

Barre Congregational Church

October 30, 2022: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ **Twenty first Sunday after Pentecost** ~

“Growing Together”

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

Scripture Reading: Acts 2 v 42 - 47

I. Introduction:

To watch something grow, like a plant, a small animal, especially a house pet, can be a wonderful experience. I hear so many parents say how amazing it is to have a child and to see them grow into wonderful little human beings. There are so many things to learn about the development of a child, their physical, emotional, psychological growth, and their other developments and needs as they grow up. The same goes for relationships of different kinds...there is the beginning of getting to know one another, then there are the growing pains, the ups and downs, and then the settling in in most cases. At other times, relationships break up, because they are so hard and complicated to work out for those involved. Then of course there is the growing together in our relationships in workplaces and especially our church, which is our focus here this morning.

II. We are called to grow together in Christ

We are closing our Stewardship month with the theme, *Growing Together*, reminded that God is with us as a congregation, blessing us with so many gifts and talents as we serve God and one another. We are here because we need God in our personal lives and as a community of faith, being in relationship with one another. The Book of Acts Chapter 2 speaks to us in a special way about the early church's devotion to the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, and the breaking of bread and prayer. It speaks about the sharing with one another according to their needs and eating together in each other's homes with glad and sincere hearts, and praising God. It is a beautiful picture of communities of faith being with one another and growing together. Life within the congregation was a life with Christ as the Saviour of their lives, and as the Head of the church, which was, and is the

Body of Christ. It is in that spirit that they would gather, constantly learning about Christ's message of love and forgiveness and the ministry to others. That was the core of their identity as a church, growing in Christ and growing together as children of God, praying together, worshipping together and breaking bread together in their community and in their homes. These elements of gathering, worshipping, and praying and breaking bread together were essential for their growth as a church or churches. One could not exist without the other. The church then, and now, would and could not exist and flourish without these different aspects they are called to do and to be.

It was not always that easy though, because as time went by, the day-to-day activities and different opinions over various issues became part of the life of these congregations. The apostles therefore felt the need to remind the various churches about their calling as God's children, to stay focused on Christ as the head of the church, and to love one another despite their differences and the challenges they faced.

III. Conclusion

These churches initially experienced the joy of being together like a newborn baby in a young family, or a newly formed relationship between two people. All is well and rosy at the beginning, and then the sleepless nights for young parents, or the challenges a new relationship brings, and it takes a good partnership to make things work and grow together. We are also aware of the challenges our church and many other churches face today, as we come together as different people from different households and persuasions about how things should be, especially when decisions have to be made, and also the many societal pressures and problems we face. One thing is clear that we all are trying our best as we come to church, work and serve and worshipping together. We all have our gifts and talents, and we are all flawed children of God, under the grace of God. But we are here and we receive God's love and the presence of the Holy Spirit to love and to serve, to listen to one another, honor and respect one another, and as we do, no matter the differences, we grow together.

May God helps us on our journey together and help us during good times and the not so good times, to live together, love together, pray together, and grow together. Amen