

## Another Word

July 1, 2020

Dear friends and family of First Christian Church.

Can you believe it! We are already entering the second half of the year. Even with the long months of quarantine, time is moving swiftly on.

Our second “live” service was well attended. We had 55 members and guests come together to worship in God’s goodness and glory. Weather permitting, we will continue to hold our services in the pavilion. Come and worship if you are comfortable or know the service will be available to view on our website later in the afternoon. As always, in case of inclement weather, services will be moved into the sanctuary. Please know, all social distancing requirements, including temperature, masks, and sanitizers will be observed.

The Annual Ashland Care Center’s banquet, that was postponed in April will now take place August 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, with a twist. It will be a one-hour virtual banquet broadcast. Donita and I are table hosts and if there is enough interest, we would love to show the live broadcast in our sanctuary, and possibly have a short gathering afterwards with coffee and dessert. The keynote speaker is Abby Johnson, author of the book, “Unplanned.” Please let us know if you would like to attend so we can register you. This is a wonderful opportunity to see and hear what is happening with The Care Center without fighting the large crowds. Any questions, please ask.

As a reminder, Pathways Hospice bereavement meetings will start July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1pm at our pavilion.

Also, the baby bottle campaign is finally coming to an end. There are 15 bottles still out there, so please try to have them returned by July 12<sup>th</sup>. If you can’t make it here, call and I will come and pick them up. Thanks

To speak and to listen to God is such a needed part of our day. I hope each of you take time every day to hear His sweet voice. May we pray.

Great and Merciful God, your life is a constant source of peace and joy to us, and we recognize that your grace and mercy are our only hope. You watch over us and know the deepest secrets of our hearts. May your loving spirit draw us closer to you, and may we be moved by your love to reach out and love and comfort

others. We pray this prayer through Jesus' name, who leads us to the very depths of your heart, Amen.

I felt a little bad about switching scriptures last Sunday, so I thought I would say a few words about Romans 6.

We are about to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Question: does Canada have a 4<sup>th</sup> of July? ...hmmm... Of course they do. Every country has a 4<sup>th</sup> of July. We happen to celebrate our independence on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. I know I know, boo Rich, bad joke.

When we gained our independence from England, we received freedom. We became free to establish our own rules and government, and no king, country, or peoples can control us. That is freedom.

The Bible also talks about freedom, true freedom. A freedom that no one can ever take from you. But first we need to understand who we are. In Galatians 3, we are told, that we "are born prisoners to sin" and because of that, we need to be set free. But how? We are either slaves to sin, or slaves to righteousness (doing the right things), which means we either follow the world, or follow Jesus.

Romans 6:16 states, "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." So, we need to have a personal Independence Day, a day when we reject sin and the battle for freedom is won. But it's nothing we can do. Jesus fought the battle for us. He died in our place to pay the debt we owe to God. And by His doing so, "You have been set free from sin. God has made you His slaves. The benefit you gain leads to holy living, and the result is eternal life." Romans 6: 22-23.

Being set free from the control of sin is true independence. To "know the truth will set you free," and "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:32,36.

So this Independence Day, when you are grilling burgers and watching fireworks, remember to celebrate not only our national freedoms, but also our eternal freedoms paid for by our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

In His Peace,

*Rich*