

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

May 10, 2023

Association Minister Message

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LOVE. "Those who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them." (John 14:21). The UCC calendar for Sunday, May 14, 2023, has the theme *"Witness of LOVE."* How is *LOVE* witnessed in our lives and communities? Are there limits to *LOVE*? What intention does someone have when telling someone else *"I LOVE you."* Is the statement heartfelt or for selfish desires? John Lennon of the Beatles wrote *"All you need is LOVE"* in 1967, especially for *"Our World,"* the first televised satellite link that connected 25 countries worldwide. The Beatles were expressing optimism of *LOVE* among all the people of the world. The word *LOVE* was repeated over and over again, being the response to *"There's nothing you can do that can't be done...Nothing you can make that can't be made...There's nothing you know that isn't known...All you need is LOVE."*

Jesus shows us the way of *LOVE* by both His words and deeds. *LOVE* is powerful and transforming in our lives when we include, forgive, and share with one another. Jesus embraced outcasts and included them as children of God to be *LOVED* and cared for unconditionally. As we continue in the Easter Season, we are reminded that even death cannot stop the plans and purposes of God. We are resurrection people, for Jesus' *LOVE* brings abundant blessings that offer peace and justice for all the world's people. It has been said that *LOVE* is a gift that keeps on giving and the more *LOVE* you give away the more *LOVE* you have to bless one another.

LOVE is both giving graciously and receiving graciously. *LOVE* is God's Spirit of transformation that is living resurrection's power in our lives that conquers hatred and indifference. In Jesus Christ, we find out we are *LOVED* by God to *LOVE* one another. Jared E. Alcantara, professor of preaching states, *"Deep relationships are built on reciprocity. A new friend will tell you what you want to hear. A best friend will tell you what you need to hear...An admirer stands in awe and appreciation. A disciple follows in LOVE and obedience."* Jesus' words are more than saying we *LOVE* Him and the world: it is doing acts of *LOVE*. **BLESSING ALWAYS.**