

BLESSINGS ALWAYS
March 26, 2025
Association Minister Message
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RECONCILIATION. No longer is trust a significant part of the dialogue with one another, for mistrust has oozed into public conversation and causes controversy. Rather than having respect and a willingness to work together, discussions begin with mistrust of families, community groups, religious organizations, and politicians fearing loss of power, possessions, and prestige. There is fear and a lack of trust as benefits, services, assistance for people's physical and mental concerns, environmental issues, and international relationships are being curtailed.

One of the most familiar scriptures is the parable from Luke 15 called "*The Parable of the Prodigal Son*," "*The Parable of the Two Brothers*," "*Lost Son*," "*Loving Father*," or "*Forgiving Father*." Jesus begins by saying, "*There was a man who had two sons.*" (Luke 15:11). The younger one demands his inheritance immediately and runs off, squanders the money, and eventually journeys back home. Dr. Peter S. Hawkins, theologian writes, "*An empty belly, not remorse, sends him back to his father.*" The older brother is angry because his father gives his brother on his return a great feast, including the "*fatted calf*" symbolizing highest honor. The father's emotions of losing a son and rejoicing that his son returned, is both celebration and torture for the family. The father *RECONCILES* with the returning son, while the brother is tormented and jealous, not willing to any *RECONCILIATION*. He judges the brother a robber of some of the family fortune, a wasteful spender, AND not "*earning*" his inheritance like he had worked so hard to do.

Each story character has strengths and flaws, but compassion was lacking and not a unifying factor in their relationships. The father's compassion welcomed his son back and there was *RECONCILIATION*. This is one parable that there is no resolution of knowing if the brothers *RECONCILED* or not. Did they even sit down together at the banquet? In all the divisiveness that touches our lives, are we willing to do ministries of healing, peace, justice, and extravagant welcome? We, too, are the prodigal, "*lost and has been found.*" (vs. 32). No matter how *Prodigal* we or others are, we all are invited to come to God's feast of extravagant generosity, forgiveness, and love to be *RECONCILED*. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS*.