

Another Word May 2, 2023

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

As we enter the Month of May, let's hope the weather will finally catch up to the time of year! However, let us also remember that each day is a beautiful gift from our Creator; a day given to us that we may share God's love, comfort, and peace with someone in need.

This Thursday is the National Day of Prayer. Even if you can't make it to the University for the Prayer breakfast at 6:30 am, please pray for our city, state, nation, and our leaders. Pray for God's truth, guidance, and wisdom.

Our scriptures for the next couple of weeks are:

May 7: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16. Dale Campbell is our serving Elder. New Testament is John 14: 1-14, "What, worry? Me?!"

May 14: Mother's Day! Psalm 66:8-20. Alan Girard is our serving Elder. New Testament is John 14: 15-21, "Help is on the way."

May 21: Special speaker, Alan Girard. Shelley is our serving Elder. Donita and I will be in Cincinnati watching our grandson graduate High School!

Please include Lennie Reich, Alice Metcalf, Terry Mack (Donita's cousin), and Shelley's daughter Ashley in your prayers.

Holy God, with Your love, You have empowered us to be Christ's witnesses. We each have our own story of what Jesus means to us. A story to share that will convey hope, joy, and peace. May we be bold, confident, and filled with humility as we share the Good News of the Risen Christ to a hurting and lost world. Amen

Over the past few years I have had the honor to lead Bible studies at one of our local nursing homes when the chaplain has been called away. They have all been enriching and teaching moments, but one session was most memorable.

One day I was asked to lead studies in a section of a building that took care of seven residents with dementia. The chaplain expressed his belief that everyone has a right to hear God's Word and of course to pray and be prayed for. I agree.

Upon entering, three residents were watching the television. One of them turned and smiled. The other four residents were asleep. I opened my Bible and began to read. I tried to engage the three in conversation and hoped that they might respond and possibly with our conversation awaken those who were still asleep. However, I quickly began to feel my presence and efforts made little to no difference to anyone in the room. I was ready to just say a prayer and move on when I had an idea. Instead of reading scripture I decided to sing a couple of hymns to them.

I started with "Amazing Grace."

What happened next, I will never forget! Before I got through the first line, all seven residents had sat up and were singing along with me! What an awesome God moment that was. We then sang "Jesus Loves Me." After singing, the four went back to sleep, and the other three continued watching television. I said a prayer for them and left, a changed person with a greater respect for all of God's children.

So, what had happened on that Tuesday morning? I didn't realize it then but I had stumbled onto what is being called Music Therapy. Researchers are now documenting the clinical benefits of music. In fact,

music is now being prescribed for cancer patients, those with Parkinson's, dementia, and even trauma. Music has a powerful effect on mood and it is thought that when you become calmer, the body may be more responsive to healing.

The Bible seems to bear this out. The attendants of King Saul noticed that when he became tormented, if music was played in his presence it would calm him and bring him peace. 1Samuel 16:16. They sent for David, the son of Jesse to play the lyre whenever Saul became restless. Saul was pleased with David and asked that he "remain in his service." Verses 19-22.

I think it is interesting that we are now just starting to understand what God revealed to us 3,000 years ago. Music is an integral part of our lives and wellbeing. It's a prescription for our health that's available to all, even those who at first appearance seem to have no way of hearing and understanding. For they too are able to sing praises and have peace through the gift of music from our God, our creator, and our great healer.

In His Peace,

*Rich*