May 18th, 2023

REPOST

*Alone, we can do so little; together we can do so much…*

~Hellen Keller

*THE BELOVED COMMUNITY*

As I wrestled with what to write about in this newsletter, the phrase *The Beloved Community* kept coming to my mind. I mulled over where to start, what to say, and how to say it—but still it seemed as if I was experiencing writer’s block. I tossed a few ideas back and forth in my head; but still it seemed that I struggled to connect the dots. Therefore, I decided to just start typing anything that came to mind with no outline, no script, or any particular destination in mind…so here you go.

What is the beloved community? When I think of the beloved community, I think about the kitchen table at my late grandmother’s house. The kitchen table was where we laughed together, cried together, read bible stories together, settled family disputes, and chowed down on some of my grandmother’s good ole’ southern cooking. I mentioned this in my sermon on Remembrance Sunday, as well. However, what I didn’t mention to you is that my grandmother was a foster parent. We always had people coming to stay with us. It was so much fun for us kids—it was like one big slumber party, all the time.

What makes this story about my grandmother’s foster children so interesting is that she didn’t do it for the money. She did it out of love. Whenever there was a need that arose within our family community (which included her foster children), the need was met. We would all sit down and figure it out together. Whenever grandma gave out hugs to one, she gave out hugs to all of us. Whenever grandma gave out kisses to one, she gave out kisses to all of us. Even as I am writing now—I can remember how we would all gather around the table—foster children, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, etc. There were some of the foster children that had disabilities and problems that, obviously, they couldn’t solve on their own.

Nevertheless, we were the beloved community. We loved each other. We looked out for each other. And we supported each other.

Furthermore, as members of the First Congregational Church of Spencerport—we are the beloved community, as well. We all come from different denominational backgrounds, political affiliations, socio-economic statuses, etc. We all have different personalities, interests, values, hobbies, life experiences, etc. Some in the beloved community are rich; others are poor. Some are mentally healthy; others struggle with mental illnesses. Some are democrats; others are republicans. Some are theologically conservative; others are theologically liberal. Some are introverted; others are extroverted. Yet, we are still the beloved community of God.

With that being said, as members of the beloved community, let us look out for each other. If you haven’t seen someone in church for a while, give them a call to check on them. If someone among us is going in for surgery, give them a call to see if they need a meal or two, post-surgery. If someone is the caretake for a sick parent, spouse or relative, give them a call to see if you can relieve them for an hour or two per week.

Finally, as members of the beloved community—We are commissioned by Christ to love each other; to look out for each other; and to support each other.

I’ll leave you with this quote by Jen Schmidt, “Community is not about being together. It’s about doing life together.”

Grace. Peace. Love. And Light.

Pastor Michael Sloan

A Member of the Beloved Community