

Another Word    May 11, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Donita and I had a wonderful time with our 2 daughters and their families. We again thank you for the time to go and visit. By the way, the on line “musical” service was awesome! I only wish we could have been there for the live service. Thanks to all who poured their hearts into making it a special worship experience. We truly are a blessed church family.

Ellie has prepared an updated list of those who are unable to come and be with us in worship. You may pick up a list in our gathering area or contact us and we will send you a copy. Again, a simple card or phone call to a member and friend can mean so much. Speaking of cards; the cards collected last Sunday have been delivered to Kingston.

You may have missed it because of the heavy rain last Sunday, but there is a new addition to our pavilion area. We now have a beautiful cut stone fire pit. Please join me in thanking Todd Whitmer for suggesting the idea and the use of the memorial gifts given in Arlene’s name for this special gift to our church home.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are Psalm 1, and Mark 2: 13- 22. My message title is “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.”

By the way, this Thursday is Ascension Day. May I recommend that you take some time during the day to read and contemplate Acts 1: 1-11?

May I offer this prayer to be used for the Day of Ascension?

Dear Holy Father. On this day of the ascension of Christ, we pray to You with amazement, astonishment, and awe. Christ ascended from earth to be with us forever. We thank You for the life of Your Son and like the disciples, we turn our eyes toward heaven to see and gaze with wonder at your miraculous ways. We then turn our eyes to the poor, the rich, the young and the old, to see signs of Jesus living in their lives. We also turn our eyes to the leaders of nations, in hope that they can envision a new world where peace and harmony reign. But most of all, we turn our eyes to You O God, in awe, respect, love, and in great anticipation of Jesus' glorious return. In His most perfect name we pray, Amen.

I was reading Revelation 21 and a line really jumped out to me. It said, "Behold, I make all things new!" The NIV says, "I am making everything new!" The inference is, you take something old, worn, even broken, and bring it back to its original state. As I thought about this line, the old desk I am sitting at reminded me of such a situation.

When I was around 17, I became interested in refinishing old furniture. I was downtown one day and was in a secondhand store on Main Street and noticed an old desk, stuck in the corner with junk piled high on its top. It was not in the best of shape, but it intrigued me. There was a built-in book case on either end, and the drawer had a writing board and slots that swiveled up that could hold papers, notes, and even pens and pencils. It seemed to me quite an unusual find. I bought it for the unimaginable price of 5 dollars.

When I got the desk home, my mother took one look at it and said, “Do not bring that piece of junk in the house!” Hummm, what to do? I took it apart in our old barn, and like any good son, sneaked parts of the desk, board by board into the house and hid them under my bed. Like most teens, I quickly lost interest and for over 7 years it remained hidden.

Yes, I said over 7 years. After Donita and I were married, I remembered the desk and my unfinished project. We gathered the parts and took them to our home, where I sanded, repaired, stained, varnished, and reassembled the desk. It actually turned out quite nice. It was made “like new,” and is still being used in our home every day. But the best moment came when mom visited one day soon after I finished my work and said, “Where did you get that beautiful desk?” I guess the restoration was a success. The ugly was gone and it was made “like new” again.

We have a Master Carpenter, a carpenter from Nazareth who can restore people who have been scarred and damaged by years of mistreatment, bad choices, abuse, and anger. Paul wrote “If anyone is in Christ, (the Master Carpenter) he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5: 17) So the moment you place your life in the hands of the Master Restorer, He begins to repair and transform the damage that’s been done through years of neglect.

I rebuilt a desk. I took some old dirty pieces of wood and turned them furniture. It was an accomplishment to be sure. But Jesus took an old rugged piece of wood called a cross and took all our sins on Himself

“that by His wounds, we have been healed.” (1 Peter 2: 24) Jesus has come to rebuild our lives. To take the broken and soiled pieces of our lives and renew them to the beauty that God intended. All we need do is invite Him in, and with loving hands, Jesus will make “All things new!”

In His Peace,

*Rich*