

Another Word July 18,2023

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

What a great day we had! Our first outdoor service and our first picnic. Thanks to all who brought such wonderful dishes to share, as well as a big thank you to all who helped cook, set up, and even clean up afterwards. I've already been asked when is the next picnic. I say sooner than later.

You should have seen the eyes of the folks at Associated Charities when we delivered our love offering of mac n' cheese and noodles! They send you all a great big thank you, and God's blessings. Well done good and faithful servants.

We had a great meeting with a representative from LifeWise Academy on July 9th. Over 20 attended. They provide an elective Bible study class, with parental consent, for students in the Ashland School system. The material taught is non-denominational and Gospel centered. The program is privately funded and classes must be off school property. This is where we come in. The program is being introduced to the Middle School this fall and they need space close by to hold 2 classes a day, 5 days a week. LifeWise estimates that there will be close to 250 students signing up. They will come in, set up the rooms, see that the students are transported here and back, provide teachers and materials, and have full liability on every student. They are asking for 2 classrooms from us and possibly a few volunteers to assist. Background checks will be provided.

Your Leadership committee met last Sunday and voted to move ahead with this important outreach to the youth in our community provided you, the congregation accepts and agrees.

We are asking you to be present immediately after our service, July 30th for this important vote, whether to move forward or not. Please contact Jan Robinson or any member of the leadership council with questions or concerns.

Our scriptures for the next two weeks are:

July 23rd: Psalm 139: 1-12, 23-24. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. Looks like this is a job for Round-Up!

July 30: Psalm 105: 1-11, 45b. Todd Whitmer is our serving Elder.

Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52, Seeds, yeast, and pearls.

As we go to prayer, please remember Dick Gordon, Glen Bille, Shelley and Ashley, and Michelle Richey.

May we pray. O Holy and faithful God. We rejoice this day for your gift of life, and the new life offered through your son Jesus Christ. We also give thanks to you for the love of family, the affection of friends, and giving us strength and abilities to be able to serve you each day. We especially pray for those who are in the great storms of life; the homeless, the widowed, the orphaned, the lonely, the outcasts, the persecuted. Guide each of us this day that we may make a difference in someone else's life. Give us courage to be a witness of your wonderful love, and to share in the work you have given us as your disciples. In Jesus' blessed name, Amen

A friend of ours had a boat on Lake Erie. Well actually, it was docked at East Harbor just off the lake. Three or four times every summer he and his wife would invite us to take a cruise with them out onto the lake. We would pack snacks or even a picnic basket of food and off we would go.

It was so peaceful cruising around the islands, enjoying the sights as well as the beautiful weather. Other times we would head out to the middle of the lake to look for the dotted line that separated Canada and the U.S. We never located it. Do you suppose that the maps had it wrong?

Once in a while as we bobbed on the calm waters, he would look toward the northwest, study the sky, and then say, "we need to head

back, NOW!" I would look around and see nothing but blue skies, feel a gentle breeze, and see a few clouds forming in the distance. Nothing to be alarmed of, or so I thought. But by the time we got back to the entrance of East Harbor, the wind was blowing, it was beginning to rain, and the calm waters had turned into huge waves crashing over the protective barriers; barriers that are man-made arms of rock and dirt that are designed to take the brunt of any storm. They also have bright lights that shine out into the lake to guide boaters back to safety. Storms come up quickly on Lake Erie! Luckily for us our skipper could read the signs, avoid danger, and bring us back to the safety of the harbor.

I've often thought what it would be like to be caught out on the lake in a raging storm, uncertain what to do or where to go for protection. Hopelessness comes to mind. Possibly even the same hopelessness that so many in our world today feel as they find themselves in the middle of the many storms of life. So, what or who do we need to guide us through the perils of life?

As I looked through God's word, I came across two verses written by King David that can guide us home to a safe harbor. They are in Psalm 32: 6-7. Verse 6 states, "Let everyone who is Godly pray to You while You can be found." In other words, we must seek God at all times, not just when we are desperate for His help. But don't wait too long, you may miss Him. And then it says, "surely when the mighty waters rise, (sounds like a raging storm to me) they will not reach him," (that is, the one who is seeking God.) With God in your heart, you will be brought safely through the storm. Verse 7 goes on to say, "You are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance." In these words, David means that God gives us a place of protection, a barrier from the storms of life. He guides us with His light of truth, and surrounds us with love, comfort, and assurance of life. He gives us peace, even in the midst of danger.

Just remember that if we have God in our lives, we will be able to withstand the storms of life and be guided home by the light of truth, to a safe and secure harbor.

In His Peace,

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