

THE FIRST WORD



First Christian Church

Vol. 26

Lent / Spring 2020

From your Pastor

Dear Members and Friends,

In ancient Rome, when you needed to write something down, you used a tabula. A tabula, or tablet, was a slate that was covered with wax. You then wrote in the wax what you wanted to record or remember by using a thin stick or feather quill. Sounds good so far. But what happens when your tabula slate becomes full? (yes, this is where we get our saying, “I have a full slate”) All you needed to do was heat your tabula slate, melt the wax, let it cool, and when it hardened, you guessed it, you had “a clean slate”. By the way, this procedure was known as tabula rasa, which means to erase. (Don’t you just love it?)

Before you begin to think that I’ve lost my mind, consider this; when we are born, we are all born with a clean slate. As we grow, our slates can become filled with so many of the world’s ideas and images that by the time we are old enough to believe in Christ and follow Him, our slates are often already filled. But Paul addresses this problem in his letter to the church in Rome. Romans 12 verse 2 says, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is - His good, pleasing, and perfect will”. Hmm. “The renewing of your mind.” In other words, “tabula rasa”, erase and start anew. We are to fill our minds, our inner tabula, with God’s truth, the living truth that is found on the pages of The Bible. And as you read and study, allow His words to “melt” your heart and give you “a clean slate”, so that you will be renewed as you grow in Christ.

Lent is the perfect time to inspect and unclutter your tabula. To renew your mind, to pray, to repent, to search, and discover what God has written on your heart.

In His Peace,

Rich



CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY TO APRIL

February 14th Valentine's Day. Let's show our love to our shut ins with cards.

February 26th Ash Wednesday service 7:00 p.m.

March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, & April 7th - Bible Study

April 5th Palm Sunday

April 9th Maunday Thursday Service 7:00 p.m.

April 10th Community Good Friday at Trinity Lutheran

April 12th Easter Sunday

HOUSE

Things are progressing with the demolition of the house next door. The asbestos has been removed, inside and out. All the utilities have been shut off and disconnected. The only delay now is for the gas company to remove the line to the street. We are hopeful that the house will be taken down by the end of February. Please keep the workers in your prayers for safety.



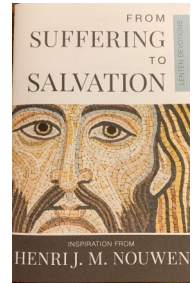
Storage Building

If you haven't noticed, there is a beautiful new storage building out by the pavilion. We now have ample space to store our mower, tools, grill, extra chairs, tables, Christmas decorations etc. allowing us to better utilize our space in the main building. Let's all give Glory to God and a big thanks to the trustees for the completion of this project.



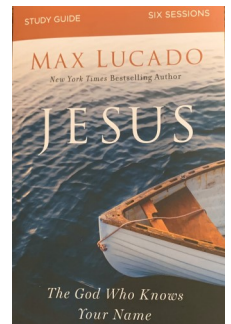
LENT DEVOTIONAL

It's hard to believe, but Ash Wednesday is February 26th. For devotional readings during Lent, we have chosen a book entitled "From Suffering to Salvation". This is a book of scripture, prayer, and filled with the inspirational writings of Henri Nouwen, one of the most influential spiritual writers of the past century. The book will be available Sunday February 23rd. We hope it will bless you and aid you in your own personal journey through Lent.



BIBLE STUDY

Many have been asking when our next Bible Study will begin. I came across another Max Lucado study entitled "Jesus, The God Who Knows Your Name." It is a 6 week study that traces Jesus from his birth to the cross and beyond. Each session is approximately 90 minutes and will begin Tuesday, March 3rd and continue every Tuesday through April 7th. We will have a morning session at 10 am and an evening session starting at 6 pm. The study guide will be available for \$10. I have also ordered a few of his companion hardcover books for those who would like to explore a deeper study. Our hope is that this study will inspire us to spend a little more time at the foot of the cross and search even deeper to know more of the one who would rather die for us, than live without us.



Baby Bottle Campaign

During Lent, we will again collect loose change for the Ashland Pregnancy and Care Center. What an easy but truly worthwhile way to come to the aid and care of expectant mothers.



Just a Reminder!!!

We want to remind everyone to pray for our church, why we are here, what is God's plan for us, and what is weighing heavy and breaking your heart. Please contact Rich, one of the Elders or fill out a prayer request form.

Also, along with his office hours, Pastor Rich is available by calling the office at 419-289-7439 or his cell at 419-565-2965.

HAPPENINGS In our church!

We are touching lives every day. Here are just a few ways.

Pastor Mike and Stacy Simmons of New Beginnings Crossroads Church thank us for our generous gift of \$760.00 to help provide food for The Lord's Pantry food bank in West Salem. Their church mission is to help provide food, clothing, and health needs for the underserved in their area. They help on the average 1,000 people per month and rely solely on the generosity of gifts like ours to pass God's love on the others. The gift was the total of the donations given by us in honor and memory of our loved ones during Christmas.



The Socks for Seniors program, sponsored by the Area Agency on Aging, was a huge success. Their goal was to collect 4,000 pairs of socks to distribute to nursing homes in Ashland, Richland, and Marion counties. The personal goal we set for ourselves was attained. The Agency on Aging's goal was met and surpassed by over 6,000 pair! Yes, you read that correctly. In total over 10,000 pairs were collected! What a testament of the power of God!



Ken Bee once again created a beautiful clock to be auctioned off during Advent. The auction raised \$400.00 and was donated to 'Feed the Children'. Thank you Ken.

Our Give and Take shelves are beginning to fill. The food and care items collected by us are used to help our friends and neighbors. Bring an item to give or take an item to use or give to someone in need.



We have had many cards and phone calls of thanks from all who received Christmas gift bags. This is one of the most special gestures of love we do each year. Your gifts bring joy to our loved ones who can't be here to worship with us. Your generosity captures the very spirit of the season and shows our hearts, overflowing with kindness and thoughtfulness.

On December 12th, Pathways Hospice once again held their remembrance service in our sanctuary. Their lovely and moving service was attended by over 100 family members and friends of loved ones lost over the past year. It is an honor for First Christian Church to be able to contribute, even in a small way to the healing of those who mourn.



And of course, I would be remiss if I did not again acknowledge my (and my family's) sincere thanks to each and every one of you for showing us such love, support, and compassion over the loss of our mother. We often think the words, and say the words of condolence to others, but they take on even more meaning when directed to you. Your outpouring of love is gracious to see and humbling to receive. In His Great Love, Rich

As the world fights to figure everything out,
I'll be holding doors for strangers,
letting people cut in front of me in traffic,
saying good morning,
keeping babies entertained in grocery lines,
stopping to talk to someone who is lonely,
being patient with sales clerks,
smiling at a passersby.
WHY?
Because I will not stand idly by and
live in a world where love is invisible.
Join me in showing kindness,
understanding, and judging less.
Be kind to a stranger,
give grace to friends who are having a bad day,
be forgiving of yourself - today and every day

BE the change, BE the light,
start today and never stop.
Audrey Loves Paris

Pray for our Shut-in and homebound members

Please pray for Joyce Bradley, Sherry Burns, Jane Foster, Dick Gordon, Carol Imhoff, Betty Imperio, Bernice Lambert, Jane McVey, Kate Miller, Wanda Mish, Dick Scott, Gertrude & Keith Sparks, Dale Wells and Beverly Zimmerman. A visit, call, or a card means so much to those who can't come to church.



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