

**BLESSINGS ALWAYS**  
**September 17, 2020**  
**Association Minister Message**  
**Rev. Daniel L. Busch**

*TENSION*. There is nothing new about dealing with *TENSION*. Our Biblical and societal ancestors encountered it. Today in this pandemic time there is an underlying *TENSION* that gnaws at us in ways that stresses relationships with one another and in our personal inner self. One of our hymns declares *"It is well with my soul..."* but is it? Is it well with our lives or our living? Is it well with encountering crowds or practicing safe-distancing, choosing or not choosing to wear a mask? Is it well with your financial resources or mental, physical and spiritual health?

Jesus' parable in Matthew 21 is filled with *TENSION* because all workers received the same pay no matter when they were hired during the day. In the parable the landowner said, *"Call the workers and give them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and moving on finally to the first."* (vs. 8). All received the same wage, as agreed upon when hired, and those who had worked all day grumbled and thought it was not fair. It was not well with the workers and *TENSION* ruined the day's work for them. The landowner responds, *"Don't I have the right to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or are you resentful because I'm generous?"* (vs. 15). The *TENSION* in the parable is the contrast of generosity (*sharing*) versus privilege (*what I deserve*). Generosity expresses compassion, concern and care; privilege conveys self-interest and greediness.

We have been blessed abundantly by God's generosity of nourishment for our minds, bodies and souls, not because of our worthiness but because God's grace accepts us with unconditional love. First or last, we are members of God's family—no exception, no distinction. *"So those who are last will be first. And those who are first will be last."* (vs. 16). *"When we let go and let God"* it is well with our lives. As God journeys with us, *TENSION* of these days has no power over us. God blesses us with abundant living in all circumstances and in whatever we encounter. Thanks be to God! BLESSINGS ALWAYS.