

## BLESSINGS ALWAYS

May 17, 2023

Association Minister Message

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*NAME. (Jesus prayed:) "I have made your NAME known to those whom you gave me from the world." (John 17:6).* Symbolically at a service of baptism, the officiant asks, *"What is the NAME given this child?"* Of course we all know the *NAME* of the child and God knows the *NAME*, too. Giving *NAMES* and having a certain *NAME* identifies a person to others and connects someone with a certain family. Some *NAMES* are reflections of a family member, a close friend, or to remember a special someone. *NAMES* help us form relationships and *NAMES* help us identify the reputation, good or bad, of one who carries a certain *NAME*. Many *NAMES* given to Biblical persons often identified certain characteristics of that person's life. For instance, Adam derives from the noun *"adamah"* means *"earth, soil, red"* reflecting being created from the earth. The angel tells Joseph to *NAME* the baby *"Jesus"* which infers salvation. We read in Proverbs 22:1, *"A good NAME is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold."* *NAMES* give identity to a person's relationship to others. Who are we to others or what kind of reputation do we have when our *NAMES* are recognized by others?

Jesus says that His message was to make God known to the world. It was His calling to be God's messenger of hope, love, transformation, and salvation. In Jesus we find a reflection of the goodness of God and how life should be lived as God created it to be. Again, returning to our baptisms, in us God is well-pleased and calls us to witness to living life with actions that share, care, and love as God's beloved. Jesus' mission was, in some ways, to re-introduce God to the world as creator, comforter, sustainer, and giver of life in its abundance and generosity. God's *NAME* is synonymous with both power and gentleness. Our ancestral Jewish communities could not say God's *NAME* because God was so holy. Some words spoken today use God's *NAME* flippantly and derogatorily. Jesus said that He and God are one, a relationship of union of doing God's bidding and given gifts and graces both human and divine. To know God's *NAME* is to know God in relationship that reveals God embracing us as God's beloved in the community of faith. *BLESSING ALWAYS.*