

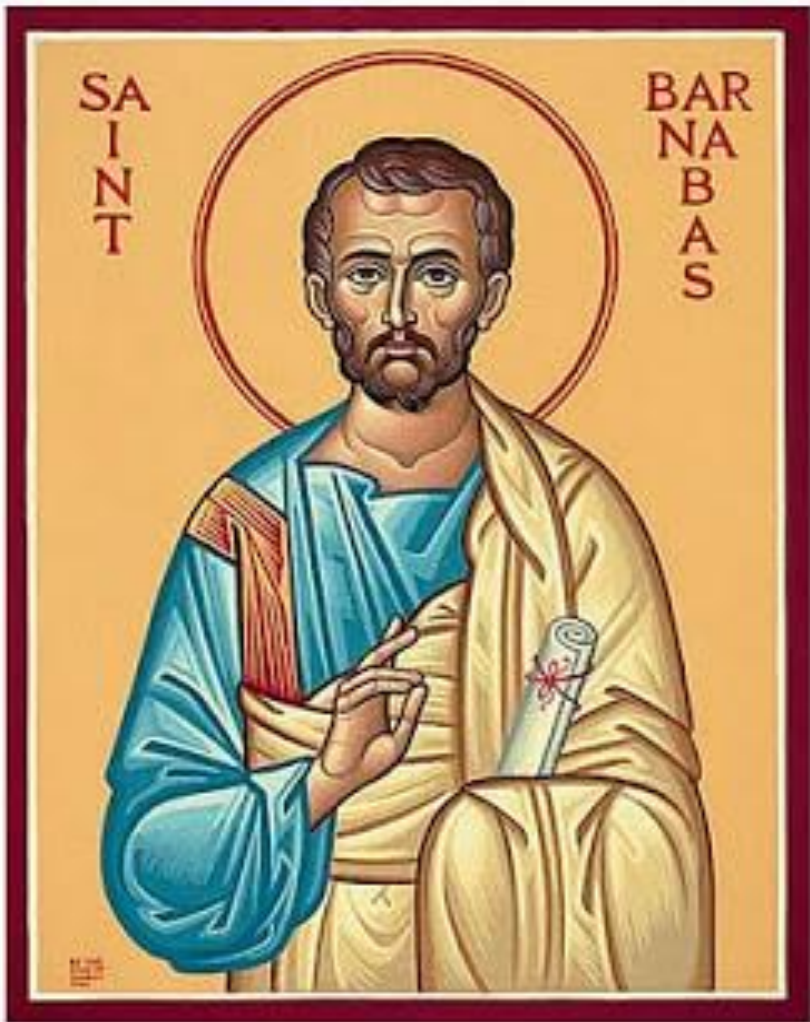
The Encourager

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

Saint Barnabas Church
3257 Post Rd., Warwick, Rhode Island 02886
www.stbarnabaswarwick.org

401-737-4141

May 2024



Some FatherLee thoughts:

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,
give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

*Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies,
but test everything; hold fast to what is good;
abstain from every form of evil.”*

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-22)

Sometimes, the hardest words in our worship to pray is, “It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you.” I don’t feel like giving thanks “always and everywhere”. Do you? When I am walking into a hospital to visit someone who is dying or gets the kind of news everyone dreads, a song of praise is not my first instinct.

When I see the horrors that have again become commonplace in our world, I want to scream and cuss, not rejoice and give thanks. However, Scripture reminds us over and over (more than 157 times) to make a point to praise God. The complete phrase, “Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His mercy (or ‘love’ depending on the translation) endures forever,” is used 44 times.

Taking time to unpack this, I realized that being deliberate about praising God makes us raise our eyes from things that are only temporary, so we don’t lose sight of what is eternal. Cancer is temporary. War and violence are temporary. “The Word of our God,” however, “lasts forever.” (Isaiah 40:8) The love and mercy of the Lord are everlasting. Which begs the question: What are you looking at?

You may be thinking, “Fr. Scott, you have no idea what you’re talking about.” Maybe you’re right. “Test everything,” is one of my favorite parts of that portion of First Thessalonians. Please, don’t believe something just because I said it. Test everything. Hold it up to the light of God’s eternal Word. Do not be “led astray from your simple and pure devotion to Christ.” (Ephesians 4:14)

Jesus tells us, “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7:15-16) Test everything. While I definitely try to be led by the Holy Spirit and grounded in the Word of the Lord (Thanks be to God), I am certainly not right about everything (just ask my wife).

When I am wrong, I trust in God's grace, and I work to make the appropriate course correction. One of those course corrections over the past few months is that I realized that it is incredibly important to pause from the momentary chaos and distress of this world, and to be deliberate about giving thanks for the eternal Word of the Lord and the mercy and love of God that are everlasting.

This past New Year's, I realized that happiness, for the most part, is a choice. Sure, if we don't have the basic things we need to survive, it is hard to be happy. If you need help with those basic things, let me know. We can help. However, once a person has those basic necessities, the only thing keeping you from happiness is you.

I was in the Dominican Republic for several weeks. While I did become fluent in Spanish (which was the intent) I did see, first hand, that happiness is a choice. Our teacher took us to his mother's house, which was a tiny, cinder block apartment with a dirt floor. She did have indoor plumbing, and a few pieces of furniture that were "nice". By our standards she had very little, but she had something that very few Americans do have. She had an absolute delight that beamed from her mostly toothless smile. She was overjoyed to spend some of the very little money she had for us. She prepared a soup to share. My friend and I sat down at the table with her and her son, our Spanish teacher. While there was a language barrier, what became obvious is that happiness is communicated without language.

This woman had so little, yet she was happy. As I looked around her tiny home, I noticed several religious items. I am convinced that the difference between her and I was that I looked to my privileges and things to be happy, while she simply and beautifully looked to the everlasting love and mercy of the God we all share.

Therefore, I am becoming increasingly deliberate about giving thanks and praise to the Lord. This Pentecost, with the nudge of other faithful members in our community who seek happiness as we "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His mercy (love and Word) endures forever." I invite you to "test" this with us. Join us as we let the Spirit be our guide. Abstain from evil and holding fast to what is good. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Faithfully
Fr. Lee

Deacon's Greetings

Dear St. Barnabas Family,

A couple of weeks ago the Episcopal Deacons of RI met at the Episcopal Conference Center (ECC) in Pascoag for an annual retreat. As the newest deacon it was my first time attending the retreat, which was a wonderful time of worship, meals together and fellowship by the fire, and some much needed rest. In the first of Saturday's two excellent workshops, Mother Susan Wrathall led us in a group Theological Reflection, using the Good Shepherd scripture passage from John 10:11-18 as the starting point. One thing that stood out for us from the passage is that Jesus chooses us. He chooses to care for his sheep - the ones in his fold and the ones not yet in the fold. He chooses to lay down his life for them, and to gather them together in safety. Through discussion we made connections with times when we've been faced with choices - and what experience, Christian tradition and Scripture, culture, and society say about making choices. Group insights included a renewed understanding that God is with us in the decision-making process. Another was that Jesus made the choice to love his sheep, and so we, as followers of Jesus, can pray for the grace to walk in his footsteps. We can continuously make the choice to love like Jesus.

Later in the day, after some lunch and free time, we had a songwriting workshop with Providence singer/songwriter Mark Cutler. He expertly led us through a group exercise of writing a retreat song which we titled *You Are Beloved*. Since "choosing the way of Jesus" was on our minds from the morning workshop, it was reflected in the lyrics.

The refrain goes like this:

I can't keep it in, gotta sing of your love. Now my heart is open, feeling peaceful as a dove. Gotta let it out. You give the power from above. Rejoice, we have a choice to radiate your love...

We're going out to the world. We're here to spread God's Word. Going out to the world. Have you heard God's Word --- you are beloved.

The Good Shepherd scripture passage and the You Are Beloved song both reminded me of a drawing by artist David Hayward. In the drawing, a sheep has fallen/slid down the edge of a cliff and is stuck on a small ledge. Jesus is walking toward the sheep to rescue it, and the lost sheep has its eyes fixed on Jesus. Behind Jesus, and behind a stone wall, are the rest of the sheep looking on from a place of safety and comfort. Some of the sheep in the front row are holding signs that say "All Sheep Matter" (which is also the title of the drawing.) This minimalist sketch illustrates the point that of course all sheep matter! Jesus loves all the sheep and will lay down his life for all of them. Yet in that moment one of the sheep is in danger. The sheep is suffering and in need of healing, and to be held in the arms of God's love. The lost sheep is in a dangerous and precarious position and the Good Shepherd chooses to see this with the eyes of God's Love.

We have a choice to do the same in our world. How will we respond to our neighbors who are in need of food, shelter, healing, and safety? How are we being called to recognize the suffering of those whose situations are most precarious? Do our actions and choices point to God's healing love?

Let us pray for the grace to see through the eyes of God's Love and then put that love into action. And, when needed, may we also have the grace to gently remind ourselves and each other that, while, yes, all lives matter and are cherished, some of those lives are in danger. When we make choices that honor the dignity of every human being equally, then "all" will indeed mean "all" and we will see the Kingdom of God at work in the world.

Happy Eastertide,
Deacon Andrea

Deacon's Library



Are you willing to help set up and maintain the lending library we host for the diocese? A few volunteers are needed to put stickers in the books and/or reshelve returned books. Speak with Deacon Andrea if you are available.

Healing Prayers May 5th



You have the opportunity to participate in prayers for healing, the laying on of hands, and anointing with Holy Oil. At the end of the service, simply move to the front of the church. After Fr. Scott greets those leaving church he will join you as we pray for ourselves and those in need. If you ever need prayers for healing please speak to Fr. Scott, you do not need to wait until the first Sunday of the month.



The Backpack Program

We may assume that every child lives in a safe and secure home. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Due to a variety of circumstances including child maltreatment, some of our children of Rhode Island are unable to return to their home.

Beginning in 2010, the Aubin Center (of Lifespan Health) began the backpack program. This program offered these children backpacks filled with personal hygiene items, age-appropriate clothing and pajamas, and a toy. These children were able to have clean clothing and personal items to take to their new home.

In 2023, the Backpack and Clothing Program stepped up to another level. A “mini-mall” was established that began offering these children the opportunity to make their own choices with a degree of comfort as they are transitioned into a new home.

The Daughters of Hope are sponsoring a clothing/toiletry drive beginning June 1st through July 30, 2024.

According to specialists in the front line with this program, the items most needed include underwear and full-sized toiletries.

We are asking members of St. Barnabas Church for donations of underwear and full-sized toiletry items (see list below) to be dropped off at the church at any time between June 1-July 30, 2024. The items will be delivered to the Aubin Center to be added to their “mini-mall”. We will also accept monetary donations - that will be used to purchase these needed items.

If you have further questions, feel free to reach out to Joan Jordan Daughter of Hope. Please call Robin in the office for her contact information.

We thank you in advance!

Love & Blessings-

The Daughters of Hope

Donations Requested:

Girls' Underpants (all sizes) and Boy's Underpants (all sizes)

Girl's undershirts (all sizes) and Boy's undershirts (all sizes)

Girl's socks (all sizes) and Boy's socks (all sizes)

Full size-shampoo and Full size-conditioner

Full size-soap/shower gel

Full size-toothpaste

Toothbrushes-children's sizes and adults



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

Benjamin Carignan

Chrystal Tyson

David Butziger

David Costa

Dianne Whitehead

Emily McMahan

Tammy Salisbury

Elizabeth Pashkovsky

James Bernardino

Joan Riley

Jessica Iozzi

Heather McLaughlin

Julie Mixner

Kelley Holmander

Therese Beauregard

Helena Dexter

Wanda Michaelson

Pruet Beauregard

Bill Gray

James Lindopp

John Wright

Henry Schofield

Carolyn Smith

Joan Schofield

Stephen Hinger

May Potluck Brunch



On Sunday May 5th our annual May Brunch will be held following the 10am service. This will be a potluck event. A list will be on the back table in church for attendance and what dish you would like to bring.

There will be “May Baskets” available to purchase, all donations will go towards upgrades to our church. Any questions, you may speak to Jo Taylor, our Junior Warden.

Dave's Details Notes from the Senior Warden May 2024

“...WHY ARE WE HERE?”

Yeah, I know...It sounds like cheap stunt to draw you in with a temptation that I would possibly be discussing the Meaning of Life this month. Alas, I was aiming a little more locally and specifically, ... Why are we HERE at St. Barnabas?

Why are YOU Here? Many come to this parish because they grew up here.

Many arrived at our door in the past because they wanted to reconnect with God, because they felt the draw back to an actual building, because a friend went here and suggested that they come and see, or because it was only a five-minute drive from their house. Every one of us has a slightly different reason that puts us in these pews on Sunday. In my case, I came here because of the late Jim Bocchino, whom I knew when he was first ordained in the 1980's and I was an acolyte at St. Mary's in Portsmouth, RI. However, once I was drawn here to St. Barnabas a few years ago, almost immediately I felt like I belonged.

The real question to ask is ‘Why do we stay?’ The story and message of Christianity is available in many different places and many different ways. Why choose us, why choose here? As special as Father Scott is (especially with his “Dad jokes” in his sermons), as beautiful as the stained-glass windows are when the light hits them in the morning, and as brilliant as the finery sparkles every week on the alter, there is one more thing that makes St Barabas something of a rarity.

To be blunt, what we really have is each other. This is family. This is what is unique about this place, and I guarantee that it cannot be had anywhere else. Think about that fact and let it settle in. You are an integral part of the living being of this congregation, and your presence strengthens us as a whole. The more we grow as a congregation in this church, the more of a reason we stay here in this place. It is almost magnetic. This collection of talents and personalities is what makes me proud to declare myself a member of and brag about this parish. Take a moment to look around this church and realize that as a family, we have our laughs, our grumbles, our celebrations, and our losses, but above all else, we have a strong love for each other, and that is an organic strength that is so critical, reassuring, and almost calming in a sense. It is important for all of us to occasionally look up from the grind of our lives and remember that. Realize the gem of a place we have carved out here and hold it close to your heart.

Why are we here? Well, where else would you want to be? This, of course, is home.

Thank you and God Bless,
David M. Dolbashian, Esq., Senior Warden, St. Barnabas
Episcopal, Warwick, RI

Coffee Hour



Thank you for making our coffee hour a huge success! Our last gathering before summer arrives will be on Sunday, May 19th. We could not have done it without all of you, from baking and bringing in goodies to share, to set up and clean up, and to just being together. We look forward to gathering in June for St. Barnabas Day and again in August for St. Mary's Day. Coffee hour will resume in September.

Happy Mother's Day, May 12, 2024



We would like to wish a Happy & Blessed Mother's Day to all our mom's here at St. Barnabas.

Flowers & Sanctuary Candle



If you would like to have flowers on the Altar or the Sanctuary Candle lit in memory of someone special or in celebration of a special event, there is a calendar with envelopes located in the back of the church. Please complete and drop in the collection plate or you may hand to an usher. You may also call or email Robin in the Parish Office –

parishadmin@stbarnabaswarwick.org

Pentecost of Praise



How do we pray? We very often pray to God asking guidance through difficult times; we pray with words of praise; and we also offer to God our *thanks* for all the wonderful things He has done in our lives – even more than we can ask or imagine! From now through the Feast of Pentecost (May 19), you're invited to share everything you are grateful for, anything that moves you to give God the praise for the miracle he has worked in your life. This can be just about anything; from little things we often take for granted like food on the table and clean water to drink to life-changing miracles like healing from disease and reconciling relationships of family or friends. On **May 19**, the Feast of Pentecost, we'll offer to God our **Pentecost of Praise**. A box with a cross on it has been placed in the back of church for you to drop in your personal notes of praise and thanksgiving. There's no limit to how many praise offerings you can give to God. After all, God's love is from everlasting to everlasting; and His goodness endures forever! If you'd prefer to thank God for all He's done but would rather your petition be kept confidential, just note that on your slip, and it will not be made public. Let's make these weeks a time that we focus on all the good God has done and is doing in our lives and offer our thanks to Him.

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.*

Memorial Day



The parish office will be closed on Monday, May 27th in observance of Memorial Day.

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. Please call parish office for her contact information.

Morning Prayer



On Tuesdays & Thursdays mornings at 10:00 a.m. Fr. Scott holds a short Morning Prayer Service. This gives us another chance to pray for this world, this nation, our church, our friends, family and even our enemies.

Mid-week Eucharist & Bible Study



On Wednesdays, there is another opportunity for worship and study. At 10:00 a.m. there will be a Rite I Eucharist in the Guild Room immediately followed by a Bible study. All are welcome!