

Another Word February 7, 2022

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Wow! Talk about a winter wonderland!! It's great seeing people sled riding on the old Country Club hill again. Also, have you seen the piles of plowed snow on our parking lot? I wish I was a little younger because I would be out there digging a fort, digging tunnels, or maybe planting a flag at the top of the mound as we play, King of the hill. Oh, to be young again. And speaking of flags; more on that later.

There is still time if you would like to join our latest study. You may join us either at 10:30 am or 6pm every Tuesday, now through March 1st.

It's hard to believe, but Lent is fast approaching. We will start this most Holy season on March 2nd, with our Ash Wednesday service at 6:30. The worship committee is planning a little different approach to our services during Lent, and we hope you will be able to join us as we explore and experience the passions of Jesus.

Our Old Testament reading for this Sunday is Psalm 1, read by our serving Elder Todd Whitmer. Our scripture is Luke 6:17-26, "Will **your** world be turned upside down?"

May we be in prayer.

O, Holy and loving God. You alone are worthy of our praise. Often, we get so wrapped up in our day to day living that we forget to stop and just give thanks. You are always there for us, and for that, we are truly grateful. Please hear our prayers that we raise for our friends and

neighbors who are in need of Your healing, comfort, and peace. Guide our local, state, and national leaders in Your wisdom, and protect those among us who put the safety of others in front of their own. We are so blessed to be alive and to be placed here to do Your will. In Jesus' most Holy name we pray, Amen.

Speaking of flags; for centuries, many a country's might was expressed through their navies; large sailing ships, patrolling and commanding the seas. However, when one ship spotted another, the only way to see if they were "friend or foe," was by their flag at the top of the mast. Quite often, the order was given to lower the flag until they were close. This gave them time to prepare for battle in case the other ship was the enemy.

However, there were a few courageous captains who gave the order upon seeing another ship, to "nail the colors to the mast." In other words, the flag will not be taken down. No hiding; we are who we are, and we stand firm!

As we move closer to Lent, there is a verse in Luke that always haunts me, takes my breath away, and convicts me. It's Luke 22:60. One of Jesus' followers it seems has "lowered his colors." Jesus has been arrested and is being questioned by the High Priest. Peter is in the courtyard below and has already been asked 2 times if he was a follower of Jesus, and both times has said, "No." He has just been asked a third time and he cries out, "I don't know what you are talking about! I don't know Him!"

During the last supper that they would have together, Jesus told Peter that he would deny knowing Him 3 times before the rooster crows. As Peter cries out, the rooster crows! If that isn't bad enough, Peter glances up and Jesus turns and looks directly at him, reminding him of what was foretold, and what Peter had just done. Peter leaves the courtyard, and weeps bitterly.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you are being forced to commit, or you just want to be left alone, or you just want to go along with the crowd? When something or someone demands you to give in or go along? Do you keep your flag hidden, or do you "Nail your colors to the mast?" As a salesman for so many years, I always tried to never "make waves," to be honest, to always help, but to stay neutral. In other words, I always tried to keep my flag ready, but hidden. That's what the world wants of us.

But I had an incident that changed all that. One day, while conducting a fairly large seminar, a rather belligerent person came up to me during the seminar and in a loud voice said, "You are one of those '&#@&' Christians aren't you!" My mind went into overdrive, thinking, "Was it any of his business... what will others think of me...how should I answer him...and then I thought, who am I...am I a Christian... what do I truly believe... and am I ashamed of my answer?" I looked him squarely in his eyes and said, "Yes, yes I am!" For the first time in my life I nailed my colors to the mast, and as the old hymn says, "..No turning back, no turning back."

We all have at times, been backed into a corner, been pressured to “lower our colors.” Don’t worry about the past. Our hope can be seen in Luke’s second book, the book of Acts. In the second chapter, Peter, the same guy who denied knowing Jesus 3 times, preaches his very first sermon and 3,000 came to Christ that Day. And then, in just 2 more chapters, Peter was told by the Priests that he wasn’t allowed to preach Jesus’ name any longer. He said, “Salvation is found only in the name of Jesus, and no other name,” and that “he would not remain silent.” (Acts 4:12) Talk about raising your colors and nailing them to the mast!

When you plant your flag, amazing things begin to happen. The gentleman who confronted me began to change that day. He softened and started to see life in a better way. You see, when others see who we truly are and who we belong to, that is when we start making a positive influence and difference in a world that is in desperate need of Jesus. And it all begins with not being afraid to “Nail your colors to the mast.”

In His Peace,

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