

Another Word August 31, 2021

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

I have the privilege and honor to officiate my nephew, Bryan Benton's wedding September 11, in Atlanta, Georgia. Donita and I will be gone from September 8 to September 14th. During our absence, Linda, Brian, and Ellie will again offer a wonderful service on September 12th. During this time, if you find yourself in need of prayer or help, our Elders are available by calling the office. If other pastoral care is needed, Pastor Matt Potosky of Albion Brethren Church has graciously offered to be on call.

We will begin our latest study, "The Art of Living," by Henri Nouwen Tuesday, September 21st. There will be a 10:30 am class and a 6pm class. Books are available, and a signup sheet will be posted in the gathering area. This is a 5 book series. The first book, "Identity" is a 5 week study. Individual books are \$4.00, or all five for \$15.00.

Scriptures for this Sunday are: Psalm 125, and James 2: 1-10, 14-17. "Faith and works." Linda Gardner is Elder.

May we be in prayer.

O most Holy God. We gather together in your calming presence. Our hearts are heavy and saddened at the loss of our service members, the destruction in Haiti, and the loss of life and property in the wake of hurricane Ida. Remind us to place our trust in You, and to replace our fears with Your peace. May we be assured that You are our God, and that You are always with us. Please give Your comfort to those, here

and abroad, that have lost loved ones. May they feel Your presence and love. We also ask that You guide and direct us to reach out to our neighbors with a kind word, and with loving deeds that will lighten the burdens of their lives. We pray this prayer in Jesus' pure and precious name, the name above all names, Amen.

Last Sunday's message helped us to realize that what is in our hearts, determines what comes out of our mouths. A hard heart brings scornful words. A loving and peaceful heart brings kind, loving words. Our words and how we act and react to them is an important byproduct of how we see, accept, and interact with each other. I read a story a while back that I think bears this out.

A man moved into a small cottage in a lake side community. Being an early riser, he noticed the garbage collector going from cottage to cottage collecting everyone's trash. He moved quickly, quietly, and efficiently, while not disturbing the peace of the sleeping neighborhood. One morning, after observing his movements for a number of weeks, the owner went out to tell him that he really appreciated the good job he was doing. The man said, that in over ten years of collecting garbage, no one had ever said a kind or encouraging word to him. What a shame.

This story got me thinking. How many people around us do countless, thankless jobs, jobs we take for granted in our day to day lives. Let's see, there are mail carriers, meter readers, street cleaners, park maintenance, sewer workers, and of course, even trash collectors.

(That's the short list.) Yes, it is their job. However, many of these people are "out of sight, out of mind" workers. They all do invaluable services for us and for our community. But because their jobs are often done behind the scenes, some of the workers could begin to feel let down, discouraged, even unappreciated. The first half of Proverbs 12, verse 25 addresses these feelings; "an anxious heart weighs a man (or woman) down." No one should feel alone, anxious, and weighed down by life, especially when it comes to doing a day's service for others. So, how can we help?

The answer is quite simple. It is what the man in the story did. And it is what the second half of Proverbs 12:25 instructs; "a kind word cheers him (or her) up." A kind word! Just a simple word of praise or encouragement. A kind word spoken to someone who hasn't heard one in a long time, is like a breeze on a hot day, like the sun breaking through an overcast day, like a cool, refreshing drink of water, and like a comforting word directly from God.

We need to be aware of those around us and to have courage to approach them. And then, knowing that our hearts are filled with peace, love, and compassion, "Let our speech be always full of grace." Colossians 4:6. Let the love Christ has for you, be the standard for how you love your neighbor; and yes, that even goes for the trash collector.

In His peace,

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