

The Encourager

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

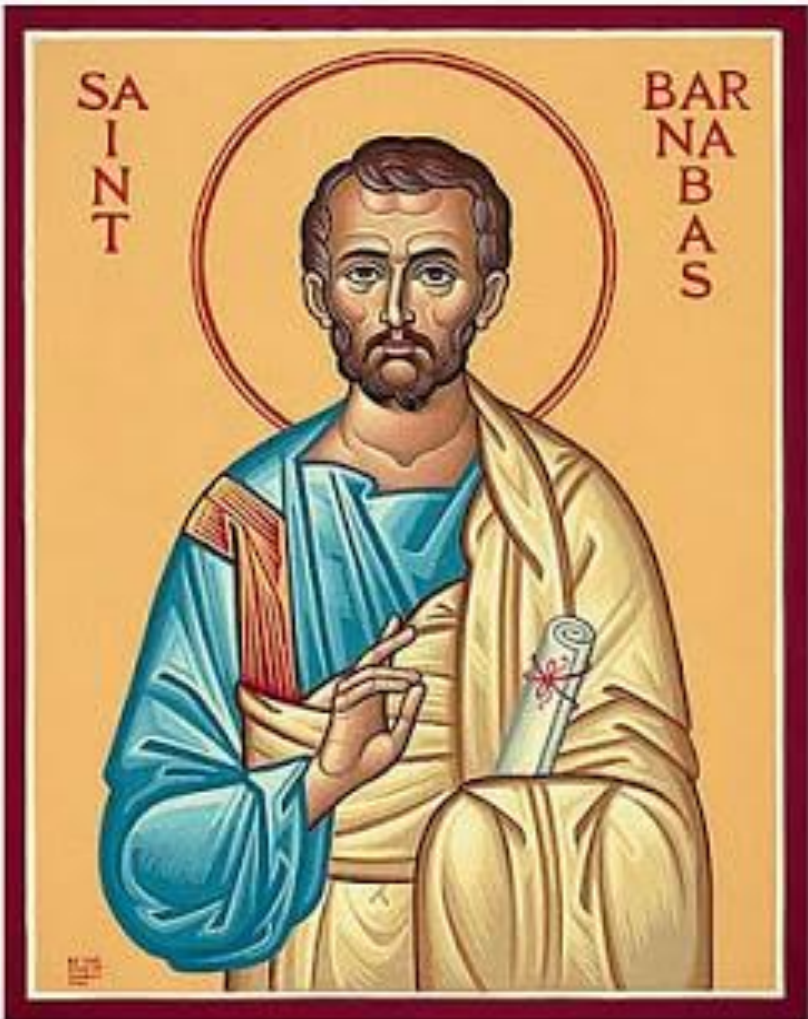
Saint Barnabas Church

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www.stbarnabaswarwick.org

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December 2024



Some FatherLee thoughts:

*Grace to you and peace from him who is
and who was and who is to come. (Revelation 1:4)*

One of my favorite parts of Morning Prayer is a phrase that is repeated many times, “As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.” It places us in the presence of God who is bigger than the present moment in which we find ourselves. We think time is so important, but the Almighty is actually beyond time, which becomes our great hope.

John takes this understanding of God and time and applies it to Jesus, “who was and is and is to come”. In fact, grace and peace, things we desperately need, come to us BECAUSE our hope is not bound to the circumstances of this moment. How big is your hope?

Believe it or not, this brings us to a discussion about the season of Advent, which is the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. Advent also happens to be the start of the liturgical year in the Church (not fiscal; God is bigger than budgets, too). We end our Church year by remembering that Christ is King! Then, we begin each year by both looking back and looking ahead.

We look back at what the Almighty has historically done. We look ahead, knowing that the Lord will do what God always does: rescue, forgive, restore, and redeem. That is the assurance of grace, and it is what gives us hope. How big is your hope?

Advent is a time to celebrate the past when Jesus came among us in great humility and look to the future when Christ will come again in great triumph, which gives us courage to have faith in this present moment.

If you are struggling with courage or faith, it is probably because you are focused on the problems of our current time. When I see images of war, I don't have much faith in humanity. When I hear lies by our political leaders, I don't have much hope for the future.

But, when I look back at all the wonderful things the Almighty has done and look ahead knowing God will do amazing things again, hope and faith creep into my heart. That allows me to feel a little joy and equips me to share a little more love.

So, how will this play out at Church this Advent? I'm glad you asked! With some consultation, I have decided to do something a little different (only a little, don't worry). Nothing will really change at the 8:00 service. Not because they can't handle change, but because they already embrace this mentality of looking back, looking forward, while living in the now.

For the four Sundays of Advent, similar to the 8:00, we will use Rite I at the 10:00 Sunday service. We will, of course, still have music at 10:00, which has become one of the most beautiful aspects of our worship together, but the words we use will be "older" or "timeless". You will hear more "thee's" and "thou's", "Wouldst's" and "Thy's". Why?

This is the language that has carried our tradition for hundreds and hundreds of years, and it is perhaps more relevant now than ever. We need a language that isn't used by the news who describe tragedy and all the very misleading political rhetoric. We need to use words that proclaim that God is above war and beyond time but is still as close as a whisper of a prayer.

If you love our older, traditional language, enjoy! If you don't like it, know it will only be four Sundays, then we will return to Rite II at 10:00. However, I encourage all of you to take time in the coming weeks to look back at the incredible ways God has revealed love to us, look ahead knowing the Almighty will come and do amazing things again, and may that give you courage to have faith and hope, and help you relish the wonderful things that are all around us if we just take our eyes off tragedy long enough to see the good.

Faithfully
Fr. Scott Lee

Deacon's Greetings

Happy New Year! The first Sunday of Advent begins the new church year, and as we prepare our hearts and homes for Christmas and New Year's, some of our songs' origins reach back hundreds of years.

During our Blue Christmas service at 6: 30 p.m. on Thursday December 19, we'll sing individual verses of one of these ancient hymns, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, between short readings and the lighting of candles. "Blue Christmas: When Christmas Hurts" is designed for anyone who is blue at Christmas. This casual, contemporary, candlelight service is open to people of all faiths and walks of life. Christmas is merry and bright and full of cheer, and at the same time, the holidays can be difficult and isolating for those who have lost loved ones, are estranged from family, are worried and anxious about the state of the world, or who are grieving in any way.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel fits the service well, with its hauntingly beautiful melody and the poetic and ancient imagery of the lyrics. The hymn comes from the 9th century! According to the Medieval History website historymedieval.com: the 9th century, from the year 801 to 900 AD, was a transformative period marked by cultural, scientific, and political developments that rippled across continents. This century, widely studied in historical scholarship, witnessed notable events that shaped the course of empires and left a lasting impact on future generations. A look at the 9th century reveals an era filled with intellectual flourishing, political upheavals, and the spread of influential ideologies and religious movements.

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel came from that time of flourishing, and is, by design, full of references to Christ in the Old Testament. It is sometimes hard for Christians, especially new Christians, to make sense of the Old Testament. When we begin to see the Old Testament as God's plan to prepare for the coming of Jesus, a plan that even angels were excited to see unfold, then we start to see that the Old Testament is much more than a history of Israel's place in the ancient Near East. The Old Testament becomes for us a way to see and savor the glory of Jesus Christ in the types, shadows, and promises that predicted His coming.

The author of *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* wants those who sing this hymn to grow in that knowledge. Consider the different messianic promises of the Old Testament that are alluded to in this hymn: Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), Branch of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1), Dayspring (Luke 1:7-8), Key of David (Revelation 3:7-8).

It is essential to learn and know the theology that describes how the Old Testament points to and prepares for the coming of Jesus. It is just as important to sing that theology. When we sing, we engage both our mind and our emotions in the worship of God. In this way, this hymn helps root us in the Old Testament in a way that is richly biblical and centered on Jesus.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel also roots us in the history of the New Testament church, a history that began with the Apostles and will culminate in the second coming of Jesus. Christians have a particular safety and camaraderie when they sing a hymn that has been sung by Christians for 1,200 years and counting. There is also a fellowship in singing old hymns because we sing the same songs that our brothers and sisters have sung, brothers and sisters in Christ who have gone before us. Our faith and our worship of our God unite us with Christians around the globe and with Christians who have lived through the centuries. Singing old hymns reminds us of this truth.

When we sing *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, we offer our imperative prayer to God, longing for the return, the second coming of Jesus. The first two periods of time in which this hymn roots us are in the past. But this hymn is also expectant and forward-looking in its composition. It declares the first advent of Jesus even as it stokes our desire for the second coming of Jesus. That is why I argue that we should sing this hymn all year long."

All are welcome to this year's Blue Christmas service, here at St. Barnabas Church on Thursday, December 19th at 6:30 p.m. followed by refreshment in the church hall. If you have friends or family who don't regularly attend church, or who have never attended but are curious and could use some candlelight and quiet music and prayers of hope in a casual small group setting, this service may be one to invite them to, or better yet, to attend with them.

If you would like to attend a Blue Christmas service but can't make it to ours on the 19th, there is also one planned for Wednesday, December 4th at 6 p.m. at St. James Episcopal Church at 474 Fruit Hill Avenue, North Providence, and another at St. Martin's Episcopal Church at 50 Orchard Avenue in Providence on Saturday December 21st (call or check smartinsprov.org for details.)

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, I Israel!

(Hymnal, 56)

God's Peace,

Deacon Andrea

Dave's Details
Notes from the Senior Warden
December 2024

Greetings all.

As we turn the corner in this holiday season, the expression, "But for the Grace of God, go I," always rings loudly in my ears when these holidays charge rapidly through the calendar. The Christmas season is no different, and in fact sometimes amplifies our anxiety. We have all seen the over-commercialization of a holiday that frankly has been engineered to sound with much noise so that we forget who is hurting. For years, I have attempted to (unsatisfactorily) convince my family to just do something a tad different.

In the past, I have lobbied for all the members of my family to pool all of the monies that we all know we are planning on spending for each other, with the promise that we would take all those funds and (very quietly and without fanfare,) go out and anonymously help a few families that really need it; A single parent, with two children who is struggling to keep her head above water and feels inundated with everything life can throw at her, a person who is alone and abandoned due to poor choices and worse luck, or just someone who cannot be bothered with confronting their own anger and hate without a productive outlet. For them the Christmas season tends to leave them behind. Who better than them to have an unannounced surprise, a reminder of the miracle of Christmas ... if for nothing else, to show them that they are not forgotten, that they are worth the effort, that they are someone of value. If you think about it, that was the reason the Good Lord send Jesus to us, to remind us that we are all redeemable.

Unfortunately, my yearly efforts to get the whole family to pool monies together usually fail, but only because those same family members understandably still desire to give each other gifts, which usually overwhelms my best laid plans.

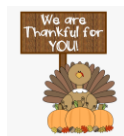
Nonetheless, I still tap the shoulder of some of my surrogates out in the communities who always have their ear to the ground, knowing who really needs a boost, and recruiting them for my purposes. Put a little cash into their hand with the strict orders that they are to make sure that someone in real need receives it and they are told that the source is simply someone who loves them but demands to stay out of sight. I strongly believe that kids should have a happy Christmas morning, that solitary souls should be reminded they are not alone, and people with substantial emotional issues are not excluded from the world just because they tend to make others around them uncomfortable. Moreover, they should not think it is from one specific person, but really from all of us.

I wish I could tell you that I always abide by this edict I am supporting here. Alas, I am a mere human, clearly burdened with flaws. Many times, I find that I am selfish, uncaring, and willfully intentional in avoiding uncomfortable situations. Even so, that does not mean that I refuse to ask for the strength from God to do what I am asked to do. Christmas time is the most obvious reminder of that spirit, to accept that invitation from God ... to Give.

As Christmas approaches, please take some time to find yourself doing a little bit to remember those who have a little less happiness and spread it around for them.

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

Thanksgiving Baskets



Thank you to our wonderful parishioners for once again making Thanksgiving a wonderful celebration for those who would otherwise have gone without. House of Hope is forever grateful.

Annual Tree Lighting



On Sunday, December 1st @ 4:00 p.m. we will be having our annual Advent Tree Lighting Service in Dorothy Mayer Park. We are inviting our neighboring parish Warwick Central Baptist to join us during the outdoor service. After the lighting, Warwick Central Baptist is inviting us back to their parish for refreshments, pizza and Advent wreath making. An attendance sheet will be on the back table, please let us know how many. This will ensure enough wreaths and food will be available as we join Warwick Central Baptist.

Healing Prayers December 1st



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.

Grief Group



Grief has no timeline

We have started a Grief Support Group which will meet every other Thursday. Our next meeting will be Thursday, December 5 @ 7:00. For more information, please speak with Fr. Scott.

Blue Christmas Service



"Death ends a life,
not a relationship."
Mitch Albom

But still, grief at
Christmas makes us
lonely & sad.

St. Barnabas Church will be hosting the *Episcopal Deacons of RI's Blue Christmas Service* on Thursday, December 19th at 6:30 p.m. All are invited to attend this contemplative, candlelit service, designed especially for those who are feeling blue this holiday season. For more information, please contact Deacon Andrea at andreahtnak@gmail.com.

Schedule of Christmas Services



Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24th

Holy Eucharist - 4:00 p.m.

Solemn High Mass – 10:00 p.m.

Christmas Day, Wednesday, December 25th

Holy Eucharist - 10:00 a.m.

The First Sunday after Christmas, December 29th

8:00 a.m. - Rite I

10:00 a.m. - Rite II

New Years Day, Wednesday, January 1st

Holy Eucharist - 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Hope Tree



The Christmas season is fast approaching. I'm sure that many of us have already started our Christmas shopping, but there are some in our Warwick community who truly don't have the means to purchase a single Christmas present. It is quite humbling to realize how fortunate we are when we first think of our neighbors who are less fortunate. This Christmas St. Barnabas Church is continuing to support our Warwick neighbors in need via The House of Hope.

Our annual Christmas Hope Tree is already set up in the back of the church. Each tag on the tree represents someone's wish this Christmas and identifies the age and gender of the person, a little something about them and their specific Christmas gift wish. There's a 6-year-old boy who likes dinosaurs and legos, and a 3-year-old boy who loves Bluey and Miss Rachel; there's a 24-year old new mom who's asked for diapers and a bathtub for her newborn baby daughter and a pair of warm socks for herself. There's a 35-year-old woman who's going to CCRI who's asked for a Trapper Keeper for her schoolwork in. You'll find tags on the tree with requests for gift cards too. Please consider taking a tag and making someone's Christmas wish come true. If you'd prefer to make a monetary donation, we'll use all money collected to buy any items that are still needed once all gifts are in.

All gifts should be wrapped. Please attach the tag that you take from the tree to the gift that you purchase. That way we'll be sure all the gifts get to the right recipient. Gifts can be brought to church on Sunday mornings and placed around the Christmas Hope Tree or they can be dropped off at church during office hours. All gifts must be turned in by **DECEMBER 22.**

The House of Hope has expressed their thanks and appreciation for our continued support. Thanksgiving baskets were distributed to Warwick families in need on November 25, and they are absolutely thrilled that we're continuing to show our support through the Christmas season. Each and every gift – small or large for adult or child – will mean more than we can imagine to those who receive it.

Contact me any time if you have any questions – Christmas Blessings to you and your family!

Heidi Seddon
HJSeddon@GMail.com
401-241-1983

Holiday Bazaar



A big **Thank You** goes out to everyone who helped make this year's bazaar a huge success. Beginning with the many donations, set-up, those who volunteered their time to work the many tables, served at lunch and to help clean.

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.

Happy Birthday



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

Georgia Shuster	David Tyson
Jeanne Bayles	Dawn Campopiano
Joshua Monahan	Donald Rancourt
Peter Schofield	Megan McGoran
Richard Carr	Audrey McIntrye
Seamus Maloney	Doris Sherman
Thomas Chadwick	Deborah Palazzo

Vestry Members for 2025



'Vestry' is defined as a meeting of parishioners conducting parochial business for the better of the church. St. Barnabas is looking for new Vestry members beginning in 2025. A Vestry term is for two years, meeting typically the 2nd Monday of each month. There are several openings, as well as guidelines to be a member. Becoming member at Large requirements are as follows:

1. You must be baptized in the Episcopal church
2. 18 yrs. or older,
3. Attend regularly
4. A pledging member in good standing
5. Be available to communicate via email.

If you wish to volunteer to join, please see Fr. Scott, Sr. Warden, David Dolbashian, or Junior Warden Jo Taylor.

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. Her email is klara777@aol.com

Out of Office



Robin will be out of the office Wednesday, December 25th – Wednesday, January 1st. Will return Thursday, January 2nd.

Morning Prayer



On Tuesday 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 Wednesday's 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!

Knitting/Crochet Group



Gail Frueh is resurrecting the Knitting/Crochet group after the holidays in January. It will take place around 11:30 on Sundays after church and coffee hour in the Guild Room. We will be working on individual projects as well as projects for charity including baptismal blankets for our church. All are welcome...beginner to experienced.

Food Donations



With the winter and holiday months coming, please continue to bring in your nonperishable items. Hunger is on the rise, and more and more are turning to our local food bank for help. We thank all of you for your continued support. There is a donation bin at the back of the church, or you may drop them off to the parish office during office hours.

Bell Choir



If any person is interested in joining/participating in the "Bell Choir" for this coming Christmas / Easter 2025 please speak with Mr. Twaun Doyle, the music department would like to start practice soon. Please contact Twaun at 401-952-5110, or via email Twaun_Doyle@yahoo.com.



Daughters of the King

St. Barnabas Church is blessed to be the home of the (DoK) Daughter's of the King chapter in Rhode Island. Daughters of the King is a holy order whose mission is the extension of Christ's kingdom through prayer, service and evangelism. Daughters meet at 7 pm on the first Tuesday of each month in the Guild Room. If you think Daughters of the King is something that calls to you, then come curious with an open heart and we'll explore where the Spirit may lead. If you have any questions, please reach out to Ashley, or Heidi, or Fr. Scott who can put you in contact with the Daughters. For more information on the Order, you can visit www.doknational.org

Ashley Lee
Daughters of the King,
Member at Large
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Heidi Seddon
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St. Barnabas Church has moved to YouTube!



Please visit the link below to watch our first video featuring Fr. Scott and be sure to subscribe. <https://youtu.be/tUOnRWfSo8s>
The plan is that you will be able to watch us live on YouTube or our website. After worship, the video will be shared back to Facebook, so it will be available after the fact on all three platforms. Thank you for your patience during this transition and for regularly joining us both in person and online.
If you haven't already, please like our Facebook page (St Barnabas Episcopal Church, Warwick, RI) and our Instagram page (stbarnabaswarwick). With everything going on you won't miss out on any parish news.

**CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS AND
THANKSGIVINGS**

Christmas is a time of beauty and celebration. Our worship space is decorated with beautiful foliage. These plants are given in memory and thanksgiving of loved ones. If you would like to donate to these decorations, a \$25.00 gift is typical, but any amount is acceptable.

Please print the names of those you would like to remember and submit them no later than Friday, December 20th.

In Memory of _____

In Thanksgiving for _____

Christmas Memorial and Thanksgiving Memorials Given By:

Name _____

Telephone _____ Pledge Number _____

*Please make check payable to St. Barnabas Church and note
"Christmas Memorial" on memo line.*