

## BLESSINGS ALWAYS

June 9, 2021

Association Minister Message

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*SURPRISE. “So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!”*

(2 Corinthians 5:17, CEB) It is amazing how green has appeared around us so quickly. It seems just yesterday that earth-tones dominated the area. On one side of my house are hostas that disappear after freezing temperatures. Every year I wonder *“Will they return?”* And the *SURPRISE* happens and within a few days they appear and all is well again in greater number than the year before. I have separated them and transplanted some to other areas of my yard and I always wait for the *SURPRISE* to appear there, too.

Northwest Ohio is blessed with farms that become witnesses to the Creator's blessing us abundantly. Every year farmers plant with the hopes of a harvest in the fall. Farmers are agronomists, scientists, weatherpersons, mathematicians, gamblers, mechanics, dreamers, optimists, pray-ers, realists and faith-filled believers. Every seed (or plant) put in the ground has potential. God has blessed farmers to be co-creators with the divine. They certainly are witnesses to Paul's words about *“...old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived.”* Yes, there is *SURPRISE* in how things will turn out, but they also have the true meaning of faith word HOPE that production will happen. So, thank you farmers for being the Spiritual guardians of the faith in your work. Gifts and graces are yours from God and without you, new things would not happen.

In Mark's Gospel, chapter 4, Jesus teaches followers by using parables—earthly stories with spiritual meaning. Jesus says someone *“scatters seed on the ground”* and patiently waits for the harvest. *“Whenever the crop is ready, the farmer goes out to cut the grain because it's harvest time.”* (Mark 4:28, CEB). Again, God is full of one *SURPRISE* after another with blessings beyond our imaginations. Even the smallest of seeds, mustard seed, *SURPRISES* us by becoming a plant where birds can nest.

There is an older hymn, *“Count your many blessings, name them one by one, to see what God has done”* (and continues to do). We are, shall we note, God's human seeds that do produce an amazing harvest of love, compassion, hope, generosity and spiritual transformation as resurrected people. As Resurrected people living the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit, God calls us to be the new creation as the Body of Christ. The pandemic brought with it challenges and *SURPRISES*; a new era has begun. Be open to God's *SURPRISE* of harvest to nourish our minds, bodies and spirits. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*