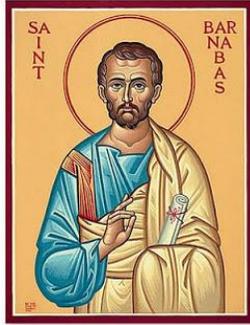


# The Encourager



*The Mission of St. Barnabas Church is to live and spread the Gospel of Christ as disciples making disciples.*

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## A Note from the Senior Warden

It's hard to believe that just a few short weeks ago we were saying farewell to Fr. Jim and Barbara. The Farewell Team outdid themselves in the lovely reception they planned. On behalf of the parish, Fr. Jim and Barbara were given a gift certificate to their favorite local restaurant, and they were presented with a beautiful wind chime – an Adirondack bell. When they hear it chime outdoors at their home in the Adirondack mountains, they'll hopefully remember their St. Barnabas family. As a testament to Fr. Jim's love of children and youth formation, a scholarship was established in Fr. Jim's name that will provide a perpetual campership at Episcopal Conference Center. Further in this Encourager, you will find a lovely note from Fr. Jim and Barbara thanking everyone for the reception and gifts.

Now we're looking forward to yet another chapter in our parish life with the arrival of our new Rector! Fr. Scott Lee, wife Ashley, and daughters Kara and Savannah will soon be relocating to Rhode Island from Oklahoma. Our first service with our new Rector will be on Ash Wednesday (March 1). Fr. Scott sent along a brief bio that was included in our Sunday bulletin, and you will also find it printed in this newsletter together with an additional short article entitled "*FatherLee Thoughts*." (At first I didn't pick up on the title, but then I noticed.) I've spoken many times already with Fr. Scott, and I've enjoyed every single conversation, start to finish! I know the entire parish is anxiously awaiting the whole family's arrival, but please note that Fr. Scott will initially be coming alone, and aside from a visit during Spring break, Ashley and girls will follow later on once school is out. The Welcome Team is already busy planning a welcome reception in March for Fr. Scott and his family, and I know that we'll all individually reach out to him as he's settling in to help make him feel especially welcome.

In the meantime, Fr. Michael Pearson will continue filling in throughout the remainder of the Epiphany season. Fr. Pearson will be celebrating at both services on Sunday mornings as well as the Wednesday morning Eucharist and Bible study. He will also respond to any pastoral emergencies that may arise. It's always *our* pleasure to welcome Fr. Pearson, and we are most appreciative of his kind assistance.

On behalf of the entire Vestry, I thank you for your continued support and faithfulness,  
Heidi Seddon  
Senior Warden

## Meet Our New Rector-Elect, Fr. Scott Lee



*He called them. Immediately they left . . . and followed him.*

I have to admit, the Gospel story the Lectionary assigns for this Sunday has always troubled me. What seems to be implied in the lack of information is that Jesus is a complete stranger when he walks up to Peter, Andrew, James, and John by the sea. He says to them, “Follow me,” and they drop everything and go. Now, if a total stranger walked up to me and told me to leave my work and my family and blindly follow, I would lock my doors and call the police. I wouldn’t go without getting to know the person or at least checking a few of his references.

There is, however, another way to think about that story. Years ago, someone suggested that Jesus did know these four individuals before greeting them by the sea. The assumption he made is that Jesus was sent somewhere at a young age to be taught the Jewish faith. It was there that he met Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Taking this one step further, Jesus might have even told these four individuals that the time would come when he would begin his ministry, and they would be invited to participate. In this scenario, Jesus is no stranger. His words are not, “blindly follow me.” Instead, Christ says to them, “You know me. It’s time. Let’s do this!”

That is more like what I have experienced when following Christ. When I went to Seminary of the Southwest in 2009, it was not a spur of the moment quick decision. It was the next step in a long, deliberate process after years of preparation and discernment.

At a very early age, sitting in the pews of St. Paul’s United Methodist Church in Amarillo, Texas, it became clear that God was gently nudging me to consider ordained ministry. While in college at Texas Tech University, the nudge became less gentle, but I kept putting the call aside. After graduating with a degree in Human Development and Family Studies and a minor in Substance Abuse Studies, I was working two jobs simultaneously: managing a Pizza Hut and serving as the pastor of the tiny United Methodist Church in Adrian, TX. Even in this ministry, the nudge persisted like an itch that couldn’t be scratched. After a few years, I was invited to serve as Director of Youth Ministries at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Amarillo, TX. It was there that I fell in love with the Episcopal liturgy and theology, and what started as a gentle nudge towards ordination when I was a child, began to feel more like an unrelenting, strong push. After a few more years of trying to fulfill this call to ministry without going to seminary, I finally submitted, and decided that Christ was calling me to leave for seminary and follow more closely, more completely. It was time, so my family packed up and moved. Let’s do this.

Fast forward to Edmond, Oklahoma where I am serving as Associate Priest at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church. Last spring, a large group of college students from The University of Rhode Island came to Oklahoma, volunteering their Spring Break to repair some homes that were damaged by tornados. This group stayed at our church, and I quickly formed relationships with them. A few months later, while looking at parishes searching for a new rector, I came across the profile for St. Barnabas in Warwick, RI. Those relationships with the young men and women from URI came to mind, so I submitted my name for consideration. Getting to know some of the leaders of the church in the interview process was a delight, and I am overjoyed to have been selected as your next rector. Although moving halfway across the country is incredibly frightening, it feels very much like a continuation of what I know, and now is the time. Let’s do this!

Thinking about the history of St. Barnabas, I can only imagine what you might be feeling right now. Having just said goodbye to Fr. Jim who served so well the past few years, understanding Fr. Michael will be filling in the next several weeks, remembering such a variety of priests in the past, and now you learn that your next priest is a Texan who has been living in Oklahoma the past four years; it is a lot to comprehend. Whatever you are thinking or feeling, it is understandable. There is no doubt that Peter, Andrew, James, and John had every emotion possible as they considered the invitation of Jesus. They were optimistic and doubtful, excited and apprehensive, anxious and peaceful, but what gave them strength to take the risk and follow were their relationships. I believe they already knew Christ, and equally important, they had each other to walk with.

You may not yet know me directly, but you know me through those who served on the Search Committee and who serve on the Vestry. Because I am a priest in the Episcopal Church, you also have an idea of who I am and what I'm about. Equally important, you have one another. St. Barnabas has been through a lot in over 125 years. Through the ups and downs, joys and struggles, the fact that you have walked together, following Jesus, is what has brought you to this point. Soon, our journeys following Christ will unite. My family will join with St. Barnabas, and we will walk together. Though it may be frightening, we knew this time was coming, and this is a continuation of what we believe to be good and true. Now is the time. Let's do this!

Respectfully,  
Fr. Scott



### Notice from the Welcome Committee



The committee has been meeting and would like to inform the congregation that on Sunday March 5th we will have a Welcome Cake at the coffee hour for Fr. Lee our new rector.

On Sunday March 12th there will be a Silver Tea Celebration to welcome Fr. Scott, Ashley, Kara and Savannah to our church family following the 10:00 o'clock service. All are welcome!

## Some “FatherLee” thoughts . . .

*For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life.* Matthew 7:14

On the high plains in Amarillo, TX, where I grew up, the land is so flat and has so few trees that a person can stand in a field, look in every direction, and see the curvature of the earth the way you can see it from a boat on the ocean. When I was young, I would get on my bicycle and ride about a mile or so from my house, where the main road turned from a large, concrete street that was five lanes wide, and became a narrow dirt road that pointed due-West as straight as an arrow. I would look down that road till it came to a point on the horizon, miles from where I stood next to that old bike.

When Jesus talks about the narrow way, that dusty road is the image that would come to mind. However, that is not the correct understanding of the road Christ is suggesting. There were no twists or turns on that dirt road, no ups or downs. To walk it, an individual would simply place one foot in front of the other, marching on the flat ground, until the destination is reached. The goal is the end of the road, not the journey. To walk on that road is not particularly difficult, and Jesus describes a hard way.

By comparison, my family has gone on a number of mountain hikes. With water and snacks, together we would walk a trail that was narrow and often very strenuous. There were twists and turns, ups and downs. There would be places where the path opened up into a clearing where we could see the trail ahead for quite a bit before it disappeared around the next bend. Other times, we could barely see the next step we were taking. But we hiked together in order to experience the beauty of the world. We did not journey as an individual towards a destination; in fact, we were often surprised when we reached the summit, waterfall, or clearing at the end of the trail. The time together in God’s creation was the purpose. Those hikes were difficult. We were exhausted, but we enjoyed every moment.

It is my belief that an experience on a difficult mountain trail like that, in the company of family and friends, is what Jesus is depicting when he says that the road is narrow and hard, but leads to life. The life we receive as followers of Christ, we find both in our eternal destination and in the steps we take together along the way. I am very much looking forward to walking with you at St. Barnabas very soon. The road to follow Christ will undoubtedly be difficult at times, but through the twists, turns, ups, and downs, we will journey with each other. My prayer is that we will experience the beauty of this world, together, as we travel towards our heavenly destination.

See you very soon!  
Fr. Scott Lee

## Monthly Youth Sunday on February 5<sup>th</sup>



Kids, our monthly Youth Sunday will take place on February 5<sup>th</sup>. Kids will be greeters, take the offering, bring the gifts to the altar and have a special talk with Fr. Pearson and then join him around the altar rail for the consecration of the bread and wine. We hope all the children will be in church on this Sunday.

## Healing Prayers on February 5th



If you feel you are in need of healing prayers and the laying on of hands and anointing, we give you this opportunity on the first Sunday of the month. At the end of each service simply move to the front pews of the church. After the priest greets those leaving church he will go to the altar rail and invite you forward for prayers and anointing.

## Episcopal Conference Center Offerings

In addition to the summer camping program, ECC ([eccri.org](http://eccri.org)) offers opportunities for youth to get together and explore their relationship with God at other times throughout the years. Here are a few of the offerings for 2017:

- Winter Camp: February 17th - 20<sup>th</sup> for 7th-11th graders
- Spring Weekend Conference: March 31st - April 2<sup>nd</sup> for 9th-12th graders
- Happening of RI: May 5th - 7th for 9th-12th graders

You can also see registration information for the above as well as the opportunity to shop online at the ECC store and see the schedule for the summer camping season. It is never too early to register for camp, especially Family Camp.

## Annual Meeting – Vestry Election

The Annual Meeting of St. Barnabas Parish was held on Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, in Schweitzer Hall following the 10 o'clock service. Listed below is the newly elected Vestry for 2017

Heidi Seddon, Senior Warden  
Joseph Rodrigues, Junior Warden  
Stanley Schofield, Treasurer  
Robin Beckwith, Parish Clerk

Vestry  
Barbara-Jean Lynch  
Kristen Marcks  
Elizabeth Marsh  
James Mixner  
Joan Newell  
Bonne Simonian  
Michael Sliney  
Dianne Whitehead

## Music Notes



The liturgical season of Epiphany extends from January 6th, when the church remembers the coming of the wise men bringing gifts to visit the Christ child, until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent leading to Easter. The last Sunday of the Epiphany season is often known as Transfiguration Sunday, when we hear in the gospel story how Jesus was revealed in his full glory to Peter, James and John on a mountain.

The term epiphany means "to show" or "to make known" or even "to reveal" as the wise men worship the infant Jesus and "reveal" him to the world as Lord and King.

How does the music of this season reveal God to you? What images do you encounter in the poetry of the hymns which express how God is revealed in the community of the church, in your life, in your work, in your challenges, in your joys?

The hymns of this season use images of stars, sun, healing, vision, blessings and light to convey that God is continuing to be revealed to us by the presence of Christ in our faith community and in our individual daily lives.

In the Contemporary American hymn, "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" (#490, [Hymnal 1982](#)) Kathleen Thomerson professes:

*God set the stars to give light to the world.  
The star of my life is Jesus...shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.*

Stars are often metaphors for Christ in our calling as Christians to let our lights shine in a dark world. The music of this season continues to reveal to us that we are called to shine in work, worship, and praise. Therefore, let your voice be heard in song to help illumine the face of the earth, to brighten the dark dissonance of our times and to reveal Christ to the world.

**Ted Platt**  
Director of Music



## Outreach Opportunities

A Committee of cooks helps prepare dinner once a month for residents at RI Family Shelter and the House of Hope. If you would like to participate in this ministry please contact Julie Mixner.

We continue to collect full-size personal care products, paper goods and cleaning products for the residents at House of Hope. There is a box at the back of the church labeled for these donations.

We also collect canned and dried foods on an ongoing basis for the West Bay Community Food Bank. Again, there is a box at the back of the church for your donations. Thank you for your continued generosity.

## Your Generosity at Work & Thank You



We received Thank you letters from three organizations thanking us for our generosity over the holidays

### **Westbay Community Action wrote:**

Thank you for the donation of 578.0 lbs of produce to the Westbay Marketplace. Your generosity will benefit one or more of our nutrition programs, such as the Children's Center, Senior Dining and WIC.

Westbay Marketplace typically serves more than 5,000 households and distributes more than one hundred tons of food each year. We are proud to be Kent County's only multi-service agency serving the basic needs of Kent County residents, and helping families achieve great self-sufficiency to improve their lives.

### **Crossroads Rhode Island wrote:**

On behalf of the many people we serve at Crossroads Rhode Island, we would like to thank you for your donation of 52 scarves, 33 hats, 26 pairs of gloves, 102 pairs of socks, valued at \$400.00 which was received on 12/20/2016. Your donation will be put to good use and will certainly have a significant impact on the families and individuals who turn to us for assistance.

The Mission of Crossroads Rhode Island is to help homeless or at-risk individuals and families secure stable homes. Those who serve achieve this by engaging in our range of services including housing, basic needs, shelter, case management, referrals, and education and employment services.

Crossroads is often the last source of hope to our State's most vulnerable residents. Your generosity will help provide the resources which they require to overcome barriers and, ultimately, lead them out of their homeless circumstances.

Thank you again for your kindness.

### **St. Mark's Episcopal Church**

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your overwhelming donation of food for our Community Lunch and Food Pantry! Your generosity is amazing and delighted the 94 guests who joined us on December 31, 2016.

Yours in Christ,  
Mtr. Susan Wrathall+

## Stewardship Report – 2017 Pledge Drive



Our 2017 pledge drive has produced **101 pledges totaling \$128,544**. Unfortunately, this is seven fewer pledges than we had in 2016, and the amount pledged is **about \$11,000 less than in 2016**. Our average pledge for 2017 is \$24.48 per week, which is just about the same as last year. This downward turn should be of concern to all of us, especially since we have a new rector coming to us on March 1.

It is important to note that St. Barnabas Church is completely self-supporting. We receive no money from the Diocese or National Church to support our programs and budget. 80% of our income comes from the gifts that we, the parishioners, make through our regular pledge payments and other special offerings. The other 20% comes from investment income and the rent paid by two outside groups that use our parish halls.

Because we have to pay our own way to keep the ministries at St. Barnabas functioning, our pledge gifts are critical to the financial strength of our parish. We all have a Christian responsibility to make a financial pledge each year, according to our means, to support our parish, its programs and missions. On behalf of the Wardens and Vestry, I thank all of you who responded so far with support by making your pledge for 2017.

If we are to continue to grow as a parish, offer meaningful programs for our members, and provide outreach to those in need in our community, as well as maintain the financial stability that we have enjoyed for the last nine years, then we must also continue to grow in our level of giving. **If you are not already pledging, please seriously consider doing so today. You may always increase or decrease your pledge amount at any time by notifying me of the change so that I can adjust your records.**

Anyone wishing to make a pledge can contact me at 738-5639 or by email at [sws53@cox.net](mailto:sws53@cox.net) and I will be happy to provide you with a pledge form and offering envelopes.

Faithfully,  
Stan Schofield  
Parish Treasurer



### Lent Begins

Lent begins this year with Ash Wednesday falling on March 1st. There will be two services that day. The Holy Eucharist will be celebrated at 12 noon and 7:00 p.m. The imposition of ashes will be offered at both services. There will be no mid-week Eucharist and Bible Study that day.

## A Letter from Fr. Jim

My Dear Friends of St. Barnabas Church,

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful day I experienced yesterday as I celebrated Eucharist with you for the last time. The service was all I could have hoped for and the memory of it will remain with me for the rest of my life. Through most of the service I had to really concentrate on my prayer book as every time I looked up at all of you I nearly burst into tears.

The Farewell Celebration was fantastic and beyond my wildest imagination. I never expected anything like that. My only regret is that I did not have more time to talk to each and every one of you.

Your gift of an annual scholarship in perpetuity in my name to the Episcopal Conference Center is something I will treasure forever. ECC has always been an important part of my ministry and my love for youth formation. It will indeed be a gift that keeps on giving and I hope that some of the youth of St. Barnabas will directly benefit from it.

Thank you also for the very generous gift certificate for Chef Ho's (our favorite Chinese restaurant). We are already trying to make plans to bring the entire family out for dinner some evening.

The incredibly lovely wind chimes will grace the patio area at our home in the mountains.

Barbe and I will always appreciate our time with you and look back upon it with fond, loving memories.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Jim Bocchino

## Parish Office Closed



The Parish office will be closed on Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup> in celebration of Presidents Day.

Robin will be on vacation Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> and Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the office will reopen Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> & Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Bazaar Chairperson Needed



We are in need of a Chairperson for the 2017 Bazaar. As you know, the Bazaar is our major fundraiser each year. I have chaired the Bazaar for the past six years, and am (finally) ready to step down from that position. Chairing the Bazaar is not a difficult job, but it does take organization. Among the rewards, however, are those of new friendships and getting to know fellow parishioners even better; and, yes, also helping St. Barnabas Church. Please talk to me if you're at all willing. I have tons of notes and tips to pass along and I'll gladly help wherever needed.

Thank you!!

Heidi Seddon