

## **BLESSINGS ALWAYS**

October 23, 2024

Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

*SUFFERING*. The lectionary for this Sunday looks at *SUFFERING* from different perspectives. (Read Job 42:1-6, 10-17; Psalm 34:1-8, 19-22; Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52.) The Abrahamic traditions are perplexed with the suffering of Job, the sarcasm of his friends, his realization of evil that continually challenges him, and finally the great abundance he has, not as a reward, but as a sign of his faithfulness to God. The Psalm writer poises insights of relationships with God in the contradictions of pain and deliverance, suffering and healing. The writer of Hebrews presents Jesus as the "*High Priest*" who gives a vision of holiness that can lift us out of all our weaknesses. Mark's words show mercy that leads to healing.

*SUFFERING* can be physical, mental, and spiritual, tangible or imaginable. The hurricanes are bringing physical *SUFFERING* along its paths of high winds and overwhelming rain. News reports show destruction in the Near East and in the Ukraine. There is fear of the use of lethal weapons that have the capacity to destroy the world. Words have a way of causing *SUFFERING* when used to condemn family, neighbors, communities, and nations. Misuse of spiritual gifts can destroy individuals as well as social and ethnic groups by intimidation, condemnation, and not telling the truth.

As people of faith, we always have words of assurance, goodness, redemption, and hope. The psalmist declares, "*I sought the Lord, and God answered me and delivered me from all my fears.... O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in God.*" (34: 4, 8). Jesus asked the blind man what He could do for him. He answered, "*Teacher, I want to see,*" and his sight was restored. We need healing (*VISION*) physically, mentally, and spiritually from our *SUFFERINGS*. God calls us to be partners to change all that would destroy life with God's vision to live life as God intends it to be. We are not God and need "*an attitude adjustment*" to find "*refuge*" (Psalm 34) in God to live as resurrected people. "*Go; your faith has made you well.*" (Mark 10:52). *BLESSINGS ALWAYS*.