

## **BLESSINGS ALWAYS**

November 23, 2022

Association Minister Message

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*HOPE. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4).* We begin the Advent Season with *HOPE*, dreams, and thoughts that the world's people will find peace in relationships and compassion with one another. Several years ago Rev. Amin Hooker wrote, *"Why are we still playing war? The God we service is a God of peace. It is a great reminder that we are supposed to be people of peace and joy."*

The news of wars and rumors of war continues to be a way of life for many people. Weapons of mass destruction continue to be built that threaten and destroy human lives and the environment. Indiscriminate killings destroy life. Again, we seek *HOPE* for changes of hearts, attitudes, and actions for the healing of the nations to find the transformational ways of love. It takes more than words of *HOPE* to make a difference. It is grasping *HOPE'S* power and embracing *HOPE'S* possibilities that all people in the world are affirmed as children of God. It is a matter of prioritizing and using resources for peaceful purposes rather than for war or killings. It is using the resources of earth for productive and peaceful purposes.

Isaiah proclaims that peace is God's ultimate goal and God's *HOPE* for us is to be peace-makers. There is *HOPE* for abundant living. It is amazing how humans have made progress in so many fields such as food production, solar energy, and technologies that allow us to talk and see each other around the world. Progress has been made in controlling and even eliminating some diseases. Advances in medical procedures heal the body. Transportation alternatives allow us to go anywhere in the world in a short time. It is time to realize and embrace God's peace in our world and in our own lives. When *HOPE* is embraced, God's peace is realized.

Advent is preparation time for celebrating Christ's birth. *"Because of Christ we not only have HOPE, but we believe that good is stronger than evil. God wants us to work for good in this world."* (UCC Book of Worship, p. 171). Let us be embrace and live God's *HOPE*. **BLESSINGS ALWAYS.**