

Saint Barnabas Episcopal Church Borrego Springs, California



Parish Profile

2680 Country Club Road
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

www.stbarnabasborregosprings.com

Who would be crazy enough to start a Church in the Desert ?



Jesus – for one.

Moses – for two.

Isaiah – for three.

John the Baptist – for four.

The Desert Fathers – for five.

***The People of Saint Barnabas,
Borrego Springs - for six***

The Desert plays a critical role in our faith and the life of the church. God gave Moses the ten commandments in the desert. Isaiah tells us the Lord will make the desert like the garden of the Lord and joy and gladness shall be found there. (Isaiah 51:3) John the Baptist began his ministry in the desert. (Matthew 3:1). The Temptation of Jesus took place in the desert. In the early Christian Church the Desert Fathers and Mothers moved to the desert to seek solitude.

Nearly two millenia later the desert is still a place that fosters spirituality, peace, solitude and faith. St Barnabas Borrego Springs offers the modern faithful the opportunity to fully experience that spirituality, peace, solitude and faith.

About Borrego Springs



Others have described Borrego Springs as “Southern California, but a world apart”. The Desert offers opportunities to experience peace, serenity and spiritual contemplation that simply do not exist in many other places.

St Barnabas is best understood as “Borregan” – formed by the Borrego community and an integral part of the community. Barnabans take this relationship with the Borrego community seriously and it was easily the most often raised topic in a recent congregational survey.

By the numbers St Barnabas is a small congregation in a small community. Although small in number, the congregation has a disproportionate presence among the leadership of the Borrego Springs community.

St Barnabas Community Involvement

As described by Rev Michael Plekon (himself a member) in his book *Community as Church, Church as Community* “The people of God at St. Barnabas have their hands in almost all the outreach that goes on in the valley—hosting and supporting a monthly food bank, volunteering in the schools in science and the arts, teaching English as a Second Language, mentoring students on their way to college, and participating in the performing arts center productions.

**“I THINK ST BARNABAS
PUNCHES ABOVE ITS
WEIGHT IN LOOKING AFTER
THE COMMUNITY”**

Survey Response

Another retired priest who is a member, George Keith, is the artistic director for the Performing Arts Center. Other members are deeply involved with music and theater productions, as well as the yearly film festival. Two retired Priests resident in the parish assist regularly with preaching and teaching. Still others are on town committees interacting with the county supervisors for the area and with local health care providers.”

The most common themes mentioned in the recent congregational survey were: (1) community focus/partnership; (2) love in action; (3) welcoming atmosphere; (4) worship; (5) fellowship; (6) love/compassion; (7) doing the work of Jesus; (8) events; and (9) tradition.

In his book *Call to Excellence: Studies of Eight West Coast Churches*, Rev. Alfred Smith devoted a chapter to St



St Barnabas Food Bank Serves the Greater Borrego Community

Barnabas. He observed that Barnabans “capture the essence of simplicity as they describe their lifestyle; sincerity as they discuss their mission; and serenity in their love for the beauty of the desert. St Barnabas gives that trinity of grace to the stranger. I found the Spirit of God alive at St Barnabas – an excellent community of angels!”

“our church is involved in almost every aspect of Borrego: the School, the Water Board, The Borrego Ministers Association, The Borrego Art Institute, The Borrego Springs Performing Arts, The Anza-Borrego State Park, The Film Festival: anything and everything that makes Borrego a vital and vibrant place to live in community.”

Survey Response

Barnabans enjoy a relationship with Jesus which inspires them to spread the gospel through words and deeds. It is no accident that the Episcopal Church in Borrego Springs is named for Barnabas who is identified in Acts 11:24 as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith” who brought “a great number of people ... to the Lord” (NIV) Along with Paul, Barnabas is referred to in scripture as one of the Apostles. Acts 14:14. Barnabas and Paul traveled together spreading the Gospel to all who would hear. In this way the Barnabans of Borrego Springs have adopted the very simple mission “to share the Love of Christ.”

Our New Rector

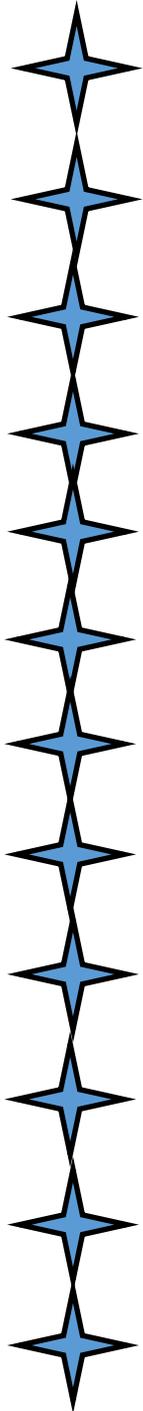
St Barnabas is currently looking for a new rector who – in the words of one survey response – will be “a good fit” for the congregation, but not “in our own image and likeness;” who can bring out the best in the parish and can further inspire us to go forth and spread the word of Jesus through prayer and good works. As stated by Fr. George Keith in a recent sermon we are looking for a Priest who brings God to the People and the People to God.

In the words attributed to St Francis, someone who can preach the Gospel, using words if necessary.

VISION STATEMENT

“As a community, we are devoted to building a harmonious, fully inclusive, group of loving Christians who are engaged, passionate and spiritually healthy. Jesus himself set an example of service, which St. Barnabas will use as the basis for making a compassionate impact in the community and the world. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit and our resourcefulness, we believe we will be able to accomplish our vision.”

Highlights



Small Desert Based Family Sized Parish

Attendance Fluctuates Seasonally

Worship Services in Episcopal Traditions using the BCP and Supplemental Liturgical Materials (SLM)

Music Ministry Featuring Professional Organist

Christian Formation/Education Serving Year-Round and Seasonal Members Through Use of In Person and Zoom Offerings

Active Lay Leader Participation in Church and Community

Congregation Cares for Each Other as if Family

Outward Looking to Community as Church

Collaborative Community Outreach with Other Borrego Churches

Congregation/Church take leading roles in Community

Beautiful Spanish Mission Style Church/Parish Hall with nearby Rectory

Financially Stable

Financial Standing

For a small church St. Barnabas is blessed to have a significant endowment. Historically St Barnabas has been able to meet Normal Annual Operating Expenses through a combination of pledges, donations and investment income without being required to reduce principal endowment or incur indebtedness. St Barnabas has historically been debt free and currently has zero debt.

Worship at St Barnabas



Worship at St Barnabas is rooted in the Episcopal/Anglican traditions. Our weekly Eucharist (every Sunday at 9:30 a.m.) generally follows Rite 2 from the Book of Common Prayer as supplemented by the Supplemental Liturgical Materials (SLM). We celebrate this in the sanctuary every Sunday and certain Holy Day from September/October through Early June. From October through June we are privileged to have an inspired organist to lead our musical celebration.

Normally, the Eucharist is held in the church but we have been experimenting with having the service in the Parish Hall in the summer with the thought of reducing electrical usage by not having to air condition the church. The summer service is informal, piano instead of organ, but hearty singing from the participants, and we use one of the alternative liturgies authorized by the Church. The small service in the Parish Hall has a more intimate feeling than Sunday Eucharist takes on a different character akin to a "Dinner Church." Sunday Service is always followed by a communal coffee/snack hour which is either in the courtyard or in the Parish Hall depending on the heat.

We are blessed to have two gifted retired priests as members of our Congregation: Father George Keith (year round) and Father Michael Plekon (November through May). Together they have over 70 years experience as parish priests. Both Fr. George and Fr. Michael assist us by conducting services and/or preaching on any given Sunday. Often one will be the principal celebrant and the other will assist and preach the sermon. Their presence and assistance has been invaluable to us during the time of transition. They have generously volunteered to assist in any way they can with worship and pastoral care during the transition period and beyond. They are both desirous and willing to continue to assist our new rector in the conduct of our worship service as may be requested thus providing invaluable backup and relief not often available in a parish of our size.

We are most grateful.



We also enjoy having special services including Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve, a procession from the palapa to the church on Palm Sunday, and, during Holy Week, we have the traditional services culminating in the Easter Vigil. On Easter Day, there is a widely attended ecumenical Easter Sunrise service on the hill behind the Methodist Church after which we have a simple communion service at our church as well as the regular 9:30 service.

The Sunday service is also available by Zoom for those who are unable to join us in person for whatever reason, from being away for the season to physical inability to make it to church or simple choice.

This virtual service is particularly important to St Barnabas as we seek to keep our seasonal parishioners connected to St Barnabas during their time away from Borrego. Fellowship follows each Sunday service with refreshments provided by parishioners. This is an opportunity to get to know some of the members of St. Barnabas and to welcome visitors. We take great pride in trying to make newcomers feel welcome.



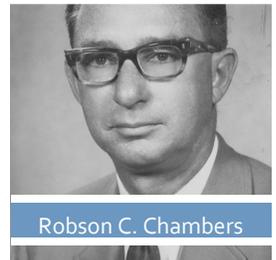
Assistant Usher at our Pet Friendly Services

Buildings and Grounds



Church and Parish Hall

Our church was designed and constructed on land donated to St. Barnabas by the Methodist Church and DiGiorgio-Burnand-Kuhrts holdings. Architectural services were donated by Robson C. Chambers—a noted architect, parishioner and member of the Vestry. The design, construction and furnishing of the church paid painstaking detail to the Spanish Mission Style which fits harmoniously with the environment and area. Ground was broken in 1984, construction began January 6, 1986 and was completed on June 21, 1986. The last window—the great window behind the altar which looks out to God’s creation with a stunning mountain desert landscape was installed on September 20, 1986.



The timing was propitious because the first service in the new church was held the following day (September 21, 1986). The 100 person capacity church was overflowing with a congregation of 126 people. The formal dedication occurred on January 4, 1987, with Rt. Rev. Charles Brinkley Morton, Bishop of the Diocese of San Diego presiding.

During construction of the church itself the Vestry unanimously agreed that it was very important to add a Parish Room with a kitchen and a small office room. This was also designed by Robson Chambers and fits seamlessly with the design of the church itself. The Parish Room is attached to the church in an L-shaped configuration which forms a perfect courtyard used for multiple events throughout the year. Later it was determined to expand the Parish Hall to add a separate office—also designed to fit seamlessly with the church and existing parish hall.

During the hot summer months the Parish Hall now serves as the site for a more intimate celebration of the Eucharist each week. This is done both to save on cooling costs during the desert summer and also because it provides for a more informal intimate celebration of the Eucharist during the summer months when attendance seasonally decreases. During the “season” the Parish Hall serves as the site for “Holy Coffee Hour”, Parish Meetings and other events.



Labyrinth



Our labyrinth is patterned after one at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. They are the 11 circuit type like the one built in the Chartres Cathedral in France during the Middle Ages.

The Labyrinth is a spiritual tool whose ultimate purpose remains what it always has been - a way to encounter the Holy. It transcends all religions and dogmas and outdistances all cultures and ideologies.

The labyrinth is a popular spot for visitors to our church as noted in the Guest Book maintained near the entrance to the labyrinth.

Rectory



The St. Barnabas Rectory is a 1,923 square foot single family home located on a ½ acre lot in Borrego Springs. The Rectory is an attractive 2 bedroom/2 bath home on .37 acres. Features large living/dining area with wood burning fireplace. The kitchen includes all appliances, new laminate flooring throughout, master bedroom with seating area, master bath, guest room and guest bath. There is a large family room/office with tile floor and separate laundry room with washer and dryer. A new furnace and AC were installed this last summer as well as a solar energy system. The home also has an evaporative cooler for use when the humidity is low (less than 25%).

Front gated entry to a front courtyard and the front door with access to the one car garage and large storage area. Two patios to enjoy star gazing in the evenings. Mature landscaping with irrigation system. Gardener included.

The Rectory is approximately a five-minute drive from the church.

Our New Rector

The desert is a unique environment which offers peace, serenity and opportunity for meditation not available everywhere. To paraphrase Frank Herbert in DUNE, God created the desert “to test the faithful” and to provide unique opportunity for spiritual life and leadership.

We are looking for our own modern day Desert Father or Mother. A Priest who will draw inspiration from the peace, serenity and spirituality of the desert. A Priest who in turn will inspire us to be better servants of God and Community: to grow in our relationship and love with Jesus and to grow in our relationship and evangelism within our community.

As one survey respondent put it – a Priest who will be a “good fit” but not necessarily “in our own image and likeness.” A Priest who can provide leadership as we strive to fulfill our Vision Statement to “build a harmonious, fully inclusive, group of loving Christians who are engaged, passionate and spiritually healthy. Jesus himself set an example of service, which St. Barnabas will use as the basis for making a compassionate impact in the community and the world.” As our own Fr. George described it at the Reception of our own Fr. Michael as a Priest in the Episcopal Church; a Priest who can bring God to the People, and the People to God.”.

We seek a collaborative leader, spiritually grounded, empathetic, open minded, tenacious, morally courageous, resilient, and community focused while also caring for the needs of the congregation; a priest who inspires by both preaching and living the Gospel to enable us to better serve God, each other and the community.

Because we are a small Parish the Priest we seek will—initially—be a part time (approximately 2/3 time). The time flexibility will enable our new Priest to achieve and maintain a healthy balance between service to the Congregation/Community and his/her own physical, spiritual and mental health and provide opportunity to pursue his/her own personal projects, hobbies, activities, or other interests.

What We Offer

St. Barnabas is a small, somewhat geographically isolated, parish completely surrounded by the Anza-Borrego Desert. Far from being oppressed or limited by the Desert Environment ST Barnabas thrives like the wildflowers which arise each year to beautify our environment. We draw our inspiration from our surroundings. We offer . . .

- † Lay leadership that is committed to work collaboratively with our rector for the greater good of God, the Parish and the Community
- † Financial stability backed by a substantial endowment for a Church of our size
- † Zero debt
- † Existing Community and Ecumenical Partnerships which enable us to provide greater service to the community than we would be able to accomplish alone
- † Flexible part time schedule to achieve proper work/personal balance and provide time to pursue your personal desires
- † Opportunity to grow into full time position along with potential Parish growth
- † Retired clergy as members of the congregation with over 70 years collective service as Parish Priests who stand ready, willing and able to provide support to our new Rector in whatever manner may be most helpful
- † Competitive Salary
- † Participation in TEC Pension Plan
- † Health Insurance Supplement in alignment with EDSD policies
- † Vacation
- † Sabbatical
- † Professional Education allowance
- † Rectory—including all utilities and gardener (\$0.00 housing expense to you)

Next Steps

If you feel this might be the right opportunity for you to continue your ministry please submit a cover letter, a completed OTM Portfolio, references and a Curriculum Vitae to the Rev. Canon Gwynn Lynch, EDSO Canon to the Ordinary at glynch@edsd.org.

Thank you for your interest in St Barnabas.

The St Barnabas Vestry and Calling Committee

