

Barre Congregational Church

October 20, 2024: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ **Twenty second Sunday after Pentecost**~

Second Stewardship Sunday

“We are Grateful to God...”

Our services can be found on our website at www.barrechurch.com

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3 v 12 - 17

I. Introduction:

Some of us had the privilege to be raised by our biological parents, and some of us may have been adopted by caring parents; some of us may have lost a parent or both in life, and some of us may have been raised by an adult in the family, an aunt or uncle, or grandparents. Then there are some of us who have been in foster homes or have had to find ways to be in this life without the care of an adult. Whatever our circumstances are or were, somewhere in life, I hope, we have found someone, an adult person or persons, who have gone out of their way to love us, and care for us... And those are the people whom we are grateful for in this life for loving us, holding us close, listening to us, counseling us, guiding us and setting us on our way to live a life that is meaningful and filled with hope, and not despair. Whoever these people are or were in our lives, who gave us their all, in their own brokenness, we have the opportunity to thank them for what they have done for us.

II. We are Grateful to God:

I was contemplating this, in reading this letter from Paul to the Colossians, where he counsels the congregation about their behaviors, but at the same time encouraging them to always be thankful to God. He urged them to rid themselves from the things that are not acceptable in God's eyes, such as anger, rage, malice, slander and so forth, and instead, to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. And then he tells them more than once to be thankful to God, to be a thankful people, and to show

their gratitude towards God for all that God has done for them. They have received their sanctification through the greatest gift of all, which is the gift of God's Son, who died for them and their sins. This Son of God came from the bosom of God to this earth to love, show compassion for humanity, teach, minister and heal the sick and the brokenhearted. And so, he called them to be thankful and to submit to the Lordship of God, and God's Son. God, our heavenly Parent, sent us God's only Son, to be our Brother, our Lord, our Friend and more. Paul then tells them to let the word of Christ dwell in them richly, and to teach and admonish one another with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Through their singing and worshipping they acknowledge their dependence on God's grace through Christ.

III. Conclusion:

While we show our gratitude to the ones who have cared for us in this life, the church of God is the place where we come together as a community of faith to express our gratitude for God's love, blessings, mercy and compassion in our lives. We come in humility to thank God for all of this, and to be renewed every time together as a community of faith. We are broken people who need God's help for our own salvation, our healing, and our inner restoration. We are blessed to have a God who listens when we pray, and who comforts us when we are heartbroken. And so... we come together to worship God through teaching and learning and singing together. In gratitude we build our church together in love, peace, kindness and humility, and we rid ourselves from the things that hurt God and others. This is the heart of the child of God that makes God happy. We must never take for granted God's love for us, and our church, which is a gift from God, with Jesus Christ as the Head. May God help us to always look to God for everything, in humility and gratitude. Amen