

Another Word July 1, 2024

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

I apologize for the lateness of my letter. Driving to Birmingham twice and spending time with our daughter Betsy, André, and Sammy sort of tied Donita and me up. This may be a quick letter, but full of good stuff.

First, I want to thank Mary Dolce of LifeWise for her uplifting and informative talk Sunday the 23rd. And we look forward to our continued participation beginning this coming September. And I want to thank all of you who are and have stepped forward to help in the success of this God inspired program.

The July 4th celebration of fireworks, as you may have heard, has been moved to Freer Field. (Bummer!) We will be giving out our treats, glow-sticks (supplied by New Life Church), and our church brochures on Morgan Avenue, to those who may be parking in our church lot or in the High School lot. One way or another, we will still be reaching out to our friends and neighbors. Thanks to all who have and will help!!

We have re-instituted our "Give and Take" shelf in the gathering area. We are looking for pantry food items (pasta, canned goods, paper products, soap, shampoo, etc.) to have available for anyone in need. Take items if you or someone you know is in need, or bring in a few items you would like to donate. Thanks for your help.

Get your lawn chairs ready! Our outdoor worship at the pavilion will begin soon. We are looking at either July 21st or 28th.

There are so many friends and family that are in need of our prayers and God's healing; please remember Shannon, Bill Schafer, Lyle Easterday, Pam Burrier, Pam Coffman, Lana, Wendy, Ken and Mary Bee,

Natalie Brown, and Wade Kimball's mother. My apologies to anyone I have missed. Let us go to God our Father in prayer.

Holy and gracious God, you are our strength and guide. Our lives can turn so quickly from peace to chaos. But because of your love and direction, we can and will be able to weather any storm life can bring. Whether confusion, health, or loss, you stand with us. At times of pain you allow us to lean on you. In times of suffering, grief, and loss, when all our strength is gone, you will even stand for us. You, and you alone are what we can always count on and take comfort in. We thank you for your love and daily provision. And we thank you for your greatest gift of all, the gift of salvation through your son, Jesus. Please accept our prayers for all those in need (Personal prayers). We raise these prayers to all that is Holy, Amen.

On our recent trips to Birmingham I was reminded, as I sat in heavy traffic outside Louisville, of an incident that happened to me a little over twenty years ago. I had just left a customer's store and was heading to my next appointment. I was driving down an entry ramp to the expressway that had a stop sign at the bottom. Of course, I came to a full and complete stop. As I was looking for a break in the traffic, I was struck from behind. It wasn't a huge crash, but big enough to get out and inspect the damage.

As I looked at my bumper and the other car's bumper, I noticed two things; there was no damage on either car, and that the driver had her head down and appeared to be about to cry. As I walked back to assure her that all was ok, she looked up at me with tear-filled eyes and said, "I'm so sorry. I was praying to God and I had my eyes closed." I sort of laughed and said, "Maybe you should keep them open when you pray and drive." I assured her that there was no harm, wished her well and drove on to my next stop.

We all should pray continually for God's guidance, His comfort, and His will. And yes, even when we may be driving. Paul gave some good advice to the church in Ephesus which seems to also pertain to praying while driving. He writes in chapter 6, verse 18, "And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." I think that means pray continually! But he also goes on to say, "With this in mind, be alert..." He ends the verse by saying, "to keep on praying for the saints." However, I like the words be alert. Maybe he didn't mean don't close your eyes as you pray while driving your chariot, but it does mean to be alert and aware of our surroundings, problems, temptations, and to be able to help others in need.

So, in your quiet place, close your eyes as you pray. But in the world of massive distractions and temptations, it's best to keep them wide open. I don't think our Father will mind!

In His Peace,

Rich