



## FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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*Rev. Angelique Bradford*

### Pastor's Page –October 2016

#### *Faith Stories*

*Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.*

*We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.* Psalms 78: 1-4 NRSV

In our culture today many struggle with sharing their personal faith story with their family, let alone sharing their faith story with a stranger. The scripture says in Revelation twelve verse eleven, “.....they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...” I am reminded that it is our stories of faith that help us grow closer to God.

Stories have a way of building relationship. And our faith stories are a tangible witness of God's love and amazing grace toward us. Stories also connect us in a personal with the Word of God. It is in the sharing of that experience which encourages and inspires both the giver and the receiver. Our stories have a way of helping us understanding who God is. And sometimes we will never know how our faith story will have an impact on someone's life. The benefits of sharing our faith story with someone surpass our understanding.

As the body of Christ let us strive to tell of the goodness of God in the land of the living for the Kingdom sake. As we approach the end of the year take time to reflect on the goodness of God and all that you have overcome by His grace. And then share your faith story with your family, friends and yes, strangers. I am reminded of a story of faith from one of the parishioners here at First United Methodist Church of Ellwood City. A story of courage, faith and love of how one man prayed to God for a wife. It was in his vow that he made to the Lord to take care of her if God would allow him to be her husband. God not only blessed him with a beautiful wife, God blessed and honored him by answering his prayer. And he was able to take care of his wife for the rest of her life. What a blessing to be able to extend care and love to someone for over 65 years of wedded bliss. The scripture says in Proverbs chapter ten verse twenty-two “*The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.*” As I listened to him describe the way in which he loved and cared for his wife I was reminded of how Christ laid down His life for the church. What an awesome witness of God's unfailing love. So as you continue throughout your days remember that you have a story to tell. Tell your story of hope, tell your story of love, tell your story of the wonderful deeds that the Lord has done. Thanks Be To God, Amen!

*Pastor Angelique*

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#### **PASTOR'S BOOK OF THE MONTH**

Politics of Jesus "Healing the Heart of Democracy"

Author: Parker J. Palmer

At this critical moment in American life, Parker J. Palmer looks with realism and hope at how to deal with our political tensions for the sake of the common good. Building on his decades of social activism and inner life exploration, Palmer examines ways to restore the invisible infrastructure of American politics. What he did for educators in *The Courage to Teach* he does here for citizens by seeking answers to democracy's dilemmas within us and between us. He points the way to a politics rooted in the commonwealth of creativity and courage still found among "We the People." "Democracy..." writes Palmer, "is a nonstop experiment in the strength and weakness of our political institutions, our local communities and associations, and the human heart" The democratic experiment is endless, unless we blow up the lab, and the explosives to do the job are found within us. But so also is the heart's alchemy that can turn suffering into community, conflict into the energy of creativity, and tension into an opening toward the common good." Palmer names the "habits of the heart" we need to revitalize our politics and shows how they can be formed in the everyday venues of our lives. He proposes practical, promising ways to hold the tensions of our differences for the sake of restoring a government "of the people, by the people, for the people."