

Another Word June 1, 2023

To our friends and family of First Christian Church

I don't know about you but we have had extraordinary weather this past week. I hope you have been able to get out and enjoy God's creation.

Our Bible Study, "You were made for this moment," is off and running. What a great turnout at both times. If you were considering coming but missed Tuesday's classes, there is still time to join in on what appears to be a great lesson. We will meet each Tuesday for the next 4 weeks at either 10:30 or 6pm.

Because the Fourth of July is fast approaching, we would like to clean up around the property and make it sparkle before the crowds amass on our front lawn. We are planning a work day, Thursday June 29, starting at 6pm. Hope you can make it.

Our next "Legacy Resource Seminar" is also fast approaching. We have a different line up of speakers bringing information on Consumer Protection, avoiding scams, programs available in Ashland County, and a local attorney to answer your questions. This is a free seminar but you must sign up. Space is limited. To register, phone 419 281 1477. The seminar will be held at The Wellness Center at Brethren Care Village June 17th, from 10 to noon. There are information flyers at the back of the Sanctuary.

Our Scriptures for the next couple of weeks are:

June 4th-Psalm 8. Matt Henderson is our serving Elder. John 16: 12-15, "How can we possibly understand God."

June 11th- Psalm 33: 1-12. Todd Whitmer is our serving Elder. Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26, Jesus calls us, with a gentle, loving touch.”

Please remember to pray for Shelley’s daughter Ashley who will be having surgery this coming week.

May we pray. We come to you O Lord with separate thoughts, wants, and needs. Often, they are heavy and overwhelmed, but we know you are there offering us your strength and peace. You, and you alone can make us whole, and You give us hope through Grace. It seems that our world is tearing itself apart, but then we realize You are our God, You are in control, and that we gain strength through You. May we pass on that strength, revealed through the Holy Spirit, Your perfect gift. In Jesus’ precious name, Amen.

One of my favorite stories is, “Les Misérables”. A recently paroled convict by the name of Jean Valjean enters a church and steals the silver. Shortly after the theft, he is caught by the police. They take him back to the church so the priest can identify the stolen items. Once that is done, they will send Valjean back to prison.

But the priest claims that he gave the silver items to Valjean. What a moment; shock, confusion, even disbelief! The police, in utter amazement shake their heads and then leave. As Valjean stands with eyes fixed on the floor, the priest turns, gives him the stolen items and says, “You no longer belong to evil, but to good.” Such love—such grace—such forgiveness!

As I prepared my message for last Sunday’s Pentecost service, it occurred to me that the priest mirrored what Peter said to the crowd.

Peter said, “less than 2 months ago you crucified Jesus.” Once they understood what they had done, they were, “cut to the heart,” and asked, “what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent, be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.” (Acts 2:37-38) In other words, Jesus endured the people’s deserved punishment, but there will be no penalty if they put their faith and trust in Him. Imagine, the people could only be forgiven because of the death of Christ; the very death they were responsible for. What irony! What wonderful grace!

Jean Valjean repented and turned his life around because of the extraordinary love and grace of the priest. 3,000 repented of their sins and became believers and followers because of that first Spirit-led message from Peter. And, since that day, hundreds of millions have also been given that undeserved gift. The Spirit, if accepted can change our hearts and redirect our lives. And it’s all because of God’s priceless gift of Jesus, filled with love, grace, and forgiveness.

In His Peace,

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