

Ilion Presbyterian News

February 2021

Pastor Rick Riggle

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Every month, I sit down to the computer and try to think of something to say to you for the newsletter. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy every chance I get to talk about God's love for each and every one of us, but sometimes it is so hard to come up with an idea. I know many writers who say the most frightening thing for them is a blank page of paper, and I understand that, and I bet you do too.

We all worry and fret about how we will communicate the gospel. We all know the story and we all know how important the story is in our lives but somehow we feel like we don't know what to say, or we will say it wrong, or we are afraid to say it. I understand, I really do.

Growing up in the Baptist church gave me an opportunity to see something that a lot of Presbyterians may not be aware of. It was called good old fashioned testimony service. The church would meet together and after a few people who had been asked to speak, the floor was opened to whoever the Spirit moved to get up and tell their testimony.

Well let me tell you I heard some stories that were incredible. People who had been caught up in lives of sin and evil whom God had snatched up into the body of Christ. People would clap and the amens would fly around the room for each person. A lot of the time the stories just got better and better, (or worse and worse depending on how you look at it) until the room was in a frenzy and the pastor would give the altar call. People would come pouring out of the pews and down to the "mourner's bench, better known as the front pew (maybe that is why no one sits there) and we would pray for God to heal them and send the spirit to them.

It was exciting for me, but it was also kind of troubling as well. I knew God loved me and I knew my salvation was assured but I didn't have a great story so I sat in the pew feeling silent and somehow ashamed.

In the letter to the Romans Paul writes these well known words, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel". I am not sure exactly when I first read those words and realized it was meant for me. I had a story, it wasn't dramatic and filled with awful deeds, but it was no less miraculous than anyone else's story.

I couldn't see the miracle. God had given me a loving family, and parents of faith who had taught me and led me in my journey to know God, and who let it be my journey even when it brought them pain. They were my miracle. We all have a miraculous story of God's love in our lives, I hope you will find a way to tell it. Remember the rest of what Paul says, "it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Peace and Grace

Pastor Rick



## **Prayer List:**

- Men and women who protect us and our freedoms.

**Cody Adams,**

**Kiersten Barnes/Richard Davis,**

Barbara Connor,

**the Devereese Family,**

Allan Dickinson,

**Art DuBois,**

**Lenore Ebersole,**

**Phyllis Fasolo,**

**Sarah Getman,**

**Marilyn Hext,**

Julie Hulser & Julie's granddaughter, Jocelyn,

**Dave & Jane Jacquays,**

Amanda Lawrence (Christine's daughter),

Barbara Maley,

Joan Matteson,

Pat & Marge Moylan,

**Millie Ritter,**

**Dale Rohrer,**

Anita Smith,

**Angela Traglia,**

**Darlene Whalen,**

**Gretchen**

Joy Bagwell (George Gullis's niece by marriage),

**Linda Cate,**

Brianna Nicole (Christine Lawrence's daughter)

Clifford Dibble (Anita Smith's son),

Beverly Doolen,

George Dunbar,

Jenn Eldredge,

**Betty Foor,**

**Fran Harrod,**

Loren Hughes,

**infant Grayson,**

Dr. Aimee,

Sharon Lennox,

Marty March,

Laureen Mitchell,

**Rebecca,**

**Henry Rocker,**

**Lorie Schrader,**

Jane Smithson (Lynne Orendorf's mother),

Kirsi Viskari (friend of the Eldredges),

**Ricky Wilson & mom,**

Beginning on February 21 and continuing through Lent, Rick will be hosting a Sunday School via zoom. It is open to anyone who is interested. We will be studying the beatitudes as found in Matthew. If you would like to take part please email Rick at [pastorfpcilion@gmail.com](mailto:pastorfpcilion@gmail.com) so that he can make sure you get the link for each meeting. If the situation changes we will, of course, figure out a way to do it at the church. If you have any questions about the material, or how to use zoom please let Rick know about that as well.

I am considering a midweek Bible study using zoom. It would be my intent to start with the two letters to the Corinthians and then see where we go from there. If you would be interested please send me an email and let me know.

Thanks

Pastor Rick

Your Session continues to monitor the situation regarding Covid-19. There is some good news coming in and it appears things are moving in a good direction. We will keep you informed and let you know when we think it will be safe to meet again.

Session

With apologies to Pastor Rick for printing a different report for the Annual Meeting

### **Worship and Education Committee**

As for most of us this has been a difficult year for us as a committee, the pandemic has made it difficult to meet and plan and be an active committee. We have made devotional materials available for year round study and for Lent and Advent as well and we are working to have a Lenten devotional available for this year.

We are pleased that online worship has been received so well. We have had as many as 65 people take a look at our worship service online and that is very exciting. We are continuing to work on getting it right every time, to that end we have purchase a new laptop computer specifically for streaming the worship service and we are very excited about that.

Looking forward there are a few things we hope to see put in place in the next couple of months. Pastor Rick is planning on starting a Wednesday evening Bible study for any and all interested. More information will be going out as plans get made.

We are also looking for a way to get the kids involved again, with zoom meeting being a possibility, we are looking for material that would lend itself to that format. We miss the kids and know that this lock down has been especially hard on them.

Finally we are hoping to start a Sunday school class after Easter on the letters to the Corinthians. It would meet Sunday mornings by zoom at 9 am, when we are able to meet together again we will switch to in person.

As always if there is something you would like to see us try, or some new idea that might help us better serve one another, please let us know.

Peace,

The Worship and Education Committee

The First Presbyterian Church

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