMANDMENTS

On Sunday 20th October in "Bible Stories for Children", they learnt an easy way to learn the Ten Commandments by counting on their fingers. Then, at the end of the morning service, they showed the congregation who joined in with them.



1. There is only one true God.
2. Never bow down to anything except the one true God.
3. Watch your words especially when you use God's name.
4. Stop and go to church.
5. Honour your Father and your Mother and any other adults in authority.



6. Do not murder



7. Do not commit adultery.
(Marriage is for 2 [on the right]; it doesn't involve those on the left)



8. Do not steal.
(in some lands they cut off thumbs)



9. Do not lie.
(5 [left] is not 4 [right] & 4 [right] is not 5 [left])



10. Do not be greedy and want other people's things.

An example of what the children learn during 'bible stories for children' sessions on Sunday mornings

We have rotas for readers, intercessions, servers and welcomers. There are usually flowers in church, arranged by a small but very creative team.

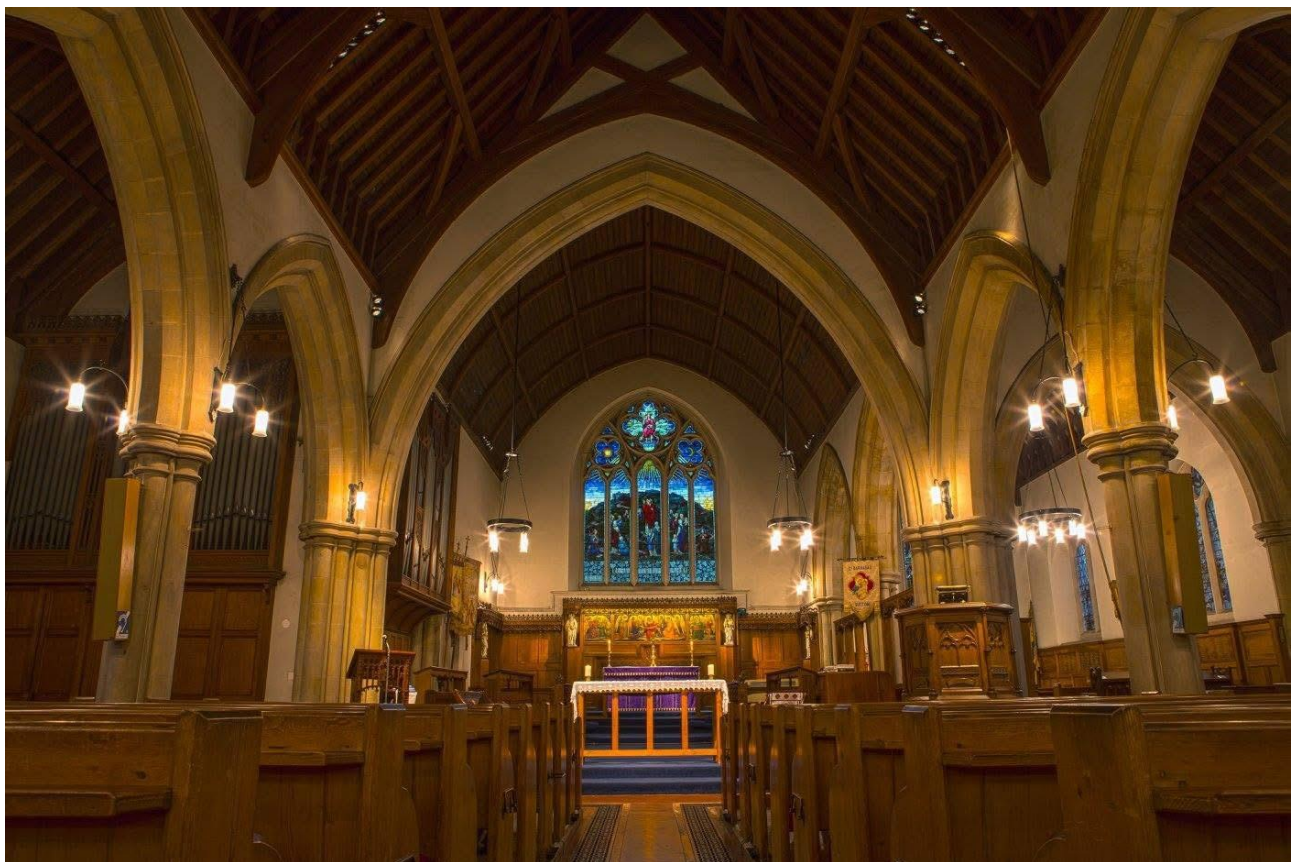
At present, although we have a very good and well maintained organ, we rely on an unpaid volunteer to play for our regular services, when his time allows. We have a good sound system with a large repertoire of hymns and songs that we can use without the need for a licence. We also have a clavivova and a grand piano that are crying out to be used. Our choir has sadly dwindled to the point that it was disbanded; one or two of the former members continue to sing with local choirs with links to other churches. We had a Handbell Group which played at Christmas and other special services; they also played for the patients in the Royal Marsden hospital on a few occasions, but sadly they are unable to do so at the moment.

The congregation usually numbers between 25-35. There is a mix of ages, from young families to people in their 80s, but mainly in the upper age range.

We have operated an open baptism policy for many years. At the moment, the only follow-up to baptism is a card sent on the first few anniversaries. With your help, perhaps more follow-up might encourage these families to engage more with us and join the congregation on a more regular basis.

We welcome everyone who comes into our church, whether for a service or other occasion. We try to greet everyone personally as they come in and engage with them after the 10.30 service on Sundays over coffee and biscuits. This is often a time when newcomers appreciate the chance to meet informally with a vicar that they know they will be able to meet again and we look forward to being able to introduce you in this way.

On Open Saturdays (1st and 3rd of each month), there is a short morning service, which is open to all, including anyone who is visiting. This is currently led either by one of the churchwardens or a member of the congregation and usually includes a time for reflection and discussion. The service is held in our beautiful Memorial Chapel which lists the names of 174 local people who sacrificed their life in the two World Wars. The chapel also contains a very rare stained glass window honouring the role of the Civil Defence Services in the 2nd World War. We carried out a project in 2017/18 to research some of the names of those who died in WW1 so that in the centenary year of the end of that war, we continued to honour them. Many local people came to our exhibition - some people even discovered things about their own family that they had never known about!



A bit more about us

For the past several years we have opened the church on the first and third Saturdays of the month. In the beginning this was to comply with the stipulation from English Heritage, who had given us a grant for roof repairs. By trial and error, we arrived at the present arrangement and although we have not yet attracted the numbers that we would like to, we do have a group of people not connected with St Barnabas who value the welcome they receive and are fairly regular in their attendance.

In 2023, a new initiative was started, Walk In Wednesday. Anyone is welcome to come and join us for a couple of hours of companionship, refreshments (more homemade cake!) and activities such as knitting and crocheting – help and advice is provided by a couple of expert members; as well as jigsaws or simply sketching by yourself in a warm and welcoming space. We are hoping to introduce card making for Easter this year.

We have combined Open Saturdays with Christian Aid Big Brekkie and Macmillan Coffee Mornings events in the past, which has helped us to support these causes. The Ride and Stride event organised by Surrey Churches Trust is always well attended by people taking part; we have a reputation for a warm welcome and good refreshments! Our new servery and toilets are a great asset for Open Saturdays and Walk In Wednesday, and have encouraged more people to attend.

We have invited various people to come along to an Open Saturday to reach the local community – these include our local pharmacist, Community Support officers and Age UK. We advertise these occasions on our Notice Sheets, Notice Board and in the Parish Magazine, as well as inviting our friends and relatives.

We also organise occasional working parties so that everyone can come along and help care for our beautiful church and grounds. We have no paid staff to clean the church so general 'housekeeping' is usually done by a few dedicated people.

We enjoy getting together for social activities as well, for example our Harvest Supper with good home cooked food and some entertainment. We very much hope that you will join us at these social occasions.

As part of our fundraising activities to "Raise the Roof" in the past couple of years, we have enjoyed many social events, including "Burgers and Bingo", a Beetle Drive, table top sales, a Spring Fair and a "pop up" Christmas market which was held when we turned on our Christmas lights at Advent this year. We have almost reached our target, with approximately £70,000 still needed.



The Mayor of Sutton attended one of the many events held to raise funds for the £300,000 essential repairs needed for the church Roof and other masonry, etc. repairs needed

Our most spectacular event was held this year, with a Burns Night Supper, complete with piper, where over £1100 was raised. We are very lucky that the congregation is always generous, with their time, talents and money.



The burns night supper held on 25 January 2025 in aid of the church roof repairs raised £1,117



The burns night supper held on 25 January 2025 in aid of the church roof repairs raised £1,117

Since September 2004, we have run a Charity of the Month scheme, which has enabled us to support over 60 different charities (local, national and international) with over £19k of voluntary donations from the congregation. Some of the charities have been suggested by church members, others have been chosen in response to international humanitarian disasters and we regularly support the Bishop's Lent Appeal and Crisis at Christmas in this way.

We have a very active Mother's Union Group which holds regular meetings and outings throughout the year. Janice, the leader is very enthusiastic and all events are open to everyone, whether or not they are a member.

Janice also edits our very popular and informative Parish magazine, which is published quarterly, and is also available online (we have recipients in Australia!). It is always a sell-out, full of information and interesting tidbits. We hope you will continue the tradition of writing a piece as vicar for each edition.

We hope that although you will find us to be quite self sufficient and able to organise ourselves, you can offer us guidance and leadership. You will find us open-minded and willing to listen. We are a confident community, more than ready to support you and take some of the load. We need your help to really be able to offer meaningful outreach to the local community.

We are lucky to have a close knit congregation who are generous and willing to volunteer in all sorts of ways, although many of us are in the older age range which sometimes brings its limitations.



Before a St Barnabas Mothers' Union carol service and Christmas lunch six mothers' union members visited an MU member who was housebound, Marjorie Udall, aged 97 (far right), in her flat in Oak Lodge for a mini carol service with two carols, a reading from St Luke's gospel and prayers. When Marjorie was in hospital shortly after Christmas, her daughter-in-law told the two Mothers' Union members who were then visiting Marjorie how much she had enjoyed the carols and had not stopped talking about it on Christmas day when she had lunch with them. Sadly, Marjorie died after that Christmas day.

What some of the congregation would like to say

Valerie – *I've been coming to St Barnabas since the 1950's– I was even a member of the Youth Club in the 60's! I enjoy the Sunday service and now that I live alone since losing my husband, I really appreciate Open Saturday and Walk In Wednesday, as otherwise I could go days without speaking to anyone.*

Marion – I have always found St Barnabas to be a welcoming community to everyone and I enjoy being able to be a part of its life, without feeling any pressure.

Sue -- The Sunday service suits me very well and I enjoy being part of the life of St Barnabas, helping with the refreshments and either attending or helping at the various social occasions.

Rosemary – *I love coming to St Barnabas. My children get to learn Bible stories each week and then we come in for communion at the end of the service. I also enjoy the monthly adult Bible Study, as well as all the social events that we can enjoy as a family like the Beetle Drive. It is a very welcoming and supportive community and we try to look out for each other. The Wiggly Nativity is always a highlight and a chance to invite friends to share the joy of Christmas. My elder son is in Beavers and joined in the parade service on Remembrance Day. We have a beautiful building and it feels a special place to worship God.*

About the PCC members

Sally Bramdaw, Churchwarden, PCC Secretary, PSO – *"I have been worshipping at St Barnabas for almost 40 years since moving here with my family. Both my children were confirmed here. I have taken an active part in many church initiatives over the years and joined the PCC in the 1990's. I have been a churchwarden since 2023".*

David Hall, PCC member, Electoral Roll Officer - *"I have been coming to St Barnabas since the mid-1950s when my parents moved to Sutton. I am married to Sue and we are both enjoying retirement".*

Carol Davison, PCC member - *"I have a long family association with St Barnabas; my great-grandfather used to worship here! I was baptised here and was a Sunday School teacher for several years. Following a stroke a couple of years ago, I am not as active as I once was".*

Peter Redding – PCC member - *"I have been coming to St Barnabas for over 25 years, since meeting Carol. I had a variety of jobs over the years, including being a milkman and airport security. I am now retired and enjoy carrying out minor maintenance tasks and gardening in the church grounds".*

Ellie Holley, Churchwarden – *"I started coming to St Barnabas when my mother brought me along as a baby; I was christened, confirmed and married here! I have taken part in most roles involved in the running of the church, including serving as churchwarden from 2013 to 2019, and again since 2023. I am married to Mark and have 2 stepchildren and a step-granddaughter. I have worked in childcare for over 20 years which I find very rewarding."*

Cathy Brown, PCC member, Deanery Synod Rep - *"I have been coming to St Barnabas for most of my life; I was christened and confirmed here and in 1992 my husband Peter and I were married here. I was a Sunday School teacher and have been a server and a member of the choir. I have been the Deanery Synod Rep for the past few years. I am a member of St Barnabas Mothers Union, and am a member of the MU Board of Trustees for Southwark Diocese.*

Lesley Caple, PCC member - *"I have been an active member of St Barnabas since moving to the area about 40 years ago. The church has been a major part of my life and that of my family. My 3 children were christened here, as was my grandson last year. My elder daughter was married here and is currently one of the churchwardens. I have served on the PCC for a number of years."*

Dorothy Hannam, PCC member – *“I moved here with my husband John 38 years ago and I’ve been a member of St Barnabas Church since then. I was an active choir member until sadly our organist was taken ill and went home to South Africa. I have also done two stints as churchwarden. I’m retired now and am kept busy with grandchildren, church events, knitting groups and holidays!”.*

Sally Reed, PCC member - *“I have been worshipping at St Barnabas for 25 years and have served as churchwarden four times over that period I am part of a small team who arrange flowers in church, and we especially enjoy marking special occasions with seasonal decorations. I am also on various rotas including reading the lesson, welcoming at the door and delivering intercessions. Happy to step in and do whatever is needed at a Sunday morning service. I work full time as a business analyst for an insurance company”.*

Our financial situation

In 2019, Dave Billin negotiated a very much lower Pledge from St Barnabas (£5,000), on the understanding that the money “saved” would be used to pay for the roof repairs and other works recommended in the 2019 Quinquennial Report, and also because the congregation would be actively fundraising for the roof repairs. A modest increase was made each year, but in 2024 we realised that we would need to raise our giving substantially in order to be considered for getting a new vicar and, on the recommendation of the Archdeacon, the PCC agreed on £10,128, an increase of 20% for 2025 over 2024.

The Government’s recent restriction on the maximum Listed Places of Worship Scheme Grants (now up to only £25,000 until 31 March 2026) means we will not get £20,000 of the VAT refunded. But we have now raised/secured 75% of the money required for the repairs with just £69,941 needed now.

We are still awaiting replies from two grant providers and we have a provisional diocesan loan of £25,000 should that prove necessary.

To date, donations (including legacies) from and fundraising by our congregation have amounted to £103,607. Money “saved” from the lower Parish Support Fund Pledges totalled £31,758.

The attached draft 2024 year end accounts were approved by the PCC on 12 January 2025 and have subsequently been independently examined with no changes. The PCC will formally approve the accounts at their meeting on 26 February.

Three of the best things about St Barnabas

- Sense of family – we are embracing, encompassing and compassionate
- Tradition
- Warm Welcome

Three challenges that St Barnabas faces

- Finance
- Vision
- Lack of younger people and families

We look forward to interviewing you and hearing about how you see the future at St Barnabas.

About you

We would like the Associate Vicar to:

- Have good people skills that you enjoy using
- Have a good sense of humour
- Collaborate with the congregation in introducing new ways
- Take a pastoral interest in uniform groups to try and encourage families to come to church
- Be flexible with your time, but we would encourage you to take your proper time off so that you are able to enjoy a good work/life balance
- Be able to guide us in our shared vision for the future
- Have sensitivity and empathy for all age groups
- Help us funnel our outreach (we are just starting to revamp our MAP with help from Alison Way)