

Ilion Presbyterian News

August 2020

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Life; there is always a temptation to reduce it to an understandable size. A bowl of cherries. A rat race. Amino acids. Even to call it a mystery is to make it something less than what it is. It is the mystery. The one thing all of us struggle to understand and the one thing that is just a bit too elusive to ever understand fully.

As far as anybody seems to know, the vast majority of things in the universe do not have life. Sticks, stones, stars, space—they simply are, they exist but they are not alive. A few things are and are somehow alive because they are. They have broken through into something, or something has broken through into them. Even a jellyfish, or a butternut squash, are in it with us. We're all in it together, or it is in us, which is probably the more accurate way to say it.

After lecturing academically on miracles, a great theologian was asked to give a specific example of one. "There is only one miracle," he answered. "It is life." Even so we wonder what is life? Why are we? Some questions for you:

Have you wept at anything during the past year?

Has your heart beat faster at the sight amazing beauty?

More often than not, do you really listen when people are speaking to you instead of just waiting for your turn to speak?

Is there anybody you know in whose place, if one of you had to suffer great pain, you would volunteer yourself? Have you thought seriously about the fact that someday you are going to die?

If your answer to all or most of these questions is no, the chances are that you're already dead. Life is a verb, it is meant to be lived fully and with abandon. Joy, love, pain, illness and death are all a part of this great celebration we have all been invited to. Thanks be to God.

Live with abandon,

Pastor Rick

THANK YOU FROM MIS:

Many thanks to all who showed up to donate blood on July 1<sup>st</sup>. This is an incredibly important time as the blood supply is dangerously low. We had the most exciting and productive day - 3 first time donors, 23 whole blood and 4 double reds, a total of 31 units! These donations can and will help up to 93 people. Such an impact for such a short amount of time out of your day.

We will be hosting another drive on Friday, August 28<sup>th</sup> from 1:30 - 6:30 p.m. Once again the Red Cross will be testing all donations for Covid antibodies. This is a free service to all donors. It takes approximately 7-10 days for the results. Please consider donating on August 28<sup>th</sup>, you could save up to 3 people's lives.

To donate, go to [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) to sign up. It is important to preregister for this event as our last one filled up completely before donation day.

### Food Pantry Drive

Another HUGE thank you to all who have brought in food supplies to help restock our local food bank in Ilion. We delivered what we had collected last week; they were incredibly happy and thankful for what we had done. They are still in need of cereal, pasta, and canned fruit cocktail. We will be running this food drive for the month of August. When you're at the store buying your groceries, if you could add 1 or 2 extra items to your basket for the food bank it would mean a great deal to all those who are in need of food at this time. I know that Catholic Charities has offered food to those who usually sign up for Food Sense so the need for donations is ongoing.

Dear Friends,

It has been 5 months now since the world turned upside down. Perhaps we were all a little bit naïve when this started, because I don't think any of us thought it would take this long or be as hard as it has turned out to be. You can see evidence of the tension we live with everywhere you go. People snapping at one another, or searching desperately for ways to be in control of their lives again. If anything has shown us the illusion of control it has been this pandemic.

Add to that the upheaval in American city streets that is a sign of the anger of a people finally boiling over at being told to keep their place for far too long, and the politicization of everything that is taking place by both parties and it is understandable that people are beginning to feel at the end of their ropes.

Please remember that even in isolation we are never alone. The spirit is with us always and we can find courage, strength and patience in that. God with us is real and our true strength.

Knowing that, let me ask you to be in prayer for our world and our country and our community. Not that republicans or democrats will win but that God's will be done. Be patient with one another, show love and kindness to all you encounter because love always wins over hatred and bigotry. This will be over someday and we want to look back and know that we were the people of God throughout, sowing love and acceptance to everyone.

I want to thank all of you for your love and patience through the last few months as we sought ways to continue to worship without gathering. Your kind words of encouragement have meant the world to both Sue and I. I am glad to be able to say that we had our first worship service in the sanctuary on July 19<sup>th</sup> and it went very well. 20 people came and praised God together (although still socially distanced) and it was a joyful time.

If you would like to join us you will find things a bit different. We want to make sure we are doing anything and everything to assure people's health. We ask that you get here a bit early so that everyone can sign in, so that we have a record of everyone who was there on any given Sunday. Masks are mandatory. Much has been made about masks and we choose to require them out of respect for one another. Hand sanitizer is available and we ask that you use it as you come in and as you leave. An offering plate is on the table and we ask you drop off your offering as you come in. When we have communion we will have individual communion servings for everyone; they are sealed and sanitized.

If you still don't feel ready to come we are sending the service out over our facebook page. We have added a link to the church's website for those of you who don't use facebook, we try to start as close to 10:30 as possible so if you don't see us there try refreshing your screen. (it is that little circular arrow at the top left of most browsers). I hope you can find us but if not let us know as we continue to work out the logistics of this process.

Peace and Grace to you all

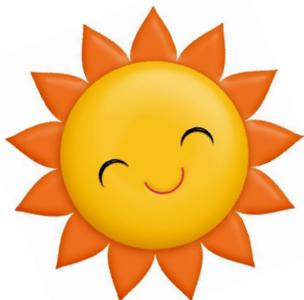
Pastor Rick

## BUILDINGS and GROUNDS (and then some)

Progress seems to be taking its own sweet time at church this year.

- First was the issue of heat when our boiler failed again, and for the last time! The installation of the two new HVAC (Heat, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) systems seemed to take forever to get designed, approved and installed. Now, here we are enjoying the central air conditioning in the office building and the sanctuary. Also with the installation of "super duty" MERV-13 air filters in these units we are protecting ourselves from airborne particles contaminated with, banish the word, COVID-19 as they are filtered from the air that passes through the systems.
- Second IS the issue of COVID-19. Is there no end to this! The ripple affect of product shortages is driving us crazy. Who would have thought there would be shortages of disinfectants, wipes, sanitizers of all sorts, facemasks, and TOILET PAPER! Not to mention patience! Iso-propyl alcohol (not the liquor store variety), was also difficult to locate and purchase. Items we ordered 4 to 6 weeks ago are finally coming in.
- Dick Long and his daughter Laurie made two trips to Syracuse to one of our distributors to pick up hand sanitizing units and sanitizing gel. We currently are installing the motion-activated hand sanitizing units. And I must mention Dick donated all the equipment, sanitizing gel and trip expenses saving us hundreds of dollars. Thank you Dick and Laurie. Other donations of air filters, sanitizing wipes and disinfectants, face masks, temperature monitors and labor have also been donated. And a big thank you to Hannaford Market for donating 50 bottles of hand sanitizer. It sure is wonderful to see our members and others step up to fight this virus.
- Third is the progress on the installation of the LED sign for our front yard. Seems to me like it should have been done by now. Patience, George! I think most of the ground work has been planned. Codes, electrician, excavation and now wait for the "sign". I think mid August is the target date to start the installation.
- Seems like we're walking with baby steps as we re-open our doors. Patience, George! First to start (slowly), was the Bag Lunch program in June. Next was the Red Cross blood drive. I think the donations were the most we've had in a single drive. We started worshipping IN THE SANCTUARY! Two Sundays in a row, and 20 people each Sunday! Collecting food for the Food Pantry is off to a good start, too.

Let's move forward, cautiously. I hope and pray everyone keeps safe and well.



A good laugh is like sunshine in the house.

## Prayer List:



- Men and women who protect us and our freedoms.

Cody Adams, Joy Bagwell, Marty Bigelow, Kiersten Barnes/Richard Davis, Linda Cate, 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 & Julie's granddaughter, Jocelyn, infant Grayson, Dave & Jane Jacquays, Dr. Aimee, Amanda Lawrence, Bill & Barb Lennox, Warren & Sharon Lennox, Barbara Maley, Marty March, Amanda Marro, Joan Matteson, Laureen Mitchell, 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

Christian Sympathy is extended to the family of Nick Marro, for whom we have been praying.

Continued prayers for Warren Lennox as the doctors find a way to regulate & heal his heart .

God never asks about our ability  
or our inability  
but about our availability

The Lord gives you one mouth, which closes,  
And two ears, which don't.

Your life is God's gift to you—  
What you do with it, is your gift to Him.

Thanks to Jean Sullivan for sharing these little quotes

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