

Another Word June 29, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Don't forget that this Sunday is Independence Day, and we will again be hosting a fireworks party on the front lawn. Popsicles, snacks, and water will be made available for the crowd. We anticipate a large turnout, so 7pm would be a good time to arrive to help set up for this exciting community event. I will have more to say about this a little later in this letter.

We had a beautiful, outdoor service, made even more special with the dedication of Lane Shakley to God by his loving parents.

Please consider giving a call or send a card of encouragement to one or more of our family that can't be with us on a regular basis. Ellie has compiled a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers and a copy can be picked up at the end of each service. If you prefer, we can also email a copy to you if that is more convenient. This is a wonderful way to show our love and support to each other.

The cards collected last Sunday have been delivered to Brethren Care Village.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are: Psalm 33: 1-12, and Romans 6: 12-23
"Freedom with strings." The Elder is Lana Bell.

May we be in prayer;

O merciful Father, Holy is Your name, and faithful is Your love. You are the great creator, and we bow before You in gratitude for all that Your hands have made. May we never take for granted the gifts of life and freedom You so lavishly pour on us. And may we, with Your strength, reach out to our brothers and sisters who are in need, and bring peace to all who are oppressed. You, and You alone are faithful.

Please bless and guide those who unselfishly stand in the way of danger. May we always see the good in others; have the courage to forgive, and to spread Your love to a hurting and wayward world. We wait for Jesus' return. But until then, may You find us faithful. In His perfect name we pray, Amen.

As mentioned earlier, our front and side yards will be filled with friends, neighbors, and strangers this Sunday evening to watch the city's fireworks display. This is a fun event that draws people together in one common theme; to celebrate the birth of our wonderful Country.

As I thought about this coming Sunday night, I realized that it's more than a city event. It also is a moment in time given to us by God, to be able to spread His love, and to show His good will through hospitality.

As our nation, as well as the world, becomes more and more divisive, we in little old Ashland have an opportunity to show a portion of the world what being a follower of Christ is all about.

I read these words today and would like to pass them on to you for your consideration. Peter is addressing the fledgling churches of Asia Minor, (What is now Turkey). In 1Peter 4: 7-11, Peter gives us a templet for who we are and of what is required of us. And especially of how to act and inter-act with each other and with the community we are in.

He says, "Be clear minded, love each other deeply, offer hospitality to each other without grumbling." He goes on to say, "Each one should use whatever gift he or she has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. (That's your special gift) If you speak, do it as one speaking the very words of God. And if you serve, do so with the very strength God provides." (My apologies to Paul for condensing a few of his words)

Paul's point is; we all have a talent given to us by God, and we are to not hide it but use it for His Glory. If you love little ones, then you are the one to pass out popsicles. If you love to talk, you are the one to walk through the crowd, welcoming them and making them feel at home. Not good at talking; maybe you man the table and hand out the snacks, or direct those who need to find the restrooms. Or just walk around with a few bottles of water, passing them out, and commenting on the beautiful night, their beautiful children, or even just asking, "Have you been here before?"

That is hospitality! A time to open your heart, and a time to show others that they are loved, cherished, and always welcome. Who knows? Someone in the crowd may be feeling lonely, neglected, or rejected. And a single word or smile from us could be the trigger that sets them on their journey to finding peace, finding a safe secure place, finding community, and most importantly, finding God. Looking forward to seeing you Sunday morning and evening!

In His peace,

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