

Framed by Hope

Just as children, before Christmas, live lives utterly framed by the coming festival, so Christians should live lives utterly framed by the Christian hope. Just as a child, yearns for, dwells upon, the hope of parties and presents, so the first Christians expected great things from God and framed their actions around that future – whatever was happening in the present.

All this autumn on Sundays we've been looking at hope. In November and December we focus on the impact having hope has in our lives.

And to understand Christian hope, we need first to recognise how vividly other-worldly Christian faith is. Its fundamental orientation is to look for a world that is yet to come, a world that will only be fully clear to us after we die. Christian faith started on Easter morning, when Jesus rose bodily from the tomb. This was not simply a 'spiritual' resurrection. It matters, massively, that a physical body came to life. And it matters, massively, that we remember that key doctrine of the New Testament and early church –



Photo by Szabo Viktor on Unsplash

that the same Jesus who ascended to his Father, is coming back to judge and renew all creation.

Believing this hope affects us as individual people. Our life does not end in death. There is more, far more, to come. This world is a preparation for the world to come. Whatever heartaches we face – and I know there are a great many at the moment – they are less powerful than the hope of Christ.

Believing this hope affects us as a congregation. No one is saved alone. We are saved into a new community. The New Testament knows nothing of solitary religion. So, as we gather Sunday by Sunday, whether in the building or online, we taste something of the new Jerusalem – sometimes only a faint taste, but a taste nonetheless. We each need to re-commit to connecting with Christian community. We need that connection – and our congregation needs each of us to play our part.

Believing this hope affects us as citizens of Middlesbrough

and Teesside. Notice how the book of Revelation depicts eternal life as like a city, a new Jerusalem. We are to live as citizens of that future city, but bringing something of its reality into this present city. There is a deal of poverty and trouble in this town, but in God's kingdom that will go. Central to our task as Christ's followers is to work for God's kingdom on Teesside as it is in heaven.

I've heard it said that Christian faith leads to passivity – since we hope for a world that is not this world. In fact, it is the other way round. If you hope only for this life, if you believe that your existence ends at your death, then there is little to hope for as an individual, no reason to cultivate community and no reason to seek the welfare of the city in which you live. Secular society is the dissolving of all society.

William Wilberforce, famously a son of Yorkshire, lived a life of immense impact – notably in managing to end the slave trade. What is less often noted is that Wilberforce believed profoundly in the resurrection

of Christ, the future return of Christ and the resurrection of Christians. And this future hope fuelled his hopeful action in the present. Because he believed he would live again in the kingdom of his God, he worked to make that kingdom come in the highly troubled world in which he lived.

We can see troubles a-plenty around us. But we have a great big God who holds us in his hands. This hope is fuel for living hopefully now.

David Goodhew



PCC in October

The treasurer gave a financial update.

The health and safety policy was approved and the PCC looked at risk assessments. The PCC discussed further steps to return to normality in our worship post Covid. Mark Walley updated the PCC on work with children and families.



Worship Night

Join us on Wednesday 9th November, 7.30pm—9pm for an evening of worship with space to meet with Jesus through prayer and praise, led by Lindsey, Oli and the Worship Band.

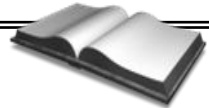


Prayer ministry will also be available.



Diary

Week beginning 30th October Life groups meet
Tuesday 1st November Explore meets, 6pm in church
Monday 7th November PCC meets, 7.15pm in the Reid Room
Wednesday 9th November Worship Night, 7.30pm in church
Sunday 13th November Remembrance Sunday
Week beginning 13th November Life groups meet
Tuesday 15th November Explore meets, 6pm in church
Saturday 19th November Craft Aid, 10.15am—2 pm
Friday 25th November Lydia Group meets, 2pm in the Reid Room
Sunday 27th November Advent Sunday
Sunday 4th December Church lunch, 12.45pm in the church hall
Week beginning 4th December Life groups meet
Monday 5th December PCC meets, 7.15pm in the Reid Room



From the Registers

Funeral at St Barnabas

4th October Maureen Francis Watson aged 88

Funeral at the Crematorium

5th October Katrina Somerset-Brooks aged 58

St Barnabas Church Office, 1A St Barnabas Road, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough, TS5 6JR
Phone: 01642 812622 E-mail: office@st-barnabas.net Website: www.st-barnabas.net