

Another Word February 16, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Well, here we go again! We had such a wonderful live service last Sunday, (the first since mid November) and we were looking forward to our up-coming Ash Wednesday Service. It appears Mother Nature had other plans. With a 12 hour snow event coming at us as well as frigid temperatures, for your safety, we find it necessary to cancel our Wednesday service. However, this coming Sunday, we will incorporate portions of Ash Wednesday into our first Lenten Service. It should be a meaningful and moving experience for all.

Scriptures for this Sunday: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17, Psalm 25: 1-10, and Mark 2:23- 3:6. "Keep the Sabbath Holy...How?"

May we be in prayer.

Most Holy God, we lift up our voices as one, praising your name and all your great works. The plans you have made for us are for our peace, comfort, and safety. To live in your ways is indeed a challenge but also a great blessing and we are humbled that you care for and love us so. Please be with us as we face this week of uncertainties. May we look out for our neighbor's welfare, and open up to us opportunities to spread your love to others. In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.

For years, Easter to me, was a time when we celebrated the coming of spring, renewal of life, getting Easter eggs and chocolate, and the resurrection of Jesus, if you happened to go to church that

Sunday. And then there was the season of Lent. A time to give up things that you liked, or more as a joke, to give up things you didn't like.

All of that changed when Donita and I were asked to teach a Bible class to a bunch of fourth and fifth graders. We took over just as Lent began, and discovered that we didn't know any more than the youth. It was time for a crash course about Lent and Easter.

Over the years, we learned that this season is the most rich and wonderful time of the church year. A time to self-reflect on who we are, as well as a time to better understand our God, and the ultimate gift He gave to the world.

Forty days of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday, (not counting Sundays) has been observed by the church since the sixth century A.D. Forty days to be used as a time to prepare for the Resurrection of our Lord. Why forty you may ask? Forty is a very important number. Jesus took forty days in the wilderness to fast, to fight Satan and to prepare for His ministry. Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai, receiving the law of God. Forty days: with Moses, an encounter with God, and then through Jesus, a divine action. Does it not then make sense that we should also examine our lives to match our own forty days in faithful commitment to the Lord, and then to admit the reality of the bountiful Grace given to each of us?

We all have a deep need of the Grace of Jesus. The time of Lent should be used, not to give up something, but to more deeply understand the gift of His Grace, to understand more thoroughly Jesus' crucifixion, and

the marvelous act of love it represents. And to then thank God for the great resurrection that points to the promise of our own resurrection.

This season of Lent, we will be using a few verses from the book of John and from the book of Mark. May I suggest that you start your own Lenten journey by reading Mark, chapters 14 and 15. Refer to them often as you contemplate your life, God's will, and Jesus' perfect act of love, for all mankind.

I look forward to walking this journey with you.

In His Peace,

*Rich*