

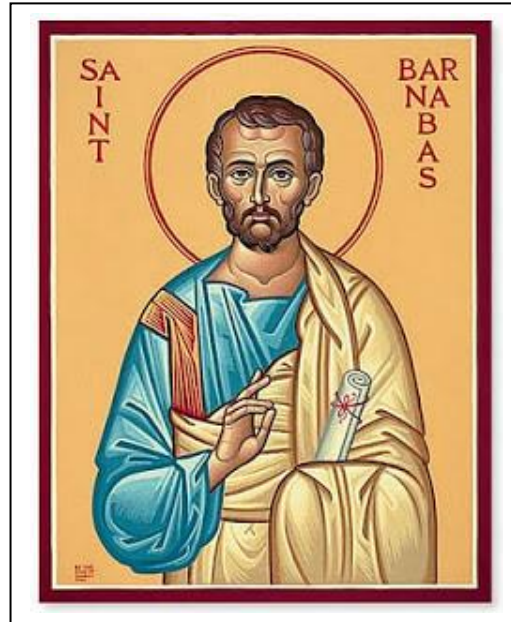
# The Encourager

*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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September 2021



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

*The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exodus 1-3)*

There was a time when I knew what to expect. Things were predictable. As a kid, I knew school would start about this time of year, and I would go almost every single day of the school year. I could predict Mom would drag my brother and me to Church about every other week. I knew there would be time to hang out with my friends. I looked forward to recess.

Once I became an adult, responsibilities grew, but I still pretty much knew what to expect. I knew I could safely go out to eat, enjoy a concert, and meet with friends. I knew I would go to work, and my daughters would start school in the Fall and go almost every single day of the school year.

Now, it seems, bills are the only thing I know I can expect. No one knows if school will be in-person all year. Will masks come back, even for vaccinated persons? Will things shut down completely again?

For the first time in my life, I can relate to the Israelites when they complained to Moses in the wilderness. I feel lost. I know what we once had, and it was pretty good. The world is now completely unpredictable, and I do not like it. I crave the mundane days when I knew what to expect, and I have been voicing my grievances.

Have you been complaining more lately? If so, you are in good company. The people of God often logged complaints. Some of them sounded a little bit like whining, but many of them were legitimate. In this portion from Exodus, the people were upset, rightfully, because they had nothing to eat. They were hungry, they were tired, and they remembered full bellies in Egypt. Sure, they were slaves, but their life was predictable. Would we choose slavery in a situation like that?

What I have noticed is that God never gave the people the option to go back into the shackles the Almighty removed. In a mysterious way, the same God who delivered them with fire and water, provided food for their bellies. It was another sign and wonder so that people would place their trust in the Lord. Stop looking for a Pharaoh to provide for you. Stop yelling at Moses and Aaron. Make known what you need, and God will provide.

The people made it known that they were thirsty, and God gave them water. The people made it known they were hungry, and God gave them bread from heaven and quails for meat. Are we asking for the things we need? Or, are we just complaining because our life is unpredictable?

God eventually gave the people something they didn't explicitly ask for, but desperately needed, the Almighty provided rules to live by. The Ten Commandments are the foundation for any civilization to work, and they teach us what to cling to when our world seems upside down and backwards. If you look closely, you will notice the first three commandments are about our relationship with God. Does God make up the first three of your top ten priorities?

As you read through the rest of what we call the Old Testament, you will notice the people frequently lost focus on God. They would often shift their attention to an enemy, to a king, or to fighting amongst themselves. It is no coincidence that when they moved from God, their problems grew. However, when they returned to the Lord, things improved.

I will not promise you predictability. When God led the Israelites out of Egypt, the only promise was freedom. In addition to that, the Almighty provided what was needed to survive. But, there is one more thing. Something that gets overlooked in the Exodus story is that God also gave the people community. This is not a story of individuals embarking on an impossible mission all alone. In addition to the knowledge that God will provide, we are to journey, together, through our uncertainty.

Remember, it was "The whole congregation of the Israelites". Men, women, and all sorts of people were gathered by God, miraculously delivered, provided for, and given the rules for how to live together in community.

The news lately has left me with whiplash. We hear the marvels of the vaccines that are almost 100% effective at keeping people from dying of CoViD. Then some reporters concentrate on the small percentage of vaccinated people who still test positive. One report says that masks are crucial while others acknowledge their limited effectiveness. Then, there's an earthquake in Haiti, death and destruction in Afghanistan, and a hurricane on the shores of our state. I don't know what to expect. Nothing is predictable.

What I noticed is that every time the people of God felt lost, as I do now, they would gather to tell and retell the stories of how the wonders the Almighty did for them. They would tell of deliverance, they would share a meal, and together they would claim the promise that God will again provide. Perhaps, rather than grabbing for predictability, it is better for us to make room for consistency. I need to consistently gather with others who likely feel lost, to let the Lord provide as we care of one another, and to claim promises of our God.

Faithfully,  
Fr. Scott

## Confirmation



Bishop Knisley is scheduled to visit St. Barnabas on Sunday, September 29, 2021. These visits are when members are Confirmed in the Christian Church. It also offers anyone from a different denomination to be officially Received by our bishop into the Episcopal Church. He should be at both services with Confirmation/Reception at 10:00 am.

## Inquirer's Class



Fr. Scott started classes for those who wish to be Confirmed, Received, or would simply like to have a discussion of faith in the Episcopal Church. Classes are on Sunday mornings at 11:00 a.m. Speak with Fr. Scott for more information.

## Happy Birthday



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

Bart Boss	Michael Spearman
Bonne Simonian	Shirley Bentley
Donald Morrow	Jenna Mixner
Gene Toro	Ronald Bonenfant
Jason Pari	Leonard Johnson
Joyce Budlong	Heidi Seddon
Karen Thornton	Stephanie Riley-Schafer
Kristy Marble	Joseph Angell
Laurie Furney	Stephanie VanPatten
Michelle Gilbert	Jessica Mixner
Nolan Hinz	Kyle Wheeler
Paisley Harding	Wayne Pollard
Patricia Loftus	David Perkins-Hagen
R. Peter Furney	Mike Marsh
Richard Riley	Mark Menzies
Savannah Mowry	Iris Rogers
Scott Simonian	Shirley Bettencourt

## 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 help with hoping to have things resume in September. Please speak with Fr. Scott or call the parish office to find out about the opportunities where you can serve.

**We would like to begin coffee hour, but we need volunteers to make it happen.**

## Prayer Chain



Prayer Requests

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.



**westbay community action**

*Helping people. Changing lives.*

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.

## Wedding



Congratulations to Kimberly Marie Furney & Michael Patrick Williams who celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage on August 8, 2021.

## 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!

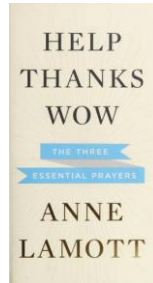
***Thank You!!!***

## Office Closed



The parish office will be closed on Monday, September 6th in observance of Labor Day.

## Book Study



Join us as we explore how to keep our prayer simple in these difficult times. Any questions contact Mother Susan @737-3127

Where: St. Mark's (111 West Shore Rd.)

When: Tuesday evenings; September 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Time: 7:00 p.m – 8:00 p.m.

# Let's Pray!

*For the Good Use of Leisure*

O God, in the course of this busy life, give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*