

Another Word January 31, 2022

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

With the potential of another large snow storm looming, I am writing and mailing this a day earlier so it can be delivered before the storm arrives. If you need to be out and about toward the end of the week, please use caution. I don't know about you, but I'm getting a little tired of shoveling. It's interesting to note that if we receive what they say is coming, and combine it with our recent snow fall, we will have received more snow in just a couple of weeks than over the past 2 years combined. Gee, thanks for *that* little piece of trivia, Rich!

Our email prayer list is growing. If you wish to be included, just leave your email address with us. You will be notified, as a group, when someone needs prayer, so they may be lifted quickly and powerfully to our Great Healer. Thank you for your willingness to pray for others.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are: Isaiah 6:1-8, read by our serving Elder, Matt Henderson. My message, "He is calling, be prepared" is based on Luke 5:1-11.

As we go to prayer, may we remember all those in our families and our friends who need healing or comfort from loss. And to remember those in our church family who haven't been able to be with us in worship.

May we pray.

Most Holy God. We thank you for Your love and guidance, and for allowing us to come to You with our praise, our fears, and even our anger. You truly understand us. May we always act in accordance with Your word. We ask for Your guidance, strength, and protection to grace our first responders, and to all who put others before themselves. We ask for love and comfort for our family and friends, as well as all who need Your loving touch. You are our God, and You alone are worthy of our love and praise. We lift our voices as one to You, in Jesus' precious name, whose death and resurrection erased our sins, Amen.

Speaking of erasing. Donita showed me a cartoon the other day. It was a picture of the "Etch A Sketch" Museum after an earthquake. All the great pictures that had been painstakingly drawn were shaken and erased. There was nothing left but a bunch of blank screens. Note, I said it was a cartoon.

But it got me thinking. My sister received one the year they were first introduced. All of us were mesmerized by how it worked. You turned the left knob, and magically a horizontal line was drawn. When you turned the right knob, a vertical line appeared. When you turned both knobs together, you could make stairs, diagonal lines, even circles. The more you worked with it, the more complex pictures you could draw. But the coolest part was when you messed up, or wanted a blank screen to start over. You simply turned it upside down, gave it a shake, and when you turned it back over, the screen was again blank, ready for you to create something new.

David, in Psalm 51 said, "Blot out my iniquity," and "create in me a clean, (new) heart." God's forgiveness works much like an Etch A Sketch. When we go to Him and ask for forgiveness, He wipes away our

sin, and gives us a new clean screen of life. The beauty is that there are no marks left on the screen to be held against us. God chooses to forgive and forget. Psalm 103:10 tells us, “He wipes them out, and doesn’t hold sin against us. He doesn’t treat us according to our sinful actions, but extends grace through forgiveness.”

And then the Psalmist goes on to say in verse 12, “that our sins have been separated from us as far as the east is from the west.” You can’t get much farther away than that! In other words, our sin is no longer there, like a bad drawing that could clutter up the screen.

I think we are truly lucky that we don’t have to be held upside down and shaken to erase our sins. Because of His love, God only requires that we come to Him, with a contrite heart, and ask for His forgiveness.

In His Peace,

*Rich*