

THE SAINT BARNABAS CENTER

NEWSLETTER #10

JUNE, 2024

This newsletter is being written as we approach Memorial Day and the kickoff of the summer season.

As I get older, it seems that the days, months, and years are dashing by at an ever-increasing breakneck pace. I find myself wanting to get off the rollercoaster and stop and smell the roses. I feel like it's time to savor some things without a self-imposed deadline hanging over our heads.

When Saint Barnabas Center was in the planning stage, one of the main concerns some had was how could we foster community and combat the essential loneliness of American life? I remember thinking about this when I was at the mall. They have about 20 chairs arranged back-to-back with a pole behind each chair. The poles are receptacles to plug in your phones. So here are 20 people sitting side-by-side practically touching each other. Yet they are oblivious to the people around them. I watched for ten minutes and not a word was spoken. No one acknowledged anyone else. I thought, what a great photo this would be for a Kafka novel.

In our computerized, cell-phone society, isn't it true that we text and email people more than we actually talk to them? It seems that free time has become a thing of the past. We at St. Barnabas Center are committed to *community*. Our programs are designed to bring people together to enjoy each other's company. Some have succeeded, some have failed. Where we have succeeded, we shall celebrate. Where we have failed, we shall ask for your input on how to make it better. We want your input; we want your involvement.

When we have something coming that is good and right, such as Juneteenth, we shall savor it!

EVENTS THIS MONTH:



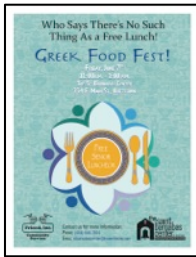
**Juneteenth – Freedom Day Celebration! Saturday, June 15,
11:30am**

Join us for “*Leaders & Liberators*” The Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem presents this event to be hosted by The Racial Justice and Reconciliation Task Force in partnership with the St. Barnabas Center in Kutztown, PA.

The program will consist of a dramatic reading, telling the story of an imagined meeting in Cape May, New Jersey on Independence Day 1872, when famed Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman met with Stephen Smith and William Whipper, courageous conductors and agents who led hundreds -possibly thousands of formerly enslaved Africans to freedom through the network of the Underground Railroad, from the 1830's through the 1850's. Following the performance there will be time for questions and answers from the actors. A celebratory BBQ lunch will be available to all attendees.

“The Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to our constitution are great things and I’m happy that they are there. They show what our country aspires to. But let’s be clear. They are words on a piece of paper. The real struggle is trying to make those words a reality in people’s lives. More that 150 years later that that struggle continues today.” – Sandy Milien

Juneteenth is the longest running annual celebration of the end of slavery in the United States. For more information on this exciting event see my interview with the Sandy Milien at the end of this newsletter.



Greek Gastronomic Delights!

Senior Luncheon – Friday, June 7, 11:00am-1:00pm

The Senior Luncheon at St. Barnabas Center is no longer Kutztown’s best-kept secret. The word has gotten out! These ladies at the Center can really cook up and serve a meal with the best of them. On the first Friday of each month the Center teams up with Friend, Inc. to provide a nutritious meal for our senior citizens. Every senior is welcome and the cost is zero. This month includes a celebration of favorite Greek delights, including chicken souvlaki, lemon roasted potatoes, Greek salad, and baklava! There will also be a vegetarian option offered. Come out for great conversation, great food and make new friends.



Community Threads – Special Planning Meeting, Thursday, June 13, 2:00 pm

Community Crafters and Community Threads have concluded their regular Thursday afternoon meetings for the ‘23-’24 season. Regular meetings will resume on September 5, meeting from 2-4 on a weekly basis.

We are however holding a special meeting on June 13 for all who wish to help plan our first ever Craft Exchange program, scheduled to occur September 28 from 10-3. It will be an opportunity for folks to get rid of excess or unused crafting materials in a give away/trade, and/ or pick up craft supplies for a new area of interest. We plan to have some craft demos happening throughout the day as well. Join us in planning to make this unique program happen! – Doreen



Chair Yoga: Every Wednesday 9:30-10:30

This class is taught by the talented Kris Amey. If you have any kind of pain or issue that prevents you from doing a regular yoga workout, then this is the class for you. I can tell you from personal experience that woman is a miracle worker. Kris teaches you to work around your issue. The first class is always free. Additional classes are a nominal charge of \$10.00 whenever you choose to attend.

KUTZTOWN OPEN TABLE

× Where Community Comes Together ×

FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 11AM-1PM – SENIOR LUNCHEON & CHAIR YOGA—EVERY WEDNESDAY, 9:30AM

St. Barnabas Center, 234 E Main St, Kutztown

This month includes a celebration of favorite Greek delights Always fabulous food, great fellowship, and free! No advance registration required. Please enter via the rear entrance.

Chair yoga with Kris Amey meets every Wednesday at 9:30AM. \$10 per class. Please enter via the rear entrance.

FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 10-11AM – BETTER WITH AGE & CHAIR YOGA—APRIL 7, 10:00AM

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS – THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 6:30PM

Kutztown Community Library, 70 Bieber Alley, Kutztown

Chair Yoga on Friday, June 7 @ 10 am. \$10 due at time of class.

Better with Age Friday, June 14 @ 10 am: Welcome to the Medicare World

Thursday, June 13 at 6:30pm –The Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival will perform *The Comedy of Errors* at the Kutztown Bandshell. Free to everyone.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 4:30-6 PM – Kutztown Kitchen

Trinity Lutheran Church, 357 W. Main Street, Kutztown

Kutztown Kitchen, a free community meal

All are welcome!

Menu TBA. Takeout available with prior reservation by Wednesday, June 19

Call Ann 484-239-5314 for takeout or questions.

Once A-Pawn A Time Chess Club

The Chess club is on hiatus for the summer. When we come back in the fall we will be looking for volunteers to help staff weekly meeting. Contact Chuck at the Center if you are interested.

Ascension Day at The Saint Barnabas Center

by Rev. Kim Adamson



On Thursday, May 9, a small group gathered to celebrate Ascension Day with a worship service followed by a joyful time of blowing bubbles outside.

In the not-too-distant past, Ascension Day was a day when all businesses closed. Even farmers did not attend to their farm duties, aside from the necessities of caring for their animals. Sewing was expressly forbidden – particularly the use of a pair of scissors!

Today, many Christians never heard of Ascension Day and even fewer have

attended worship on this sacred day. The Amish and Mennonite communities still observe this day by closing their businesses and stepping away from their farm duties to attend a meaningful worship service followed by fellowship and fun in celebration of this wondrous day.

You may be wondering, “What is Ascension Day?” It is the day that Jesus ascended into Heaven after he appeared to thousands of people following the Resurrection. It falls on the fortieth day of the Easter season and always falls on a Thursday.

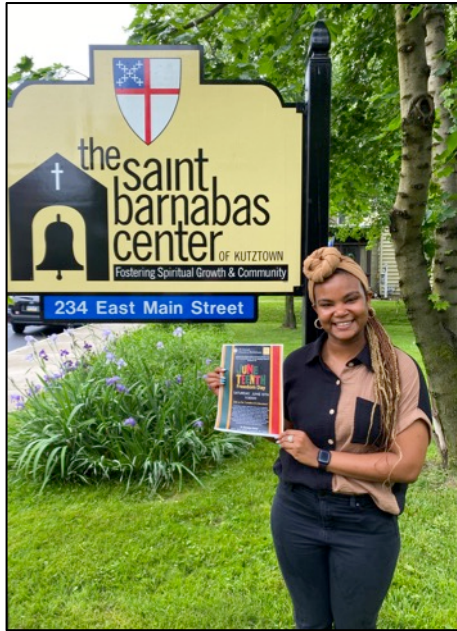
In *Acts 1:9-11a* the Ascension is described this way, Jesus “was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and [the disciples] were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?”

There are several answers to the question. The disciples wanted to savor the incredible moment. The disciples wanted to see what else might happen. You may have an answer of your own.

Whatever the reason, two angels appeared to the disciples and let them know that one day Jesus would return the same way they saw him go into Heaven, but that day was not today. The message they implied was that the disciples were not to stand about looking up at Heaven. They were not to return to the lives they knew before Jesus called them to follow him, rather they were called to continue to be the hands, feet, heart, and soul of Jesus to share the good news in the world.

That is what we are called to do, too. We are called to seek out places in our community where there are needs and seek to find ways together to meet those needs.





An interview with Sandy Milien about Juneteenth

Chuck: Welcome Sandy and thank you for giving us some of your time. You are the Chairperson of the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Task force for the Diocese of Bethlehem.

Sandy: *I am. Because of violence against people of color in the country, the Diocese decided to form a task force to address this issue. I am a co-chair of the task force.*

Chuck: I see. What would you consider your mission to be? What would you like to see accomplished by your task force in the coming years?

Sandy: *That's a great question. One of the things we would like to continue to accomplish is to create spaces for conversations. We want to create intimacies where people can share stories and experiences with people from all different backgrounds. We hope that all entities in the Diocese can model that contact. We want people to have a desire to come together to discuss*

race, gender and other issues. We want to get people sharing opinions even on things we think are difficult to talk about. Because, if we distance ourselves from everything that we find difficult to talk about, then change could not come about. God wants us to love one another. We need to establish a pathway for doing that.

Having true and honest conversations is a main goal. I think we can get there.

Chuck: Can we talk for a minute about the origins of Juneteenth? I know a General Granger of The Union Army arrived in Galveston Texas on June 19th, 1865 and announced that slaves were free and the U.S. army would enforce this. Beyond that, I haven't a clue. How did it get from there to the holiday we have today?

Sandy: *Well, I think about the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation. It's one thing to say that slaves are free and quite another for them to be free. How do the rights of being freed and receiving Citizenship rights and voting rights happen, when there doesn't seem to be a government structure in place to make it happen.*

Chuck: I wonder how word spread across America about what happened in Galveston. Observing politicians throughout history I would say most are in dire need of growing a spine. I don't see too many of them sticking their necks out.

Sandy: *There were the abolitionists.*

Chuck: True.

Sandy: Churches had a prominent roll in being the voice of justice. All churches, but African American churches in particular. Black leaders and black pastors did what they could to make this known. The church had and continues to have that role in proclaiming freedom. They spread the word about freedom in the same way they spread the gospel.

Chuck: Fredrick Douglas asked the question: "To an enslaved person what is July 4th? " Would you say that Juneteenth was the July 4th of the formerly enslaved and their families?

Sandy: *Yeah, that's great because July 4th claims independence. But independence for who? What does freedom mean for people who were still enslaved. A lot of African Americans have a special connection to June 19th as their independence day. We were enslaved for just being who we are. On June 19th we were freed. June 19th represents the beginning of the journey towards finally living as a*

free person. All African Americans are Americans. So one of those difficult conversations that we talk about is how to shift the view of July 4th for them.

Chuck: When I look at the things we put on paper in this era, I realize that putting them on paper may just be the beginning. We had the Emancipation Proclamation; then the 13th Amendment ending slavery; then the 14th amendment granting citizenship; then the 15th amendment for voting rights and holding elected office.



Sandy: That's right.

Chuck: Those Rights are not complete until this day are they?

Sandy: No! Because the sin of power is embedded in all of the things that we do. America does not want to admit its role of oppression publicly. A lot of times, I think, institutions want to write things down just to get people off their backs. But it stops there because there is no structure to build on what was written down. There is hope because without these written things we wouldn't know the rights

we are supposed to have. Even in 2024 we must continue to say that people cannot be treated badly just because of race or gender, just because of who they are.

Freedom is for everyone. And we, as followers of Jesus—that must be how we walk our lives. Yeah, those things are written. I'm glad they're written but there is so much more that needs to be done to make what is written a reality for everyone. The Episcopal Church can continue to be a beacon of change in our communities.

Chuck: Everyone knows about the legacy of Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement headquartered in the Ebenezer Baptist Church. White people knew about Selma, bus boycotts, his *I Have a Dream Speech* and the fact that near the end of his life, he had turned against the Vietnam War. I'm wondering if there is the same level of awareness among white people about Juneteenth and what it stands for.

Sandy: Not nearly enough Chuck. The knowledge of Juneteenth is limited in Americans regardless of their background. We've come to the realization of this while working in the Diocese. Even for African Americans, this has not been part of their cultural heritage or celebrations of the yearly commitment to community. Why is that? This day, which is so important in the life of this country, seems to be hidden under other things. Many don't know that it's a federal holiday. Finally, the nation gives recognition to African Americans that this is an important day. I think there is a lot of education that needs to happen in our country. The church is a great way for people to create spaces to learn about such important things. This church is diverse and maybe that gives us a platform on this issue. Maybe in the secular world it is not known as a day of freedom and justice. We can change that perception.

Chuck: How in the world did the St. Barnabas Center get chosen as the site for this year's celebration?

Sandy: Doreen Tobin came to the office a couple of months ago. She had come to a celebration that celebrated the first African American Episcopal Priest. She said she would like to partner with our task force. So I kept that in mind. The actors that are coming were supposed to be at our Gather 24 event, but couldn't because of the date. So I called Doreen and asked her if we could use St. Barnabas to celebrate Juneteenth. It was a Holy Spirit moment after a great conversation with Doreen!

Chuck: What can people expect to see when they come here on June 15th?

Sandy: It's an imaginary reenactment between Harriet Tubman, an abolitionist who helped enslaved folk through the Underground Railroad. The conversation is with two abolitionists who moved slaves to freedom. Expect powerful interpretation, expect singing, expect to be transported to a different time in our history. We will discuss how we take what happens here and use it in our own communities. How to we take the bigger message of freedom to our churches and communities. Expect food, celebration and a good time!

Chuck: What would you like the audience at the St. Barnabas Center to take home with them after the celebration?

Sandy: *Umm. That's good. I want them to feel that this is a day that must be celebrated no matter what day of the week it falls on. Freedom for everyone should be in the forefront of their minds. We hope they open their hearts and let the Holy Spirit in.*

Chuck: On behalf of St. Barnabas, we thank you for all that you do.

Sandy: *Thank you for welcoming us.*



Till next month,

Chuck

My name is Chuck Brown. I am the facilities manager of the Center. You can speak to me about any activity or issue concerning the Center or offer suggestions for programs you think would work for the Center. I am in the office Monday through Thursday from 10:00am -12:00 noon. If you call at other times, leave a message and I will answer you during our office hours. The Center phone number is 484-648-2814 or email stbarnabascenter@hometownu.com.

Visit us at the St. Barnabas Community Center Website at
<http://www.stbarnabasktown.org>.

We value your privacy. Contact us at stbarnabascenter@hometownu.com if you wish to be removed from our mailing list.