

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

November 1, 2023

Association Minister Message

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PARTNERS. "The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted." (Matthew 23:11-12). November 1st was *All Saints Day* and depending upon different faith traditions, *Saints* are/can be both dead and living. We often describe our faith journey as living and struggling as both saint and sinner. Some traditions determine making saints after a person has lived and died a life of faith of inspiration to the honor and glory of God. Living saints live a lifestyle of compassion, generosity, kindness, and unconditional love.

Jesus' words in Matthew remind us that faith is a *PARTNERSHIP* with God, others, and ourselves. Servanthood is not imprisonment or slavery: it is caring and helping others in their needs and concerns for comfort, healing, hunger, learning, economics, and spirituality—respectfully. It takes *PARTNERS* to change lives and living situations. A humbled life recognizes the Creator God as the giver and sustainer of life, believing God is willing to *PARTNER* with God's creation, providing blessings generously and abundantly. When we *PARTNER* with God and with one another, peace, justice, and fairness happen and together we bring God's Realm into the here and now, not as some reward at the end of life.

We are living in extremely terrifying times: wars, mistrust, self-love, self-admiring prioritizing ways of living and self-sufficiency. We struggle with fears, doubts, and hopelessness. Saints remind us of life's journey as promise and fulfillment. It is about *PARTNERING* with one another in acts of care and affirming one another as all being created in the image of God. Saints are those who show us the Word of God in powerful humility and we recognize the Spirit of God and abundant living in them, with them, and through them. We are *PARTNERS* living the resurrection faith that makes all things new—forgiven, reconciled, and embraced by God forever. When we *PARTNER* together for "*justice and mercy and faith*" (vs. 23), we give hope to being the saints of God, as a hymn declares, "*For the saints of God are just folk like me, And I mean to be one too.*" **BLESSINGS ALWAYS.**