

Another Word December 19, 2023

To our friends and family of First Christian Church

I hope you have been enjoying our journey through the first chapter of Luke, as we prepare, anticipate, and wait during Advent. God's plan is coming to fruition! It's hard to believe that we will be celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior in less than a week!

This Sunday at 10:30 is our fourth lesson of Advent, the lesson of Love. Then at 3:30 we will reassemble for our Christmas Eve Service, a Festival of Lessons and Carols. We hope you can join us for this lovely candlelight service, celebrating our Lord's birth.

Our December 31st service is entitled, "The Wise Still Seek Him." Based on Matthew 2: 1-12. The Old Testament reading is Psalm 148.

Our scriptures for January the 7<sup>th</sup> are Psalm 29 and Mark 1: 4-11.

For January the 14<sup>th</sup> they are Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18, and John 1: 43-51.

Please remember Julia Fowler (John Kirby's sister), Sandy Bally (Sara Stewart's niece), Lennie Reich, Lyle and Jeanne Easterday, Ken Bee, our niece Shannon, and other loved ones we know who are in need of healing as we go to prayer.

May we be in prayer.

Lord of life, we raise our hearts and voices in praise and adoration. We give You thanks for the abundant gifts of life that nourish our bodies and souls. Our hearts are light with joy as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth and wait with anticipation His second glorious coming. Until then, as we await, we follow You by caring for our neighbor, and spreading the good news of Your love. We offer ourselves as grateful servants in the name of the one who gave all for us; Jesus... our Immanuel... God with us, Amen.

Here is a little something to consider as we await His coming;

Matthew 2: 11. "On coming to the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped Him."

Many of us, when we were young heard our parents say, "sit up", "don't slouch", and even, "stand up straight." I even remember placing a book on my head to more "properly" learn to stand and walk.

Standing straight and tall has always been a sign of confidence, control, and strength. To sit or stand casually was in many minds a sign of inattention, boredom, and weakness. Even corporations have studied and taught the effects of body language and how it can affect business in the marketplace.

Yet our verse today tells us that wise men of great importance, who came from a distant land, bowed in submission and worshipped a tiny baby. Think of this moment in time. Wise men, who in their hometown would have been respected and bowed to, brought gifts, and submitted themselves to a lowly child.

This reminds me of an incident in the dead of winter that made headlines some years back. A photographer snapped a picture of a New York policeman who purchased shoes and socks and then bowed down and put them on a homeless man. He humbled himself, gave gifts, and showed respect to a fellow human being.

So, the question to ask ourselves is, what posture will we show this Christmas season? Pride and strength or humbly bowing to Jesus and caring for our neighbor? I say, we should choose the "Wise" way.

May your Christmas be filled with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

*Rich*