

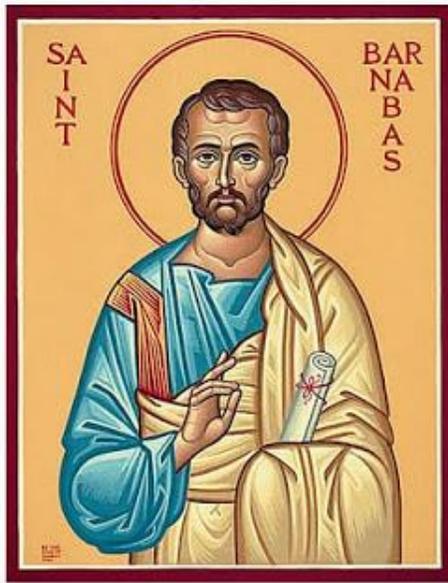
The Encourager

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

Saint Barnabas Church
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Then criminal said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Luke 23:42-43

Do you have a favorite Bible verse? Is there a story in Scripture that you find something new every time you read it? This exchange in Luke is definitely one of my absolute favorites. Our Savior, who did nothing wrong, still has the energy to offer hope to an undeserving criminal while dying on the cross for us. Wow!

Most of the time, the Church takes her place in this story at the foot of the cross. We marvel at the work of Salvation that Christ accomplishes for the whole world. However, sometimes it is helpful, to put ourselves in the place of the criminal. Almost every single one of us has done something that we are terribly ashamed of, something that may even deserve harsh condemnation. The truth is: We don't know the fullness of God's grace if we don't acknowledge the full extent of our need for grace.

If you remember, there were two criminals hanging near Jesus. One of them was making fun of our Savior, "If you are the Messiah, save yourself and us." Notice the way this criminal prescribes what Christ should do for him.

On the other hand, the second criminal asks for nothing in particular. He just says "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." In this petition, there is no sense of a demand telling Jesus what to do. He knows his life didn't merit anything good, he simply begs, "remember me." This man trusted in the infinite goodness of God to give more abundantly than he deserved.

Like the first criminal, I often find myself trying to tell God how I would like to see something work out. "This is how I want you to save me, God." Instead, is it time for me to simply realize my helplessness in a given situation and trust God's infinite goodness?

With no expectation, the second criminal just asks to be remembered. Jesus responds with an incredible promise. “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise.” The man now sees beyond his temporary suffering to the eternal reality of Heaven.

On the cross, Jesus did not remove or even postpone death like the first criminal demanded. Instead, Christ made a way through death into eternal Paradise.

Now, there is some debate about this passage. Since there was no punctuation in the original language of our Gospels, many have asked the question: Where should we put the comma when this gets translated into English? The NRSV is the translation the Episcopal Church recommends. It reads, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise.” This implies that on that very day, the criminal entered Heaven. Therefore, we can expect the same.

Another way to translate this passage is, “I tell you the truth today, you will be with me in Paradise.” This implies that the criminal was given the promise on that very day, the promise that he would, eventually, enter Heaven. The idea of Purgatory fits into this way of translating the Scripture. It suggests there is a time of waiting before we know the fulfillment of Christ’s promise.

From my perspective, when we die, our temporary existence transitions into the eternal reality. Now, eternity is not limited by time; therefore, in my opinion, there is no waiting for the realization of Heaven. I may be wrong. Please, feel free to disagree. Regardless, the promise is the same: We will know Paradise.

Personally, I think we focus too much on what is temporary. This earth, and our struggles on it, will soon fade away. Like the criminal on the cross, our time here is limited.

Now, Jesus did demonstrate that the nature of God is to engage and helps us during our time in this world. However, the primary work of Christ is to lead us out of this temporary existence into what is infinite and what is eternal.

Am I focused on what is temporary or on what is eternal? Am I demanding what I want, or do I trust in the infinite goodness of the God who loves me? These are the questions that have been on my mind.

When the criminal was hanging on a cross, having this conversation with Jesus, Christ had not yet entered Paradise. We are fortunate; we know how the story continues. Out of the ashes of death, Christ rose and ascended into Heaven. Our Savior charted a course that thief followed, the journey we all will one day take.

Until that glorious day when we enter Heaven, what will we do with our remaining energies on earth? That criminal accepted the promise of Paradise, then used his last breaths to speak about the hope of eternity to anyone who would listen. Following that example, may God confirm your belief in things eternal, so you can meet your temporary struggles with the hope of eternity, and may you share that hope with others.

Faithfully,
Fr. Scott Lee

Episcopal Diocese Covenant for Regathering

I promise, to the best of my ability with God's help, to abide by the guidelines of the Diocese of Rhode Island for participation in church as we regather during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In faithfulness to the Baptismal Covenant (BCP p. 304-305), I will strive to:

Love my neighbor as myself, I will...

- Wear a mask or scarf over my nose and mouth at all times in church buildings, except momentarily to receive the sacrament or lead worship by an assigned speaking part, and follow public health guidelines for hand sanitizing and disinfecting.
- Only attend worship if I am non-symptomatic for the COVID-19 virus or any other transmittable disease that could compromise the health of another person also attending.
- Abstain from attending if doing so would put me at greater risk due to my own health status.

Respect the dignity of every human being, I will...

- Make no physical contact with people beyond the members of my own household.
- Maintain a six foot or more distance from other members of the congregation.
- Respect any requests for distance, masking, cleaning, and disinfecting to ensure the safety and comfort level of others.

Seek and serve Christ in all people...

- Support the decisions of my diocesan and congregational leaders.
- Stay connected with others in my community by telephone, video chat, mail, or other means.

This is our expectation for all those who wish to worship with us in person. By participating in our worship, you assume responsibility for following the above, and acknowledge the risks of participation in an in-person gathering.

Dear Parish Friends

Thank You

I hope everyone is well and observing the coronavirus precautions to stay safe and healthy.

Although we have resumed in-person worship services outdoors in the park, many of us are not yet comfortable with or able to attend, so we continue in asking everyone, as you are able, to mail in your pledge and other offerings to the parish office. Your response to this ongoing request has been very generous and we are asking that you continue this practice, until you are able to resume coming to services in-person.

We understand that many of you may have been impacted by job reductions and layoffs due to the coronavirus crisis, so if you are in that situation, please do not worry about trying to pay your pledge right now. The parish does have a small fund of money, known as the Discretionary Fund that is to be used to assist those in financial need. Please contact Fr. Scott if you need assistance from this fund. As always, please feel free to contact me directly with any questions or concerns you may have.

Faithfully, Stan Schofield – Parish Treasurer

Church Holiday Bazaar



It is with a heavy heart that the decision was made that St. Barnabas will not hold our Bazaar this year. In the interest of everyone's health and safety, it seems best to wait for 2021 to resume this wonderful opportunity for fellowship and fundraising.

Happy Birthday

We would like to wish those celebrating birthdays in the month of September a Happy Birthday!

Bart Boss
Bonne Simonian
Donald Morrow
Gene Toro
Jason Pari
Joyce Budlong
Karen Thornton
Kristy Marble
Patricia Loftus
R. Peter Furney
Savannah Lee

Michael Spearman
Shirley Bentley
Jenna Mixner
Ronald Bonenfant
Leonard Johnson
Heidi Seddon
Stephanie Riley-Schafer
Joseph Angell
David Perkins-Hagen
Richard Riley
Iris Rogers
Shirley Bettencourt

Laurie Furney
Stephanie VanPatten
Michelle Gilbert
Jenna Mixner
Nolan Hinz
Kyle Wheeler
Paisley Harding
Wayne Pollard
Mike Marsh
Mark Menzies
Scott Simonian

Prayer Chain



Our prayer chain is organized to meet the prayer needs of our parish family as well as those in our community of family, friends and neighbors. It functions as a rapid response to anyone in need of prayers. Because prayer requests are communicated by e-mail, the Prayer Chain is available 24/7. The coordinator keeps a list of voluntary prayer intercessors, and we always welcome new volunteers! Please contact Robin Beckwith our prayer chain coordinator if you have a prayer request or would like to volunteer. You may contact Robin Meunier in the office at 737-4141 or by email at parishadmin@stbarnabaswarwick.org for Robin Beckwith's contact information or to simply take your prayer request.

Prayer is the lantern that will light our way through the darkness.

Wedding



Congratulations to Corey Anthony McMahon & Emily Hope Seddon who celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage here at St. Barnabas on Saturday, August 15, 2020.

Baptism



Congratulations to Brooke Rose Hockenhull who received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism here at St. Barnabas on Saturday, August 22, 2020.

Office Closed

LABOR DAY



The parish office will be closed on Monday, September 7th in observance of Labor Day.

Education for Ministry (EFM)

EFM is a 4-year program of theological study out of Sewanee - The University of the South. St. Mark's has a class that meets on Mondays, September-May from 6:30-8:30 pm. Areas of study are Old and New Testament (years 1 and 2), church history (year 3) and theology (year 4). If you are curious about this program, or ready to sign up, there is space for you! We begin again the Monday after Labor Day. More information can be found here: <http://efm.sewanee.edu/> or you can call or email Mother Susan Wrathall at St. Mark's, Warwick.



40 Days of Love is a personal exercise in which you pray daily at the time and place of your choosing, beginning September 19th thru October 28th.

The focus throughout the 40 days is for us all to pray for between 1 and 10 unconverted or unchurched people in our circles of influence. In days 20-30 we specifically ask God to show us how to demonstrate God's love in practical ways to those we pray for. In the final 10 days we ask the Holy Spirit to show us how to have a spiritual conversation about Jesus with those people.

As a registered participant, you will receive a printable Daily Prayer Guide, and over the fall be sent additional inspirational testimonies and ideas for caring and sharing with your friends. There will be 9 Solemn Prayer Assemblies held in communities around RI, and daily prayer walks called *Prayer Walk RI* which will ultimately encircle the whole state in strategic prayer for a new advance of the gospel in Rhode Island.

To register visit: solemnprayerassembliesri2020.eventbrite.com

To register for one or more prayer walks visit: prayerwalkri.eventbrite.com

You may also call Robin in the parish office & she will register you.

Facebook



Please like our Facebook page (St Barnabas Episcopal Church, Warwick, RI). With your busy schedules, you will not miss out on any activities. It's a secure page; reach out to Heather Rodrigues if you wish to add an event.