

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

August 9, 2023

Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

OTHER SIDE. “Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the *OTHER SIDE*, while he dismissed the crowds.” (Matthew 14:22). What an amazing symbolism of the *OTHER SIDE*. Jesus had just heard about his cousin’s John’s (the Baptist) death, tried to get away from everyone to deal with His grief, was found by a large crowd, preached to them, performed a miracle by “feeding five thousand men, besides women and children” (14:21), and then again tried to have some alone time “up the mountain” to pray. Soon a storm arose and the disciples in their boats encountered danger from the storm. Jesus appears walking on water and the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus calls Peter to walk to Him, but when Peter “noticed the strong wind” he begins to sink. Jesus reaches out, takes Peter’s hand, and rescues him.

The *OTHER SIDE*. Like the disciples, we fear offering assistance to help those in need (*feeding the crowd*), or lose hope in the midst of inspiration (*Peter not staying focused on Jesus*). Conflicts with family and friends often happen because parties in conflicts are not open to the opinions of *OTHER SIDES*. There are conflicts today due to partisan, political, and religious unmovable opinions. “Don’t present me with the facts; my mind’s made up.” So much misinformation is part of discussions that does not consider the *OTHER SIDE* of issues. Truth seems a variable commodity, often with facts manipulated to support positions. There is complicity by those involved in questionable acts or crimes to justify violence that hurt or destroy relationships. Disagreements can be solved when there is respect to and from *OTHER SIDES*.

Peter, when he trusted Jesus reached the *OTHER SIDE* where he was saved from sinking. Jesus calls us to live resurrection as the *OTHER SIDE* of death, fear, and hopelessness. As the 23rd Psalm reminds us, it is God who “prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies.” God calls us to unconditionally love and welcome those who are hungering and thirsting for justice, peace, and love for their minds, bodies, and spirits. There is room for all on the *OTHER SIDE* where we all gather together around Christ’s Table to receive God’s Spirit of inclusion and unconditional love. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS*.