

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

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NEW. "See, I am making all things NEW." (Revelation 21:5). Resurrection faith reminds us that God is not finished with us yet. The reverberations of the Good News of *"Christ is risen...Christ is risen INDEED"* changed the first disciples from disciples (*"followers"*) to apostles (*witnesses/leaders*). The disciples had been in Jesus' *"classroom"* for three years, observing and being instructed about God's Spirit that makes life and living *NEW*. For fifty days they hid fearing being discovered by the religious and political authorities, fearing persecution and possible death. Jesus appeared in their hiding places and they still did not fully comprehend the power of the resurrection.

We, too, wrestle with life issues behind closed doors, the places of escape from the demands of the day. What controls us, divides us and diminishes us? Who are we really and who are we to others. Where are the locked doors of our hearts that prevent us from becoming agents to *"turn the world upside down"* away from the evil that destroys us and God's world? Locked doors of our hearts are the hiding places that prevent us from being engaged in ministry, service and mission. It is wrestling with fears and hopes, doubts and certainty, limitations and possibilities. Rev. Henry William Fosdick wrote, *"Fear imprisons, faith liberates. Fear paralyzes, faith empowers. Fear disheartens, faith encourages."* Resurrection calls us to open the doors and live outside and beyond the closed doors. God is making us *NEW*, making all things *NEW*. It is being led by God's Spirit as the prophet Isaiah proclaimed, *"to bring good news to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to those who are bound."*

When Jesus met the disciples behind closed doors where they were more comfortable than on the streets. He instructed them to leave their locked house and sent them out to engage in ministry. Jesus turned over ministry to them—AND TO US. It is our turn to do ministry. We are called out of our tombs, out from behind closed and locked doors to be people of the resurrection in acts of kindness, generosity, embracing all God's children, loving God with our hearts, minds and souls, and loving our neighbors as we would want to be loved. God IS making all things *NEW* in us, through us and with us. God empowers us to *"turn the world upside down."* BLESSINGS ALWAYS.