



The Good Neighbor Project

May 26, 2020

Beloved in Christ,

When Jesus offered the Summary of the Law – love God and love your neighbor as yourself – a Pharisee asked, “Who is my neighbor?” That’s when Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, who stepped up to help someone in need when others refused.

I’m pleased to announce the St. Barnabas Good Neighbor Project. Through the generosity of a handful of parishioners, we’ve mailed \$100 to every household in the parish. **Please use the enclosed \$100 to be a good neighbor.**

Like many of God’s blessings, this gift was unrequested and unexpected. However, unlike God’s gifts, this one has a few strings attached!

1. **You can’t keep the money.** *(If your family is struggling right now and this \$100 would make a difference for you, feel free to ignore these rules.)
2. **You can’t give it back to the church.** (These funds were donated specifically for this purpose, so the Good Neighbor Project is not impacting our normal operating budget in a significant way.)
3. **You have to tell us how you used it.**

The pandemic has impacted all of us in various ways: there is increased poverty, pain, sickness, loneliness, isolation, and disappointment. How can you use this money to make a difference? How can you be a good neighbor? Of course, you don’t have to spend it all in one place. Be creative! If you’ve got some extra cash to spend, feel free to add to it.

If you have a spouse or children living at home, please use this as an opportunity to pray with them and ask for God’s guidance to use these funds. Consider offering this prayer with anyone in your household as you discern how to best use this gift:

Gracious God, whose goodness knows no bounds: we thank you for the abundance of gifts you have given us, especially for _____. We thank you for our family at St. Barnabas and for this opportunity to serve our neighbors. Guide our decision-making and help us use this gift in accordance with your will. Finally, give us eyes to see your presence in all the neighbors you've given us to love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I recognize that many of us are overwhelmed right now, and this is not meant to place an increased burden on anyone. If you cannot mentally or emotionally take this on, simply pass the \$100 on to your favorite charity and you've done your bit of good.

Please let us know about your Good Neighbor experience by Thursday, June 18. There are two things I ask that you do:

- If you have the capability, please take a short cell phone video (20 seconds max) to introduce yourself and explain what you've done with the funds. Then upload the video to our Google Drive – a link will be provided in the weekly email. We intend to compile these into a video summary at the conclusion of the project.
- Please fill out the enclosed survey and mail it back to the church office. If you prefer, the same survey is also available online. The link is on our website and will be included in the weekly email.

Because of social distancing requirements, many of the ways we'd like to serve our neighbors are not currently possible. I am grateful to have this shared outreach experience and look forward to hearing about all the ways that you've impacted the community and been good neighbors.

Faithfully yours,

Fr. Alex +