

## **Another Word. May 13, 2020**

Dear First Christian Church.

Did you feel it? Something moved, something shifted, something thumped. A few business doors cautiously opened, and a few folks opened house and car doors and ventured out into our community. If you are one of those who ventured out, good for you. As we slowly jump start our lives, may we be careful, as well as caring for each other. Common sense is the order of the day. In the meantime, we will still record services and have them available online.

In speaking with our Elders, it is agreed that **services at the building will resume June 7<sup>th</sup>, provided stay at home orders aren't reinstated.**

Recommended guidelines are being put into place for our safety, and we look forward to worshipping together again at 10:30.

Until then, each Tuesday, from 10 am to 2 pm the sanctuary will be open to anyone wishing to come, pray, read scripture, or just sit and contemplate God's glory. You are encouraged to stay as long as you like. There will be quiet music playing in the background and at 1 pm, the previous Sunday's service will be shown. Continue to use common sense. Social distancing will be the rule of the day, and if you have a cold or a fever, please stay home. Continue to be cautious, stay safe, and secure in the confidence that we all will soon, by the grace of God, be back worshipping together on King Road.

Our weekly church services are reaching and blessing people across our country. We are receiving cards and emails from many folks expressing their thanks for being there each week and giving them hope, peace, and courage in these troubling times. Please continue to spread the word to others to tune in to our services found on our website.

If you have a praise or prayer request let me know or call the church office and leave a message. Stay in contact with each other by phone, cards, texts, and email because staying in touch brings us closer not only with each other, but also with God.

For those who tune into our services, please have a cracker and a small juice available that we may take together during the time of communion.

May we pray.

Holy and loving God. We don't pretend to have more faith than we really have. We also do not come making promises beyond our control. But we do come with open hearts, praising you and your greatness. We ask for your guidance O Lord, especially in these times of uncertainty. Please protect those who are working to find a cure for the virus that has gripped the world in fear. Please guide and protect those on the front lines, those who are putting their lives on the line for our safety. In these confusing times, may we all feel your steady and unwavering power, knowing that you are in control of all; that your strength will see us through to victory. We pray this through Jesus, our savior who taught us to pray, Our Father in Heaven, holy is Your name. May your kingdom come; may your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those that sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory forever, Amen

I have had the great honor to lead Bible study at Brethren Care for Chaplin Dean Pierce whenever he has been called away. It can be quite challenging at times depending on which residence building you go to. At the "Tower", there is usually lively discussion. But in other buildings, many times there is not an eye open or a word spoken. After reading scripture in a building of 8 folks, I decided to try something different. I sang a hymn thinking it would bring a little peace. What happened next was a complete shock; a completely remarkable surprise. Almost everyone sat up and belted out "Amazing Grace"! Their love of God broke through what I thought was an insurmountable barrier and poured out in joyous heartfelt worship.

Looking around, we all have barriers in our lives. Conflicts, money problems, loss of a job, health issues, pandemics. Maybe even a heart that's grown a bit cold in our relationship with God.

Our friends at Brethren Care remind us that the greatness and majesty of our mighty and awesome God can overcome any barrier, and that all of us can grow from silence to praise.

I challenge you this week to read and reflect on Psalm 96 that begins, "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord all the earth". As you do, know that the obstacles and barriers in your life will, by the grace of our loving God, be replaced by heartfelt praise.

In His Peace,

*Rich*