

## Barre Congregational Church

March 13, 2022: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ Second Sunday in Lent and Memorial lighting of candles for our deceased loved ones

*“Under Jesus’ Wings”*

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

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### Scripture Reading: Luke 13 v 31-35

#### I. Introduction:

I’m sure we are all looking forward to the arrival of Spring, just to shake off the cold of winter from our bones and to feel the warmth of the sun on our faces, our arms and legs. Spring is such a lovely time of year, with so much life and color. One of the wonderful gifts of Spring is our ability to observe and appreciate the birds as they emerge full of life and sounds and beauty. To see a mamma bird protecting her little ones, is awesome. There is tenderness and power in these beautiful creatures. Their wings are made to protect, and to fly, full of power and strength. Those of you who have chickens know how a hen can be protective over her chicks. And so, it is significant to observe Jesus’ reference to the hen and her chicks when He addresses Jerusalem in our passage. Let’s have a look.

#### II. Introduction:

On this second Sunday of Lent, we are being taken back to Jesus’ interaction with the Pharisees, whom we know have not been very sympathetic to His message of the Good News. In their view, He came to make trouble for them. His claim that He was sent by God to bring Good News to the poor and the outcast in the Temple in Nazareth, and all His travels where He continues to spread this message, was a challenge for their religious authority. Even Herod was interested in the miracles Jesus performed, but certainly not because He would have approved of it. We see how Herod and Pilate later on became friends in Luke Chapter 23 after he ridiculed and mocked Him and sent Him back to Pilate before His crucifixion. Jesus was not going to be deceived by the warnings of the Pharisees to leave town. He was also not afraid of Herod, but called him a fox, which in His time referred to someone who was insignificant and weak. He wanted them to tell Herod that

He is here to heal people and to drive out demons. He has a mission to fulfil, and no one will prevent Him from doing just that.

### **III. Under Jesus' Wings:**

And so, we see Jesus being very frustrated by Jerusalem's zeal to kill the prophets who speak on behalf of Yahweh, and cannot see the love of God for them, for all the world. They are not giving Him a chance to be who He was sent to be, the Messiah Who speaks of salvation and forgiveness of sins, and who cares for everyone who crosses His path. This kind of compassion that transformed the lives of the outcasts and restored their lives and their dignity, is not in the interest of the leadership and institutions of Jesus' time, and so any prophet who would be spreading this kind of message would be a threat. Jesus was a threat to them and their authority.

Jesus then cried out, "How often have I longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" We have seen in the Old Testament imagery how Yahweh's protective symbols are being explained as a shelter, a tent or a rock, (Psalm 27) and to take refuge in the shadow of God's wings in Psalm 57, and in Psalm 91 v 4, "He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge..." It is in God's nature to reach out, to be protective, to have compassion and to be in our lives in the way a hen is with her chicks, caring and loving. It couldn't be that bad, right? But they weren't interested, instead they are out to kill the prophets who are trying to be helpful. What the people of Israel perhaps did not understand, and what the leaders in Jerusalem refused to hear, was that God knew of the dangers of the wilderness journey and sent the prophets so they could hear and be prepared for the dangers to come. In our passage Jesus warns Jerusalem of the doom that will come to them. The One who came to show a way of grace, and unconditional love, is being rejected, and their lack of interest in His person and message, would lead to their own destruction, He says, and their constant rejection and persecution would take Him on a journey to the cross.

### **IV. Conclusion:**

During this time of Lent, where we remember Jesus' journey to the cross, we can be assured that He understands suffering of the worst kind, and His offer of protection under

His wings, stands all the time. As we remember our loved ones this morning, through the beautiful lighting of these candles, we can be like little children, saying I am here, Lord. I need to be under those warm, and powerful wings of yours, holding me tight. I need to feel the tender feathers which wipe away my tears and stroke my cheeks. I need You Lord. Here I am Lord, under Your wings. May God grant us the lightness of being as we go through our own struggles, and may we feel that lightness like a beautiful sunny Spring morning. Amen