

## BLESSINGS ALWAYS

July 20, 2022

Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

*PRAYER...CONVERSATION. "Lord, teach us to PRAY, as John taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1).* Jesus responded by what we know as the *Lord's PRAYER* and Luke's version is the "short one." Why *PRAY*? What do you ask for when you *PRAY*? Are *PRAYERS* answered as you desire? How often do you *PRAY*? Are your *PRAYERS* just about you?

One tradition of our historical churches of the United Church of Christ was using a catechism for confirmation classes—questions with answers and scriptures to learn about the Christian faith. The assignment was to memorize the questions and answers for recitation during confirmation class. *The Evangelical Catechism, The Heidelberg Catechism, and Catechisms* of other heritages of the UCC used the catechism form. One question, #105 from the *Evangelical Catechism* has shaped my *PRAYER* life. The question is, "What is *PRAYER*?" Answer: "*PRAYER is the CONVERSATION of the heart with God for the purpose of praising God, asking God to supply our needs and those of others, and thanking God for all God gives us. It is a sigh. It is sometimes speechless. It can be subversive. It is unafraid to lift its voice amid the pyramids of indifference and the vast deserts of conformity to evil that take our breath away.*"

So many books, sermons, and studies have focused and reflected on defining *PRAYER*, or about "how to *PRAY*." So many liturgical *PRAYERS* have been written for community worship and personal meditation. Often pastors are considered the "paid" *PRAY-ERS*. Ask someone to *PRAY* at a meeting and excuses are sometime made not to be the *PRAY-ER*. The most important part of the *CATECHISM* answer is the word *CONVERSATION*. So often we get caught up with stringing the "right" words together or worry about what others might say about our *PRAYERS*. *PRAYING* can be in thought, word, deed, instantaneous or planned. *CONVERSATION* fills *PRAYER* with grace and love, forgiveness and hope, comfort and strength. So often we bring to God our "lists, demands, or wishes," forgetting that *CONVERSATION* involves listening to God, others, and sounds/silences all around us. *CONVERSATION* is speaking and listening to the movement of God's Spirit in our lives and in the world. *PRAYER'S* response is love and care. Jesus words on *PRAYER* are to "Ask...search/seek...knock...and receive." Is it well with your *PRAYER* life? *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*