

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

May 25, 2022

Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

ONE. “...that they all may all be *ONE*.” (John 17:20). Rev. Dr. Louis H. Gunnemann published a book in 1987, “*United and Uniting: The Meaning of an Ecclesial Journey*”. He describes the surprising survival of the United Church of Christ in its first 30 years with all its diversity of faith understanding, membership, and governance (polity). The UCC claims, first of all, that Christ is head of the church and we seek to find the Christ in each other and be Christ-bearers (Christians) to others in word and deed. Dr. Gunnemann also reminds the UCC that it has a task to be a church in the spirit of people who will always be uniting into God’s future. God is not done with us yet. In this season of searching and doubt that leads to resurrection, we together find union with Christ everywhere. Just like the first disciples, it took them 50 days of searching and dealing with their doubts and fears to affirm on the day Pentecost resurrection was alive and life-changing. We continue to proclaim that message that “*Christ is risen...Christ is risen INDEED.*”

The UCC in its merger journey took to heart the passage from John, “...that they all may be *ONE*.” *ONE* but not the same. *ONE* in all its diversity. *ONE* yet respect for different faith expressions and faith understandings. We are united and uniting because we are *ONE* in Christ. Individual identity is recognized within the Body of Christ that together becomes a fellowship gathered around a Table of Christ filled with grace, love and peace. Yes, we agree to disagree with respect for *ONE* another to the honor and glory of God. It is our covenant understanding in the UCC that brings us together. It takes all of us together to do ministries and missions. *ONE* for all and all for *ONE* is a saying that reflects what covenant means.

We are so blessed by all who give of their time, talents and treasures to the Body of Christ. Generosity of *ONE* together with others can become the possibility for societal change, correcting inequalities, changing habits and stopping warring conflicts. *ONE* is the loneliest numbers (Harry Nilsson’s song), but when two or three are gathered in Christ’s name the Spirit of God is a powerful force. As Dr. Gunnemann wrote, we continue to be on “*ecclesial journey*” into God’s future of unlimited possibilities. A hymn reminds us that we are “*ONE in the spirit*” because “*they (those who observe us) will know us by our love.*” The gift of unity, with all its diversity, is Jesus’ gift to us, “...that they all may be *ONE*.” Life is sacred and together we are loved. “*No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.*” **BLESSINGS ALWAYS.**