

Another Word February 14, 2022

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Happy Valentine's Day! I was sent God's Valentine by two people, and it is so good that I will have Ellie put it on our Facebook page. And by the way, it also coincides with my story below.

We will be changing the sanctuary around after our Sunday service. If you are able, stay for a few minutes to help. Thanks.

It's hard to believe that Lent is just around the corner. As a reminder, there will be an Ash Wednesday Service, March 2nd beginning at 6:30. We hope you can join us, and bring a friend to this meaningful time.

Our scriptures for this Sunday: The Old Testament reading is Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40. Our serving Elder is Ellie Wells. The New Testament reading is Luke 6:27-36. "Hate is easy; love takes courage."

As we enter into prayers, please remember all those who can't be with us each Sunday, and those among us in need of healing.

O, Holy and mighty God. Together as one, we raise our voices in praise and adoration. Your love is there and unending, even when our thoughts are turned away from You. There are so many in the world that are lost and struggling. May we be used by You to reach out to them with Your love and compassion, and explain through Your love, Your special gift of Grace. May we help all who are in need of peace, healing, and comfort, and direct us in Your perfect way of everlasting life. In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.

We all like to receive gifts. Christmas and birthdays come to mind. I hope we also like giving gifts. (It is better to give than receive, or so they say.) However, the best gift is the one we receive out of love, because it comes unexpectedly, and is given for no clear or apparent reason. The recipient is at first surprised, and then often feels confused or undeserving. When explained what the gift is and why it is given, they will graciously accept with a grateful heart. So, what happens if they don't know what the gift is for, or how it's to be used? It will be placed on a shelf, and forgotten. The following story proves my point.

In the mid to late 1800's, the east side of London was an area of abject poverty. A well-known writer, trying to raise public awareness of the horrid conditions, went to interview an elderly woman in her late 80's, who was living in total squalor. As he listened to her story, it was revealed that she had worked most of her life as a maid for a wealthy couple. The couple eventually died, and because there were no relatives to continue the estate, she became unemployed. Her meager savings soon ran out and she has been forced to live this way ever since.

As he was preparing to leave, she pulled out what she said was her only reminder of her past life. It was a beautiful paper with fancy writing that was given to her after the death of her employers. Upon inspecting the paper, the writer discovered that it was the last will and testament of the couple, leaving the complete estate to their beloved maid. However, because she could neither read nor write, she never knew what she had.

I think it's kinda obvious where this is going.

The last will and testament of God is available to everyone. It reads in part; John 3:16, "For God so loved the world (you can add your name here) that He gave His son,... so if you believe, you will have eternal life." Romans 5:8 "God shows His love for us, for while we were still sinners, Christ (His Son) died for us." And then there is Titus 2:11, "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all people." To you and me these words make perfect sense. Why? Because someone took the time to explain them to us, and because of that, we now believe. And we know that God's grace, that "Amazing Grace," is the greatest gift ever given; given solely out of love.

As believers, our job is to see that no one goes through life like the elderly lady, in the possession of an unopened or unexplained gift from God. For when this gift is explained through our love and actions, it can then be claimed and accepted by others, with a grateful and loving heart.

In His Peace,

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