

Another Word August 24, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Looking at the weather for the week, it appears to be rather warm. Please be careful as you go about your weekly chores. Excess heat can sneak up and drain you energy as well as your spirits. However, Sunday looks good, so be prepared to worship at the pavilion. Looking forward to seeing you all this Sunday!

This Sunday we will still be collecting donations for Samaritan's Purse. The total donation, and matched by the church will be used to aid those whose lives have been devastated because of the earthquake in Haiti.

We have just received the 5-book series, "The Art of Living," based on the thoughts and writings of Henri Nouwen. I would like to start the first book, "Identity" during the week of September 20th. If you are interested, let me know if you would like a morning or evening session, and what day would be preferred. Each book is \$4.00, or if you would like the full series, all 5 books for \$15.00.

The Wi-Fi extension to the pavilion is being installed as I type this letter.

The cards this week go to Brethren Care Village.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are Psalm 45: 1-2, 6-9, and Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, and 21-23. "Oh, come on guys, not 'bread' again!" Our Elder is Shelley Carpenter.

As we go to prayer, please remember those in Afghanistan, as well as those in our congregation who are facing surgeries and other issues.

May we be in prayer. Most Holy and gracious God. Our lives are truly enriched because of Your love and guidance. Come and still our anxious hearts. Set us free from the fears of everyday life, knowing that You are with us, directing us, and assuring us through Your word. May You reach out and touch those in need of Your physical and spiritual healing. In these unsettling times, may we feel Your steady and constant power, knowing that You are in control. We are grateful and thank You for Your wonderful gift of life, along with Your daily provisions. In Jesus' most precious name we hold up this prayer to You, Amen

Two Sundays ago, Donita and I were very fortunate to go to a fantastic concert in Akron, with Bill Freytag and Jackie Lindecamp. The concert, called the "Happy Together Tour," consisted of 6 major "rock" groups from the 60's. Each group came on stage and played five of their chart topping hits. Then at the end of the concert, all 6 groups came out on stage, and along with a crowd of over 1,200 people, belted out one more hit song. It was an incredible evening!

As I look back on the concert, I am struck with a couple of thoughts. We were treated to 31 songs that night. And as I recall, we all knew most, if not all, of the lyrics. Maybe that doesn't seem like a big deal, but most of the folks there, including me hadn't heard many of those songs for over 50 years. But yet, we sang along with them all. How can that possibly be? I often forget why I went to the kitchen during the **15 seconds** it takes to get there. Is our memory selective; fickle?

My other thought is about the brain itself. It must be quite an amazing gift of God. Imagine something that is able to store so much data and then recall even the smallest detail at the sound of a word or a note.

Music is a stimulus that brings joy and pleasure. When a song (or other stimulus) is repeatedly played, sung, or read it becomes engraved in our memories. And when we are reminded of it, our brains engage and then brings it forward. The caveat for us is this; everything, good or bad can become a part of our memory and it can be there forever. The lesson is, what we repeatedly put in the brain is what we will remember. We must be especially careful with what fills our thoughts.

God spoke to Moses in Deuteronomy 11, on this very issue. After giving the Israelites the laws and commands, in verses 18-19 He says, “Fix these words of mine in your hearts and **minds**; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.” And then He goes on to say, “Teach them to your children when you sit at home, when you walk, when you lie down, and when you get up.” In other words, continually fill your thoughts with God. Read His word daily, pray for guidance daily, and when life’s challenges come along, you will be able to hear, remember, and “sing” His beautiful words.

The music of our youth may be engrained in our minds. But how much better will our lives be to have God’s words “fixed in our hearts,” soaring like a beautiful song, guiding our lives, and reminding us of His love and devotion?

In His Peace,

Rich