

Chris Murphy
November 19th, 2023
Colossians 3: 12-17
Sermon Title: Hearts of Gratitude

Prayer...

Introduction:

I love the holiday season. When I think of Thanksgiving I remember time with family, especially in California visiting my Aunt Kathy, Uncle Bill, and my cousins Brian and Brenda... Nice for Karen to get a chance to experience that family Thanksgiving when we were newly married. Now we are blessed to have Thanksgiving with our own family, including our daughters Cate and Chiara.

Reflect on the Apostle Paul's letter to Colossians and the specific message from Colossians 3: 12-17 that describes a thriving church.

Reflect specifically on gratitude.

Give sample of the spiritual practice of gratitude. Highlight Sarah Blondin.

Share thoughts from Randy Woodley and the good news about Barbie's Village.

Rev. Dr. Randy Woodley Quote:

Settler folks must be educated to realize that Thanksgiving in America didn't begin with the Pilgrims. For thousands of years many feasts of thanksgiving have been characteristic of all our Indian tribes. This phenomenon continues today. Settler-immigrants should reorient their thinking to view that First Thanksgiving as the first opportunity for them to join millennial old traditions among America's Indigenous peoples to thank God, who was already present before they arrived, and thank the

land upon which they were living. They should view the Plymouth feast as the land welcoming them, and as a result an opportunity to express gratitude to all creation, especially those plants and animals that provided the feast and extended their lives another day. They should see themselves as good guests of the Host Peoples of America and rethink their social posture with more humility.

I'm not advocating that Indians replace our current traditional feasts and celebrations with the dominant Thanksgiving holiday, but rather that we add it to our list of current celebrations. Why should we give up any type of festival of thanksgiving? Everything we have comes from the good Mother Earth and the Great Apportioner God. We should always give thanks for everything! I feel our indigenous ancestors would agree with this. Our tribal ancestors woke up every morning and gave thanks to Creator and the land. Our old ones celebrated these days with vigor and gratefulness for life! How then, can I wake up on the day that is

designated "Thanksgiving," or any other day for that matter, and not express my gratitude in the best way possible?

Our elders knew that many of the "Christian" settlers did not act like the Jesus whom they claimed to represent. They also knew that in our histories we shared times of peace and friendship that reflected something better than unhappier times. Without ignoring the centuries of injustice, together, we should celebrate those times of friendship and build upon them. After all, isn't the point of a myth to set a good narrative that can be built upon in the present? To me, this is the point of Thanksgiving. It is a time to share stories of both joy and pain and still be thankful for all life. Thanksgiving is a time for us all to share our mutual humanity. If we can use the Thanksgiving holiday as narrative for peace and friendship, then let's build upon that part of the myth without ignoring the historical truth of the big picture.

Barbie's Village – Laurelhurst Church Property

The project is named after Barbie Shields, a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and dedicated natural helper – a role central to the mission of **Future Generations Collaborative** – who worked with the organization for five years to address public health disparities in the Indigenous community, particularly among those experiencing houselessness on their homelands.

This was something Shields and her family understood first hand.

Kenneth Shields, Barbie's husband, said the couple experienced homelessness early in their marriage, when they had young children.

Because of that experience, Shields, Anishinaabe and Sioux, said it was Barbie's vision to create a safe place for Indigenous families with small children to begin their journey to collectively repair and heal from

homelessness and the lasting impacts of colonization. (Tiny Home Village).

“That was always one of Barbie’s concerns – wanting to help our people that were living on the streets,” said **Jillene Joseph, executive director for the Native Wellness Institute and a partner with the Future Generations Collaborative.** “She always felt how ironic it was for Native people to be homeless on their own homelands.”

But she didn’t live to see her vision come to life. In 2018, Barbie Shields died after suffering a brain aneurysm. She left behind her husband, her four children and her community.

May we as a church community walk in gratitude as we celebrate the Thanksgiving season!

Let us pray...

Colossians 3:12-17

New International Version

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.