

St. Barnabas, Sutton New Town

Parish Profile



OUR AIM

To find a spiritual leader who we can call our own, who is as passionate as we are in our desire to energize the congregation of St. Barnabas and to make us a positive influence in our neighbouring community, so that we can be a living example of Jesus's love for his people.

THANKYOU

We thank you for your interest in this post at St Barnabas church. We really look forward to meeting you so you can find out more about us, and we about you, to see if we could be a 'fit'!

St. BARNABAS CHURCH, SUTTON NEW TOWN

Sutton New Town

St Barnabas Church is situated in the Sutton New Town area of Sutton, a short stroll from the centre of town. Sutton New Town grew up in the second half of the 1800's when there was a rapid expansion in the size of the town and 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 St. Barnabas parish is home to about 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 have formed good links with Gracewell Care Home, the only one in the parish, and have created a new congregation there, holding services twice a month with several members joining our electoral roll.

The St. Barnabas 'Estate'

St. Barnabas sits on a small plot which includes the church itself with a Memorial Garden at the front (where we inter ashes), two functioning halls which house a pre-school every Monday to Friday during the day in term-time and regular groups in the evening, and two 'Memorial Halls' which are currently being refurbished. The Vicarage is adjacent to the church.

We also own a plot of land in Westmead Road which has a hall on it, the hall itself being owned by the St. Barnabas Scout Group. We are currently investigating how

St. Barnabas and the scout group can make the most of this facility to our mutual advantage (see under 'St. Barnabas Bunnies' below).



Recent history

In the year 2000, the current incumbent retired and we then went into an Interregnum for 6 years, during which time we managed to keep services going on a Sunday morning with a succession of visiting clergy. Several parishioners left us during this period of uncertainty.

For a couple of years, we were 'adopted' by the vicar of St. Dunstan's church in Cheam, which gave us a measure of stability before the 'Sutton Team Ministry' was created in 2006.

The Sutton Team Ministry was comprised of the churches of St. Barnabas, St. Nicholas and Christchurch from the central Sutton area. The constitution of the Team was set up in such a way that no one

member of clergy was responsible for a particular church; all the clergy were to spend equal amounts of time in each of the three churches. We were very lucky during this time to have a succession of very good Curates and Readers.

Following a review of the effectiveness of the Sutton Team Ministry in recent times, it has been decided that the Team itself would be dissolved and each of the three churches would have their own specific incumbent with dedicated pastoral responsibilities (the post that you are applying for). However, it is still proposed that the three churches maintain links as part of a 'Group' ministry.

Worship

We enjoy a traditional, 'middle of the road' style of worship at St Barnabas, with the leader of the service usually being robed. Currently, our only formal service is at 10.30 am on a Sunday. These are mostly Eucharistic but with an All Age Service every fourth Sunday. We also enjoy occasional Evensong services, especially for St Barnabas Day.

We have been experimenting with different forms of service, and have recently enjoyed 'Hymns and Pimms' on a sunny Saturday afternoon.

In recent times, some of the well-loved traditional services have been celebrated together as a team including Easter Services (reflection services at Christchurch during Passion week, an Easter Vigil on Good Friday at St Barnabas and the Easter Sunrise Service and breakfast at St Nicholas), and Advent and Carol services.

We hold our own festival services such as St Barnabas Day, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday. These are usually 'Parade Services' attended by our affiliated uniformed groups.

One of our most popular services is the 'make-your-own' Christingle service usually held at the beginning of Advent. Another popular event is the Wriggly Nativity on Christmas Eve which is a well-loved institution within the local community with up to 200 people from all generations attending. Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve also brings in many local people. For many years we have not had a Christmas Day service at St Barnabas ('Team' Christmas Day services being held at Christchurch and/or St Nicholas), although this year we do plan to have a Christmas Day service at St. Barnabas.

The Congregation



Church Parade.

The average congregation is 29 (24 adults, 5 children under 16) (Statistics for Mission Returns). The Gracewell congregation is between 9 and 14. The number on the Electoral Roll stays around 60 There is a mix of ages, from young families to people in their 90's. Elderly folk are picked up and brought to church by a small group of volunteer drivers.

There is a Sunday Club for children, organized by a member of the PCC with a rota of parents to help. There can be anything from 0 to 10 children in Sunday Club.

We have 1 (adult) candidate for Confirmation this year, the confirmation service to be held at Southwark Cathedral, and two members of the congregation have enrolled this year in the Bishops Certificate.

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 of the Baptism.

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 10.30am service on Sundays over coffee and biscuits. This is often a time when both newcomers and the congregation appreciate the chance to meet informally with a vicar that they know.

Music

We have a very good and well-maintained organ, a clavichord and a grand piano. We currently rely on a self-taught unpaid volunteer to play for our regular services. When he is not available, we download the music for our service from the internet.

Our choir has sadly dwindled to the point that it was disbanded; several members of the congregation continue to sing with choirs of other churches (specifically Trinity Methodist Church, Sutton) for special occasions.

We have a hand-bell group which plays at Christmas and other special services; they have also played for the children in the Royal Marsden hospital and for the volunteers at the visitor centre at the local prison.

Our Financial Situation

The majority of the congregation donate regularly via 'Planned giving'; we do not normally have a 'collection' during the service.

The accounts for the Church and for the Church halls are kept separate; for many years, the church's accounts hover in the red and it is the income from the church halls that helps us to break even.

We have maintained our Parish Pledge for 2019 at the same amount as for 2018 (£18,132) as our income continues to drop due to a fall in the number of regular members of the congregation. We hope that this trend will start to be reversed when we have our own dedicated incumbent. Our current forecast shows that this amount provides a surplus of less than £1000 to put to reserves for any future major repairs and maintenance of all our buildings and any other emergencies which might arise.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Charity of the Month

We run a 'Charity of the Month' scheme, and have collected over £10,000 in voluntary donations over the past 10 years. Some of the charities have been suggested by church members such as a local sports club for blind people or disabled riding organisations; others have been chosen in response to international humanitarian disasters and we regularly support the Bishop's Lent Appeal and Operation Christmas Child in this way.

Open Saturdays

For the past 5 years, we have opened the church on the first and third Saturdays of the month. In the beginning this was to comply with a 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, 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. We usually provide a simple lunch for anyone who is there at a very competitive price to cover costs.

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. We make sure we are open for the 'Ride and Stride' event in September, organized by the Surrey Churches Trust; we have a reputation for a warm welcome and good refreshments (not to mention the toilets!).

We have invited various people to come along to an Open Saturday to reach the local community – these include our local pharmacist and the Community Support officers.

On Open Saturdays there is a short morning service which is open to all, including anyone who is visiting. This is led either by our reader or by a member of the congregation and usually includes a time for reflection and discussion.

We also organise working parties on these days to care for our church and grounds. We have no paid staff to clean the church, so general 'housekeeping' and gardening is usually done by a few dedicated people on Open Saturdays.

St Barnabas Bunnies

In July 2018 we launched a Mother and Toddler Group – the St Barnabas Bunnies - in our Scouts Hall in Westmead Road. It is hoped that it will really serve the needs of isolated young parents and carers with young children in the parish. It will run on a

Friday throughout the year, not just during term time. We received a grant from Sutton Council to help with set-up costs, but the group should become self-funding within a relatively short space of time. The leader is one of our churchwardens, who is a qualified Nanny. In the short time that it has been running, we have received some very positive feedback and numbers are beginning to grow.

Sutton New Town Community Festival

Last year we successfully set up a separate charity, the 'Sutton New Town Community Festival' (SNTCF), which seeks to arrange and promote 'non-religious' community events for the benefit of the people of Sutton New Town. An initial grant was given to the charity by Sutton Council, but the intention is that this charity quickly becomes self-funding.

Our first event was a Christmas Tree Festival in 2017 hosted at St Barnabas, with over 50 trees in the church, decorated and sponsored by local businesses, charities and groups. Over 1500 visitors came into the church over the Christmas period to see the trees and all agreed that the effect was truly 'magical'. It seemed to be very popular, both with the people who set-up the trees and also with the visitors, so we aim to repeat it this year.

Recently the charity held a cream-tea in our Church Halls, which was attended by over 60 people (most of the attendees coming from the wider community rather than St Barnabas church).

The SNTCF will be hosting a 'Festival of Remembrance' on 10th November to mark the centenary of the end of the first World War.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Memorial Chapel



We have a beautiful Memorial Chapel which lists the names of 147 local people who sacrificed their life in the two World Wars. The chapel also contains a very rare stained-glass window dedicated to the Civil Defense Services.

We have recently started a project to research some of the names of those who died in WW1 so that, in this the centenary year of the end of the war, we can continue to honour them.

We are currently applying for grants in the hope of being able to repair the roof over the Memorial Chapel.

Memorial Halls

We are currently refurbishing two of our halls, with the help of a grant from the Sutton Community Fund. We hope to be able to offer the halls for community use, in particular for youth work, within the next few months.

St. BARNABAS IN A NUTSHELL

Best bits

- The beautiful church
- A warm welcome to all
- Traditional but relaxed sense of worship
- Links with community groups (Sutton New Town Community Festival, St Barnabas Bunnies, Open Saturdays, Gracewell)
- Links with uniformed groups
- Sense of family and shared community within the congregation
- Proud links to local history

Challenges

- Balancing finances / generating income
- Maintaining the church and associated buildings with limited resources (both people and finances)
- Perceived lack of Pastoral care
- Years of change of leadership, the different clergy with differing theological convictions having an impact on the worship and teaching of the church. Whilst this can be quite refreshing, it can sometimes be quite confusing.
- Empowering members of the congregation to be proactive in the working life of St Barnabas

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

We are a relatively small, close-knit congregation. Over the last few years, and out of necessity, we have become quite self-sufficient and able to organize ourselves to face most eventualities.

However, we are looking for the guidance and leadership from a dedicated St Barnabas vicar that we feel we have lacked for many years. If this is you, you will hopefully not find us not too 'stuck in the mud' or set in our ways. But rather, you will find us open-minded, willing to listen, ready to try out new things, happy to support you and take some of the load.

We are quite a social bunch and enjoy getting together for activities such as our Harvest Supper with good home cooked food and entertainment. We very much hope that you will join us at these times as we have missed having a clergy presence at these occasions in recent times.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

Most Important

- Someone who is engaged and committed to St Barnabas, who will be a presence at St Barnabas on a regular basis. Someone we can refer to as 'our vicar'.

Important

- Someone who is an inspiring teacher, who can help us to faithfully understand the bible better and help us on our individual spiritual journeys.
- Someone who can shake us up to give us some definite direction and shape the steps towards the goals in our vision.
- Someone who can be flexible in their working hours if necessary.
- Someone with good people-skills.
- Someone who can work in harmony with the clergy from the other churches in the 'Group'.

Good to have

- Someone with good administration and IT skills
- Someone who can look at the wider picture, and form connections with the other churches in central Sutton.
- Someone who will 'muck-in' when needed

And definitely

- Someone with a lot of patience and a keen sense of humour.

SUTTON, SURREY

The London Borough of Sutton is situated approximately 12 miles due south of the centre of London. It has a population of over 202,000. Unemployment is low at 3.9% and the poverty rate is 16.3%; the 4th lowest in London. Sutton has one of the lowest crime rates of all London boroughs (excluding domestic violence).

Sutton is a good place to live with several attractive parks and open spaces. Benhill Rec is literally up the road from St Barnabas 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!

We have no schools within the St Barnabas 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. Many of our children attend All Saints Benhilton Primary School which is a church school – and there is another church primary school in Carshalton. We have formed a good relationship over the years, which we would love to expand, with Manor Park Primary School, which is only just outside the parish. Sutton has an extremely good education record amongst London Boroughs and some of the grammar schools are amongst the best in the country.

There are plenty of play opportunities for younger children – in parks, playgrounds, play groups but in common with many places, there is little provision for teenagers. We hope to continue our involvement with STYG (Sutton Team Youth Group). With the imminent re-opening of the War Memorial Hall, we have

space that could be used by youth groups, although at the moment we lack the leaders to form any group ourselves.

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.

In common with many High Streets throughout the country, Sutton High Street is currently in a period of decline. Many commercial and retail outlets as well as restaurants, pubs and nightclubs have closed in the past couple of years. The main Post Office, the recently 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. There are many 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 around the station; some older commercial buildings have been replaced with modern high-rise flats and high spec office accommodation. Although it is unclear who will buy these (expensive) new flats – they could be commuters who have stronger ties to their original homes at the weekend, or younger people with no interest in coming to church - it will be interesting to see what effect this influx of people will have on the wider Sutton community, and it would be wonderful to welcome potential new members to our congregation.

Transport links to and from Sutton are excellent – Sutton Station can be reached on foot in 10-15 minutes from St Barnabas; 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 an express bus service to Heathrow Airport and several hail and ride local services. The closest London Underground station is Morden which is 3 miles away and easily accessible from Sutton by bus. Morden is the most southerly stop on the Northern Line, with trains into London every two or three minutes. There are plans to extend the tram network into Sutton over the next 10 years.

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) and run by Sutton Nightwatch. Sutton Nightwatch is a local charity that we support in various ways at St Barnabas; another charity we support is Sutton Food bank, which has recently opened another local branch to meet the increase in need.

