

## Another Word September 5, 2023

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

Good first Tuesday of a new month to you. Eight months of 2023 are now in the books. Time is rolling by, but it has been a true joy rolling along with you. This new month is jam-packed with exciting events, programs, and outreaches! So, let's get started:

We are again hosting The Jazz Society's concert series in our Sanctuary. Their first concert will be Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. From October on, the concerts are scheduled for the first Monday of each month. You are all cordially invited to come out for an evening of great music with a different band each month.

Our newest Bible Study will begin Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>. Classes will be held at 10:30 and again at 6pm. This will be an in-depth, 9-week study of the Book of James. If you haven't signed up yet, either let me know or you may just show up at either time. Because of an anonymous donor, our study guides are available at no charge.

On September 17, our first "Sunday" Bible Study will begin at 9:30. It has been decided that the Study of The Book of James would be the perfect way to once again begin Sunday classes. This will allow those who have expressed a desire for a Sunday morning study to begin a class. It will also allow anyone who can't attend on Tuesday or who misses a class to be able to make up that session the following Sunday. We hope many of you will join us in the study of this important letter that has helped shape the growth Christ's Church.

On Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, we will welcome the middle school youth and their families who have signed up to attend LifeWise Academy classes. An open house will be held from 6:30 to 7:30. It is estimated

that over 200 will come by to familiarize themselves as to where their classes will be held. We are asking for donations of cookies to help them feel welcome.

LifeWise classes will begin Wednesday September 27<sup>th</sup>. Every Wednesday through the school year our building will welcome close to 100 students, teachers, and volunteers (brought in in 3 separate groups) from approximately 10 in the morning until 1pm. Each 45-minute class will concentrate on a Bible story from either the Old or New Testament concerning subjects like trust, compassion, respect, and ending with how Jesus relates to each lesson. These classes are approved and allowed by the State of Ohio and of course our school board, provided; 1- the classes are not mandatory but elected by student and parent or guardian. 2- that they must be held off school property, hence our building. 3- LifeWise must be privately funded. We are truly blessed to be a part of such a wonderful outreach, and a big thank you for each who have stepped up to volunteer your time.

And last but indeed not least, we will again be supporting Crop Walk. The donations collected go to help fight hunger worldwide as well as here locally. The deadline for donations is October 1<sup>st</sup>. Please give generously for this noble cause. See Dick Reich or Jan Robinson for more details.

Our Scriptures for this coming Sunday are Psalm 119: 33-40, Matt Henderson is our serving Elder, and Matthew 18: 15-20.

September 17<sup>th</sup> Scriptures are: Psalm 103: 1-13. Todd Whitmer is our serving Elder. Our message on forgiveness is based on Matthew 18: 21-35.

As we enter in a time of prayer, please remember John Kirby's sister, Julie Fowler who was taken ill on Sunday, Ada Sue's brother, Thom

Gibson, Lyle Easterday, Shannon, Martha Koberstein, Frances' sister-in-law Trudy, and all those we know and love.

May we pray. Dear loving God, we come to you to praise and give You glory. You and You alone are our God. Life that You give is so beautiful that at times we hardly know how to say thanks. But we are thankful! And even thankful for the many trials that come before us. For without these trials, we would never grow in our faith and understanding. We only ask that you continue to give us love, hope, and peace so we may keep our gaze firmly fixed on You. We ask for healing and comfort for our families and friends who are in need of Your loving touch. Give us courage to be bold ambassadors and reflect Your beautiful light of truth. In the name of Jesus, the light of the world we pray, Amen.

You may have noticed that I used the word light in our prayer. I did that on purpose. To make a long story short, my mother was a very good artist. She mainly painted in oils. I used to be a fairly good artist but never quite had the time to keep up with it. When Donita and I moved back to Ashland in the late 70's, my mom asked if I would like to take a couple of art classes at the art institute in Mansfield. I said yes, sounds like fun.

It was good relearning some old techniques and trying new ones. By the end of the class, we were doing wet watercolor paintings. This is where you wet your canvas and use wet paints. The colors become muted and at times bleed into one another producing beautiful impressionistic creations.

I have always loved drawing landscapes. So, for my final painting of the class, I decided to paint an old grist mill tucked away in the woods with a large pond at its side. As I began my picture, the instructor gave me a bit of advice. She said that one of the mistakes so many people make is

with light and reflected light. The light that is reflected, let's say on the pond, should never be as bright as the light it is reflecting. If the reflected light is too bright, it can detract from the source of the light. Hmmm!

Not long ago I was reminded of just that in a few scriptures in the book of John. John 1: 4 states that Jesus' life was, "the light of all mankind." Verse 5 then states, "the light shines in the darkness." Verse 6 then introduces us to John the Baptist, "who," in verse 7 states, "came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him, all might believe." And then verse 8 says, "he himself, (That is John the Baptist) was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light." Do you see? John was chosen to **reflect** Christ's light to those living in the darkness of an unbelieving world.

And like John before us, we too are now Christ's ambassadors, chosen to **reflect** His light. You and I can never blaze in Christ's full glory. However, as we live, act, and interact with the world, we believers who have Christ's direct light falling on us, will become the source of **reflected** light, light that shows our broken world the way home to God!

In His Peace,

*Rich*