

Dear Brothers and Sister in Christ,

As I sit down to write this, I recognize that I have attempted multiple times to write a pastor letter and so often a need arises that prevents me from being able to complete a letter. Pastoral care needs continue to be on the rise, not just in our community, but everywhere. I often think of how Jesus handled pastoral care needs of those he encountered when He was doing ministry. One thing I noticed is how Jesus handles interruptions when someone's pastoral care needs arise amidst the times of ministry programs. For example, when Jesus paused to address Zacchaeus who was sitting in a tree, or when the woman who touched Jesus' clothing to receive healing. Jesus seemed to know well what we often forget as humans, and which I heard quoted a while back, "people are more important than programs." As a pastor, I am often reminded of this when I must cancel a meeting or push off work because people need pastoral care, of God's love and peace surrounding them, through me, or other fellow Christians.

Sometimes it is easy for us to focus on that tunnel vision, the programs, the finances, the lack of young people, etc. Yet, for Jesus, in ministry these things always went to the wayside in favor of putting people ahead of programs. It's easy to put our agendas, our lists ahead of the people right in front of us. The busier we make ourselves often means we miss a person in need right in front of us. How then can we work to be like Jesus and put people ahead of programs? In the words of the Psalmist "open my eyes to see"—to "see" the children, neighbors, co-workers, people in high or low positions and put their needs ahead of our agendas. Are we willing to put aside our ideas of what needs to be done, how worship should be, what our building should look like, how we need to decorate for this or that and instead focus on "seeing" how God sees? This means focusing on people, the community, and not on our own agendas. May we seek to become like Jesus and "see" those who need to be "seen."

In His Peace,

Pastor Nicki

**YouTube:** live stream and recording can be found at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/ESPresbyterian>

**Facebook:** click on the link below near the time the service begins at 10:00am to watch the live stream <https://www.facebook.com/espresbyterian/>

Additionally, bulletins and an online hymnal have been put on the website and can be found at <https://www.espresbyterian.com/worship/sunday-bulletin/>

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