

Another Word January 26, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

The leadership committee is happy to announce that we will be opening for live services Sunday, February 14th (Valentine's Day). We had been announcing Ash Wednesday as the first live service, but decided the Sunday before the start of Lent would be better. (For those who might have forgotten; services will be at 10:30.) Sorry, couldn't resist!

They are also excited to announce plasma based air purifiers that kill most viruses, are being installed in the sanctuary. The purifiers will be working and cleaning the air by the 14th. We still want you to wear masks, but you may be confident we are doing everything possible for your comfort and safety.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are Psalm 111 and Matthew 7: 24- 29.
"So, tell me, what do I need to do 'to follow?'"

Let us be in prayer.

Father of creation, we offer to you our praise and thanks for life. Every day is a gift from you; and a time to spread your love to others. We ask for blessings, guidance, and protection to all who are working on the front lines who work to bring us healing, peace, and safety. We pray for the persecuted and abused around the world. May they find peace, strength, and resolve through your word and trust in your son, Jesus. When the storms of life try to overwhelm, we know you are there with your arms around us. We thank you for your love and assurance, that

comes from knowing and following your Son, and in his perfect name we offer this prayer, Amen

I asked Donita the other day if she has ever seen me panic. You know, a full blown, running in circles, flat out lose control panic. She said, “Not even on our wedding day.” Good answer! Whew!!

The closest I think I’ve ever come to panicking was waking up some years ago at 4 in the morning to a sound, not unlike that of Niagara Falls, emanating from the basement. (Ah, the basement again. See a pattern developing?) I ran down to find that the line coming from the hot water tank had separated and water was shooting, for quite some time, clear across the room. (At least we have good pressure.) For a few moments I stood speechless, but then ran to the main water valve and shut off the flow. I was prepared for a water emergency, and had faith that the shut-off valve would work.

There are many incidents in the Bible where God teaches us about faith in the midst of a storm. (And many of them concern water.) Matthew 8:23-27 is one of them. Jesus and his disciples head out across The Sea of Galilee. A violent storm comes up and the disciples panic. They awaken Jesus, who was asleep, and in their fear say, “Lord save us! We are going to drown!” Jesus looks around then says “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Of course, you know how it ends. Jesus calms the storm and the disciples scratch their heads wondering “Who is this that can even calm the wind and waves?”

I read a quote the other day by Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones. “Faith is the refusal to panic, come what may.” Maybe that doesn’t sound too

Biblical, but let's take a closer look. Life, like the weather, can change at the drop of a hat (or broken water pipe) from sunny to stormy. If you are not prepared; if you have no belief, no faith, and feel helpless, then you will, like the disciples, panic in the face of disasters. Note, Jesus said "You of little faith." I think that might mean we need more.

Matthew 8 is telling us we need to have a strong faith. Knowing that through a strong faith, Jesus will always be there, whether you're in a sunny day or in the midst of a storm. He will be the same in every situation. And even the wind and waves that come our way are under His control. So the faith that the good doctor was referring to is the belief, trust, and the following of Jesus through His perfect words. I will have a bit more to say about His words this Sunday. Stay tuned.

We had a storm hit our house that night. I had faith that the valve would stop the raging waters. Likewise, when you find yourself in the midst of a storm and the waters are raging, remember- Jesus is aboard and in control. He wants you to always rely on Him, to trust in Him, and to know that "Faith is the refusal to panic, come what may."

In His Peace,

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