

Ilion Presbyterian News

May 2020

Pastor Rick Riggle

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This craziness we call Covid-19, has many of us scratching our heads. How many of us have wished for a few days off to catch up, only to find that being stuck at home is not exactly what we wanted. Now many of us are at the end of our rope and we long for the old days, when we could go to work and have some stress and push ourselves to the point of exhaustion. We feel a deep sadness, about the lives we want to get back to and often we even find ourselves weeping for what is lost.

"Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh," Jesus says. That means not just that you will laugh when the time comes, but that you can laugh a little even now in the midst of the weeping because you know that the time is coming. All appearances to the contrary, no matter how hopeless it may appear, the ending will be a happy ending. That is what laughter is about. It is the laughter of faith. It is the divine comedy.

In the meantime you weep, because if you have a heart to see it honestly, the world you see is heart-breaking. Only the heartless can look at it and remain unmoved, and I think that is why Jesus says, "Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep," which is a different sort of laughter altogether. It is the laughter of callousness, mockery, and indifference. You can laugh like that only if you turn your back on the suffering and need of the world. "Jesus says let those who have eyes see, and those who have ears hear." If you have the eyes he speaks of you cannot miss the suffering around you. The single mother trying to make ends meet, the homeless person who needs a hand, the lonely person locked away and depressed. If you have the ears he speaks of you must hear the cry of the poor who are always hit the hardest when something like this pandemic happens. Those of us who are people of faith know this is true, but that isn't all there is to this story.

The happiness of the happy ending, what makes the comedy so wonderful, is the suggestion that in the end even the callous and indifferent people will take part in it. The fact that Jesus says they too will weep and mourn before they're done seems to mean that they too will grow hearts at last, even if they learn how the hard way, and once that happens, anything is possible with God.

Keep laughing my friends and I pray we will be together soon.

Pastor Rick

As we enter this third month of social distancing (hard to believe isn't it) I wanted to share some thoughts. First the session and I are watching the news to keep up with the latest facts about the virus. We are following the latest medical advice as opposed to the rumors and misinformation that abound out there. Based on that information we will reopen the building at the first available time that we can safely do so. There has been much talk of reopening the economy and that needs to happen to relieve some of the financial hardships people are facing, but that is a different call than reo-

pening the church for several reasons. First we have learned that we can do church without the building if we have to. Sue and I have enjoyed trying to figure out how best to make that work and we appreciate all the lovely comments we have received from you thanking us. Second we are an aging congregation which means that you and I are all at a greater risk from this disease, so we want to be extra cautious. We know this is not how we all would want it to be but we will continue to seek out ways for this church to serve and worship during this time.

We have learned some things too:

The church is not the building, which isn't to say the building isn't important. We have worshipped, we have met, we have done mission all while we are having to keep our distance. So we are a creative church and that is exciting.

The church is a part of the community. We tried to continue programs until we couldn't and we have been a good neighbor by participating in this social distancing. I read these stories about the pastors who have had their churches go ahead and meet and it makes me sad because I think they miss the point. It is not about the separation of church and state. It is not the government telling the church what it can and cannot do. It is about the church being a good neighbor and living out the truth of God's love for everyone. So we are a responsible and neighborly church.

The church is about the kingdom of God. I have heard so many stories of how you are all looking out for one another. Groceries dropped off, phone calls being made, working to support the local food pantry in a time of crisis. These and so many other things just remind me of how generous and loving you all are. We truly are a church seeking the Kingdom and that reminds me how lucky I am to be a part of that.

Thank you all for everything that you are doing every day for the Kingdom. I wish I could tell you a date when all this will be over, but I don't know what the future holds. Of course I do know who holds the future, so we will leave it in God's hands.

Peace, stay safe and healthy,

Pastor Rick

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BUILDINGS and GROUNDS NEWS

A huge THANK YOU to all members and friends. The heating and air-conditioning units are completely installed and operating in both buildings, Sanctuary and "office" building. Money received from the insurance company and donations from YOU made this possible without dipping into our savings. We have some minor work to be done enclosing some of the new duct-work in a few rooms in the "office" building. I think we can do this at a minimal cost over a period of time.

Cleaning up after the HVAC installation in the office building turns out to be more than I expected. There is LOTS of plaster dust through out the rooms. Dan is doing a great job cleaning up this mess. The library will need extra attention. Cleaning the books and shelves will be time consuming, but we will prevail.

The scheduled spring clean up is on hold for now. We will address this again in early May.

Until we meet again: Be safe, Stay well, "Live long and prosper" (Spock).

A Message from your Board of Deacons:

We are all missing our Church Family, and getting together on Sunday for worship and coffee hour in person. I am sure most of us come together for worship with Pastor Rick and Rev. Sue - Live on Facebook on Sunday at 10:30 am. Their messages are so much appreciated, along with singing Hymns and enjoying the wonderful music provided by the New Hartford Presbyterian Church.

I am sure you have seen on TV how the local food pantries are in dire need. The Board of Deacons voted via e-mail to donate \$250 to the Ilion-Frankfort Food Pantry. Thanks to Lesa Decker for letting me in the church to write the check. If anyone is interested, donations can be mailed to the Ilion-Frankfort Food Pantry, c/o Catholic Charities, 61 West Street, Ilion, NY 13357.

We missed “noisy collection” on Sunday, March 29th; but hope you put aside your loose change as we will be glad to collect it once we are back together again. Thanks to your generosity to our fund raisers, we were able to give Pastor Rick one-thousand dollars-worth of food cards at Christmas-time to pass out to individuals and families in need. I foresee an even greater need this year.

On behalf of your Board of Deacons, I Thank You for your support, and wish you all good health until we meet again. Stay Home – Be Safe – Take Care !

Love and Prayers,

Sandy Eldredge, co-Treasurer

Board of Deacons, FPC – Ilion

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MIS Committee

Greetings from Richfield Springs and your MIS committee: Last month you received some information on our One Great Hour of Sharing initiative and a mailing envelope that can be used to submit your offering. Apparently the Post Office doesn't know where our church is; these are being sent to Syracuse and then returned to the sender. (Go figure...) Since we didn't put any stamps on the envelopes, feel free to use one of your own.

If you would like and are able to submit your offering now, please feel free to do so, and thank you; and if you are unable to or would like to wait until we meet again, you certainly can do that as well.

Now, more than ever, it is obvious so many need our help. To quote Helen Keller, “Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.” With God's strength,

Susan Backus, MIS Committee



**Prayer List:**

• **Men and women who protect us and our freedoms.**

- Cody Adams, Joy Bagwell, Marty Bigelow, Kiersten Barnes/Richard Davis, Linda Cate, Alice Eldredge Crosier, Brianna Nicole, Travis Darling, the Devereese Family, Clifford Dibble, Allan Dickinson, Beverly Doolen, Shirley Dostal, (Rick’s sister), Art DuBois, George Dunbar, Ralph Dupres, Lenore Ebersole, Jenn Eldredge, Phyllis Fasolo, David Flanagan, Sarah Getman, Fran Harrod, Marilyn Hext, Loren Hughes, Julie Hulser, infant Grayson, Dave & Jane Jacquays, Dr. Aimee, Don Lamphear, Amanda Lawrence, Sharon Lennox, Barbara Maley, Marty March, Amanda Marro, Joan Matteson, Pat & Marge Moylan, Patrick O’Connor, Steve Price, Rebecca, Millie Ritter, Henry Rocker, Dale Rohrer, Barb Ropeter, Lorie Schrader, Jane & Bob Smithson, Angela Traglia, Kirsi Viskari, Darlene Whalen, Ricky Wilson & mom, Gretchen

From Lesa—if you have any prayer requests during this time of quarantine, or want to remove anyone who is much better, please either call or text me at 315-269-6295 or email me at the church at fpcilion@gmail.com OR call Pastor Rick & he will pass the name to me. I hope you all can stay safe while we’re getting thru this.:

Christian Sympathy is extended to the Orendorf Family: Jan & Gary, Mike, Lynne & Claire, Shaun, Heather, Mason, Dane, Zoey & Joslyn on the passing of Jan’s brother-in-law, Leo Hartmann.

Congratulations to Sue Thomas on the birth of her 7th great grandchild! Evelyn Gail Grubbs was born May 15, 2020 to Elijah & Natalie (Thomas) Grubbs. She weighed 8 lbs 12 oz & was 21” long. All are doing well.

Asking prayers for Lauren Mitchell as she will be having her postponed shoulder surgery on May 11 in Little Falls. That’s if everything goes as planned. Keep your fingers crossed & the prayers coming!

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It has been brought to our attention that Joan Matteson has participated in the annual MS Walk again this year. Since we have not been together, therefore have not had any chance to ask for support, We ask for it now.

She walked this year for the appeal of the Order of the Eastern Star’s Grand Matron & Grand Patron’s project of the year. Each year, the order chooses a special cause for their fundraising efforts & this year it’s MS. My belief, whether it’s right or wrong, is MS was chosen in honor of the Grand Patron’s wife and Joan (because she is one of their officers) who both suffer from this disease.

If you can and would like to support Joan, please send any checks to the church & we will see that the money is forwarded to the Eastern Star in Joan’s name. We all are so proud of Joan & her efforts this year as a grand officer.

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**E-MAILS !!**

Are you receiving our emails with the Sunday Worship Bulletin each week? If not, do you have an email address? We are asking you to send us YOUR email address to OUR email address at fpcilion@gmail.com. Getting the bulletin is not our only reason for asking for this information. We want to be prepared in case this pandemic continues or comes back. I do get the church email at home, so will be able to record these in our church records.

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Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization  
Permit #80-US Postage Paid  
Ilion, NY 13357