

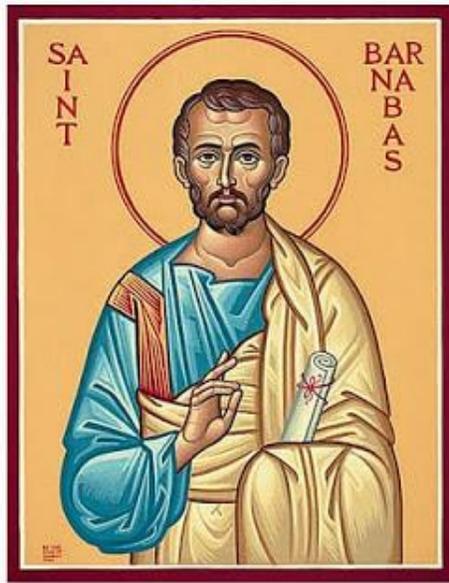
# The Encourager

*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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www.stbarnabaswarwick.org

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December 2020



## Some FatherLee thoughts . . .

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise; give thanks to him and call upon his Name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his faithfulness endures from age to age. The Jubilate - Psalm 100

Prior to this year, some of my favorite words from our worship are, "It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks." In the midst of CoViD, however, those words feel different. I am finding it harder to give thanks always and everywhere.

Personally, I think most of us are suffering from some level of depression right now. We are upset, rightly, because it feels like much of life has been stolen. We can't see the people we want to see. We can't hug the people we need to hug. We have to wear a stupid mask. We can't go the places we want to, and we can't do the things we'd like to do. Focusing on all of that has caused me to sink into a touch of despair.

Every once in a while, I like to throw myself a pity party. Sometimes, I just want to whine and cry because things are not going the way I want them to. Do you ever feel that way? I have learned, however, the response of whining and crying seldom helps. In fact, it almost always makes things worse. If complaining is my primary action, then I'm not doing anything to make the situation better, am I? And, the real problem with that, with moving towards depression, is that it causes problems to seem bigger than they really are.

God offers us an alternative. We can enter the Divine presence with thanksgiving. "Give thanks to him and call upon his Name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his faithfulness endures from age to age." The Almighty invites us to shift our attention from our problems and focus on God's goodness. Now, the problems don't magically disappear, but the grip of control from those temporary problems loosens when we concentrate on the One who is infinite.

God's mercy is everlasting, meaning that mercy and grace extend beyond the reach of any problem or issue or struggle. God's grace will still be infinite after CoViD is nothing more than a few pages of a history book.

I am reminded of the song, *Amazing Grace*, "When we've been there ten thousand years . . . we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun." No less days! God is infinite, God is eternal, and God draws us into the infinite and eternal. Therefore, when we choose to give thanks to the Almighty, even from the real depths of despair we might be feeling, it is a movement from temporary distress to eternal bliss.

I am convinced that gratitude is not a byproduct of good luck. Being grateful is a deliberate choice. Choosing to give thanks is a recognition of God's eternal abundance instead of temporary scarcity, a declaration of infinite love instead of earthly limits, and an acceptance of everlasting mercy that extends beyond a moment of despair.

For many of us, Thanksgiving Day will be difficult. We have lost loved ones to death and/or we cannot be with our loved ones as a way of protecting them. It may be a struggle to give thanks this year, but that is probably why it is especially important to choose to do so.

But, how do we do that? Our Tradition offers some help. One of the prayers for a funeral says, "We remember (our loved one who died). We thank you for giving this person to us . . . to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage . . . Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before." Did you notice the subtle shift from sadness to thanksgiving, from despair to hope?

I pray that you are not feeling as depressed as I have felt at times. When you do, I encourage you to make the deliberate choice to give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting. By concentrating on that infinite goodness, I have been better able to give thanks *always* and *everywhere*. Happy Thanksgiving!

Faithfully,  
Fr. Scott

P.S. Let me say that there are some things that a positive shift in thinking doesn't address. Lack of food, for example, won't improve until food arrives. If you are lacking any basic needs, contact me. We want to help.

GOD,  
grant me the  
*Serenity*  
to accept the things  
I cannot CHANGE;  
*Courage*  
to CHANGE  
the things I can;  
and  
*Wisdom*  
to know the DIFFERENCE.

## Schedule of Christmas Services



**First Sunday of Advent, November 29<sup>th</sup>**  
4:00 p.m. Tree Lightening, Scripture and Prayer

**Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>**  
4:00 p.m.  
Outdoor Prayer Service

**Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>**  
10:00 a.m.  
Outdoor Prayer Service



### Church Service Reminder

Fr. Scott will continue with the outdoor 8 a.m. & 9 a.m. services in the Park as long as weather permits and the Bishop allows. Watch for the reservation email each week to sign up. You can also call Robin during office hours (M-F 9 – Noon) and she will take care of it for you. The 10:00 a.m. indoor service will continue to be streamed via Facebook for those who are more comfortable watching from home.

### Happy Birthday



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

David Tyson	Joshua Monahan
Faith Thomson	Doris Sherman
Georgia Shuster	Timothy McLaughlin
Jeanne Bayles	James Whittaker
Megan McGoran	Lexine Wiech
Michael Nelson	Donald Wheeler
Peter Schofield	Stephanie Silva
Ralph Pratt	Audrey McIntyre
Richard Carr	Demetria Hammond
Thomas Chadwick	



### Church Calendars

We have received the church calendars for 2021. You can stop by the parish office or pick one up during the Sunday morning prayer service.



While the Christmas season is sure to feel a little bit different this year, we are delighted that St. Barnabas Church is continuing to support our neighbors at The House of Hope in our annual Christmas gift drive!

We'll be collecting gifts for 9 children this year. Below is list of each child's wishes. You can sign up to sponsor one or more gifts by calling the church office *before* you make your purchase (call by **December 16**, please) so that we can avoid duplicates and make sure each child's wish is fulfilled. Once your gift is purchased, please wrap it up and attach a tag for "Child 1," "Child 2," etc. That way we can be sure all the gifts get to the right kids!

The House of Hope has asked for donations of gift cards for adults. Below is a list of popular gift card options. Please purchase as many gift cards as you like in **\$20 or \$25 denominations only** so that they can most easily be distributed among House of Hope residents. Also, if you'd like to make a monetary donation, please be sure to note Christmas Gift Drive on your check, and we'll use that money to purchase anything that's still needed in the end.

All gifts, gift cards or monetary donations can be brought to church on Sunday mornings while we're worshipping in the park, or they can be dropped off at church during office house by **December 20**. *Please show your love for one another by respecting social distance.*

The House of Hope has expressed such heartfelt thanks for our continued support. Thanksgiving baskets were distributed to everyone on November 23, and they are absolutely thrilled that we're continuing to show our support through the Christmas season too. Each and every gift will mean more than we can imagine to those who receive them.

Feel free to contact either of us if you have any questions – Christmas Blessings to you and your family!  
Heidi Seddon & Therese Beauregard

<b>Child</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gift</b>
Child 1 (M)	11	Head set Xbox / Science kit
Child 2 (M)	8	Art Supplies/ Dinosaurs / Robo Alive
Child 3 (F)	6	Lego – Olaf / Frozen 2 / Follow Me Friend Olaf
Child 4 (F)	12	Anything Unicorns / Crafts / Hair Supplies
Child 5 (M)	16	Celtics Hoodie (L) / Game Stop Gift Card
Child 6 (F)	5	Anything Barbie / Barbie Dreamtopia / Doctor Set
Child 7 (F)	4	Leapfrog Pencil and Scribble/ Rescue Tales Scrub
Children (F)	1	Matching/coordinating outfits (24 months)/Educational Toys
8 and 9 (twins)		
Family Gift		Elf on the Shelf

**Gift Cards (\$20 or \$25)**

Amazon	Burger King
Cumberland Farms	Domino's
Shaw's	Dunkin Donuts
Stop & Shop	McDonald's
Target	Subway
Walmart	

## 2021 Stewardship Pledge Drive

Our stewardship drive for next year is underway and by now you should have received a letter and pledge card in the mail, asking for your pledge of financial support for 2021. We hope you will be as generous as your situation allows, and please respond as soon as possible but by December 13 at the latest.

For 2020, through November 15th, our current pledge giving has fallen behind what was pledged by almost \$5,000, so we ask everyone, as you are able, to bring your current pledge up to date and to continue to mail in your pledge and other offerings to the parish office. The response to this request to mail in offerings throughout the year has been very faithful and generous. We are asking that you continue this practice, so that we can maintain our financial stability for the year.

If you have any questions, please contact Parish Treasurer Stan Schofield.

## Annual Bazaar Request

Due to the many coronavirus restrictions, we are not able to hold our annual holiday bazaar this year. This is always a wonderful time of fellowship and community involvement and will be greatly missed. The bazaar is also one of our major fundraisers and we had been counting on receiving \$9,500 from this event to put toward our budget.

Inspired by an unsolicited gift of \$250 from one family to help offset this lost bazaar income, we are asking everyone, as you are able, to make a special one-time donation toward the bazaar. Perhaps you would consider giving the amount you would normally have spent at the bazaar - money you would have given for the raffles, boosters, ad book, lunch, or items purchased at the various tables. Anything you are able to give will be most welcome and greatly appreciated. Please write "bazaar" on the memo line if donating by check.

Thank you for your support!

## Prayer Request



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. 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.

## Parish Office Closed



The parish office will be closed Friday, December 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday, January 1, 2021.

## Church Clean Up



Thank you to Stan and Paul Schofield, Diane Whitehead, Joseph, Ashley and J.R. Rodrigues for your help with the Fall Parish Clean Up day. Together 30 bags of leaves and weeds were cleared from the church grounds, gutters were cleaned, and gardens tended. Your help was greatly appreciated!

Thank you, Heather Rodrigues, Jr. Warden.

## Snow Removal Volunteers



I am asking for volunteers to help with snow removal for St. Barnabas Church grounds during this winter season. Volunteers are needed after each snow accumulation, with special attention on Sunday mornings (meeting approximately 1- 1 ½ hours prior to services). Please bring your favorite shovel(s), the church does have a snow-blower. In the event of snow, I will contact you on when we plan to meet. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Heather Rodrigues our Jr Warden.

## Eagle Scout



I would like to thank everyone who donated Birthday party supplies to my Eagle Service project, because of your generosity and support; I was able to donate 14 boxes to the Confetti Foundation, The mission of the Confetti Foundation is to supply birthday parties to children who have to spend their birthday in a Hospital, Pediatric Oncology Clinic or Hospice facility.

Gratefully, Michael Davis

## Annual Meeting



This year's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 31, 2021. Weather permitting one option is to have the meeting outdoors, but we are exploring the possibility the essential business via Zoom. Please pray for wisdom and perseverance as we continue to be the church during these uncertain times.

## Christmas Flowers



Every Christmas we compile a list of Memorials & Thanksgivings, please call or email Robin so we can put a list together this year. Generally, a donation is suggested for the flowers: however, we are going to scale back the number of flowers for Christmas this year. The cost of these flowers will be provided by the Altar Guild budget. If you were planning on donating for flowers, please consider giving to the church, or helping someone in need.

### Garrison Keillor on Episcopalians ...

We make fun of Episcopalians for their blandness, their excessive calm, their fear of giving offense, their lack of speed and also for their secret fondness for macaroni and cheese. But nobody sings like them. If you were to ask an audience in Des Moines, a relatively Episcopalianless place, to sing along on the chorus of “Michael Row the Boat Ashore,” they will look daggers at you as if you had asked them to strip to their underwear. But if you do this among Episcopalians, they’d smile and row that boat ashore and up on the beach! ...And down the road!

Many Episcopalians are bred from childhood to sing in harmony, it’s natural. We are too modest to be soloists, too worldly to sing in unison. When you’re singing in the key of C and you slide into the A7th and D7th chords, all two hundred of you, it’s an emotionally fulfilling moment. By our joining in harmony, we somehow promise that we will not forsake each other. We like to sing, except when confronted with a new hymn or a hymn with more than four stanzas.

I do believe this, Episcopalians, who love to sing in harmony, are the sort of people you could call up when you’re in deep distress. If you are dying, they will comfort you. If you are lonely, they’ll talk to you. And if you are hungry, they’ll give you tuna salad!

We believe in prayer, but would practically die if asked to pray out loud. They believe their Rectors will visit them in the hospital, even if they don’t notify them that they are there. Episcopalians usually follow the official liturgy and will feel it is their way of suffering for their sins, They believe in miracles, especially during their stewardship visitation programs or when passing the plate. They feel that applauding for their children’s choirs will not make the kids too proud and conceited. Episcopalians think that the Bible forbids them from crossing the aisle while passing the peace.

Episcopalians are willing to pay up to one dollar for a meal at church.

We still serve Jell-O in the proper liturgical color of the season and Episcopalians believe that it is OK to poke fun at themselves and never take themselves too seriously.

And finally, you know you are an Episcopalian when:

- It’s 100 degrees, with 90% humidity, and you still have coffee after the service. We drink coffee as if it were the Third Sacrament.
- You hear something really funny during the sermon and smile as loudly as you can.
- Donuts are a line item in the church budget, just like coffee.
- When you watch a Star Wars movie and they say, “May the Force be with you,” and you respond, “and also with you.”
- And lastly, it takes ten minutes to say good-bye . . . .

(Garrison attends St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in St. Paul, Minnesota)