

Another Word December 4, 2023

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

We received a wonderful “Thank You” from Gina Pendergast of the Ashland County Head Start Program. The Thanksgiving meals, turkey gift certificates, and extra food items were delivered and every family who had a need was helped. Over 90 families in our area were served and had a brighter day, in large part, because of your kindness, love, and generosity!

And your generosity continues! The Fostering Families Christmas present pick up is Wednesday and Thursday Dec. 6th and 7th from 11 to 4pm. Because of you, 15 kiddos will have something extra special waiting for them under the tree this Christmas morning. And also, at last count, we have collected over 20 gift cards for the moms and dads who have stepped up to become foster parents.

And then there are the gift bags being prepared to be delivered to our members and friends who can't be here with us to worship! God's love is being shared in so many fruitful ways!

LifeWise snacks that we need each month are as follows: (Please note, nothing with peanuts) Contact Carol or myself for what is needed.

1st Wed. cookies. (Homemade or store bought)

2nd Wed. Fruit snacks (Motts, Welch's etc).

3rd Wed. Soft granola bars (Quaker, Great Value etc)

4th Wed. Rice Krispie treats

Thanks for your help. The students love the snacks!!!

As our journey through Advent continues, our scriptures will be:

Dec.10: Micah 5: 2-5a, Matthew 1: 1-6, 16, and Luke 1:26-38. "The Birth of Jesus as foretold to Mary."

Dec.17: Isaiah 40: 1-5, Malachi 3: 1-4, Luke 1: 39-63. "Two Mothers Meet."

Dec.24: Isaiah 9: 1-3a, 6-7, Luke 1: 56-80, Matthew 1: 18-25. "What John Becomes, and Who Joseph Is."

Dec. 24: Our Christmas Eve Service will be a candlelight service of scriptures, carols, prayers, and special music. Service begins at 3:30pm.

Let us bow in prayer,

Loving God, creator of life, Holy is Your name and wonderful are Your deeds. We await with great anticipation the celebration of the birth of Your Son as well as His second coming! But, until then may You find us faithful and willing to reach out to our neighbors in love and kindness. We lift up to You in silent prayer, our friends and family in need of Your healing touch..... May Your strength and comfort give them peace. Thank You for Your gift of life and blessings, and may we always be bold in our commitment to You. As we live by faith, and walk in hope, may the world be renewed with Your love. In Jesus' name, the perfect name we pray, Amen.

Isaiah 11: 1. "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit."

When we moved into our home 38 years ago, there was an old and massive lilac bush chained to the side of the house. The blooms were a beautiful and rare color of magenta. I trimmed and cared for it for

many years. However, about 10 years ago, because of a severe storm, it blew over, broke off, and died. I removed the last of the bush and roots and Donita and I decided to fill in the spot with flowers. Five years later, as I was preparing the ground for more flowers, I noticed a shoot coming up out of the ground. Sure enough, it was a shoot from the lilac bush, pushing its way up through the soil. It was a totally unexpected and joyful surprise.

Jesse was King David's father, and his descendants were to rule forever. But when they failed, it was as if the family tree of Jesse, like our lilac bush, was cut off and lost forever. But in God's perfect time, He sent another descendant in the form of a tiny baby. And from this new Branch would sprout the Messiah, our Savior Jesus the Christ.

I have protected our shoot for over 5 years, and it is now 2 feet tall. I'm hoping a branch will "bear fruit" next spring. Likewise, God's Will, through Jesus, was for Him to bear fruit; the fruit of life that springs up ever eternal.

In His Hope and Peace,

Rich