

Sermon – Proper 21 – Year “C” – September 25, 2016
Saint Barnabas Church, Bainbridge Island, Washington

Who is just inside the gates of our corporate life at Saint Barnabas? Who is already here, searching for meaning, looking for support?

Children in need of Christian education; lonely in need of fellowship; the ill in need of prayers and chicken soup; and all of us who need support as we travel through the various stages of life
We have our troubles; we have needs – but to many outside our gates, we look like rich men and women, dressed in purple – who feast sumptuously at coffee hour & fellowship dinners

Who is outside the gate, out beyond the turn into our parking lot? There are needs - and there is suffering - beyond our fellowship

Abused men, women and children who need a safe place to go
Addicts who need support to make drastic changes in habits
Un-employed and under employed adults who need hope and help in procuring better jobs
Syrian refugees who need new homes in a foreign land
Our Latino gardeners and house cleaners who live under constant threat of deportation

Pay Ten-Shun

Power is the underling issue in today’s lessons. Who has power? The rich man. Where is power wielded? In private circles where most cannot observe. To what end is power used? To an enjoyment of life, expressed in eating rich food, in a luxurious setting with friends and family of equal social standing.

In a 2012 article in The Guardian, Robert Caro wrote: “Power doesn’t always corrupt. Power can cleanse. What I believe is always true about power is that power always reveals.”

Think about that: power doesn’t always corrupt. Think about using power reveal, to help, even to heal.

Power is expressed in money. The more money one has, the more power one has. Money is also a metaphor for what we value. And we value power, especially having power to make change.

Because of their establishment with royal households and governments, Christian communities traditionally have held significant power to meet the needs and attempt to heal the suffering of the world in two places

Here at the church

Programs

Out in the world

Micro Loans - \$500 for equipment for embroidery in Afghanistan (women:women)

“Uncle” from 7th ward went to Baton Rouge

At Saint Barnabas we are rich in good will, rich in the joy of our celebrations (coffee hour, fellowship events) – some lead the way with their rich faith – some lead the way with a richness of making beautiful music – some lead the way with skills in leadership positions (vestry, property maintenance, programs of Christian Education)

Meeting the needs and attempting to heal the suffering of the world has happened through worship and programs here at church and through gifts to the world beyond our walls. Both programs and gifts require money in the economy of our times. How we use money reveals what we value.

The rich man is not expected to give up his riches but he is expected out of his riches to care for the starving beggar at his gate.

We are stewards, both individually and as a fellowship, of our building and of our money. Many people who worshipped here before us helped us become who we are today. Our history and our presence on Bainbridge Island is rich and dynamic. Well-intentioned men and women have built Saint Barnabas into the church it is today. What will do each year shapes the Saint Barnabas of the future.?

Personal stories from Ric Cedarwall and Maggie Ball

This is the time in the church year when we look at our stewardship of our resources and make plans through a budget for our ministry in the next year.

The Christian tradition urges people to tithe to their local worshipping community – that is how we acquire the financial resources to meet needs and to effect positive change. I am encouraging you to prayerfully consider making a tithe to Saint Barnabas. If that seems impossible, I encourage you to move towards tithing over the next five years.

Five Reasons to Tithe

1. **Ancient Model** - (Genesis 28:10-22) and Episcopal Norm (General Convention Resolutions since 1982)
2. **Trust in God** – As an act of thanks, tithing strengthens faith and builds trust in God
3. **Financial Wisdom** – Discourages debt and encourages disciplined financial management
4. **Ministry Support** – Provides adequate financial support for the work God calls us to do
5. **Congregational Strength** – Strengthens ministry, health, and community of congregations

At Saint Barnabas, we have a physical place, a lovely middle aged brick building, where needs and ways to meet those needs come together.

That is what churches do: meet needs in a spirit of love, rooted in a God who calls us into life-giving relationships.

Think about shared well-being. Think about how each of us depends upon so many others for life.

Christ gives us the power to notice and reveal truths about the world outside our gate. And Christ gives us the power to make cleansing changes, changes that heal and give life.

Stewardship Semonette – Ric Cederwall – 9/25/2016

This morning I would like to talk briefly with you about stewardship and the history of this Place called St. Barnabas and the Community of faith that IS St. Barnabas. This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of laying the cornerstone of the building we are in. What a milestone! We celebrate seven decades of parishioners committing their personal resources of money, time, and energy to support the journey of this church – its place and its people. They (we) have been good stewards, and today we enjoy the fruits of their labors and commitment.

Let me share my part of that history. This is my HOME church where my spiritual life was nurtured. I first came here over 60 years ago. My family had summered over on the island since 1948 (no bridge back then), and then we moved over year round in 1955. The Kroehl family introduced us to St. Barnabas. I remember looking up the bricks in this arch – some things never change. Fr. Gowen used to preach from this spot, and lay readers like Walt Woodward would read the lessons on their assigned Sundays. I remember the mothers like Ann Powel watching over us children like Babe and me. But some things are a little different. The altar was up against the east wall, and Fr. Gowen would say the Eucharistic prayers facing that wall. The communion rail was up there, as well. The organ console was behind me on this side where Mrs. Harvey played and directed the choir, who sat in pews on the other side. I used to sing soprano in the adult choir until puberty brought me down to the tenor section with George Trask. And, we used to do all of our activities in the one-story building attached to this one – there was no two-story Parish Hall. So, although some things have changed, it is still that wonderful church set on a hill above Eagle Harbor.

But then my life journey took me away from the island for over 40 years. College, time in the Navy, and my research career took me all over the country. I belonged to many churches. I learned about coming to a new church and finding a way to BELONG. Usually it was by singing in the choir. But part of it was by supporting the church financially – making that commitment. Belonging to the church gave support to my spiritual journey, and, in response, supporting the church gave me a sense of belonging – I was part of the community of faith in that place. Most of the time, I was only there a few years, but the last time before coming here, it was for 25 years in Livermore, California. I experienced the full range of stewardship that involved not just a pledge but also commitment of my time and talents. Besides singing in the choir, I was also on the Vestry twice, serving as both Junior and Senior Warden, ran a couple of stewardship campaigns, taught adult classes to support the growth of lay ministry, and participated in Outreach to the community around us. I tell you this because it was during that time that I lived fully into being a part of a Parish.

Twelve years ago, I returned to Bainbridge Island, with Donna (a native Californian who loves it here) and was looking forward to belonging, once again, to my home church. We arrived the Sunday before Fr. Joseph left. This was a surprise and a disappointment, since we would come to church when we visited family here each year. We went to Grace for a couple of Sundays but we felt called to be at St. Barnabas, so we committed to being part of this church during its time of transition. It had its rough patches, and there was need of much healing. Fr. Don Maddox helped that healing, and prepared us for the arrival of Dennis and Grace. So much has happened since then to make this place what it is today.

We are a healthy and vibrant community of faith. Our facilities, which are in excellent condition, support not only our spiritual journeys as individuals and as a congregation, but also support many important activities of the community around us. We are good stewards of this place, carrying forward what has been passed on to us.

I would like to close with this thought. In his last sermon, Dennis talked about DUTY and LOVE. Stewardship for me is a duty that comes with belonging. But it is not duty alone – it is also done out of love. I love this place and its people – it is a spiritual home for me.

2017 Stewardship Campaign Launch

Good Morning!

When I returned to St. Barnabas after a refreshing summer vacation, I said a little prayer along the lines of "Lord, I'm here. What do you want me to do?" Within the hour, Virginia took me to one side at coffee time and asked me to Co-Chair the Stewardship Campaign. Well I asked for it, didn't I! I must be a glutton for punishment, so here I am and along with my gracious Co-Chair Ric Cedarwall and we will do our best to serve you over the coming weeks. Barbara, our lovely librarian, gave me this book – One Minute Stewardship Sermons, Communicating the Stewardship Message Every Sunday of the year. This isn't quite what I signed up for! With your help we can wrap up this 2017 stewardship campaign in six weeks.

St. Barnabas has been my parish home since mid-November 1992, over a third of my life, and I've been reflecting on all that has happened during this time for our community and for me personally on my spiritual journey. Nancy asked me to tell you about what St. Barnabas means to me and I hardly know where to begin. Please let me know if I'm exceeding my allotted three minutes!

My life has been deeply enriched by being part of this community. When I first arrived here with my two children who were 9 and 11 years old, we were immediately welcomed and I felt at home in the beautiful intimate sanctuary with strong Anglican roots. My children, Hazel and Thomas, grew into young adults here before heading off to college. They participated in the children's choir and musicals, and both served as acolytes. They had friends here and I loved that there were several adults, notably Joseph, Joyce, Webster, Marilyn and Biagio who took time to talk to them as equals and always asked after them when they were gone. I was delighted when Hazel and Justin chose St. Barnabas for their wedding and what a joyful day we had in March 2010.

I joined the choir in January 1993 and having been brought up with Anglican vocal traditions, I love it. Music is so important to me and feeds my soul. Singing is how I worship best and connects me deeply in a way that words cannot describe. We are so blessed to have Paul at our helm, enjoying him as an outstanding musician and choral director with his grace and a great sense of humor. His sensitivity and choice of music appropriate to the liturgy is extraordinary. Paul is a rock and through all the ups and downs in this community, his strength and the continuity of the music here have been a mainstay for me and I am so appreciative.

As most of you know, another of my passions is quilting. In 2004, I answered the call for help from a Mongolian woman with a vision of setting up a Quilting Center in Ulaanbaatar for low income and unemployed women. I have been to Mongolia four times to teach quilting and mentor Selenge Tserendash, the Director of the Center. I'll resist the temptation to talk to you for the next hour about this! Suffice to say that St. Barnabas embraced this project and for the last 12 years has been the non-profit host donating the book keeping of the pass-through account for all the funds raised in the USA, (Julie, you are awesome). This is an incredible outreach gift and this congregation has been unwavering in its support for which I am immensely grateful. During this time, we have sent over \$210,000 to

Mongolia, \$85,000 of which was used in 2008 to purchase a permanent facility with a retail space, classroom and office. Without your blessings and contributions, none of this would have been possible. This project has touched the lives of literally 100's of Mongolian women.

I am involved in the healing ministry. I was the first Reiki recipient here at St. Barnabas and later trained with Ric and Sally to become a Reiki Minister. Participation in this program continues to be very beneficial to me and has made me more aware of God's divine loving and healing energy that is abundant and surrounds us all the time.

I have also served on the Vestry and was honored to be Dennis' Senior Warden in 2011 which was a rich and rewarding experience.

So, as you can tell, St. Barnabas means a great deal to me and occupies a special place in my heart. I know that St. Barnabas is a safe place to be one's self. When I come here, I feel the love of this parish family who have nurtured me and supported me in times of joy, times of sorrow and times of transition. In Dennis' last sermon to us, I think he nailed it when he spoke of the importance of two 4-lettered words – duty and love. It is our duty to be good stewards of our precious community however we are able, volunteering and pledging our financial support to ensure the continuation of God's work here. Let us do this together with love, joy, and gratitude. Amen.