

## **Barre Congregational Church**

April 21, 2024: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ **Fourth Sunday of Easter**~

***“We are called to love in truth and action.”***

Our services can be found on our website at [www.barrechurch.com](http://www.barrechurch.com) and Facebook page.

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### **Scripture Reading: 1 John 3 v 16 - 24**

#### **I. Introduction:**

A very special person told me a while ago, that when you make a quilt and you see all these pieces of fabric in front of you, they all look different, but when you put them together, they make a beautiful quilt. You may not like this or that piece so much, she said, but when they are assembled with all the other pieces of fabric, they look just right. Her message to me was that we all are different, and we may not like this or that about the other, but when we come together and discover who the other one is, we learn from one another, and can become more devoted and loving to one another. Her message emphasized love for one another, even though it is not always easy, and I will always remember that. So, what is John teaching us this week?

#### **II. We are called to love in truth and action:**

John, in his letter to the churches in Asia Minor, reminded them of what they were taught about the life of Christ, as they were attempting to build their congregations to become stronger in their faith. The true mark of their faith must be the love of God as stipulated in the commandment of God, to love one another as God loved them. This is an old commandment, he states in verse 11, and then cautioned them not to be like Cain, who, filled with hatred, murdered his brother Abel, but to love the way Christ loved them, by laying down His life for them. The love Christ had for them and for this world was a love of sacrifice, selfless, a love that sees the other as more important than Him and His own life. His sacrifice was a sacrifice within God's plan, because from God's perspective nothing else worked to bring humanity back to God. Jesus Christ was sent into this world as an example of love and truth in action, but He would not be accepted by those who crucified Him.

Instead, they would actively resist Him and His message. There are forces of good and evil in this world, and they need to remember that, says John.

Let us not love with words or tongue, John continues, but with actions and in truth. To love the way Christ loved them was a love in truth and in deed. John is not asking them to give up their lives, but to demonstrate the love they have for one another in the recognizing of the needs around them, and the giving of material goods to those in need. To love the way Christ did, was to not be indifferent to those who need love and compassion and care.

There will be those who will tell you not to care, but that is not what Christ taught you; no, He taught us all to care from the depths of our hearts, and to show it in truth and action.

### **III. Conclusion:**

The word of John and from Christ comes to us this morning in a very clear and simple manner. We are called to love one another the way Christ loved us. We are called to reach out in loving kindness, in a supportive manner, and in the building up of one another and our church. We are called to feed the hungry, to care for the poor, to visit the sick. We are called to recognize evil in this world, around us and beyond our homes and communities, and show the world a different way of being. And so, this morning on the Fourth Sunday of Easter we must ask God again, what shall I do? Where do you send me? What shall I say?

John ends his passage in verse 24, by promising us that Christ lives in us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who gives us the capacity to do what we are called to do.

Whatever we feel called to do, we will be supported by the Holy Spirit of God. May God's Spirit guide us all in our call to love one another, and may we also remember the message of this dear friend who speaks to us this morning about being like a quilt together in this world. She recently passed away, but in her life, she showed love and care in words and in action. We must love and care for one another and include one another and learn from one another in the Body of Christ and in this world. May God help and bless. Amen.