

Another Word March 5, 2024

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

As we move into the third week of Lent, my prayer is that we are slowing the pace of life around us, putting worldly demands behind us, and are clearing away the things that can distract us from the love of God.

This may seem a little early, but mark your calendars to attend our Maundy Thursday Service, March 28 at 7pm. And if you can, bring a friend or family member so they too can experience the passion of our Lord through scripture, song, and prayer.

We will again be participating with Saturate Ashland County by distributing brochures, information, and a DVD to area families, inviting them to come and worship on Easter morning. 5 of us will be packing the bags this evening. We will need 7 or 8 volunteers to help deliver the bags before Easter. I will know what area we will be serving tomorrow. Just let me know if you can help. Each volunteer will be responsible for approximately 20 bags. Thanks in advance for your help.

Our scriptures for the next 2 weeks are:

March 10- Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 Shelley Carpenter is our serving Elder. John 3:14-21. "Light or dark; your choice"

March 17- Jeremiah 31:31-34 Linda Gardner is our serving Elder. John 12:20-33. "Here comes the Judge"

As we go to prayer, please remember Lennie, Bill Schaefer, Ella Strine, and Bob Bell's family at the loss of his brother.

May we pray. O Holy and loving God, You are great and mighty. You are on Your throne and Your kingdom rules over all. The entire world is

a creation of Your hands, a creation that has been given to us for our enjoyment and pleasure. At times when our lives are turned upside down and we feel alone and deserted, You are there calling us by name to follow. And to know that You didn't spare Your own son for our sins, gives us the courage to believe and to follow Him. We all have a finite amount of time on earth, but You have given us a true path to eternity; a path called Jesus. Your love is far more than we deserve, but we accept it humbly and freely. We thank You for your son Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Growing up on the eastside of Ashland, we were fortunate to have many friends. I can't begin to tell you about the seemingly endless fun we had. From playing baseball and football, to bike rides and epic games of hide and go seek, we freely roamed the neighborhood in search of our next great adventure. There was only one thing that could stop the fun; and it came piercing through the air, through the wind, even over the hoots and hollering of our play. Riii-aaacchhh! (For those who don't know mother speak, that's "Rich, time to come home!") And it was always the same 2 notes; an F sharp and a D sharp. When I heard the call, I would stop whatever we were doing, say, "gotta go," and head for home. The voice and the notes were unmistakable. I knew I was being called by my mother. After all these years, I can still hear that specific call in my mind. In fact, everyone in our group had a specific call by a father or mother, and yet not one of us ever answered to someone else's voice.

Just last Sunday we looked at Jesus' words, "I Am the Good Shepherd." In John 10 He told His disciples that He was the Shepherd, and His followers were the sheep. "The sheep listen to the shepherd's voice," He said. Then goes on to say, "He (the shepherd) calls his own sheep by name and leads them out." John 10:3. The Priests and teachers of the

law were asserting their power and authority, and were trying to discredit the teachings and miracles of Jesus. Instead of being the Nation's leaders, they were leading many astray. But Jesus declares that, "the Good Shepherd's voice will be heard, and His sheep will follow." Why you ask? "Because they know His voice." John 10:4.

You see, I knew my mother's voice as a child, and I followed what she said, because I loved and trusted her. As grownups, the Good Shepherd still calls to us, even over the distracting noises of the world. May we carefully listen to clearly hear our Shepherd's voice, that is lovingly calling us through scripture and prayer, to follow Him safely home.

In His Peace,

*Rich*