

Dear Horseshoe Falls Regional Council,
Happy Spring/Happy Pride!



Welcome to our HFRC Spring gathering where our theme for the weekend will be Connections. We chose this theme with intention because the church, if boiled down to a couple of words might be *community*, or maybe *relationship*.

My hope, as the president of Horseshoe Falls region is that we might strengthen and nourish our connections. From the grass roots of connection and relationships within a single community of faith, to the relationships between different communities of faith, there is a spirit moving us to be stronger together. Between the first third, second third and third third, (the children and youth, the young and middle aged adults, and our elders) we need to establish and support the creation of relationship and connection. Between the communities of faith, and our regional leadership, we need to reconnect and build trust and relationship. ALL of us are stronger together than any of us are alone.

"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastes 4:12

Church, we are living in troubled times. I read an article recently that says research shows that people are more connected to their phones and computers now than ever before, because they feel so alone. Loneliness is now recognized by the World Health Organization as a threat to global wellbeing. Everyone is broadcasting – songs, poems, books, blogs, YouTube, TikTok, chatrooms, Facebook – everyone is broadcasting the message “I’m here. Please notice me.” But no one is really on the other end paying attention. For the younger generation, when asked the question “what do you want to do for work when you grow up?” the most often stated response is “Influencer”.

Surely the Spirit must be calling us into the wilderness of this loneliness. Surely, this Jesus whom we follow is walking even now into the places where people long to be seen, listened to, understood, valued, included and loved. Surely the God in whom we are adopted as sons and daughters wants their children to be a family. And surely a church that is meant to share God’s love with the world should be a United Church.

Just like every family, we have conflict sometimes and that’s fine! Conflict teaches us how to learn and grow; how to listen and compromise and understand one another. In doing this, we as church might set an example for our communities about how to find our own belonging and to offer relationship, care and belonging to others.

Let us meet with joy, let us connect with one another in fellowship, and in God’s work for our world. Amen.

Rev. Sula Kosacky HFRC President