

PRESS RELEASE

22 October, 2011
St Barnabas Church
69 Higher Drive, Purley, CR8 2HR



**Alpha - a new health initiative in Purley and Kenley
Starts Wednesday 16th November 7.30pm, then Wednesday evenings for
eleven weeks.**

St Barnabas, Purley and All Saints, Kenley

Our obsession with physical health could mean we ignore our spiritual well-being ... and that's something Chris Thomson, the new Priest in charge of St Barnabas Purley and All Saints, Kenley is determined do something about.

He's given the go ahead for the first Alpha course in the area – an initiative designed to help people think about their spiritual health and ask questions about Christianity. The first session kicks off at St Barnabas on Wednesday, 16 November.

"It's about refreshment," says the Rev Chris, who started in Purley and Kenley in February. "It's about helping people to think about their spiritual needs and about their lives beyond the routines of work and play. We'll be looking at life and death too, because these are pretty fundamental things that don't get discussed or thought about enough."

But Rev Chris is emphatic that the Alpha Course is not principally about recruiting new church members. "Absolutely not," he says, "that would be a turn off for a lot of people. Of course this is a Christian initiative, but its aim is to encourage people to ask about faith and the Bible, if they want. We're not lecturing, it's very informal and we'll be encouraging people to think about things in a new way and to ask difficult questions; hopefully we'll be able to help provide some answers."

The Alpha Course runs over 16 weeks and include an away day in the near countryside on Saturday, 7 January, 2012. Evening sessions begin with an informal meal and a chance to meet people and chat. There is no charge.

Rev Chris is also keen to emphasise the importance of community in this initiative. "There's a basic human need to belong, which we seem to be losing," he says, "the church can play an important role in bringing people together, to make new relationships and meet people of different ages and different backgrounds ... this is all about spiritual refreshment too," he adds.

Course information

Starts Wednesday 16th November 7.30pm, then Wednesday evenings for eleven weeks.

St Barnabas, Purley and All Saints, Kenley Joint initiative.

Venue, St Barnabas Church Hall, *see below*.

Regular updates on the St B Alpha web site, www.allbar.org.uk

Typical evening programme

7:30 pm welcome and prayer

7:35 pm meal and conversation

8:20 pm evenings topic presented, may include video

9:00 pm break into small groups for discussion with a group leader

9:45 pm prayer-finish

Away day Saturday 7 January, 2012

Venue to be confirmed. Likely to be in Surrey; Kent or Sussex

Contacts

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- St Barnabas Church is at 69 Higher Drive. Take the A22 south from Purley Cross and turn right just before the Shell Garage ... the church on the left, half a mile later. Alpha course venue is in the Church Hall behind the church - not the scout hall to the left of the church)