

Another Word    May 10, 2022

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

I think it's safe to say that there won't be any more snow in the near future. Looking out the window, what I do see is an amazing array of colors and an explosion of new growth. Trees leafing, flowers blooming, grass growing (way too fast), shrubs shrubbing, and crocus croaking. (Sorry, couldn't resist) Spring has finally arrived, so get outside and enjoy God's splendor.

May 22<sup>nd</sup> is Graduation Sunday. We will recognize Emma Gearhart, Shawn Brady, and Nate Whitmer for their milestone accomplishments. Then at 4 pm, we will come together for a cookout at the pavilion. There are a few items still needed and a signup list is in the gathering area. We hope you all can make this special outing honoring our graduates.

And just in case your day isn't full enough, there will be a birthday party celebrating Alice Metcalf's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. The reception will be at the Wellness Center at Brethren Care Village from 2 to 4. It is requested that you come and visit, but please, no gifts.

Wow, a full day of passing God's love on to others! See you at both events, and don't forget worship that morning!

Our scriptures for May 15<sup>th</sup> are; Psalm 53, and John 13: 31-35. "Love who? You can't be serious!" Matt Henderson is our lead Elder.

As we go to prayer, please keep Mary Bee, Janice Strine, Dick and Lennie Reich, and Sarah Stewart in your prayers.

May we pray. Dear loving God. We lift Your name above all names. There is nothing or no one greater than You. Your power and strength and wisdom open the path to everlasting life. As we pause and listen for Your voice, give us clarity, patience, and understanding. May we not allow the world and its distractions to drown You out. We ask for Your continued guidance, and Your healing touch for those we now lift up to You..... May we each reach out to help one another in our quest for peace and harmony in our broken world. We acknowledge Your love, and pray for Your blessings to fall over Your creation, in Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.

Sunday, we talked a little about listening for the Good Shepherd's voice. Jesus said, "My sheep know my voice, and they follow Me." John 10: 27. So, how do we discern Jesus' voice among all the voices in the world that are vying for our attention?

First, reading God's instruction manual, The Bible, is the most important step. But just reading isn't enough. Deuteronomy 11: 18 instruct us, "to fix God's words in your hearts and mind; tie them on your hands, and bind them on your foreheads." We are to read, memorize, and keep His word close, and to live our lives by His word. The Bible is the spoken word of God that has been recorded for us, so that we may hear His voice and follow.

Once we read and keep His word, other ways to hear His voice begin to appear. Some hear His voice, clearly stating an action or decision to

make. Others sense a directing of the spirit that often interferes with our plans. May I offer this brief story as an example.

I had been at the church all day, but still had a number of things to do around town before going home. I was tired and just wanted to leave and get everything else done. But some nagging feeling kept me at the church way beyond the time I expected to leave. I was feeling anxious and wondered how and why I was still there.

I looked out the window and noticed someone walking through the parking lot and head to the main entrance, which was locked. Not able to enter, he turned and began to slowly walk away. I ran to the door and called for him to come back. It turned out that he was looking for a quiet place to pray. He and his wife were students at A.U. and his wife's mother had become ill. She was on a plane heading back to China, and he wanted to talk to someone, and pray for his mother-in-law and his wife. We shared conversation and heartfelt prayers that late afternoon.

If I had "kept to my schedule" and not listened to His voice, I would have missed an extraordinary moment with that young man and with God.

So, as you read and the word speaks to you, or you hear a clear voice, or something detains and delays you, don't fret, don't worry. It's just the Good Shepherd calling, calling you to follow Him to share His love with others.

In His Peace,

*Rich*