

ST. BARNABAS CHURCH OF THE DEAF -- ABOUT OUR NAME

St. Barnabas is among the oldest congregations of the deaf, having been founded as a result of the missionary efforts of Thomas Gallaudet. Regular services began in 1897 for what was then known as the Washington Mission, and in 1909 the congregation took its name from the St. Barnabas Chapel of Trinity Church, where services were held at the time, and was called St. Barnabas Mission for the Congregation of Deaf People. The name kept changing among three names: St. Barnabas Mission for the Deaf, St. Barnabas Mission to the Deaf and St. Barnabas Mission of the Deaf. In 1985 a conscious decision was made to settle on its name being St. Barnabas Mission of the Deaf. Today, most congregations of the deaf participate in the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf and use the name “church” rather than “mission” to convey the congregational nature of their work.

On November 7, 2003, Diocesan Council resolved that the name of St. Barnabas Mission of the Deaf be changed to St. Barnabas Episcopal Church of the Deaf and that this name change does not alter the fact that St. Barnabas will continue to operate as an organized mission under the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Washington.

On June 26 2005, the St. Barnabas’ Mission Committee met with Canon to the Ordinary Paul Cooney to clarify some of the terminology such as mission versus parish. A Canon to the Ordinary serves as a sort of lawyer for the diocese. Paul explained that in the Episcopal Church there are three kinds of congregations: Mission, Parish, and Cathedral. A mission is a church of the diocese, or a church of the bishop. A parish is a self-supporting separate corporation. A cathedral is the one parish in any diocese where the Bishop is seated.

Each type of congregation has its own type of clergy. Every member of the Episcopal Church is equal; the different titles have to do with custom, not status.

The Bishop wants to make it clear that regardless of the name “mission” or “church” that St. Barnabas’ is a *permanent* congregation of the diocese.

Rudy Hines pointed out that unlike other missions, we serve the whole diocese. (Our members come from several Maryland counties and several quadrants of D.C.)

The role of bishop is a role of oversight. Paul said that Bishop Chane sees oversight as support: the Bishop is there to support the work of the Vicar and the Mission Committee.

Congregation	Mission (a church of the Bishop; clergy employed by the Diocese)	Parish (clergy employed by the church – example St. John’s Norwood, our host church)	Cathedral (ours is the National Cathedral)
Clergy	Vicar	Rector	Dean
Governing Body	Mission Committee	Vestry	Chapter