

Another Word May 25, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

It has been 50 years in the making. Donita has put up with me for what I'm sure has seemed, to be a lifetime. So to honor this milestone of our lives, you are all invited to The First Christian Church's pavilion, Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup> from 2pm to 4pm. We look forward to seeing you there as we celebrate this special day together. (Please see the invitation below.)

The leadership group met last Sunday to discuss the use of face masks. Because of the decline in new cases and with more people being vaccinated, it has been decided that the wearing of masks will be optional. If you feel more secure, please feel free to wear yours. The distancing in the sanctuary will stay the same and extra masks and hand sanitizer will always be available.

Because so many of you enjoyed our worship services at the pavilion last summer, we have decided to once again move outside. If the weather is clear and the temperatures are favorable, we will, for the foreseeable future be at the pavilion. Bring a folding chair or sit at one of our picnic tables as we worship together.

This coming Sunday's scriptures are: Psalm 29, Isaiah 6: 1-8, "Send who, Me?" The Elder is Shelley Carpenter. This is Memorial Day weekend.

Please remember George Paulsen and Ralph Wertz in your prayers.

Let's be in prayer:

Dear Holy Father, we thank you for our lives and the beauty that surrounds us. You provide all our needs, and for that we are grateful. We ask for peace and comfort and healing for those in our hearts who are hurting....., we ask for protection and wisdom for our first responders, and ask for peace for the families and friends of those who gave their lives fighting against oppression, and protecting our freedom and liberty. May we never forget. We thank you for our lives and the opportunities you give. All this we pray in Jesus' Holy name, Amen.

Many of you know I was born in Florida. However, my parents moved here just a few years later. When asked if I miss the sun, sand and continual summer, I always say no. I like summer and all the outdoor activities, but I really enjoy the change of seasons. Spring with the new growth; fall, with the cool temperatures and explosion of colors; and even winter with the snow and the cold silence it brings.

If you think about it, just two weeks ago, we experienced all four seasons in less than 3 days. This reminds me of a lesson I heard once about the seasons of God. We all go through the cycles of getting out our sweaters, putting away summer clothes, getting the rake out or preparing the snow blower with the change of seasons. God seems also to give us a cycle of seasons in our lives. It doesn't matter where you live; you are always in one of His three changing seasons.

If you look in the book of Exodus, when the Israelites left Egypt, on their journey they experienced three types of water, which are the three

symbols of the seasons of God. If you think about it, we all are always living in one of these seasons.

Season one: In chapter 14, Moses and the Israelites find themselves with their backs up against The Red Sea as Pharaoh's army approaches. Moses said, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord brings today. The Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you. You only need to be still." These are barrier waters. Have you ever experienced this? The Red Sea behind you, chariots in front of you; nowhere to turn! You are in a tight spot! But what does God tell you to do? He says, "You pray, I'll part the waters." We are to give our problems to Him, and wait for Him to act.

Season two: Exodus 15 has Moses and the Israelites continuing their journey. They next come to Marah, a place of useless, bitter water. Moses cries out to God in distress. The Lord showed him a piece of wood and told Moses to toss it into the bitter water. When he did, the water became sweet. Often in our lives we enter bitter seasons. Times when situations around us seem harmful and out of control. Our job during those times are to look for words or actions that can change, that can "sweeten" the bitter times around us. These can be as simple as a smile, a kind word, or even to just listen. When you add sweetener, you not only sweeten your life, but you sweeten the lives of others.

So, we've seen "Barrier Waters," water that God will part for us, and then there are Bitter waters," waters that by following His examples of living, sweeten the bitter moments of our lives.

The third Season (The end of Chapter 15) has Moses and the Israelites coming to rest at Elim, "an oasis of 12 springs and 79 palm trees."

Springs of water, “Bubbling water.” A time of rest, a time to be refreshed, and a time to soak up His gift of grace, peace, calm, and joy.

Soak up His love because like our seasons, His seasons will also change; sometimes when you least expect it. (Remember our recent snow storm?) When we hit a barrier, we are to wait on the Lord. When we enter bitter times, we are to seek out the “sweeteners,” and when we enter the times of peace and refreshment, we are to enjoy them.

Each season is designed to help us depend on Him. Our seasons will always change, but one thing is for certain; we can face each day with assurance because our Savior and Lord will always be the same, “yesterday, today, and forever.”

In His peace,

*Rich*

