

# The Encourager

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

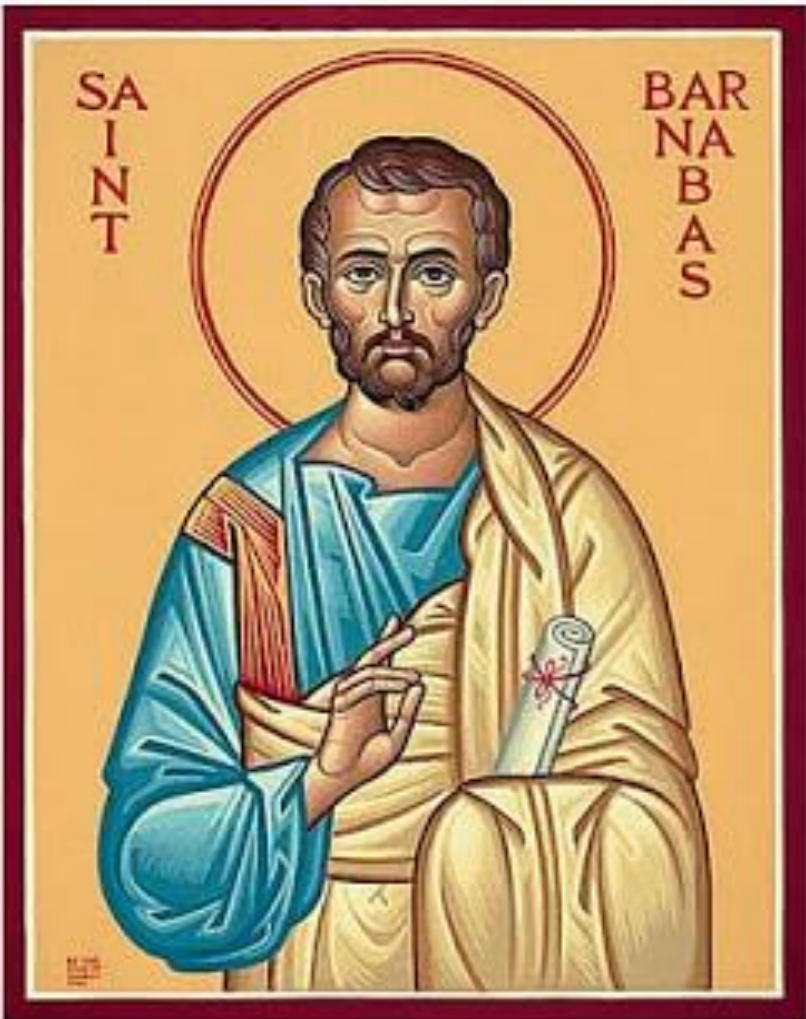
Saint Barnabas Church

3257 Post Rd., Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

[www.stbarnabaswarwick.org](http://www.stbarnabaswarwick.org)

401-737-4141

January 2025



## **Some FatherLee thoughts:**

*“Anyone who is in Christ, is a new creation”*

*(2 Corinthians 5:17)*

New Years is an arbitrary day for us to mark time. It brings with it, however, the opportunity for people to get a fresh start. Many of us make “New Year’s Resolutions”, wanting to be a better version of ourselves.

I fully support anyone who seeks to become a better person, more of who they want to be. This year really got me thinking, especially about the words we use. Are you seeking to be more like the person you want to be? Or, is your desire to be more like the person God sees in you?

I know what some of you are thinking, “You phrased that weird, Fr. Scott. Don’t you mean: Do you want to be the person God wants you to be?” Nope! I said it exactly how I see it: Are we striving to be who we want to be, or who God sees in us?

Look, the Almighty created you, formed you, and has known and loved you since before you were born. And the Lord did not want everyone to look or think exactly the same. To quote Morgan Freeman’s character responding to a little girl’s question, “Why did God paint you?” in the movie, *Robin Hood*, “Because (God) loves wondrous variety.” The Almighty made you to be you, no one else, and wants you to simply be the beautiful and wonderful human you are created to be.

I think, too often, we try to be someone else. We want to act like them, but are we supposed to be actors? You weren’t made to be like or act like anyone else. God made you to be you. Is that the person you desire to be? Or, do you still want to be who you want to be?

Let’s go a little deeper into this. Those of us who are “in Christ” as Second Corinthians describes, we are a “new creation”. This does not mean that we are someone totally new. “New”, in this sense, means we have been reset to what God intended for us in the beginning; we are restored to the beautiful creation the Almighty made in us.

All the external stuff is washed away, think of the waters of Baptism, and we stand before the Lord, worthy through the grace of Jesus. There is no account of wrongs we did once upon a time; they are forgiven. And, the voice we hear in our head when we see the bathroom scale, that criticism isn't allowed in the presence of God Almighty. No criticism is allowed because there is nothing to criticize. At that moment, we are precisely who the Lord created us to be, and we are beautifully and wonderfully made.

Of course, this perspective does bring with it certain consequences. When God let's us see who we really are, that is the best version of us, and we want to be that person more and more. Therefore, the changes we make are not us acting like someone else; we are simply being more like the person God sees in us, which is who we really are.

You're probably wondering, "How do I get this vision of who God sees in me?" Well, it takes discipline. Just like the discipline it takes to go to the gym and watch what you eat if you want to lose weight, if you want to see who God sees in you, it takes commitment, but I promise it's less work than you'd put in at the gym.

There are things I suggest you do: 1) limit the voices that criticize you; they muffle the voice of God's incredible love for you, 2) pick up the Bible, particularly the words of Jesus. See how our Savior loves and forgives and restores individuals, and 3) spend time in prayer. Ask the Lord to reveal to you . . . yourself! Then, pray for grace to be . . . yourself! Grace is both forgiveness for not being perfect and strength to be better moving forward.

Happy New Year! May God bless us all by restoring us to who we really are!

Faithfully  
Fr. Scott Lee

## Deacon's Greetings



Deacon's Greetings!

*Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise,  
manifested by the star  
to the sages from afar; branch of royal David's stem, in thy  
birth at Bethlehem;  
Anthems be to thee addressed, God in man-made manifest.  
(H 135)*

There's a cartoon (by the Surreal McCoy) that gets around social media this time each year - it's a pencil drawing of diners sitting outside a restaurant and exclaiming, "These eggs are astonishing!" and "It's a caffeine miracle!" and "Now I understand hash browns!" The title is "Breakfast at Epiphany's."

Epiphany, often referred to as a moment of revelation or insight, comes from The Greek words for *appearance* and *manifestation*, and throughout the season of Epiphany we'll be reminded that the True Light that enlightens all nations has come into the world: (John 1:9) God made manifest through Jesus in the most beautiful mystery of the incarnation.

From the visit of the Magi, to Jesus's baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan, to his first miracle at the wedding feast in Cana, to the revelation of God's glory transfigured on the mountainside, we'll see "the light that shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5) made manifest for all as God's extravagant and irrational love is born into the world to change it forever.

Between the seasons of Epiphany and Lent we'll hear many stories of Jesus healing people in body and spirit, patiently training his disciples, teaching small and large crowds who are hungry for the Word, and then sending his disciples out to proclaim God's mercy, grace, and love. Later Jesus will say "Go and tell" to the healed and the disciples, as the one who shows himself to us bids us to make his mission known among all nations.

Epiphany is a time of joy and celebration because...the story is out! Jesus, the Light of the World has been born to dispel the darkness that covers its people. God's glory appears in human form. Life on earth will never be the same again!

As beloved children of God and followers of the Way of Jesus we carry that light of God's love within us. With God's grace, may what we do and say shine forth that light in our lives and into the world this new year.  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Thomas Merton offers this on Epiphany,

We who have seen the light of Christ are obliged,  
by the greatness of the grace that has been given us,  
to make known the presence of the Savior to the ends of the earth...not only by preaching the glad tidings of his coming:  
but above all by revealing him in our lives...

Every day of our mortal lives must be his manifestation,  
his divine epiphany, in the world which he has created and  
redeemed.

And the poet Mary Oliver sums it up: Pay Attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.

God's Peace,  
Deacon Andrea

## Dave's Details – Notes from the Senior Warden January 2025



### NEW YEAR, NEW GOALS

Greetings all,

As we have turned the page on the holiday season and the new year's festivities, I have to express my gratitude to all of you in the St. Barnabas family. For the fifth year that I have been involved in Stewardship for our parish, we have again met our pledge goals. More to the point, I want to boast a little bit, but not for myself but rather for this church. I have said that I brag to other parishes' senior wardens that this parish always answers the bell when I have asked. The results of this year's pledging are no different. Not only were we able to accommodate the continuing rise in costs that we all are experiencing, but we were also able to ascertain solid and confirmed amounts from a vast majority of those pledging before the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of December. That efficiency is welcome and not common among other parishes when they take on the task of budgeting for the next year.

This leads to my real purpose of my missive this month. I am once again asking for your help. It has been a goal of mine to have our Church be more directed and more mindful of helping more and more people, just as Jesus demands of us. This does not discount what we already do, which is quite a bit throughout the year, including helping House of Hope, gathering supplies for Thanksgiving dinners, the Christmas Giving Tree, Project Undercover, to mention only a few. What I wish to do is make a larger push in the charitable realm. I wish to augment and intentionally expand that behavior, to walk in the footsteps of Christ and of his Apostles and the disciples that followed them.

Here is where I need your eyes and ears. I am looking for those organizations that A.) help those people who are in the most need and B.) will benefit with an infusion of directed donations to help them accomplish their goals. If we want to be serious about being Christians, then remember John the Baptist's warning... If you have two coats, give one to someone who has none. The scriptures are nothing but words if we do not heed and follow what they ask of us. I believe that how we find and treat those who need us the most will be our true measure. I feel that this not only something we must do, but will do, and will do so with your help.

Let's find a way to bring a little light to those who need it. The vestry and I welcome your ideas. I look forward to hearing from you.

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



### **From the Parish Treasurer**

I am very happy to report that our 2025 Pledge Drive was a tremendous success, thanks to the generosity of our parishioners. We received 117 pledges for a total of \$192,905, an increase over calendar year 2024 of almost \$12,000. This figure not only allows us to cover all our expected expenses for 2025 but will also give us the flexibility to discern new ways to provide assistance to community groups outside our parish.

If you have not yet pledged, it's not too late! Simply contact me at 401-556-1350 or by email at [sws53@cox.net](mailto:sws53@cox.net) and I will set up your pledge and provide you with a box of offering envelopes. And, as always, feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions about your pledge or other financial matters in the parish.

Faithfully, Stan Schofield

## Healing Prayers January 5th



You have the opportunity to participate in prayers for healing, the laying on of hands, and anointing with Holy Oil the first Sunday of every month. 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.

## Epiphany Celebration Brunch January 12<sup>th</sup>



On January 12 following the 10 o'clock service, Daughters of the King will host an Epiphany celebration brunch that you won't want to miss! Plan to join in the fun and enjoy a meal, meet the Lord of Misrule, sing a few Christmas carols, crown a Twelfth Night King and Queen, and there's even a rumor that the 3 Wise Men will be making an appearance too! So please come and join in the revelry! We're asking everyone to please bring a dish to share. Any questions please speak with Ashley.

## Mid-week Eucharist & Bible Study



We have resumed! Please join Fr. Scott for 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!



## Annual Meeting on January 26, 2025



The Annual Meeting of St. Barnabas Parish will be held on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, in Schweitzer Hall following the 10 o'clock service. In compliance with our bylaws the following slate is posted I month before.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved with Vestry. St. Barnabas is in a wonderful place because of your leadership! In compliance with our bylaws the following slate of candidates is posted one month before our Annual Meeting:

Treasurer – Stan Schofield, and Vestry – Audrey McIntyre & Richard Carr both seeking 2<sup>nd</sup> terms. JR Rodrigues – 1<sup>st</sup> term. This leaves the important role of Parish Clerk, and Delegates to Diocesan Convention. Please consider being part of our parish leadership.



## Handbell Choir



The Handbell Choir will have practice on Sunday Jan 5th, and Sunday, Jan 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m. in the church sanctuary. Any questions please reach out to Twaun Doyle

## Happy Birthday



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

Bruce Balkom	Aram Hinz
Eric Simonian	Craig Newell
George Gravlin	Jean Suppappola
Jane Lister	Ethel Bernardino
Joan Newell	Sarah Delsesto
Sadie Gauthier	Linda Petrarca
Sarah Tyson	Joseph Rodrigues
Victoria Silvestri	Rachel Riley-Schafer

## Souper-bowl Drive



Now thru February 9<sup>th</sup>, St. Barnabas Church is holding a Souper-bowl Drive, collecting canned and dry soup mixes. Donations will be delivered to The West Bay Community Food Bank. This collection is in conjunction with the regular weekly donations we collect. If you wish to make a monetary donation, please place your donation in a labeled envelope and place in the offertory plate. I am more than happy to purchase items on your behalf. Donations may also be dropped off during office hours. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Heather Rodrigues. Please call parish office for her contact information.

## 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.

## Parish Office Closed



The Parish office will be closed on Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup> in observance of Martin Luther King 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 contact information.

## 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. Thank you to Richard Carr who has volunteered to bring the donations to Westbay.

## Knitting/Crochet Group



Gail Frueh is resurrecting the Knitting/Crochet group starting on Sunday, January 19th at 11:30 a.m. in the Guild Room. You will be working on individual projects as well as projects for charity including baptismal blankets for our church. All are welcome...beginner to experienced. Future days and times will be discussed at that time.

## St. Barnabas Church has moved to YouTube!



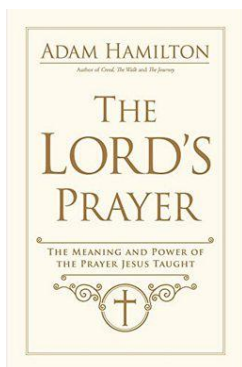
Please visit the link below to watch our first video featuring Fr. Scott and be sure to subscribe. <https://youtu.be/tUOnRWfSo8s>

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.

## Adult Book Study St. Barnabas Church

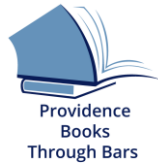
February 1 – March 8  
Saturday mornings – 9:00 – 10:30 am



In *The Lord's Prayer: The Meaning and Power of the Prayer Jesus Taught*, author Adam Hamilton guides us to really know – and really pray – the Lord's Prayer. He explores each of its rich lines and their meaning in the Bible, illuminating what we ask of God and what we ask of ourselves through its words; and he teaches us how to use it as a pattern for our own prayer life. Books can be purchased on Amazon or through most bookstores. For more info, please reach out to Heidi Seddon. Please call parish office for her contact information.

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|-------------|-------------------|--|
| February 1  | <b>Session 1:</b> | Our Father, Who Art in Heaven,<br>Hallowed Be Thy Name |
| February 8  | <b>Session 2:</b> | Whose Will Be Done?                                    |
| February 15 | <b>Session 3:</b> | Our Daily Bread  |
| February 22 | <b>Session 4:</b> | Forgive ... As We Forgive                              |
| March 1     | <b>Session 5:</b> | And Lead Us, Not Into Temptation                       |
| March 8     | <b>Session 6:</b> | For THINE is the Kingdom,<br>Power, and Glory          |

## Providence Books Through Bars 2024 Summary and Year-End Appeal



As many of you know, we moved to our “new” location at St. Barnabas Church in Warwick in 2022. It’s a comfortable space and at least a few people show up every week to answer letters and pack books - we didn’t miss a single Sunday all of 2024!

Our fundraising efforts included an October yard sale at Tara’s house (our most successful ever). We appreciate the donations and our loyal customers; it’s become quite an event!

Thanks to [Paper Nautilus](#) bookstore which generously receives the hundreds of requests we receive monthly from inmates. Other local bookstores including [Books on the Square](#), [Twenty Stories](#), [Symposium Books](#) and [Mary’s Paperbacks](#) have also supported us. Almost all of our books are donated, but volunteer Bob has been known to scour E-bay for deals on choice paperbacks, and Brown University’s Library Community Engagement gave us a generous sum to purchase high-demand books that we never seem to have enough of.

We were the beneficiaries of several book drives, thanks to the Imperial Court of Rhode Island at Providence charity, Bay View Academy, and Bring Joy by Reading (a nonprofit led by two local high school students). Of course, we received many ad-hoc book donations from individuals, including St. Barnabas parishioners, throughout the year. (We are always open to donations of gently used paperbacks – please check out our guidelines). Thanks to all the individuals, organizations and businesses who donated money, books, goods, goodwill and time in 2024!

Your support makes a big difference as it directly benefits incarcerated people. Whether it's a request for a dictionary or a thriller, classic, self-help, history, fantasy, graphic novel or how-to book, the heartfelt letters we receive express a desire for learning, self-improvement, mental escape and connection. It's through our generous donors and volunteers that we can answer these requests and provide incarcerated people with free reading material and a link to someone on the "outside" who cares. Please check out our [provbtb.org](http://provbtb.org) where we have posted some inmate [correspondence and art](#). These pieces are great reminders of why we do what we do.

As many of you know, by far our largest expense is postage. Most of our outgoing packages contain several paperbacks and weigh in the 2-3 lb. range. The cost to send such a package is \$6.13 and we will mail roughly 1,750 packages in 2024.

Would you please consider a year end donation to help us continue our mission? You can [donate](#) through our website, or mail a check to Providence Books through Bars, 65 University Ave. Providence, RI 02906. PBTB is a 501(c)(3) and donations are tax deductible.

Thanks for your support!

## New or Updated Information



New year, maybe new information! Have you been receiving a birthday postcard, monthly Encourager, or emails from the church (not sent out often)? If not please contact Robin in the office to make sure we have all your correct information. There are also forms on the back table if you need to update/change anything. You may drop them in the collection plate or had to an usher.