**United Mission is the Vehicle
Meeting Devotional 1: 2 Corinthians 5:17-19**

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 (NRSV)

17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

Sisters and brothers, you’ve been watching the news. You know what’s happening out there. (*Reference whatever current event or local issue is most concerning*.) It’s a frustrating, scary situation. And perhaps the most frustrating part of it all is the pervasive sense that so many of us have that all of this heartbreak, sorrow and grief could be alleviated if the different groups of people involved could come together and talk things through. If we could just get to know each other, understand each other – perhaps then, we wouldn’t fight so much. (*At this point, it may be helpful to reference local community divisions as well as those happening around the world.*)

Starting those conversations can be difficult. Differences create hesitations – we don’t always know how to talk to people who don’t look, or act, or think the way we do. There are definitely strong cultural voices encouraging us to view anyone who is unlike us as against us. But as American Baptists, we know there is no “us” and “them.” We know that we are all God’s children, created by God and for God. It is possible, if we’re brave enough and determined enough, to create the understanding we need to heal this hurting world.

United Mission is the vehicle that provides for the international and intercultural ministries we do to grow and foster open communication and increased understanding among all of God’s children. By bringing together people of faith to address our common challenges, American Baptists are saying no to the forces of fear and hatred, and yes to Christ’s command that we love one another. (*This would be a good place to reference United Mission supported interfaith or community outreach programs that your congregation is involved with or is interested in.*) This is faith in action. We give so that we may grow in understanding and unity. Our giving helps us come together to serve as the hands and feet of Christ.