

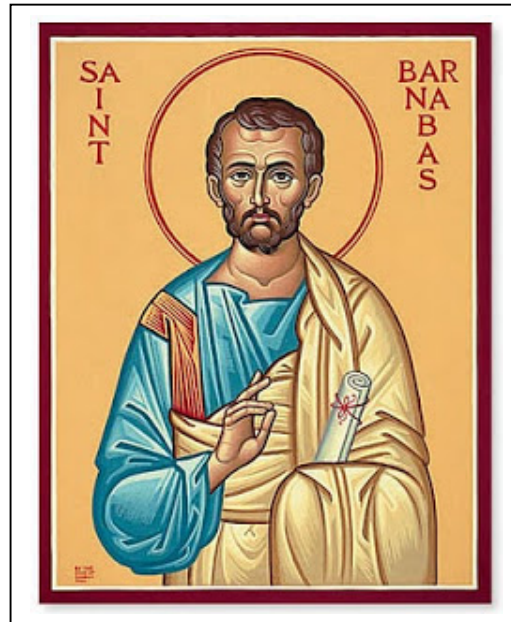
# The Encourager

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

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## **Some FatherLee thoughts . . .**

*“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4 KJV)*

When there are really bad storms firing in Oklahoma, something that I call “The Meteorologist Effect” occurs. This is when the meteorologist tells you, “This looks like it could get bad. You need to stay tuned to me. I’ll keep you safe.” It’s true! If you watch, you will know exactly where to expect hail, strong winds, and tornado’s, giving you plenty of time to seek shelter if necessary.

While I am deeply grateful for the way these meteorologists keep us safe, I am also keenly aware that they hold people captive through fear. Fear is a powerful force. It keeps us from doing the things we want to do, and fear pushes us to do things we otherwise wouldn’t do.

A friend of mine way back in high school described a terrifying situation. There was smoke in a movie theater, and the fire alarm began to sound. In a mad dash, people tried to rush out the way they had come in. People were pushing and shoving. Some fell to the ground and were stepped on. My young friend started to do the same, but he came with his father who calmly said, “Wait!” After a moment, the father pointed to the exit at the front of the theater. By taking that one second to assess the situation, the two of them strolled out through an exit that no one else thought to use. While most people were consumed with fear, wisdom and patience guided my friend and his father to safety.

Perhaps that is why our Holy Scriptures tells us no less than that 365 times, “Be not afraid!” There is a reminder for every day of the year. And, my favorite reminder is found in Psalm 23, “I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.” This is my favorite because there is no indication that whatever caused the fear was removed. It is not that the

world was suddenly right; it is that we are nestled safely in the arms of our God who loves, protects, and provides for us. Remember, the Lord, “preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” (vs. 5) The enemies are not gone, but we need not fear them because “Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me” The rod is a symbol of God’s might. It was a sturdy wooden stick that could be used to fight off a wild animal who would like to devour a helpless sheep. It is said that King David, who as a boy was a shepherd, killed a lion and a bear with the rod (1 Samuel 17: 34-35), the rod is a reminder that, like David protecting sheep, Almighty God is our Defender.

The staff is a symbol of God’s love and guidance. It was a long staff with a large hook on the end. It was used to keep the sheep close to the shepherd and away from danger and rescue a sheep that had “wandered away”. The hook could be used to grab a sheep that was stuck on a ledge or fell into a hole. You will notice that most Bishop’s Staffs are made in this likeness because they are to “shepherd” the people. But remember, Christ is the Good Shepherd who guides us and lovingly rescues us when we are in danger.

Since God is our protector and guide, we can loosen the grip fear has on our lives, which is a good thing. For one, fear is exhausting! It takes a toll on us physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Also, fear keeps us from doing what we want to do and what we are intended to do. The truth is: we must stop being motivated by fear before we can really start living a life of love. And, isn’t love what our Savior urges us towards?

We will never fully live a life of love if we are held captive by fear. And, I believe fear is the root of every argument about vaccines, politics, and just about everything else. Many are very frightened of a contagious virus that is mutating. Many are afraid of losing freedoms and privileges. In my opinion, fear is the root of almost every problem in our world.

The solution proposed in our Holy Scripture is not to simply try to remove everything we are afraid of. Instead, we are to rely on Almighty God who holds us in our fears and loves us through them. Similar to my friend’s father in the movie theater, our Heavenly Father tells us, “Be still and know that I am God.” (Ps 46:10) It is as if God is saying, “Stop racing after all those people pushing and shoving. There is a better way forward. Rather than fear, walk in the way of love.”

Faithfully,  
Fr. Scott



## Confirmation

Bishop Knisley is working to reschedule a visit we missed last year. Tentatively, we are looking at a date near the end of September 2021. These visits are when members are confirmed in the Christian Church. It also offers anyone from a different denomination to be officially welcomed by our bishop into the Episcopal Church.

## It Takes Many People to Run a Church



As we are moving forward to our normal Church routine, there are many positions where we could use help. These include Ushers, Readers, Chalice Bearers, Acolytes, Altar Guild, Money Counters, Choir, lawn mowing, upkeep of flower beds, coffee hour. We could use some help now, but other things will not resume till September. Please speak with Fr. Scott or call the parish office to find out about the opportunities where you can serve.

## Happy Birthday



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

Alexander Forsberg	Bea VanPatten
Amy Salisbury	Karl Volk
AnnWhiteley	Judi Tetreault
Brooklyn Sylvestri	Alexis Forsberg
Catherine Spearman	Maejor Robinson
Josh Williams	Robert Boss Jr.
Karen Whittaker	Marjorie Pollard
Macey Crehan	George Shuster
Madison Wiech	Fr. Scott Lee
Marion Menzies	Samatha Harding
Marsha McElroy	Natalie Mitchell
Michaela Lombardi	Luca Petrarca
Peggy Gauthier	Katelyn Volk
Steve McBride	Joanne Varden

## Donate Pull Tabs for Recycling



**Shriners Hospitals  
for Children®**  
**Love to the rescue.®**

Did you know that we have donated many pounds of pull tabs for the Shriners Hospital? Minutes of expensive treatments and other support services for the children are supplemented by selling the recycled metal. So, whenever you pop a top, say a prayer for the children and bring your tops to church and place in the collection containers! Keep those tab tops coming and transform them into a blessing instead of sending them to the landfill. Just another small way you can make a difference!

***Thank You!!!***

## 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. Robin Beckwith, our 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.



Thank you to those who continued donating food for the Food Bank during these difficult times. They are much appreciated and help local residents in need. Now that we are having in person services, donations can be left in the bins at the back of the church. Thank you to Richard Carr who has volunteered to bring the donations to Westbay.



### **Celebration of St. Mary**

We will celebrate St. Mary's Day on Sunday, August 15<sup>th</sup>.



### **Wedding**

Congratulations to Savannah Lee & Dan Mowry who celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage on July 17, 2021.



### **Education for Ministry**

There are spaces available for EFM, a program that is similar to what priests are exposed to in seminary, but this is open to anyone. This particular group will begin September 13, 2021, and will be led by Mother Susan on Monday evenings (6:30-8:30 pm) at St. Marks Church in Warwick. It is up to a four year program, but you only commit to one year at a time. There is a recognized certificate upon completion. Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, and Theology are the different areas of study. The cost is a total of \$375 per year, but Fr. Scott can certainly help with the finances if this is something you are interested in. Please direct your questions to Mother Susan @ St. Mark's Church or Heidi Seddon.

### **Inquirer's Class**



Fr. Scott will start classes on Sunday, August 15<sup>th</sup> @ 11:00 a.m. for those who wish to be Confirmed, Received, or would like to have a discussion of faith in the Episcopal Church. He is willing to offer the same class on Wednesday nights if there are enough people who commit to come. Speak with Fr. Scott for more information.