

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

JANUARY 18, 2023

Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

FOLLOW. “Jesus said, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’” (Matthew 4:19). We FOLLOW family, friends, teams, stock market, TV series, politicians, elections, medical advances, diet: all affect us and have an effect on our behavior or understanding. We can FOLLOW the advice of someone or program that makes us better persons and enables positive changes in our lives. Or, we can fight or ignore suggested ways because we are satisfied with who we are. Without change our living can be compromised and not lived as God intends life to be.

The church calendar reminds us that we are in the Season of Epiphany, the season of the coming of light to us and in us. Jesus in one week is changed from baby to adult being baptized, calling FOLLOWERS, and leading His FOLLOWERS to share the Good News of God’s transforming power. The familiar passage from Matthew 4 is about Jesus recruiting FOLLOWERS to share ministry with Him. Fishers of fish became fishers of people. Soon tax collectors became affirmers of the spiritual wealth within persons and physicians of the body became caretakers of both the human and divine. Our United Church of Christ “Statement of Faith” declares, “God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin...God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship...” It is knowing “God as the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1). It is affirming God’s presence to sustain us in joys and sorrows, sickness and health, plenty and want.

We cannot be just FOLLOWERS. When Jesus called His disciples, He taught, trained, and invited them to give testimony to FOLLOW Him and share the Good News of God’s Salvation with others. Peter, Andrew, James, and John left everything to FOLLOW Jesus to share the message of the Resurrection Faith “of forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in that Realm which has no end.” (UCCSF). FOLLOWING Jesus affirms in us that we are God’s “beloved.” With God’s help we can make a difference in the world. We are called to FOLLOW and become proclaimers of God’s incarnation in the world. BLESSINGS ALWAYS.