

**July 21, 2022**

Dear Friends,

In worship as I was introducing scripture of Pauline letters, I talked about how Paul often would open up his letters to the community he is writing with lots of praise, affirmation, and thanksgiving. I believe I need to do this more, I think, so here goes:

To the 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational UCC of Grand Marais,  
Peace to you from God the Parent, Jesus the Sibling, and the Holy Spirit which propels us forward into God's kindom. There is not a day that goes by that I don't give thanks and praise for this fellowship. One more than one occasion, maybe weekly, I lift you up to my relatives, my friends, the wider church, and the people of this community who haven't yet heard of you, or only heard about our troubles and dark times. This church has a great love for each other, for our community, and for justice around the world. You are filled with all sorts of gifts and talents and I am constantly awed by your commitment to be out in the world in ways that show the love of God. I am utterly surprised and pleased of the depth of your spirituality in the practices individual and corporate, and the eagerness in which you want to try new things. This church has been through the valley of the shadow of death and has come through to the other side to the feast prepared by God. We have only strengthened our bonds, recommitted ourselves to living a life of love, and found new ways in which to treat each other and love each other better. What has not changed is the passion this church has for all things community. The support and turn-out we have given over the past few months with the Earth Day Fair, the Pride Events, and the Pro-Choice Rallies have been the standard that cannot be surpassed. And this does not include all of the ongoing community charity and justice activities that are part and parcel of you. We are a small, but a mighty, group of people who also have some humbleness by putting things in perspective that we are not above or better than other churches, bodies of faith, or community organizations. Our goal is not to be the best or the brightest, but to do what we can to make the most impact we can for love, for justice, and for the welfare and benefit for the least of these in our community and around the world. I thank you that we have recognized that God is love and love is an action of mercy, healing, and justice. Please do not give up hope or become despondent, we are not alone, for we struggle with all of like minds and hearts to build a better tomorrow

Peace,  
Pastor Enno