

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

Rev. Daniel L. Busch

GHOST(S). “But when the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’” (Matthew 14:26) The disciples by this time had been with Jesus almost three years and still they did not recognize Him. It would not be the first time they did not recognize Him. After Jesus’ death, He walks with the disciples and they explain to the “stranger” what happened in Jerusalem with the crucifixion of Jesus. After inviting “the stranger” to stay with them a while, at the meal Jesus took the bread, blessed and broke it—and they recognized Him.

GHOSTS. Figments of our imaginations? Are *GHOSTS* real? When something happens that is unexplainable, it is easy to think that *GHOSTS* did something or *GHOSTS* haunt us or make us uncomfortable when we have bad experiences. It just may be it is our conscience bothering us. Something we have done to hurt someone, or maybe something we have done unethically in the past, haunts us over and over again. These are the *GHOSTS* that interfere with abundant living. The church has at times alienated people from being part of the community of faith because “they” did not fit in. There has been and is social ostracizing of people who look or sound or act different than those in power, including Christians who judge other faiths with contempt. White privilege, Black Lives Matter, All Lives Matter, racial discrimination, holier than thou attitudes—these are the *GHOSTS* that we need to deal with in light of Jesus’ call to inclusion, extravagant welcome, generosity, love, forgiveness, hope, and peace.

The disciples saw a *GHOST*. Who is Jesus to them—and to us? Jesus’ important question asked of them is also asked of us throughout the centuries: “But who do you say that I am?” This *GHOST* “terrified” them “...and they cried out in fear.” *GHOSTS* in our lives terrify us, also, but until we deal with them we will continue to be afraid. “Immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, ‘Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.’”

Jesus promises us the “Comforter” to be with us—the Holy Spirit (*Holy GHOST*). It is God’s presence with us in all conditions of life and we do not have to be afraid or terrified or alone. This *GHOST* offers renewal of life, relationships, and peace. Welcome the power of God’s *GHOST* in all of life and you will find God’s amazing grace and love. BLESSINGS ALWAYS.