

## The Parish of St Barnabas & St Paul, Oxford: Annual Report for 2011

### **Membership of the PCC**

(The PCC met 7 times in 2010)

### **Ex Officio Members**

Fr Jonathan Beswick, Priest-in-Charge and Chairman  
Fr Miles Maylor, Honorary Assistant Priest  
Mrs Margaret Ellis, Licensed Lay Minister  
Mr John Hanks, General Synod Representative (until Autumn 2010) & Elected Lay Member (from 21.3.10)  
Mr Paul Hornby, Church Warden & Deanery Synod Representative  
Mrs Claire Herbertson, Church Warden (from 16.5.10)  
Mrs Mary Whitlock, Church Warden (until 16.5.10)  
Mr David Pittaway, Diocesan Synod Representative  
Mr Tom Anstey, Deanery Synod Representative  
Mr Daniel Dolley, Deanery Synod Representative (until February 2011)

### **Lay Members**

Mrs Janet Bell (Secretary), Mr Phillip Purves, Mrs Claire Herbertson (until 21.3.10), Mr Malcolm Bell (until 21.3.10), Miss Claire Atkins (until 21.3.10), Mrs Julie Anne Lambert (until 21.3.10), Mrs Helen Brock (Electoral Roll Officer), Mrs Jenny Pittaway (until 21.3.10), Mr Richard Whitlock (until 21.3.10), Mrs Janet Mead, Miss Felicity Long (until 21.3.10), Dr Gill Nicholls, Mrs Joy Crispin-Wilson, Mrs Cherry Robertson, Mr Richard Doney (from 21.3.10), Mr Martin Payne (from 21.3.10) and Mr Simon Norris (from 21.3.10).

### **Honorary Treasurer**

Mr Alan Martin (until 29.4.10) and Mr Phillip Purves (from 29.4.11)

### **Church Attendance**

The average attendance at the 10.30am mass on Sundays has been 93 adults and 16 children.

The average attendance at the 10.30am mass on Sundays in October was 105 adults and 20 children.

The Electoral Roll has increased again, in spite of a number of deaths and people moving away. It was 123 a year ago and is now 133 (an increase of 40% over the last 3 years)

There have been 3 baptisms, 2 weddings and 8 funerals. We particularly felt the loss of 3 current or former members of the congregation, in Gill Nicholls, John Walsh and Bill Quinell.

### **Review of the Year**

It has been another good year for St Barnabas and God has continued to bless us in so many ways. It is a particular pleasure to note that our congregation is getting ever-broader and more diverse in character. Let no one say that St Barnabas lacks character! Some points of interest from our activities are:

**Worship:** this is why we are here. Week by week there is an uplifting and prayerful quality to the Parish Mass, and the church bell is tolled 3 times most days, to tell the parish that prayer is being offered. The Altar Serving Team continues to grow and flourish under the care of our Head Server and MC, Jenny Pittaway: our great thanks to her and the team. Our regular Sunday pattern now is to have 3 Sacred Ministers, 4 adult and 3 junior servers for the Parish Mass. Richard Doney has assumed a particular brief for developing the Junior Altar Team. The whole serving team gathered for a cheerful Epiphanytide party, which was a credit to the collective stamina of those involved. Jenny continues with her training for Reader ministry, and we reluctantly relinquished John Hanks from the Altar team for six terms, whilst he is in training for the Diaconate at St Stephens House. We keep in touch during the vacations, and look forward very much to receiving him back, this time on to the deacon's step, at Petertide 2012! We have been delighted to welcome Fr Richard Martin fully into the Sunday team; we rejoice in his distinctive combination of wit, faithfulness and friendship, and offered our congratulations as he celebrated his silver jubilee of ordination.

On Sunday mornings, the sidesmen have been the first point of welcome for visitors and 'regulars' alike: they are to be thanked for this important ministry. We are grateful to Paul South for taking over the rota from Alan Martin, and for heading-up the team.

The Feast of All Saints, in November, was a fine and memorable evening celebration. The Bishop of Europe preached and confirmed. 8 candidates were well-supported by family and friends as they took this important step in discipleship.

In May, in addition to the usual May Devotion, we celebrated Vespers of Our Lady, with a full orchestra (including sackbuts and theorbos) and the *I Dedicati* singers, using Monteverdi's beautiful setting of 1611. It was a demanding but rewarding occasion. In November, *I Dedicati* returned to sing the *Richafort* requiem for the evening All Souls mass. Two moving and beautiful occasions: our thanks to *I Dedicati*.

Fr Jonathan was pleased to accept invitations to preach at Keble, Lincoln, Worcester and New Colleges; also at Abingdon School, to the Society of the Holy Cross and at a vocations conference at St Stephen's House. He continued to lead the Thursday morning assembly at St Barnabas School each week.

**Sunday School:** we give thanks for the continued growth of our Sunday School: 3 classes are in action each week; Claire Atkins, Helene Oh and the team of volunteers have made excellent provision for the young Christians of St Barnabas. Thank you to all who have helped them, in particular the recently-formed junior team. In November, Robert Frater was appointed for a year as Children's Worker, and Helen Owen as Assistant Children's Worker: they have quickly become part of the family, and taken forwards this important work. We are grateful to Jane Thomas and Claire Atkins who have agreed to take on the essential and important roles of Child Protection Officer & Children's Advocate respectively.

**St Barnabas Music,** Dan Chambers has continued to develop and challenge the choir, which is going from strength to strength. Most Sundays there are 12-18 adult volunteers: thank you to them for their hard work and commitment. We are also all absolutely delighted that, in the autumn of the year, the treble section was re-established. They rehearse each week and sing once a month. Usually twelve in number, they are, by the generosity of the Gift Shop Team, now in cassocks and really getting into the swing of things. Thank you to Dan, Robert and Ann for their hard work in making this happen. In his duties as our Director of Music, Dan has enjoyed the continued support of Bob Lowrie. The 'Occasional St Barnabas Choir Dinner' was much enjoyed in the autumn, by the good offices of Fr Simon and Merton College. It was also a great pleasure to benefit from the trumpet-playing of Don Gray, who was with us in the summer, together with Lana. Don and Dan teamed-up on Sundays and at other times, much to the enrichment of our worship. Thank you all.

A detailed independent report on the deteriorating condition of the organ has been prepared by John Norman, and the way ahead is being carefully discerned. It will be costly, but essential work. We also established a 'Piano Fund' to raise money for a good, recital-worthy instrument. The fund currently stands at £3,000. The target is £9,000. This will be a huge asset to both our mission and our ministry.

**Curate 2011:** for the first time in at least 75 years St Barnabas will be receiving a stipendiary title curate. Lots of work has gone into making this happen: thank you to all who have been involved. This is a very exciting time for the parish, and we look forward to Mark and Lizzie Stafford coming to make their home here with us in the summer. Mark will also serve as Junior Chaplain at Merton College, with Fr Simon.

**Christ the King, Sophiatown, Soweto:** A great delight in 2010 was the return of an old friend, Angie Nethanondo. In March, Angie brought the youth choir from her church in Sophiatown to Oxford. There were many smiles and much laughter as the congregation of St Barnabas was finally led, dancing, around the aisles of the church. Many doubted this could ever happen. At the Parish Mass, the Nicene Creed was also sung in Zulu, to the greater glory of God. A very precious gift was given to St Barnabas that morning.

**Advent Concert:** on Advent Sunday we hosted a concert for *Right Employment*, a local charity working with people with learning difficulties, to help them find employment; the choir sang and Colin Dexter led the readers. A very successful evening for raising funds and awareness. A number of other special collections and charities have been supported through the year, including the *Fellowship of St Nicholas* and *Christian Aid*.

**Hospitality:** Thank you to Shelley Couper and the team who offer excellent coffee and hospitality after Parish Mass. A dishwasher and a fridge have been welcome additions to the catering 'hardware'. The regular weekday fellowship group has continued to meet on Tuesday mornings, after the 9.30am mass, and also sometimes on Thursday lunchtimes, after the 12 noon mass.

**Friends of St Barnabas Lunch** in October: thank you to David Pittaway for organising this, and to Dick Smethurst and Sue Gillingham as they welcomed us to their home for the last time, at the Provost's Lodgings at Worcester. Our traditional series of 'bring and share lunches' after Mass during the summer was enjoyed by many. 45 of us also shared a very enjoyable parish lunch at Al-Shami restaurant in Eastertide.

**The St Barnabas Gift Shop** has continued to flourish; in particular we have been delighted with the success of the St Barnabas Mug, which has been the headline act for 2010: thank you to Matthew and Emma Rice for their sponsorship and help, and to Claire and the team for making it such a success. Many members of the Diocesan senior-staff now have the 'St Barnabas Option' for their early cup of tea! We have also formed an excellent partnership with Richard, Sheila and the team at Daisies, on Walton Street, for our 'off-sales'. We are grateful to them for their help in this.

**Magazine and mission:** our quarterly parish magazine continues to flourish and take the good news to every home in Jericho. Ten issues have now been distributed, and the 2,000 copy print run continues to be sponsored by a local business: thank you to North Oxford Properties, and a big thank you to Maggie Ellis and the editorial team.

**Beaten Bounds:** the shorter (due to rain...) bounds of the parish were 'beaten' after mass on Rogation Sunday, followed by a picnic.

**Jericho Street Fair:** it was our most successful participation for many years. Cream teas were served on the lawn, plants, books and bric-a-brac were sold at the various stalls, and there was a series of excellent recitals in the church, which offered welcome respite from the heat and the noise outside. Thank you to all who worked so hard for this. Many visitors came in to church in the course of the day.

**Boatyard and Institute:** there is little practical progress to report in some ways, but conversations have continued. We are currently exploring the possibility of establishing a local 'consortium' to acquire and develop the site. A public display of the models and plans was hosted in church in December. The PCC is closely involved in the discussions, and has several important roles in any future development: both as trustees of the Institute and also as custodians of the church building, which has now been relisted as Grade 1. A strong and new local identity is being forged in this process, which will have all sorts of interesting implications for our mission and ministry!

**The Melkite parish of St John Chrysostom** has continued to worship at St Barnabas each month: their icons are a joyful reminder of our shared friendship and fellowship. St Barnabas has also continued to participate in various events organised by Churches Together in Central Oxford, and representatives regularly attend meetings and services. The Oxford Deanery Synod met at St Barnabas in the summer.

**Ordinands:** St Barnabas has continued to play a role in offering placement opportunities for ordinands from local colleges: it is a privilege for us to share in this crucial work of the renewal of the ministry of the Church, and we are blessed by it. Six ordinands have been on placement with us in 2010: we said farewell to Taemin and Helene Oh in the summer, after 2 years. They have contributed so much to our common life at St Barnabas, since joining us in October 2008. We will be very sorry to see them leave Oxford this summer, 2011, but are very pleased that they are going to such a good new home in the parish of St Peter & St Paul, Colchester, where Taemin will serve his title. We look forward to them coming back to see us soon. In the summer we also said goodbye to Nick (and Liz) Munday and Chris (and Claire) Routledge from Cuddesdon: it was a great pleasure to have them with us, and we look forward to hearing from them as they set off into the uncharted but exciting waters of their curacies. Chris Johnson was with us for a month over the summer, from St Stephen's House, and cheerfully joined in with all that was going on. Mark (and Lizzie) Stafford and Chris (and Pauline) Jones then joined us in the autumn, from Cuddesdon. They have quickly made themselves at home with us, and made many positive contributions to our life. We are thrilled that Mark will be returning to St Barnabas to serve his curacy.

**Visitors:** St Barnabas has been the venue for an increasing number of concerts and a number of visits from architecture students, history groups, schools and many others besides. St Barnabas was a host venue for ArtWeeks 2010. Many visitors were welcomed, and it was agreed that we would build on this beginning for next year. We also received many visitors over the September 'Open Doors' weekend, which coincided with the 'Ride & Stride' day. Thank you to all who helped welcome visitors to St Barnabas in 2010. It is such an important ministry.

**Pubs:** all change in the last year for our 3 most local pubs. The Raddy closed and is now being refurbished. We wish Leo and Chris every success as they prepare for the re-launch. Jean-Matthieu and family will be leaving the Bookbinders soon: we wish them happiness and success as they move on. And John and Nicky will be retiring from the Harcourt at the end of May this year: we wish them happiness and restored health for their retirement. They have welcomed and refreshed so many of us over the years: it will be a hard act to follow.

**Sacristy:** very many thanks to Helen Brock, who quietly works away behind the scenes with the vestments; also to those who have cleaned linens and polished brasses and silver. And to Jenny Pittaway, who looks after the sacristy supplies. We now never run out of candles or palm crosses. We are delighted that 2 low-mass sets (purple and gold/white) have now, at last, been restored, by the careful and excellent work of Jean Haddock. A generous and specific gift has made this possible. We are now looking forward to the restoration of our best and historic green high-mass set. A rose high-mass set will also now be purchased.

**Fabric:** thank you to Simon Norris for his patience, imagination and good-humour in looking after us and our recently relisted Grade 1 building. We have embarked on an exciting project for the Holy-Cross Chapel. The result will be: 1. improved access to/use of/appreciation of the lovely Holy Cross altar, 2. a pair of new WCs and 3. a small kitchen/servery. The sweet-sounding quarter-chimes on the tower clock were restored to action in the autumn, much to the appreciation of the local residents, especially those who are inclined to day-dream.

So: there has been quite a lot going on, and so much for which to give thanks. All that we do at St Barnabas is always supported by the important round of weekly prayer and devotion. Sustaining our common-life of course requires much hard work, and there are many to whom we owe our thanks. It is seldom easy to single out one or two for particular mention, but it is almost always necessary. Our Church Wardens play a most important role in promoting and supporting the ministry and life of the parish, at all levels. Thank you to Claire and Paul for all that they have done in the last year. Thank you also to Phillip Purves, our new Treasurer, and to Alan Martin who continues to give his assistance in this important work. I would also like to record our thanks to Mark Bale, who has again proved so generous in giving his time and expertise to ensure that our annual accounts are in good order.

Another to whom great thanks must be given is Maggie Ellis, who continues to do so much for the parish. Her series of Lent soups greatly encouraged those who attended the lunchtime Lent groups, and she is always a smiling and positive presence. Uncomplainingly, she surmounts the Byzantine complexities of the St Barnabas rotas. So many of us are grateful for her support and friendship. We miss her and John when they are away, but email happily (for us) diminishes the distance between us and their small outpost of Jericho in a lovely part of France.

Fr Miles continues to bring his inimitable combination of gentle humour, wordplay, kindness and spiritual wisdom to the service and good of the parish. I don't think that the words "Elvis has left the building" have ever before been used to introduce the Parish Mass in Jericho! His steady and quiet presence is much valued. We also continue to enjoy Fr Simon's company, friendship and support, and are very pleased at the prospect of a further-strengthened friendship between Merton and St Barnabas. The *'Little Organ Parish Mass'* and champagne for Fr Simon's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary mass were a memorable part of the summer.

Janet and Malcolm Bell have continued to tend the garden for us, mowing, pruning, weeding and planting. Janet has also served as Secretary to the PCC for the last year: scrupulously and patiently. Malcolm readily helps with supporting work to the Treasurer, and has also taken on preparation of the weekly bulletin, from Helene Oh. Thank you both.

Lastly, we owe thanks to the various priests who have so willingly helped serve the altars and people of St Barnabas: Fr Simon Jones, Fr Arthur Taylor and Fr Allen Shin. With a mix of gratitude and sadness we bid farewell to Fr Allen and Clara Shin and sent them on their way with our blessing (and 2 no. St Barnabas mugs) to their new home and parish in Huntington, Long Island, USA. We wish them every happiness in this new chapter of their life. We are delighted that Fr Dennis and Edna Mason continue to take their place in the heart of the parish family when weather and health permit.