

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

UNITY. “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in *UNITY!*” (*Psalm 133:1*). *UNITY* does not imply the same. It is living in covenant with one another, agreeing to disagree with respect, and being able to share faith in all of its diversity to the honor and glory of God. *UNITY* is both personal and communal. In politics and church meetings, when a vote is taken based on majority rules, dissention happens as it becomes the winners verses losers. The majority dominates without taking into account opposing views or even considering looking at issues from different perspectives. This can become conflictual and leads to fractural conditions. The United Church of Christ historically expanded the words from the Psalm and included Jesus’ prayer words found in John 17:20-21 (“*that all may be one*”) as a model for *UNITY* for the community of faith with all its diversity.

There can be a different way of discovering *UNITY*, for example, when consensus voting is used. It is agreeing that divergent opinions are heard with respect for both individual and community concerns. Even Jesus Himself sought *UNITY* by understanding and including diversity from His followers. What a motley group of disciples Jesus had around Him, more than twelve, both men and women as His confidants and students. Jesus never gave up on them and it was His acceptance of them in all their bickering that the church has survived for almost 2000 years. Even in the midst of chaos in our own lives and the world, we are called to be kindred who “*live together in UNITY.*”

UNITY is the power to forgive, reconcile, and love one another to be the community of extravagant welcome and inclusion. *UNITY* is finding common purpose for peace and justice in the midst of confusing and disheartening news. *UNITY* is intentionality with both word and deed to care and love friend and foe alike. *UNITY* is seeing and affirming the Christ who empowers the resurrection spirit personally and in others, confirming that we are all God’s beloved as created in the image of God. *UNITY*, is, again, not the same, but together reflecting God’s great tapestry of amazing variety of gifts and graces that are shared and received as miracles for and to one another. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*