

Another Word February 2, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Can you believe that many will now live the next 6 weeks of their lives in hope or dread because of what a woodchuck in Pennsylvania supposedly saw this morning? My advice to you is, start preparing for spring but keep your snow shovels handy. That should cover it.

We will again partner with Ashland Pregnancy and Care Center with their Baby Bottle Campaign during Lent. Bottles will be available to be picked up February 14th and are to be returned no later than April 11th.

The plasma air purifiers are installed, and we are now working to purchase 3 portable air purifiers that can be used in the offices as well as the other rooms in the building (nursery, classrooms, kitchen etc).

We have entered into partnership with LifeWise Academy of Ashland County, in conjunction with the Ashland County Ministerial Association, to offer a Bible class to students in all school districts of our County. The weekly class, which is voluntary with parental permission, will be available to all students in grades 1-5. Every district is on board and eager for classes to start. These classes, which are sanctioned by The State of Ohio, and upheld by our Supreme Court will be held off school grounds during the school day. Imagine the impact this could have on over 2,000 students, their families, as well as our community. For information on how this program works, go to LifeWiseacademy.com.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are Psalm 37: 1-6 and John 3: 1-21, "What can you do, when Jesus calls you?"

Let us be in prayer.

Almighty God our loving Father, You dwell in mystery and majesty. Through the Holy Spirit You renew and sustain all of creation. And through Your Son Jesus, You reveal Your love. Through our faith, we seek your presence. We ask that You come to us in our weakness that we will be transformed by Your strength. And, through Your spirit, may we learn to love You as well as our neighbor, with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. In Jesus' precious and perfect name we pray, Amen.

In my 45 plus years in the business world, I've seen my share of promotions and failures. Some people just seemed born ready to move up, while others didn't. Some who weren't prepared but accepted the promotion were usually the ones who failed for lack of experience.

A lack of experience. I remember my first interview out of college. It was for an assistant manager's position in a clothing store. The store was part of a chain of 35 stores, and the chain was growing rapidly. I was interviewed by one of the vice presidents of the company, and his "hook" to me was, "we promote when we think you are ready; and most assistant managers are ready in 6 to 9 months." That was quite a carrot; quite an enticement.

I can still see his face when I said to him, "but what if I don't think I'm ready?"

Many would jump at the idea of promotion and higher pay, but I felt the most important thing was to know and understand the position; to learn as much as I could so when a promotion came, I would have a

better chance of success, for myself and my employer. I was willing to take the “long way around” so I would be better prepared for the job I was hired to do.

In Exodus 13: 17-18, Moses records that God, leading the Israelites out of Egypt, chose to lead them down the desert road, toward the Red Sea. This was a much longer route than straight across the Philistine country. If they had taken the “short cut” they might have faced war, changed their minds, and returned to Egypt. However, the longer journey gave them more time to strengthen themselves physically, mentally, and to be spiritually ready for whatever risks they may encounter.

I think the lesson here is that taking a shortcut in life isn't always the best. Sometimes God wants us to take the longer route in life, whether it's our career or some other challenge. If we do, we will be more prepared to face whatever life may offer. So, when you start feeling that things aren't happening fast enough, maybe it's just God taking you on the “long way” around. The way that will strengthen you and remind you that you can always trust Him who leads and guides.

Oh and the result of the interview? I got the position, and worked night and day to learn and master what was required of me to be a manager. When I was prepared for the challenge, I was promoted.

In His Peace,

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