

BLESSINGS ALWAYS
May 21, 2025
Association Minister Message
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CALLING. Several years ago when Covid caused shutdowns and great fear, a prayer was shared from the Order of the Jesuits entitled “*A Prayer for Our Uncertain Times.*” In that prayer was a reminder that even in uncertain times “...let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.” No matter what is happening today, we need each other in trying times as well as soothing times.

In this week’s lectionary reading from Acts 16, Saint Paul had a vision that urged him, “*Come over to Macedonia and help us!*” (Acts 16:9). An important ministry of the church is responding and helping those in need. In our United Church of Christ “*Statement of Faith,*” we believe that “*God CALLS us into the church...to be servants in the service of the whole human family.*” God *CALLS* not just authorized members to ministry: we are *CALLED* to ministry to “...save all from aimlessness and sin,...” as well as celebrate life that is filled with amazing gifts and graces to share with one another.

Women were important leaders (pastorally, financially, and hospitably) of the missionary endeavors of the early Christian Church. We often overlook that women were also part of the disciples who followed Jesus and gave the first testimony of the resurrection of Jesus. When Paul arrived in Macedonia, he sat down with the women to discuss following Jesus. “*One of these women was Lydia, a Gentile God-worshipper from the city of Thyatira, a dealer in purple cloth.. As she listened, the Lord enabled her to embrace Paul’s message.*” (vs. 14). Lydia’s *CALL* to ministry enabled her to share the Good News of Jesus Christ to the early Christian Church and care for the needs of the Body of Christ.

Ministry is a *CALLING*, not a job, hiring, or task. God *CALLS* us again and again and enables us to be “*change-agents,*” for God’s Spirit is upon us with resurrection power. God *CALLS* us “*to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.*” (Luke 4:18). *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*