

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

July 21, 2021

Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

FRAGMENTS/LEFTOVERS. ("Gather up the *FRAGMENTS/LEFTOVER* pieces, so that nothing may be lost/wasted.") (John 6:12). Two different translations expand understandings of Jesus' words. There are so many stories about crowds following Jesus just to see what Jesus was doing, not following Him and listening to His message that would change their hearts, minds and souls. Knowing this, Jesus still had compassion on the crowd. They were His guests and good hosts would offer hospitality by feeding them. The disciples knew that it would take at least "six month wages" to buy bread for the crowd.

Surprisingly it was a boy who provided his five barley loaves and two fish for a miracle that fed 5000 people. *FRAGMENTS* (NRSV) indicate that the pieces are broken from or identified as part of something larger. *LEFTOVERS* (CEB) on the other hand have identity on their own, a surplus or as someone noted, an "*inheritance*." If we focus only on the five loaves and two fish, we miss the abundance what five loaves become. The miracle is that after everyone had their fill, there were twelve baskets full of bread collected, more than originally distributed. It is more than investment strategy, more than obtaining interest on deposits. The miracle is knowing that abundance can be found in acts of generosity, compassion and care.

So many in our society and the world's population are *FRAGMENTS* or *LEFTOVERS*. Their lives are broken, not really part of a community by their own thoughts of unworthiness or inflicted upon them by others who consider them inferior. So many people live on the fringes because of their spirituality, color, language, physical or mental condition, orientation or economic condition. Jesus reminds us by His ministry, even the least are the greatest in His Realm. Jesus speaks boldly that *FRAGMENTS* or *LEFTOVERS* have value when Jesus has the disciples gather up what was left over, "so that nothing may be lost/wasted." The miracle becomes affirmation of all God's children. Again I remind you of the UCC statement, "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." **BLESSINGS ALWAYS.**