

## **BLESSINGS ALWAYS**

November 29, 2023

Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

*HOPE.* “Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to I say to all: Keep awake.” (Mark 13:35-36). Worry sometimes overwhelms us. We are concerned about our families, paying bills, not having enough time to get everything done we need to do, worry about contentiousness in our families, communities, and world. Wars between nations and faith communities are troubling. The lack of respect for opposing opinions, attitudes, and beliefs causes divisions, hatred, and fears. It is frustrating when conflicts claim to be God-driven or God-inspired, especially when lives are tortured or killed. Is not all of life sacred and holy? Is there *HOPE* for resolution or peaceful co-existence?

Advent is the opening season of the church calendar year, a season that prepares us for the birth of Jesus, the Christ-child. The first Sunday of Advent’s theme is *HOPE*. Where is the *HOPE* for a world of justice when narcissism, greed, and power are forces causing conflict? How do we resist the powers of evil or seem to be the lone voice for *HOPE* for the world that is struggling to understand that we all are God’s family? We are created in God’s image and given gifts and graces from God that should embrace each other with *HOPE* of love that makes all things new as the family or community of God?

In the devotional book “*EMERGE Blessings & Rituals for Unsheltering,*” Rev. Molly Baskette writes, “*Bless the anger and the irritation. Bless the gratitude and the joy-sparks. Bless the compassion and the selfishness, the fear and the courage, the gloom and the HOPE, the listlessness and the purposeful action. Bless the love in my life, and bless the distance—emotional and physical—between those I would reunite with. Bless the stress, and bless the serenity.*” We need each other to live each day as a gift from God. God is with us and we are never alone. The journey of life is made easier when we together support and care for one another. *HOPE* opens the way to the future with peace, love, joy, and good news. **BLESSINGS ALWAYS.**