

Ilion Presbyterian News

December 2020

Pastor Rick Riggle

90 Morgan St. Phone 315-894-2070 Fax 315-894-3807

Church email: fpcilion@gmail.com

Church website: www.ilionpresbyterian.com

Facebook page: First Presbyterian Church, Ilion, New York

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*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1: 1-5)*

Welcome to Advent and the start of a new year in the church. I have often called this passage John's version of the Christmas story. Though there are no shepherds or wise men, no manger or a soft bed of hay. Though Bethlehem isn't mentioned, or any gifts brought it is still a Christmas story. This year it is, perhaps the most important of the gospel accounts of who Jesus is and how his life impacts us. There is a great deal of darkness in the world these days. First and foremost in most of our minds is the Covid-19 pandemic that has taken us so far out of our normal routines that we feel lost and confused and out of synch with life, and that has us arguing over such simple things as masks and why we should or shouldn't wear them.

There is the racial unrest that seems to be still simmering under the surface of our society only to bubble over each time another event calls attention to it. So much violence in the streets as young black men continue to be abused and killed by overzealous police officers. The violence is wrong of course but the Black Lives Matter movement have legitimate complaints. The police have an impossible job for which we are all grateful. Unfortunately, no one seems to talk about solutions. We seem bent on defending one side and demonizing the other.

There is the election and all the intrigue and anger and sadness that seem to be going along with it. I do not wish to be political but it seems to me that what we are seeing right now is unprecedented in the history of our country, calling into question the integrity and patriotism of anyone who disagrees with us no matter what side we may be on. Statements made without fact or evidence only serve to muddy the waters even more.

Closer to home we have the ongoing story of Remington Arms and the employees who are waiting to see what will happen next. Meanwhile families in town are struggling to make ends meet while the parties argue their fate in court.

It is no wonder we are tired. It is no wonder we are confused. It would not be at all surprising to find us crying out to God in pain, "How long, O God" or perhaps "Why God" All fair questions, and all questions that Job himself asked of God during his long season of suffering. The gospel of John tells us that the answer to all our questions is the Word. The light shining into the darkness, the light that the darkness cannot overcome. The Word made flesh and dwelling among us full of grace and truth. From his fullness we all receive grace upon grace.

This year, maybe more than ever before, Christmas is about hope. Hope that God is among us lighting our way in the darkness. Hope that like all things these things we live with today are in God's hand. Hope that God's grace is sufficient in all things. Let us not forget our hope in the one who made all things and loves us beyond all measure.

Christmas will be different this year but with hope we can still make it a Merry and Holy time. May God bless you all and may hope envelope everything you do as we seek to make this a very Merry Christmas.

With my fervent hope for you,  
Pastor Rick



## **Prayer List:**

- Men and women who protect us and our freedoms.

|                                                 |                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Cody Adams,</b>                              | Joy Bagwell (George Gullis's niece by marriage), |
| <b>Kiersten Barnes/Richard Davis,</b>           | <b>Linda Cate,</b>                               |
| <b>John &amp; Barbara Connor,</b>               | Brianna Nicole (Christine Lawrence's daughter)   |
| <b>the Devereese Family,</b>                    | Clifford Dibble (Anita Smith's son),             |
| Allan Dickinson,                                | Beverly Doolen,                                  |
| <b>Art DuBois,</b>                              | George Dunbar,                                   |
| <b>Lenore Ebersole,</b>                         | Jenn Eldredge,                                   |
| <b>Phyllis Fasolo,</b>                          | David Flanagan,                                  |
| <b>Betty Foor,</b>                              | <b>Sarah Getman,</b>                             |
| <b>Fran Harrod,</b>                             | <b>Marilyn Hext,</b>                             |
| Loren Hughes,                                   | Julie Hulser & Julie's granddaughter, Jocelyn,   |
| <b>infant Grayson,</b>                          | <b>Dave &amp; Jane Jacquays,</b>                 |
| Dr. Aimee,                                      | Amanda Lawrence (Christine's daughter),          |
| Sharon Lennox,                                  | Barbara Maley,                                   |
| Marty March,                                    | Joan Matteson,                                   |
| Laureen Mitchell,                               | Pat & Marge Moylan,                              |
| <b>Rebecca,</b>                                 | <b>Millie Ritter,</b>                            |
| <b>Henry Rocker,</b>                            | <b>Dale Rohrer,</b>                              |
| <b>Lorie Schrader,</b>                          | Anita Smith,                                     |
| Jane & Bob Smithson (Lynne Orendorf's parents), | <b>Angela Traglia,</b>                           |
| Kirsi Viskari (friend of the Eldredges),        | <b>Darlene Whalen,</b>                           |
| <b>Ricky Wilson &amp; mom,</b>                  | <b>Gretchen</b>                                  |

While we appreciate praying for everyone on our prayer list, there are some on whom we need to be updated. If you have added a name(s) that are not members, but are your friends or relatives, please send us a message as to their status and whether or not we need to keep them on our list. You may either call 315-894-2070 & leave a message if no one is here, or email us at fpcilion@gmail.com. I have highlighted the names we are unsure of in the list below. Thank you. If **your** name is on the list we'd love to know how you are doing!!

Christian Sympathy is extended to Betty Foor and her family on the passing of her daughter, Pam Pester on Friday, Nov. 20.

## MIS Notes:

We had our last blood drive of the year on Wednesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. There were 2 first time donors, 2 double reds, and 16 whole blood units. Our total was 20 units; we did miss our goal by 4, but you cannot have everything. Even though, our blood donations will be able to help as many as 60 people! It was extremely successful in my opinion and thanks to all who came out to donate. We have 3 scheduled for 2021 (Lord willing) in March, July, and November. These are scheduled 112 days apart so double red donors are able to donate at all 3.



November 19<sup>th</sup>, the day after the blood drive, found 4 of us in the kitchen baking pumpkin pies for Catholic Charities. This year there is no hot meal for those in need; however a box meal was given instead. The box meal had everything in it to make a turkey dinner, including 2 pieces of freshly made pie for each person. To be sure there were "mistakes" but we used those pies as quality control - just to make sure they were edible and tasty. (THEY WERE!!)



I want to personally thank Lesa Decker, Carol Okusko, and Janet Darling. We had a great time and worked well together. All of us know that what we do, we do for His glory, not ours. I don't know about the others, but I look forward to doing it again.

I want to wish all of you a happy and safe Thanksgiving. Stay well.

Susan ")

We should be like a watch—open face, busy hands, pure gold, well-regulated and full of good works.

"It's not our abilities that show what we truly are, it is our choices".

Albus Dumbledore

Lettin the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.

-Will Rogers



Although church services are suspended for the time being, the Lunch Bunch will continue to make & deliver their usual lunches for the hungry in the community.

There will be no lunches for the week before or after Christmas.

## 'Twas THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS 2020

'Twas the year 2020, and all through the house  
every creature was stirring, from Human to Mouse.  
The stockings were tossed on the chimney, who cares,  
it's been months since we entertained, would Saint Nick even  
dare?

The children were nestled all snug in their beds  
as visions of rubber gloves danced in their heads.  
and Mama in her gaiter and me and my mask,  
had just settled our brains for a long cleaning task.  
When out on the roof there arose such a clatter.  
I sprang from my mop to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash.  
I peeked through the shutter, barely touching the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,  
gave me faith that someday we'd have somewhere to go.  
When what do my wondering eyes should appear,  
but a miniature sleigh, and eight spotless reindeer.  
With a little old driver decked out in full gear,  
I knew in a moment we'd have Christmas this year!  
More safely than Hazmat the reindeer they came,  
and he whistled and shouted and called them by name.  
Now Clorox! Now Pine-Sol! Now Lysol and Purex!  
On Comet! On Purell! On Top Job and Germ-X!  
Wipe the top of the porch! Then the top of the wall!  
Now wipe away! Wipe away! Wipe away all!  
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
when they finished and then took a jump to the sky.  
So up to the housetop the reindeer they flew.  
With a sleigh full of masks, and Saint Nicholas too!  
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof,  
the pawing of each little rubber gloved hoof.  
As I pulled up my mask and was turning around,  
Down the chimney a big bucket came with a bound!  
It was covered in plastic from bottom to top,  
and the contents were sterile, despite the long drop.  
I missed seeing his eyes and his dimples so merry.  
But this virus prevents that, these times are so scary.  
I imagined his face and his little round belly,  
That shook when he laughed like hand sanitizer jelly.  
but I saw him outside though, as he stood near his sleigh,  
and I laughed when I saw him, from six feet away..  
With a wink of his eye and a wave of his hand,  
I felt warm inside, Santa too understands.  
And without a word I went right to my work.  
I filled all our stockings, then turned with a jerk  
And laying a finger aside of his mask,  
The reindeer rose up, they had finished their task.  
He waved to me then, to his team gave a shout,  
and socially distancing, quickly flew out.  
But I heard him proclaim as he drove out of sight,  
Merry Christmas to all, we will all be all right!

The First Presbyterian Church  
90 Morgan Street  
Ilion, New York 13357-2260  
Address Service Requested

Wishing you all a safe & healthy Holiday Season. In all this upheaval, let us not forget the Reason for the Season & look forward to celebrating the birth of Our Lord, Jesus.

Merry Christmas from your church staff:

Pastor Rick, Lesa, Janet, Kris, Dan and all those who volunteer so very much time to make this a better place!

