

BLESSINGS ALWAYS  
March 19, 2025  
Association Minister Message  
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*MERCY.* While living in Pennsylvania, nearby were several Amish and Mennonite communities. They had their own way of doing things, including choosing or rejecting “*certain modern technologies.*” One sad event happened when a so-called *drifter/stranger* stopped at a local Amish school house, shot and randomly killed a grade school child and ran away. Later, after being found, the man was put on trial and convicted of the killing. At the conclusion of the court session, the judge gave the family time to make any comment, The parents responded by telling the man that they forgave him. It became nation-wide news of the parents forgiving the man. Various news organizations contacted the parents as they were leaving the Court House asking why they would forgive the man. The parents stated that their Christian faith taught them to have *MERCY*, even though the pain of losing a child was overwhelming. If they did not offer *MERCY*, the anger they would have toward the man would become life-draining and gnaw at them making their lives miserable. Their faith taught them that they would not be able to receive forgiveness for acts/sins they had done if they could not forgive someone else.

Jesus told a parable of planting a fig tree that had not produced fruit in three years. The owner says, “*Look, I’ve come looking for fruit on this fig tree for the past three years, and I’ve never found any. Cut it down! Why should it continue depleting the soil’s nutrients?*” (Luke 13:7). The gardener pleads with the owner to give it “*one more year...*” The gardener saw potential in the tree. How often have we been given *MERCY*, one more chance to turn things around? Failure, disappointment, collapse, and letdown time and time again. Yet God never gives up on us, others encourage us, and the possibility of renewal and purpose can offer a “*harvest.*” The Lenten Season is a journey to receive hope, love and resurrection. The words of Frederick William Faber’s hymn declare, “*There’s a wideness in God’s MERCY, like wideness of the sea; there’s a kindness in God’s justice, which is more than liberty...If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God’s word; and our lives would show thanksgiving for the goodness of our God.*” BLESSINGS ALWAYS.