

Barnabas: apostle of the post-pandemic church?

When Barnabas came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion... --Acts 11:23

Happy St. Barnabas Day! Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic churches all celebrate the life and ministry of the apostle Barnabas on June 11th. Barnabas spread joy in the church; his preaching encouraged both the devoted and the weak; he sought reconciliation and made peace; and led by example in providing for the needs of the church. Zion is blessed to have many members, young and old, who share in the same Spirit as Barnabas! They give their time, talent and treasure; they encourage us in our ministry; they bring peace with prayer and love; and they always rejoice to see us remaining faithful to Jesus.

This year has seen many people sharing the spirit of Barnabas in response to the pandemic. Nurses staffing vaccination clinics and taking long shifts in COVID wards at hospitals; encouragers on the staff of care homes when people couldn't visit; crowd funding started from a single text to provide for tragic needs; volunteers sanitizing pews between church services; neighbours knocking on that door that hasn't opened in a week just to see how you are... No matter where we are on the three-step plan, there is a place for the spirit of Barnabas!

As we move closer together and into larger groups, as we take time to ask about our pandemic experience, as we find our way to in-person worship, as we imagine what our church will be now, we may hear many Barnabas stories, we may have many Barnabas acts to acknowledge, we may have many more Barnabases, old and young, to celebrate.

Great God, help us follow the example of Barnabas as he gave generously of himself and his substance to relieve suffering and share the Gospel, not for fame or thanks, but for you and your church. In your name we pray Lord Jesus, Amen