

BLESSINGS ALWAYS
February 19, 2025
Association Minister Message
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FRET. “Do not *FRET* because...” (*Psalms 37*). Other words for *FRET* are upset, worry, and fuss. Parents *FRET* at times when children are hurt, sick, in pain, or mistreated by other children. Parenting has many joys, sorrows, anger, frustrations, celebrations, and exhaustion while watching and supporting children growing up, often too fast or not fast enough. In the faith community, there is *FRETTING* over money matters, membership statistics, and faith interpretations.

Words of faith, particularly from the Bible, remind us that God is our refuge, rescues us, and offers ways of calm in times of *FRETTING*. Looking closely at this Sunday’s lectionary readings, there is an unstated theme of people of faith agonizing over matters that cause conflict. In Genesis 45, after being sold into slavery and becoming powerful in Egypt, Joseph is reconciled with his brothers when they come to Egypt to get food. The brothers *FRET*, fearing retribution from Joseph, but Joseph embraced them with love. Joseph helped Egypt survive a famine, and the act of reconciliation saved his family. In 1st Corinthians 15, there is *FRETTING* over the understanding of resurrection with its powerful spirit of eternalness. In Luke 6, Jesus preaches the power of love, compassion, and forgiveness that overcomes the hassles of condemnation. These passages enlighten us to understand power as gifts of compassion, forgiveness, and love in action.

The psalmist’s images are affirming: “Trust in the Lord and do good...Take delight in the Lord (enjoy the Lord).” Trusting God does not necessarily mean that all is fine, but that God will be with us in all conditions of life. God never abandons us, and *FRETTING* does not have the last word. Fear does not affirm us because it is only concerned with chaos. God’s unconditional love for us changes us and offers embrace in times of estrangement. A whole new world opens up to us when we love our enemies, do good to those who hate, curse, and mistreat us. God calls us to be instruments for good, turning *FRETTING* into service and compassion, hatred into love, peace, and justice, and separation into reunion. **BLESSINGS ALWAYS.**