

M THE Magazine

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ST BARNABAS with CHRIST CHURCH, WORCESTER



MAY 2026

ST BARNABAS WITH CHRIST CHURCH

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WEBSITE: www.stbarnabaschurchworchester.co.uk

SERVICES:

Sunday	10am	Eucharist
Wednesday	10am	Said Eucharist

PARISH OFFICE:

To book a baptism or marriage (or to have banns read), send message through our website:

www.stbarnabaschurchworchester.co.uk

MAGAZINE DEADLINE: Penultimate Sunday of each month.
Please e-mail contributions to jackiecampbell@talktalk.net

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JOURNEY TO PENTECOST

Easter is a fifty-day sabbath, stretching from sunrise on Easter morning to the Spirit falling upon the disciples at nine o'clock on Pentecost morning. And we are nearing the midway point in that journey, as this May parish magazine comes out. And this year, as in any Easter season the Church returns again and again to the mystery at the heart of our faith: that Christ, who was crucified, has been raised. It is a truth we proclaim with joy, yet it can also feel strangely distant from the ordinary life of a parish church. Most of the time, we do not feel like a community glowing with resurrection life. We feel faithful, yes, but also stretched, tired, sometimes unsure of what the future holds. And so the question arises quietly, almost beneath the surface: if the Church is the body of Christ, as Christians have always said, then which body do we resemble?

The Gospels give us not one image of Christ's body but many. We meet him first as the fragile body of a newborn, dependent on the care of others. We see him as the body lowered into the Jordan, tested in the wilderness, hungry and exposed. We watch him walking the roads of Galilee, touching the sick, teaching, breaking bread. We see him arrested, crucified, and laid in the stillness of the tomb. And then, beyond all expectation, we meet him again as the risen body—recognisable yet transformed, bearing wounds yet filled with a life that cannot be contained.

If we are honest, most parish churches do not often feel like the risen body. They may feel more like the

vulnerable body of Bethlehem - small, stretched, unsure of their place in a changing world. At other times they resemble the tested body in the wilderness, trying to live faithfully but weary, holding steady through pressures that never seem to ease. Sometimes they resemble the ministering body in Galilee, offering comfort, hospitality and hope. And sometimes, perhaps more often than we like to admit, the Church feels close to the stillness of the tomb—waiting, grieving, wondering what God is doing next.



These moments are all part of Christ's story, and therefore part of ours. But Easter asks us to see them in a new light. You could almost picture it like one of those sets of

Russian dolls. The larger figure does not replace the smaller ones; it contains them. The earlier shapes are still there inside. Something similar seems to happen in the life of Christ. The risen body does not discard the earlier ones. The child of Bethlehem is still there. The tested body in the wilderness is still there. The ministering body of Galilee is still there. Even the crucified body is still there—the wounds remain. The resurrection gathers them all inside it. So the Church can recognise itself in those earlier moments without being defined by them. The Easter claim is that the outermost life—the life that holds everything else—is resurrection.

So when we ask which body of Christ the Church resembles, the answer may change from one season to another. At different times we recognise ourselves in different moments of Christ's story. Yet Easter tells us which body finally defines us. Not the fragile body of Bethlehem, though we know fragility. Not the tested body of the wilderness, though we know testing. Not even the crucified body laid in the tomb, though we know grief and waiting. The body that defines us is the risen body—the body that has passed through death into life, the body that still bears wounds yet is filled with the life of God.

The risen Christ does not stride into the world with spectacle. He comes gently, calling people by name, breaking bread, standing beside them in their confusion. If that is the body we are called to be, then our task is not to impress or to dominate. It is about making space for the life that is already here. At St Barnabas that life appears in very ordinary ways: children discovering the stories of scripture through Open the Book, school families joining us through projects like Blockbusters and iSingPOP, neighbours gathering for worship week by week, and the steady rhythm of prayer and service that holds parish life together. In these ways the story of God's kindness and goodness continues to be told here, year in, year out, afresh.

And this is where the Eucharist becomes central. At the table the Church does not pretend that it already looks like the risen body. It comes as people who have known vulnerability, testing, ministry and even moments that feel like the stillness of the tomb. Yet in the breaking of the bread Christ gives the Church its identity again. We rise from the table as the people who belong to the risen Christ, the body through which he continues to speak peace, to offer forgiveness and to bring life.

Rowan Williams gathered this mystery into a single sentence:

The Eucharist is no more and no less than this: as Christ's body, we both claim our identity and renew it in sharing it through the elements of bread and wine, so that Jesus the Word Incarnate lives in us and we in him, and God is fittingly thanked for who and what he is.

That is the heart of Easter Season for the Church. The life of the risen Christ is not something the Church generates for itself. It is something Christ gives. And in the Eucharist that gift becomes the life we share, as again and again we claim the renew our identity as his risen body in the world.

Revd Sarah Northall

CHARITABLE GIVING

As many of you will know, St Barnabas with Christ Church gives 10% of our income from Planned Giving and plate collections to Charity each year. These are local, national and international charities and responses to Emergency Appeals. The Mission Committee, which I have just taken on, proposes donations to the PCC. I'd like to take this opportunity to say that suggestions from our congregations will always be welcome for consideration.

Margaret Gandon

As we concluded the April Eco group meeting we shared what we had noticed and appreciated of God's creation:

- Being able to hang the washing out
- The river
- The Miner bees who were spotted flitting out of the holes in the earth
- The many tadpoles being fishlike in the pond after emerging from their jellylike substance
- Seeing the beauty while visiting Spetchley gardens
- And being able to have breakfast out in the sun

I wonder what treats May will bring?

Perhaps you can abstain from mowing your lawn, or even a small patch or an edge, and observe, for a moment, something new, something spectacular and give thanks to God our Creator.

The next Eco meeting is Monday 8th June 11:30am in church, do join us, or email any thoughts/ideas.

Sue Martyr, Eco Rep

*If you're feeling creative or need some encouragement during **No Mow May**, why not colour in the picture on page 12?*

SIAMS INSPECTION

Just before Easter, Bishop Perowne Church of England College received the outcome of its SIAMS inspection. SIAMS is the Church of England's way of scrutinizing its schools. The inspectors' conclusion was very encouraging. They wrote that Bishop Perowne "is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish." In particular they noted that the school's Christian vision — based on the words from Philippians, "humbly count others more significant than yourselves" — is not just a statement on paper but something that genuinely shapes the culture of the school. Respect, compassion, resilience and integrity are visible in the way pupils treat one another and in the way the community celebrates diversity.

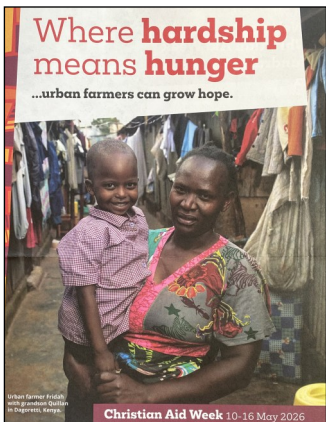
The report highlights several areas of strength. The school is described as highly inclusive and equitable, with strong support for pupils who are vulnerable. The Religious Education curriculum is judged to be relevant, challenging and well taught. Collective worship is valued by staff and pupils and plays an important part in shaping the spiritual life of the school.

One part of the report that will particularly encourage us locally is the recognition of the partnership between the school and the church. The inspectors specifically noted that "the very strong

partnership with the local church enhances this further." In practice this partnership is expressed in many ways: through regular worship in school, through services in church during the year, and through the ongoing relationship between clergy, staff and pupils. Those occasions when the school community gathers in church — at Christmas, for remembrance, and at other key moments — are part of the shared life that the inspectors recognised as a strength.

As with any inspection, the report also identifies areas for further development. The school will now be working on creating more opportunities for pupils to explore their own beliefs and worldviews, and on planning more deliberately for moments of spiritual development across the curriculum.

For us as a parish, it is good to give thanks for the life of the school and for the many staff who work so hard to serve the young people of Worcester. It is also a reminder that the relationship between church and school is not just historic but living and active. When that partnership works well, it helps create a community in which young people can grow not only in knowledge but also in character, compassion and hope.
Revd Sarah Northall



BEACON OF HOPE

Beacon of Hope a partner of Christian Aid, is training aspiring urban farmers like Fridah to cultivate their own vegetables in small, unused city spaces. Fridah *At first, I didn't understand. I was wondering, where can someone farm here in Nairobi?* Training sessions cover farming techniques, such as pest management, compost production, and seed cultivation, as well as business skills. Participants are supported with the tools, seeds and plots they need to get started.

Fridah's urban farm is hidden at the end of a concrete alley. You'd never guess that lush crops could thrive here. As she opens the gate, her face beams with pride. *When what I have planted grows—that is what makes me happy. When I get money that I have earned—that is what makes me happy.*

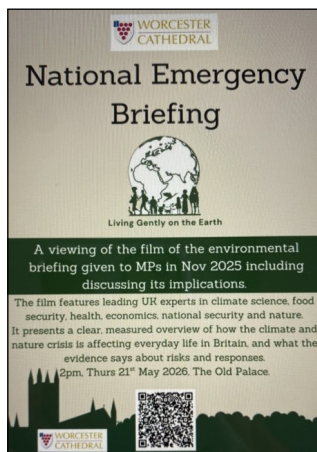
Fridah's now feeding her family with her own nutritious produce and selling it on her market stall to generate income.

From living meal to meal, not knowing if her children will go to bed with empty stomachs, Fridah now cherishes the security her small farm is bringing. *Urban farming has changed my life.*

Join us to support families like Fridah's to protect themselves from hunger, and nurture hope.

This Christian Aid Week (10-16 May), how will you fundraise, act and pray?

Margaret Gandon



GOING FOR GOLD!

As we look at working towards Eco Gold for our church - this film is highly recommended. How about coming along? It's free but you need to book (via the QR code).



This page: Racking our brains at the recent quiz!
Opposite page: Good Friday family activities and hot cross buns were enjoyed by nearly 50!
Beautiful flowers, hats and weather for our Easter Day service!



WORCESTER CITY WELCOMES REFUGEES (WCWR) – REFUGEE WEEK 15-21 June

75 Years:

A landmark celebration for the 1951 Refugee Convention, which has saved millions of lives and protected fundamental rights, providing a vital framework for refugees to find safety and rebuild their lives. Worcestershire has played its part going back at least to 1914 when Pershore and Evesham welcomed Belgium refugees fleeing German invasion. And today the County continues to offer safety to those fleeing conflict and persecution.

Refugee Week is the world's largest arts and culture festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary. This year the theme is COURAGE and everyone is invited to take part and you can organise your own event whether you are an individual, school, library, arts venue, faith group, local council, football club etc or join in events organised by WCWR.

WCWR has been busy working with several organisations and businesses to organise a variety of events during the week. The programme has yet to be finalised but set out below is a taste of what is to come.

Exhibition of Quilts and Textiles.
The Chapter House,
Worcester Cathedral The

quilts have been produced by women seeking Asylum in Wychavon, working with Evesham Vale Welcomes Refugees,

Workshops, poetry readings and storytelling - for adults and children. Chapter House, Worcester Cathedral

Stand outside the Guildhall with Amnesty International.

Open Mic Music night – Spin the Black Circle, Pump Street

Spoken Word Poetry Evening.
Script Haven, Crown Passage, Worcester

Jo Cox/Great Get Together, Walk on the Malvern Hills. Meeting British Camp car park.
Organised by Amnesty International-Worcester

Events being planned will be confirmed early May. Further information about Refugee Week – Worcester, can be found on

Facebook:
Worcester City Welcomes Refugees
Refugee Week Worcester

National Refugee Week website:
<https://refugeeweek.org.uk>





EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING EVERY SILVER LINING HAS A CLOUD

In these dark days, globally, nationally, maybe personally for some, we do well to remember that every cloud has a silver lining: a lesson learned, or a new opportunity, a chance to grow stronger and wiser, to find a new meaning to life, or a new sense of purpose.

It's known too, that positivity can affect our wellbeing for the better, physically and mentally.

Don't miss the silver lining because you're expecting gold.

Let's take the Silver Lining Challenge, today, this week, this month, when we're in the dark. And look for the positives.

*Only in darkness can you
see the stars*

Margaret Gandon

SHARED GIVING 2026

John Dentith made this talk on Sunday 19 April:

Yes, it's so good to be with you again to talk about our favourite subject, giving money to church, for some of us the largest regular donation we make to a charity, and to talk about how it's an expression of our discipleship. Sarah has spoken to us about how choice becomes generosity and stewardship, and about how to bind that together with hospitality as we move from Hope to Holiness. Our task now is to translate the theory into practice and talk about giving in the practical sense. Planned Giving, Realistic Giving.

So firstly let's talk about the issue of falling numbers. Our attendance figures are actually fairly stable, even showing cautious signs of growth as we have managed to attract some new church members to replace some of those we have sadly lost, but we are definitely still down on our pre-Covid levels.

This has had an impact on our planned giving. I'll let you have these figures to ponder on at home, but in 2025 our giving followed this pattern:

- 4 people give more than £50 a week**
- 2 people give between £31 and £50 a week**
- 5 people give between £21 and £30 a week**

2 people give between £16 and £20 a week

6 people give between £11 and £15 a week

9 people give between £6 and £10 a week

6 people give between £2 and £5 a week

1 person gives £1 a week

At least 6 regular worshippers are not in Planned Giving

... a total of 35 regular givers. As you can see, the giving reflects at least in part the income levels we have; some of us have higher incomes than others. Of course, that's not the whole story.

But going back to what I said about falling numbers, in 2019 we had **60** regular givers, nearly twice as many. The breakdown of giving was much the same as before, but there were more people:

3 people give more than £50 a week

5 people give between £31 and £50 a week

6 people give between £21 and £30 a week

6 people give between £16 and £20 a week

4 people give between £11 and £15 a week

19 people give between £6 and £10 a week

17 people give between £1 and £5 a week

In total, in 2019 we were receiving over £700 a month more than we do now. (And don't forget that to run this church currently costs

around £8000 per month, and also don't forget that last year we made a deficit in our accounts).

So that's the numbers, how about the Cost Of Living Crisis 2026? I remember being very encouraged two years ago by the fact that most of us didn't allow the cost of living crisis to affect our giving. Some of us increased, (Thank God) and more of us, most of us really, stayed the same. That was impressive in itself, but it's not the whole story. We need to grow our congregation, yes, but we also need to commit to growing our current level of giving income. But how?

Well it's the same old story really, the message hasn't changed much, if at all. Regular listeners will have heard me bang on about the need for shared giving, about the fact that the bible encourages us to tithe our income, that is, give 10%. (the Church of England more modestly asks us all to commit to arriving eventually at a giving level of at least 5% of take-home pay), the need to give every week or month even when we can't get to church, and about using this annual review to try to move further towards our 5%. Fair and realistic giving. The breakdowns I've shown you reflect our income levels, yes, but they also reflect in part the different level of financial commitment we have to our church, our generosity quotient if you like. Some people are close to their 5%, (one or two people are over 5%), but some people are nowhere near it.



Each year I ask you all to examine your take-home income, work out what 5% is, and compare it to your giving

level. I wonder how many of us actually do that?

So we have a trinity of challenges. Firstly I need to encourage new or newer church members to be committed to giving, joining in Planned Giving if you're not in it already, and giving at realistic levels. Secondly I need to encourage those good folks who haven't increased in recent years to check their finances again and see if you can't find some wriggle room to enable you to move towards your 5% target. Your bills have gone up, yes, frighteningly so, but perhaps your income has too? Thirdly, and whisper this softly, I need to encourage the small number of folks who come to church but don't give, to make a start on your giving. It's only fair to everyone else. I can guide you through the choices and methods. And if you're a tax-payer who can Gift Aid, I can help you with that as well. It's all very simple and straight forward. If you're giving you're supporting our church and each other. If you're not giving, other folks are supporting you.

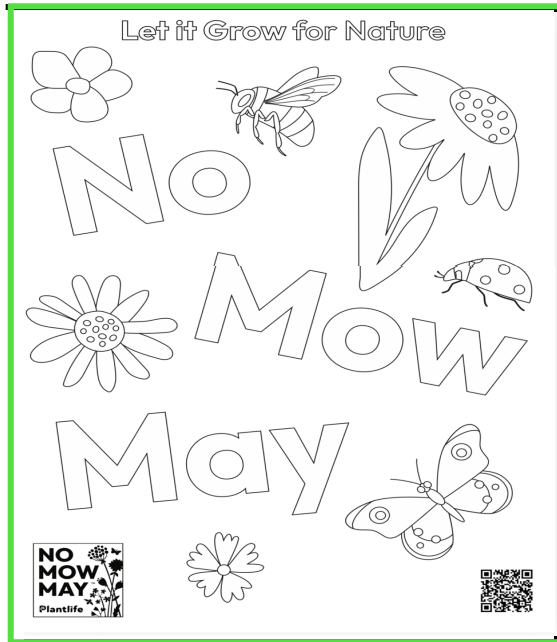
Every year I ask you to calculate your five per cent. It's an easy calculation; you see what your 'take-home' income is, then divide that figure by ten and then divide

that figure by two. That gives you your target figure to aim at. It may seem an impossible figure sometimes, but the important thing is to make a start. Please, **please** make this calculation, especially if you never have before.

Do use the comparative figures from 2025 and 2019, but also the slightly more encouraging comparison between 2025 and 2023, to help you to consider your own giving, and your comparative commitment. Where do you fit in the generosity scale of giving? How close are you to your target? It's not too dramatic to say that the future of our church depends on us making sense of this.

So - thank you so much for reading and listening. This is always a challenge for us to consider, anything to do with our money is a challenge, and we don't usually like to think about it. But hopefully, if we get it right, we only have think about it once a year. So thank you, thank you for continuing to support this church and our mission here. Please pray about your own finances but also pray about church finances, and please **please** check your 5%. We can achieve this you know.

And as I always say, please God let us all retain or somehow regain a sense of positivity, so that we can support this church as cheerful givers! *We can!*
Amen



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