

Another Word August 17, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Does it not seem that the world is spiraling out of control? More on that a little later in the letter. But for now, I ask that you please pray for all those in harm's way in Afghanistan.

I also ask you to pray for protection and rescue for our brothers and sisters in the aftermath of the earthquake that has again befallen the country of Haiti. We are asking you to pray and consider giving your best monetary gift that will then be matched by the church. This special offering will be sent to Samaritan's Purse, (Franklin Graham's disaster relief organization), to help fund their efforts in supplying fresh water, food, and much needed medical supplies in the devastated areas.

On a much lighter note; the cards collected this week will be delivered to Crystal Care.

This Sunday, Brian will not be with us. He is taking some time off to rest and prepare for the beginning of the new school year. In his absence, the service will be held inside. But not to worry, he has pre-recorded all our hymns so we can sing along with them.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are: Psalm 84, and John 6: 56-69, "Is it becoming too hard to follow?" Our serving Elder is Lana Bell.

With so much turmoil and uncertainty, please pray for guidance, understanding, love, and peace.

May we be in prayer.

Dear God in Heaven. To You we give all praise and glory. You are the author of life, and we thank you for allowing us to be a part of Your will. We come to You with joy in our hearts, but also with concerns and burdens that are heavy and overwhelming. It seems that the world is tearing itself apart with conflicts, wars, and disasters. We feel so hopeless as we watch, wondering what we can possibly do to help. But then in the midst of the chaos, we remember that You are in charge. You are in control and we gain courage with that knowledge. Guide us with Your strength to play the part in life You have assigned for us; to bring a little of Your peace and caring and love to a dark and hurting world. We hold up to You those who find themselves in harm's way. May they feel Your presence, and know of Your unending love. In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.

I was reminded recently of an interesting story that I read years ago. In ancient times, much of the world hadn't been explored. So map makers would draw a line at the point where exploration stopped and then drew pictures of dragons, monsters, and sea serpents as a warning to those who would venture into these unknown and potentially dangerous regions.

And now the story. 2,000 years ago, a company of Roman soldiers had engaged the enemy and were in pursuit of them for many days. One evening as their General consulted his map, it was discovered that they had ventured beyond the known line, and were deep into "dragon" territory. Should they continue into the unknown or turn back? Going

forward could be filled with danger, but turning back would be seen as a retreat? A courier was hastily sent back to Rome with the urgent message, “We have marched off the map. Send new orders!”

Looking around our nation and the world, does it not seem as though we have “marched off the map?” There are riots and shootings in our cities, fears for personal security, unstable economies and inflation, threats of war, cyber terrorism, and lest we forget, a virus that just won’t go away. We are all living in a high state of alert. We look to our leaders for help and assurances, but they are helpless in their ability to promise us anything. What we long for is peace and security; a peace and security that will help us cope in this upside down world that is marching deeper into the “danger zone.”

So, who can ultimately give us the peace and security that we crave and need? Yep, you knew the answer; it’s Jesus. It’s not by chance that He calls Himself our shepherd. And this is what He offers those who believe; “He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.” “He goes on ahead of them, and His sheep follow.” A little later He says, “My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand.” Talk about comforting words! (John10: 3, 4, and 28.)

You see, there *is* someone who knows the way to go, even when there is no map. That someone is Jesus, the Lord of the Universe. To those who belong to Him, He gives daily direction and provision, no matter what problems and fears may confront them.

The world can be, and is at times a scary and confusing place. And at times we may find ourselves clear off the map. But take heart. The Lord is our shepherd, and He will always lead us to green pastures, and to rest beside still waters. And ultimately to dwell with Him in His Father's House forever, as long as we follow.

In His Peace,

*Rich*