

## BLESSINGS ALWAYS

April 14, 2021

Association Minister Message

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*“GHOSTLY SCENE/SEEN.” “Jesus himself stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ They were terrified and afraid. They thought they were seeing a ghost.” (Luke 24:36b-37.)* We all seem to be bothered by ghosts. Scrooge certainly met ghosts of past, present and future. Either as individuals or nation or world family, past histories influence our living today as either blessings or curses. We have to deal with those ghosts to be open to a future with all God-inspired possibilities. There are pleasant memories of joyful times with family and friends that inspire us to be relational people wanting the best for those around us. There are those who have been damaged by abusive relationships or racial discrimination that have led to low self-esteem or disrespect by those who have misused their privilege of power. Until these *GHOSTLY SCENES* are acknowledged or recognized (*GHOSTLY SEEN*), abuse and discrimination will continue to destroy humanity and the world.

When Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, scripture reminds us that they were *“terrified and afraid”* and *“thought they were seeing a ghost.”* We might think how dare they have doubts and fears. Had they not been listening to Jesus for three years and not believing what He said would happen? We should not condemn the disciples so harshly because we have our own doubts and fears about faith. When we encounter news or even are touched by all the atrocities enacted on people around the world, we might wonder where is God to eliminate the evils that are happening in our lives or elsewhere. The disciples may have encountered the earthly Christ but not experienced the resurrected Christ in themselves as a transformational moment. Again, it took them from Easter to Pentecost—50 days—to be transformed, made new, empowered to receive the resurrection faith themselves. Doubt and fear are not opposites of faith, for they are often ways to encounter and explore the holy with all its potential for abundant living.

We continue to be drawn into a faith of resurrection hope that is experienced now and future. John writes, *“You are witnesses of these things.” (John 24:48.)* *GHOSTLY SCENES* are the conditions we encounter. *GHOSTLY SEEN* enables us to understand the ghosts for what they are. The disciples encountered a ghost who became Jesus the embodiment of resurrection power. Jesus enabled them and enables us to share the Good News of unconditional love, forgiveness and hope. *“God has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator” (UCC Statement of Faith, Moss version).* God through Jesus Christ with the Spirit inspires us to proclaim our *“ALLELUIAS”* for *“Christ IS Risen...INDEED.”* *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*