

Another word April 6, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

What a wonderful day! Our Easter Service was such a joy to attend. The crowd of smiling, eager worshippers, the need of another tray for communion, and the music was fantastic. Brian you outdid yourself! My prayer for you is that the love of God through The Risen Christ remains with you always!

During the last major wind event, we had some significant shingle damage. Jim and Kevin Scott came to our rescue and had all the damage repaired in short order. They then refused to allow us to pay for the repairs. Please join me in thanking the Scotts for their generosity and love of the Church.

The cards collected last Sunday will be delivered to Brethren Care Village.

The Ashland Pregnancy and Care Center's Baby Bottle Campaign at FCC is quickly coming to a close. Try to have your bottles returned by this Sunday, April 11<sup>th</sup>.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are Psalm 133, John 20: 19-31, ("Do not doubt"). Lana Bell is the Elder.

May we be in prayer.

O Lord our God. We come to you today with hearts that are light and full of joy! We can scarce take in the sacrifice that You and Your Son

have given for us! We are also filled with awe and wonder at the absolute love you offer through these sacrifices. But please know, we accept these undeserved but wonderful gifts, and will not only cherish them, but endeavor to pass them on through our words and actions for as long as we have breath to do so. In the name of the risen Christ we pray, Amen.

First, I would like to thank all of you for your kind words concerning last Sunday's message. It is indeed an honor and a privilege to be able to bring God's perfect word to you each week.

There was one facet of John 20: 1-18 that I didn't get to elaborate on. It was about being a witness. I pointed out in our reading from the book of Acts that Peter, while speaking at Cornelius' house, brought up twice that he was a witness. And yes he was. However, in John 20: 1-18, the only thing Peter was a witness to was an empty tomb, and folded up fabric.

John wrote and showed that 2 men were witnesses. The reason for this is that Jewish law, the Torah, stated there must be two witnesses, and they must be male adults. Women were never permitted to be witnesses. I have no doubt that Peter and "the one Jesus loved" were the first to look inside the tomb, to "believe", and to return and tell the others what they had found. However, neither saw the Risen Christ until later that day.

So, who is the true witness here? Hmmm? Let's think! Right! It's Mary Magdalene! What was it she said? "I have 'SEEN' the Lord!" That is a witness! An eye witness! Mary however, is a

single woman and she is all alone. That goes against the law of the Torah; the law of man.

Don't you just love our God? He never follows man's ways, but His own, perfect way! On top of that, He entrusts the most important tasks to those who always say "I'm not worthy!"

Look at Jacob, a scoundrel entrusted in founding and bringing together a nation. Moses, who after running away led God's people to the Promised Land. David, a young boy, was used to slay the enemy and go on to be a great King. Shepherds were used to announce the birth of the Messiah. Even Saul of Tarsus, a killer of Christians, becomes one of the greatest Apostles of all time! And here, He uses Mary, an absolute nobody, to be the first to announce that He Has Risen! An eye witness to greatness!

I think we all often write ourselves off as "not being qualified or worthy." But God disagrees. Qualifications have nothing to do with what He wants us to do. We are to interact with those who need to be loved, and cared for, and to explain to them the good news of the Gospel. (If you don't believe that, I refer you again to the list above.) God will always place you where He wants you, and will always give you the tools and words to use, at the right time. The only thing you need to do is have faith, courage, and keep your eyes and ears open. When God sends someone your way, (and He will) He will provide everything you need to offer them His love and saving grace; to be a witness!

In His Peace,

*Rich*