

Another Word April 4, 2023

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

The worship team hopes you have been blessed this Lenten season by our journey through Mark, chapters 14 and 15. To more clearly understand the sacred sacrifice Jesus made for us can only draw us closer to Him.

We hope to see you April 6th for our Maundy Thursday service. Worship begins at 6:30. If you need a ride, please call the church and leave a message.

It is hard to believe but this coming Sunday, April 9th is Easter! Please join us as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. And if you can, bring a friend or family member! The Old Testament reading will be; Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24, Linda Gardner is our serving Elder. Our scripture is John 20:1-18, "Dancing from the Garden!" Jan Robinson is the reader.

April 16th: Our Old Testament reading is Psalm 16, read by our serving Elder, Matt Henderson. Our scripture is John 20: 19-31. "No doubts; It's really Him!"

The Ashland Pregnancy and Care Center filled baby bottles are also due back this coming Sunday. Thanks to all who participated!

Please remember Ashley (Shelley's daughter) and Lennie Reich in your prayers.

May we pray.

Dear loving Father. We give you thanks each day for your gifts of kindness and faithfulness. May we never become so obsessed with our lives that we lose sight of your presence, your guidance, and your love. As we move to a rich and blooming spring, may the season of our lives

also spring forth in new ways to share your promise of faith, grace, and love to others. We hold up to you those in need of your calming and peaceful touch. May we hear Your voice calling to us and find comfort in your loving arms. Help each of us stay connected to you, and bloom in ways that help others grow in your love. In Jesus' most Holy name we pray, Amen.

Have you noticed the buds and blooms that are beginning to show on all the trees and bushes around town? Doesn't it seem that just yesterday we were amid the cold and dark of winter? Thinking that it would never end? But then, unexpectedly something happens. We see signs of renewal; signs that spring is truly on the way. In fact, our lawn is growing so fast I may have to mow in the very near future. It's nice to see what we thought was gone, come back to life.

In a very real way, that is what Holy Week teaches us. At first, seeing the Messiah enter amidst the cheering crowds seemed so promising. But then to see Him arrested, scourged, and crucified. The hope of the world dying on a cross and placed in a cold dark tomb. Our whole world turns dark and cold as we realize that nothing could possibly bring Jesus back to us! We have suffered with Him through the pain and now find ourselves weeping and feeling lost. Through the long night of Friday and the unending grief and sorrow of Saturday we are trapped in a time of despair and hopelessness. It feels as if there is nothing to live for. All that we thought we had has now been lost. And lost forever!

But then on a quiet Sunday morning at dawn, a gentle breeze rustles through budding trees and plants in a quiet garden. The sound of stone grinding on stone suddenly fills the air. There is a flash of bright light and then footsteps are heard. We hurry to the entrance of the tomb and look inside, only to find it empty. The linen that wrapped our Savior

is neatly folded on the shelf where His body had been laid. We ask ourselves what has happened?

Just as the sun breaks over the horizon, we see someone walking toward us; someone who looks familiar. Then, with a flash of recognition we see that it is our Lord! It's Jesus! In shock, astonishment, and rising joy in our hearts we fall to our knees and cry out, "Rabboni!" And then, with a peace that sweeps over us, we hear the sweetest word ever spoken! For in that moment, our Lord and Savior speaks just one word... one beautiful word... He calls us each by name!

In His Glory and His Peace,

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