

Another Word January 18,2022

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Well, nature finally happened. We got quite a sizable snow storm Sunday night and early Monday. As I shoveled at home, it seemed like 12 feet of snow had come down, but in reality, it was around 6 inches. However, there were some mighty nice drifts because of the wind. And speaking of drifts, it was so deep at the church we couldn't get in until Wednesday, hence the letter being delayed by a day. All of you who ran off to Florida and Texas recently sure missed a fun time!

I think it is time for our next study, "The Art of Living; God, Discovering the Divine" By Henri Nouwen. Looking at our calendar, we could start February 1 for 4 weeks, ending just before Ash Wednesday. Again, the classes will be at 10:30 am and 6pm each Tuesday in February. A sign-up sheet will be in the gathering center, and I have a few extra books if anyone would like to join us.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are Psalm 19, read by our Elder, Shelley Carpenter, and Luke 4:14-21, "Jesus unveils His mission statement."

Please keep Lana Bell's aunt and uncle, John Whitmer, and the family of Leonard Bair in your prayers this week.

Let us pray,

Gracious God, creator of life, to You we bow in gratitude and love. At times, our lives seem to become overwhelming; times when we can see no clear direction. But then we realize You are there, watching, protecting, and giving us much needed hope. Your word is truly the

guidance we need as we travel the challenges of life. We ask for protection for our first responders, especially for our health care workers as they face another outbreak of the virus. And we pray for our city, state, and federal government leaders. May they always seek Your wisdom first. We hold up to You those who are in need of healing, comfort and peace.....We offer this prayer with grateful hearts in Jesus' Holy name, Amen.

Virus! Virus! Virus! I don't know about you, but if I never hear that word again, it will be too soon. However, viruses have been around in some form of fashion for centuries, and will, sorry to say, be around in the future. We need to take precautions, stay in good health, and remain aware to avoid picking up an unwanted virus. In other words, we need to scan our surroundings to detect, and then avoid potential danger spots.

Even our computers can get a virus. And the only way to spot them is to have a scan set up to run often that detects and isolates the virus before it can do any damage. Like a physical virus, we want to detect it and isolate it before it infects everything.

Did you notice that I used the word "Virus" 3 times above? Yep, it was on purpose. The third virus we can catch is a virus of the soul. If we don't catch them quickly they can also spread through us and infect our lives. So, what can we do, how can we detect them? We can install God's virus scan. In Psalm 139, David describes this scan.

Verses 23-24 states, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." David knew how sin can creep into the heart, and he knew firsthand the damage it can cause. So, he asks God to search and see if any virus is found in his heart and reveal it to him before it can cause any damage.

This should be a prayer we pray at the beginning of each day. We could be virus-free yesterday, but could have pick up something in the meantime. And it's easy to become infected by a virus of the heart. It can start as a bad attitude, some small resentment, maybe a little jealousy, or you had some complaint or some negativity creep in. They all begin small, but unchecked, they can become a full blown sickness. God warns us in Hebrews 12:15 to "see to it that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." And the only way is to ask God to "search" our hearts, and once we see, to repent before it causes any lasting damage.

So, as we daily protect ourselves from a physical virus, and allow our scanners to protect our computers, may we also invite God into our hearts to scan for viruses that may have been allowed in, that can cause our hearts and minds to be infected.

In His Peace,

Rich