



**St. Thomas the Apostle Newsletter**  
**“Faith, Seeking Understanding”**  
**June 12, 2020 (St. Barnabas, Transferred)**

Three things people look for in a parish they visit are: Consistent, edifying worship, A place where they can grow, and Peace; a place where this is no tangible dysfunction or division.

Current members of a parish should want these too. They foster a spirit of unity, and allow us to return to our homes after mass and fellowship edified and filled with grace.

The Anglican Province of America is a church built upon a foundation consisting of four things: Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the Sacramental Life and the Commission our Lord Jesus gave to His Church.

Our church builds itself on this foundation not to be “old fashioned” or because it’s “stuck in the past.” She builds itself on it to prevent being “...tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine and the sleight of men...” (Ephesians 4:14) and to bring us to “...the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ...” (Ephesians 4:13). In building on this foundation, we also then provide the three things people look for in a church.

As a mission parish of the APA, the more firmly we set the foundation of our worship, works and life upon this foundation, the more likely we will be a church that has what people are looking for, and a church that has what we want for ourselves.

The world we live in is full of chaos. Much of Christianity is in this state too. The way we ground ourselves in the midst of it is to set and build ourselves upon this foundation. The more firmly we set and build ourselves upon it, the more likely we will see our faith grow deeper and stronger. It will also allow our parish to find a place of steady growth.

Let me shift metaphors here...

The part of the church building where the worshippers sit in the pews is called the nave. The reason it is so called is because some of the Church Fathers used Noah’s Ark as a type for the Church; a place where the people of God are kept safe from the storms and floods of life. In traditional church architecture, when you look up at the ceiling of the nave, it looks like the hull of a ship turned upside down.

This metaphor can be very helpful for us today, for we are no doubt sailing in some rough spiritual and cultural seas. But just like it was for Noah and his family, our faith, and the practice of that faith, can be kept safe in the midst of those rough seas. But for it to do so, we need to “abide in the ship!” (Acts 27:31). Within it there is safety. Outside of it we will be tossed about.

As vicar, I am commissioned by our bishops to “captain” this parish-ship. I am blessed to do so. While no captain can control the seas, he can control the way the ship navigates through them.

The course being charted here will be guided by Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the Sacramental Life and Christ’s Commission to the Church. These are the landmarks and stars that will be used to not just keep the ship afloat, but move it onwards through the waters.

It’s not a fast journey. The Church is a battle ship not a schooner! But it is equipped to handle rough seas and to fight off its enemies along the way. I pray you stay on (or get on) board and we can make this journey together!

*Fr. Paul*

Fr. Paul will be going to Virginia and then on to Ohio with Cyndi to visit family from June 15-26. He will be available by phone, text or e-mail during that time.

There will be no Wednesday mass on June 17 or 24. Wednesday mass will resume July 1.

There will be a mass for the Prayer Book Feast of St. Peter on Monday, June 29 at **6:00 p.m.** (The start time has been moved ½ hour earlier based on the parish survey).

The Vestry held their monthly meeting on June 10. Some of the matters discussed included:

1. Prioritizing repairs and enhancements to the parish's property.
2. Rezoning the property to allow more options for future changes to current structures or the potential building of new structures.
3. A policy for the accepting of gifts given to the parish (monetary and material) was approved and implemented.
4. It was agreed the Vestry would not fill the current vacancy and will work with four persons through the end of this year.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 15 at 6:00 p.m.

The Vestry requested for additional time to be given for receiving the parish survey. Please return them by June 28. To this point only eight surveys have been received.

A form is being sent to all parishioners and those on our mailing list requesting an update of contact information. They are being handed out at Sunday mass or sent by USPS mail. Please fill it out and return it as soon as possible. Thank you.

Wisdom from the Church Fathers:

*“Giving diligence, he proceeds, to keep the unity of the Spirit. [Ephesians 4:3] What is this unity of Spirit? In the human body there is a spirit which holds all together, though in different members. So is it also here [in the Church]; for to this end was the Spirit given, that He might unite those who are separated by race and by different manners; for old and young, rich and poor, child and youth, woman and man, and every soul become in a manner one, and more entirely so than if there were one body. For this spiritual relation is far higher than the other natural one, and the perfectness of the union more entire; because the conjunction of the soul is more perfect, inasmuch as it is both simple and uniform. And how then is this unity preserved? In the bond of peace. It is not possible for this to exist in enmity and discord. For whereas there is, says he, among you jealousy and strife, are you not carnal, and walk after the manner of men? 1 Corinthians 3:3.”*

St. John Chrysostom (Late 4<sup>th</sup> / early 5<sup>th</sup> century) Bishop and Doctor. Homily 9 on Ephesians.

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