**THE WORD FROM RICK – “It’s Who I Am!”**

As I write this week’s article, I am getting ready for a quick two-day trip to Louisville where I will be meeting with members of our General Assembly staff in preparation for this summer’s Presbyterian Youth Triennium. By now, it is no secret. I am -- have been and always will be -- a “youth ministry guy.” It is who I am – even as I wear my “Transitional EP” hat!

Beginning with my first seminary fieldwork assignment as Youth Worker at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church in Louisville to this very day, I have carried a strong commitment to the youth and young adults of the church. As part of that commitment, I accompanied a group of fifteen youth from the Presbytery of Central Nebraska to the very first Presbyterian Youth Triennium which was held at Indiana University in 1980, and got hooked on this event. As a result, I have attended every Triennium that has been held since then, except for the one held in 1995 – I was on a mission trip to Alaska at that time.

I have been to Triennium as a delegation advisor, Small Group Leader, and Work Crew Coordinator (Wrangler). This year, for the third time, I will be the Coordinator of the Triennium Exhibit Hall, as well as the College and Seminary Fair. This is probably one of the best jobs at the Triennium because I not only get to encounter most of the 6000 participants as they wander through our space and learn about their “national” church, but also because I get to work side by side with some incredibly talented and committed people who serve all of us as part of the staff for our denomination and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

Our Exhibit Hall this year is called the CROSSROADS; and for five days in July, I will get to hang out in a place where our youth will encounter their church, and learn about how the ministries of PCUSA and Cumberland Presbyterian Churches serve the world. For five days, I will truly be “in my element,” helping to create what I hope will be an amazing experience for an emerging generation of Presbyterians, and this week’s trip to Louisville is a big part of that adventure.

As I travel this week, I will keep all of you in prayer as together we walk through the events of this Holy Week. May this week be blessed and holy, and may it prepare you to experience great joy as we celebrate both an empty cross and an empty tomb next Sunday morning! Glory to God, now and always!

Grace and Peace,

**Rick**