



# Rectortown Reporter

March 2022

## From the Pastor

### Prioritizing Our Priorities

*Greetings in the name of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ!*



It seems like Advent and Christmas was just a few days ago—and here we are already knocking on Ash Wednesday’s door! Where does the time go? Are you one of those that often thinks, “there’s just not enough hours in the day” or, “there needs to be at least one more day in the week”? Perhaps that’s one reason so many people seem to be so fond of the past “golden age” of their lives—things were simpler then, and not nearly so hectically chaotic! Perhaps that could be the focus of your Lenten reflections this year—prioritizing your priorities.

Lent is a period of 40 days (not counting Sundays, which the church considers to be “mini Easters”) that begins on Ash Wednesday, and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent is more than just a series of days—it’s a journey that takes us along the path to Jerusalem and the suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Traditionally, Lent began as a preparation period for those wanting to join the church. Later, it became a time of penance for everyone in the church; which continues today in the form of ‘giving up’ some vice or temptation during these 40 days.

That changed not too long ago when many Christian leaders began asking folks to consider “taking on” rather than ‘giving up’ something during Lent. Rather than giving up chocolate, or soft drinks, or deserts after dinner, or... well, you get the point—why not take on a new spiritual discipline, or a new mission task? Perhaps you could add a time of prayer to your busy schedule, or you could spend time reading the Bible each day. Perhaps you could get involved in helping set up and/or operate the Rectortown Community Fig Leaf Clothes Closet; or collect special items for Share the Harvest food bank in Delaplane. Perhaps there is another way you might help meet the many needs in and beyond our community. Perhaps you could reprioritize what’s really important in your life.

Jesus prepared for the time when he would act for everyone’s benefit. Now is the time for us to reflect and prepare so we can be ready to answer God’s call to act for the benefit of others. Now is the time for us to determine how we will live as disciples through prayer, action, and love through service.

Grace and peace to each and every one of you!

*Pastor Steve*

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## JOIN US

10 a.m. Sundays for In-person  
or Livestream Worship at  
[www.rectortownumc.org](http://www.rectortownumc.org)

## Scripture of the month

And when you fast, don’t put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They distort their faces so people will know they are fasting. I assure you that they have their reward. When you fast, brush your hair and wash your face. Then you won’t look like you are fasting to people, but only to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

(Matthew 6:16-18, CEB)

# Notes from The History Committee

*In an effort to learn all we can about the history of Rectortown United Methodist Church, History Committee Chair Diane Harrington and Laura Symanski are speaking with members of the congregation, hearing firsthand stories about their time in Rectortown. First up are Roxie and Jimmy Willis. We met with them after worship on Feb. 13, 2022, and had a great trip down memory lane. The following is a summary—parts may not be in chronological order but follows the flow of conversation during our meeting.*



## Remembrances of Rectortown with Roxie and Jimmy Willis

Roxie Willis first came to the area because she worked at the Rectortown railroad station where she met her husband Sonny (Jimmy's father) who worked at Randolph Embrey's farm center right by the station. Roxie still lives in the house Sonny's grandparents owned. Jimmy had moved back to the farm from the Alexandria area where he was living in the 90s after Sonny passed away in 1999. Jimmy's been the RUMC Admin Council President for years, similar to Roxie who was Admin Secretary for more than 20 years. Like many at RUMC they've been on multiple committees that keep RUMC running so well.

They talked about Jimmy's younger days, attending RUMC with about 30 other youth—members, as well as neighborhood children. Back then, stores were closed and there was nothing else happening on Sundays so that's what they did—went to church and saw their friends, went to Sunday school, then had a big meal with their families. In fact, before the social hall was built and before the White House was part of Rectortown, Sunday school classes were held in the church—the youngest were up in the loft near the stairs, then when they got older they moved to the loft balcony area.

There were women's and men's groups in the main part of the church. Shirley Embrey and Jean Payne ran Vacation Bible School. The Christmas pageants were a big deal, each year children looking forward to the rehearsals and the show. Weldon White was the pastor then (1962-1972) and really grew the youth programs—camping, rollerskating, dancing... convoys of cars going to all the activities. There were so many families in Rectortown at the time.

Roxie told us about her job, being one of the only women who traveled to the regional railroad stations in The Plains, Rectortown and Culpeper, to help with communications. Jimmy would watch her using Morse code, sending and receiving Western Union telegrams, and giving messages to the engineers on the train. She had to put the message on a Y-shaped "stick", hold it up as the train went by so that the engineer could put his hand out and grab the message from the Y-stick. If they missed, then there was one more chance for someone in the caboose to grab it. Then if they missed again, the train had to stop and Roxie would run it down.

Sonny was a farmer and also raised chickens at Chilly Bleak Farm. He'd drive eggs around to his customers using a van

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## >>> Willis Remembrances continued

with an big white egg painted on the side. Jimmy got a job as a bagboy at Safeway in Warrenton, then eventually moved up and worked in Alexandria for about 30 years.

Roxie and Sonny got married in 1948 at Raders Lutheran Church in her hometown of Timberville near Harrisonburg. She became a member of Rectortown Church when she married Sonny. They had three children—Thurston Brand III (aka Rick), Cynthia Ann (aka Cindy), and James Arthur (aka Jimmy)—all were baptized at Rectortown in the 50s and became members in the 60s. Roxie now has 7 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren!

Jimmy told us about attending Fauquier schools and the fire that burned the old school in Marshall. The auditorium at the current community center is the only part that still exists. He said the school bus rides were long—sometimes an over an hour. At least once a week the Willis kids were late, so instead of catching the bus at Randolph's farm center, his father would chase down the bus in his car and all the kids would pile out when the bus finally stopped.

Jimmy told us about Sonny's time as a paratrooper, "jumping out of perfectly good airplanes during World War II."

Thoughts of Rectortown got Sonny through his tough times overseas. Roxie said Sonny didn't really talk about his time in the army until they started attending annual reunions all over the U.S., meeting the men with whom he served.

The house next door to the right of the church used to be a school. Jimmy's great aunt, Cordelia Rawlings, who had been a teacher there, bought it on auction after it closed and made it her home. The Rawlings family, including her parents and her sister (Sonny's mother) all attended Rectortown. When Delia died around 1965 Sonny inherited it. Eventually, Sonny sold it to Larry and Judy Scheuble. Jimmy said, "So there's

***"Thoughts of Rectortown got Sonny through his tough times overseas."***

a connection—not blood but warmth and community."

On the left side of the church is what we now call the "White House" because it was owned by Stuart White [*and yes, it is painted white*]. Stuart's wife, Addie, had a brother who owned the house next door. The 2 homes shared a well. Eventually Addie's brother kept that well and the Whites and the church shared another well. [*A plumber recently discovered a date written near the pipes down below that read 1988.*]

Roxie and Jimmy reminisced about the church without the social hall. In 1972, Cindy got married in the church and her wedding reception was one of the first functions in the new social hall. Jimmy and Vicki also got married in the church in 1997. Since they were living in Aquia at the time but knew they wanted to get married at Rectortown, they first had to meet the pastor. "This young kid comes out and says 'I'm Mark Roberson' and he had to ask us all these personal questions. He was a joy and he still looks as young as he did back then."

In the 60s and 70s there was an active women's group which both Roxie and Shirley were part of—the Women's Society of Christian Services (WSCS). Jimmy remembers "all the great cooking that came out of that group." This was during Pastor Weldon's time. He would wear a bowtie to preach and often broke out his accordion.

At one point Cindy Willis was an organist and shared that position with Joy Willis—a daughter in Rectortown's other Willis family. [*Did you know that the two Willis families are not related? We didn't but now we do.*] One Christmas Jimmy and Cindy played a duet on the piano, which was somewhat hidden behind a Sigler oil heater. He played one hand and she played the other.

*Diane and I thank Roxie and Jimmy for being so generous with their time, sharing all these great stories, and being part of the Rectortown Church family for 70+ years.*

*- Laura Symanski, History Committee Member*





## From the Outreach Committee

### LENT FOOD DONATION

Serving God through  
Prayer, **Action**, and  
Love through Service

Instead of giving up something, consider giving away something. Drop off food donations at Rectortown United Methodist church **no later than March 27** and OUTREACH will donate your food to a local food bank. If you are unable to take them to the church, please contact Linda Daniels at (540-364-3776) and arrangements will be made to pick them up.



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## Volunteers and Donations Needed

Rectortown United Methodist Church is excited to announce Fig Leaf, a new community outreach program. Fig Leaf is a no-cost clothes closet serving local children, teens, and adults in need of clothing for work, every day, and special occasions. Donated clothing will be displayed in an environment where those in need can "shop" for what they can use at no cost.

We hope to involve the entire Rectortown community by recruiting volunteers to receive, sort, and clean merchandise, re-cycle excess or unused clothes as well as staff Fig Leaf during hours of operation. **Volunteers are needed immediately** to set up the clothes closet. Please contact the church office at 540-364-1066 or FigLeafAtRUMC@gmail.com if you would like to help.

Our target start date to open to the public is Saturday, April 2, 2022. Fig Leaf will be open during the same hours as Share The Harvest Food Bank at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Delaplane: Tuesdays 3-5 pm, Wednesdays 10:30 am-12:30 pm, and 9:30 am-12:30 pm on the 1st Saturday of the month.

Fig Leaf will be located in the basement of the White House (3043 Rectortown Rd, Rectortown, VA 20140) next to Rectortown United Methodist Church. Park at Rectortown United Methodist Church and follow the signs to the basement entrance of the White House next door to the church.

To donate, drop off clothing at the storage building in the church parking lot Tuesdays through Fridays, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm and Saturdays 9:00 am - 3:00 pm.

# RUMC Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Wed, March 2 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday**
- Thurs, March 3 7 pm Admin Council
- Tues, March 8 10 am Worship Committee
- Sun, March 13 Daylight Savings Time –  
"spring ahead"
- Thurs, March 17 7 pm SPPRC

*All events take place at Rectortown UMC*



## March Birthdays

- Yvie Frazier . . . . . 3/4
- Skylar Riggio . . . . . 3/24
- Tom McLaughlin . . . . . 3/26
- Joice Fredenburgh. . . . 3/29
- Rick Hylton . . . . . 3/30
- Ward Ponn. . . . . 3/31

**RUMC wants to know...** If you have any photos from our events, news or recipes you'd like to share, please e-mail [Laura@NatsukoGraphicDesign.com](mailto:Laura@NatsukoGraphicDesign.com).



**Rectortown United Methodist Mission Statement**  
*Serving God through Prayer, Action, and Love through Service.*