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JOHN WINTHROP AND OUR LEGACY

"We must be knit together, in this work, as one person. We must entertain each other in familial affection. We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others' necessities."

Our legacy in the Congregational church tradition and the city of Boston traces back to the Puritans who created the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. It is a legacy of important ideas and values that have proven difficult to realize.

"We must delight in each other; make others' conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us."

John Winthrop, one of the leaders of the time, expressed the ideals of this new community of Puritans in an address that he gave aboard their ship, the Arbella. "A model of Christian Charity," quoted above and below, describes a colony that will seek to be governed by God's covenant. It will be, he says, a "city on a hill," so that it may be an example to the people back home in England. But, he warns, if they fail to model Christian charity, then they have lost the center.

"Now the only way to avoid this shipwreck, and to provide for our posterity, is to follow the counsel of Micah, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God."

They made many mistakes, and they were snared within the prejudices of their day, but they founded a legacy – that's us! – charged with the responsibility and freedom to do better, by the grace of God.

Peace,

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Senior Minister