

Another Word November 15, 2022

To our friends and family of First Christian Church

Well, it finally happened. I thought a truck filled with Styrofoam pellets lost its load, but no... it was snow! Luckily it didn't interfere with our work day. Thanks to everyone who helped work around the church Saturday.

As a reminder, our Congregational meeting to vote on our slate of leaders and to discuss and approve our 2023 budget will take place immediately after our service this Sunday, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>.

After our meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup>, we will be decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas. Let's make it a party! I'll provide pizza. We will also need a few cookies and something to drink. (pop, tea etc.)

Pastor Mike Simmons and his wife Stacy of The Lord's Pantry, send their sincere thanks for our contribution to their weekend meals program for the youth in area schools. Our donation of \$615 was raised in less than an hour, and individual serving meals and snacks were purchased and delivered in time so they could be distributed by the weekend. You are such a loving and caring congregation!

We are helping our local Job and Family Services and Fostering Families programs purchase a few Christmas gifts for 15 children in Ashland. Thanks for stepping up and putting a smile on a child's face, and a little hope and love in their hearts.

Our scriptures for this Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> are: Deuteronomy 26: 1-4, 9-11, and Psalm 100. "Give thanks for all things." Matt Henderson is our serving Elder.

Our scriptures for November 27, the first week of Advent Are: Isaiah 2:1-5, and Mark 13:32-37, and Luke 1: 5-25. "The birth of John the Baptist foretold." Todd Whitmer is our serving Elder.

May we pray.

Our Holy and Gracious God, we stand in awe of Your greatness. Your love shows no bounds, and Your gift of grace is unending. In the midst of our troubles, You are always there, supporting us, inspiring us, and guiding us to better lives. And for that, we give our thanks and gratitude. We pray that Your comfort, strength, and peace fall on those in need of health and spiritual healing. We also ask for protection for those who work tirelessly to keep us safe from harm, for they are an extension of your love. We thank You for Your gift of life through Jesus, the Christ, in whose name we raise this prayer, Amen.

Some of you may know that my father's side of the family is from the pan handle of Florida. In 1967 my brother and his wife and I decided to drive down and visit our relatives. While in Tallahassee, it was suggested we visit a local botanical garden not far from their home.

It was a beautiful warm day in July as we strolled around the manicured grounds. There I was in a shirt, shorts, and penny loafer shoes with no socks! (The approved dress of the mid 60's) I can still see it like it was yesterday; a beautiful lake down a hill and just below a large willow tree. I stepped off the walking path and headed toward the lake for a

better view. As I walked under the willow tree I kicked a stick lying on the ground. However, it wasn't a stick but a snake! And it wrapped around my bare ankle!!! (You may scream now, I did!)

There are times when walking through life isn't for the faint of heart. The Bible reminds us that that old serpent, the devil slithers along our path, waiting for a time to trip us up on our journey. Lying in the grass, he awaits until we are distracted or tempted. And then, when we least expect it, he strikes. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:27 "Do not give the devil a foothold." In other words, watch where you step. Very wise words! We need to be ever vigilant of our surroundings so we don't wander off our path into some concealed danger.

You may be thinking, "But Rich, what happened to you and the snake?" My brother Tom, who watched it all, said that it was one of the funniest things he had ever seen. He said it was just like a cartoon. I went straight up in the air and ran 10 feet to the right before my feet ever hit the ground! So, what about the snake? Tom said that it went straight up in the air, and "ran" to the left!

So, you see? The Apostle James is right when he wrote in chapter 4:7 to "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." I resisted that snake by running away. And sure enough just as James said, if we resist, that old serpent the devil, with all of his lies and deceits, can do nothing but run the other direction.

In His Peace,

*Rich*