

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

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CHOSEN. “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights...” (Isaiah 42:1). “And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’” (Matthew 3:17). In schools, teachers select ‘captains’ to form teams who will compete against each other about subject matter or as a sports competition for awards. If the competition is about a subject, first to be *CHOSEN* are the “*smart ones*.” If it is an athletic competition, the first to be *CHOSEN* are the strongest or most athletic. There are some who want to be with a certain captain, friend, or team and speak up saying “*CHOOSE me*.” It is very disappointing for those *CHOSEN* last because they feel that no one wanted them, they do not fit in, do not have many friends, or are considered non-athletic or non-intellectual persons of the class.

Scriptures remind us about God *CHOOSING* a people and affirming Jesus as *CHOSEN*, “*the Beloved*.” God also affirms that we are *BELOVED* to be witnesses to the transforming power of God. It is God *CHOOSING* us, not last, but always as part of God’s team of love, “*with whom I am well pleased*.” God affirms and accepts us for who we are, loving and embracing us, recognizing us not just as children of God, but identifying us as being part of God’s-self.

The Church celebrates Jesus’ baptism this Sunday and it is a time for us to reaffirm our own baptisms. Baptism is not some magic protection from evil, but rather it becomes God walking with us, holding us in both good and evil times. It is God calling us “*Beloved, with whom I am well pleased*.” We struggle being saints and sinners at the same time. No matter what, God is with us surrounding us with love even when we reject or turn from God. We are *CHOSEN* by God, forgiven, transformed, and blessed abundantly. God calls us to share our blessings with one another to make this world as God would intend it to be. God declares in Isaiah, “*See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare...*” (42:9). God has *CHOSEN* us as “*BELOVED*.” Thanks be to God. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS*.