

Another Word January 1, 2023

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Happy New Year to all!!

2022 went out reminding us of just how fierce weather can be. And here we are at the beginning of a new year, treated to spring like temperatures. My words of advice though would be to not get too comfortable with the warmer weather, especially here in Ohio; it can change at any moment.

We would like to thank everyone who stepped forward and shared their time, efforts, talents, and love over the past two months. So many have been helped, comforted and blessed because of you. It is because of your love and commitment to your neighbor that God's Kingdom shines brightly in our community.

We are planning our next Bible study that will begin February 21<sup>st</sup>, and continue for 5 weeks. We will be exploring the Henri Nouwen book entitled Love. I have a few extra books available. Alan Girard has graciously accepted to lead the discussion. I will have a signup sheet available in the gathering area. The class will again be held at either 10:30 am or at 6pm each Tuesday. We thought it would be a great study coinciding with Lent, which begins February 26.

Jaime and Mike Reynolds were joined together in marriage January 1<sup>st</sup>. Please join me in wishing them a God inspired, joyful, and long life together.

Our scriptures for Jan. 8 and 15 are:

Psalms 29, serving Elder Todd Whitmer. Matthew 3: 1-17, the Baptism of Jesus.

Isaiah 49: 1-7, serving Elder Matt Henderson. John 1: 29-42, Jesus, The Lamb of God.

As we enter into prayer, please pray for Lennie Reich who will be having surgery Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>.

Let us Pray. Almighty and gracious God, as we enter a new year, we find ourselves filled with hope but also questions as to what the future may bring. May we never forget to first honor you with our lives, and to know you are always with us, guiding and protecting us. May we continue to show true compassion to those around us, and to keep you at the heart of all we say and do. With new mercies given us each day, may we live to worship you with contagious joy and deep gratitude for all the gifts you constantly shower on us. In Jesus precious name we pray, Amen

All day I have been watching, and yes watching is a relative word, the fog that fell in the morning, blurring my sight, lifting some so I could see a little more clearly, and then settling even lower and masking my sight almost to the point that I can barely see the houses across the street. In fact, it has been so overcast that when I awoke this morning, I thought it had to be 3 or 4 in the morning it was so dark. However, fog never ultimately lasts forever. Fog is never a match when the sun finally burns through and shines brightly.

As I set here, it occurs to me that the fog parallels the dark and uncertain moments in our lives. At times, fog rolls into our lives obscuring things that we were once sure of, and it covers our joy with a

sense of sadness and fear. In fact, this fog can even seem impenetrable, especially when it becomes darker and darker. So, what can we do? Where can we turn?

Psalm 84:11 promises, “The Lord God is a sun and shield.” In other words, if you belong to God, His light, His sun is more powerful than any fog invading your life. And it doesn’t matter how dense or stubborn that fog may be, it is no match for His shining, protecting light.

And then there is Psalm 112:4, “Even in darkness light dawns.” And then It goes on to say, “Good will come to you, and surely you will never be shaken.” The fog in our lives that at times seems overwhelming and unending actually has no chance to overpower us, and will ultimately lose to the joy of God’s powerful sunlight.

Just like the fog that has been building up right outside my window, it will eventually give way to the sun that is always there, brightly shining down on us. So, don’t lose hope, don’t stop trusting. The light may have been delayed, even obscured, but there is no way it will ever be defeated. We will always rise to a brighter tomorrow.

In His Peace,

*Rich*