

Another Word March 15, 2022

To Our Family and Friends of First Christian

First of all - - This is Ellie, filling in for Pastor Rich this week. I will mention that it is Rich's fault we had snow this past weekend. Having two nice Spring-type days, he removed the snow shovels and salt buckets and took down the winter banner and put up the spring banner. Guess he jumped the gun! I think we are all ready for Spring though. The winter has seemed to drag on.

I hope you are enjoying our Lenten journey so far. Instead of the traditional 40 days of Lent, Pastor Rich is concentrating on the two days before the death of Jesus on the cross. This in depth look gives us time to reflect on the intensity of these days. Rich and Brian have put together the message, videos and music to give us a wonderful and meaningful service each week. Paige Carpenter sang "Alabaster Box" on the 6th and Emmy Henderson sang "Gethsemane" this past Sunday. What a blessing and joy this 8 year old girl is. Brian promises more special music is to come.

Our scriptures for this coming Sunday are Mark 14: 53-72 read by Jan Robinson. Pastor Rich's message is "The High Priest's House". Linda Gardner is serving Elder and will be reading Isaiah 53: 1-3, 6-9.

There will be a Maundy Thursday service on April 14th at 6:00. You won't want to miss this as Rich and Brian always make this service memorable. You might want to add it to your calendar now.

As we go to prayer, keep the people of Ukraine in your prayers and also our people who fell this past week. No one was hurt badly but still sore and could use your prayers. Pray for Dick Baum, Mary Bee, Helen Thomas (Jim's mother), and Janice Strine. Also keep Cari Campbell (Mona and Dale's daughter) in your prayers as she is undergoing tests this week.

Most Heavenly Father. Watch over us as we struggle to walk the way of the cross. We know you hear the prayers in our hearts that stay as unspoken sighs. May your cross become our cross. Do not let us escape the pain of your Son's holy passion, but grant that your life and peace may find new expressions in all we do and say. Help us, when confronted with the truth, to stand boldly with our Lord and Savior. In Jesus name, Amen

I have been thinking about a book I had years ago. It was John Ortberg's "If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat". I thought it was an intriguing title. I bought the book. (However, I didn't think it really lived up to that great title.) I remember it was about faith and trust and what God wants us to do. He wants us not to be afraid to step out in faith. If we miss a step or even fall, he will catch us. We just need to trust him.

I am reminded of a joke I heard one time about a man who fell off a cliff and half way down he managed to grab onto a small branch. He called and called for help. A voice from above asked the man what he wanted. He told him he needed help to get back up. The voice told him to let go of the branch. The man asked who he was and the voice told him he was God and to just let go of the branch. The man thought for a moment and then pleadingly asked "Is there anyone else up there?"

Well, we don't want to let go of that branch either and we aren't sure we want to step out of that boat. We are fairly content to stand where we are on firm ground. Being afraid to take that next step, we tend not to grow in faith and trust when we are asked by Jesus to do something that we are afraid of trying. We think we aren't capable enough, or not old enough, or are too old to try it. That of course, shouldn't stop us. We just need to take that first small step and God will be there to guide us the rest of the way. It is a struggle, not as easy as it sounds. We might think, "Let go and let God".

Please pray with me: God of grace, we confess we do not always want to follow Jesus. Humility is not our choice. Lowliness is not our desire. Forgive us when our drive for control blocks us from dealing with others in love. Help us to step out in faith if we feel that nudge from Jesus. We need to trust and know you are here to guide us.

In Jesus' Holy Name, Amen.

In His Peace.

Ellie

p.s. Linda Gardner and I will be doing the letters for Pastor Rich during Lent – giving him a little break. Thank you for understanding.