

Another Word September 17, 2024

To our family and friends of First Christian Church

As I sit at my desk pondering the keyboard of my laptop, then looking around my office and out the window, I see the first signs of fall. The sky is a beautiful blue, the temperature is a nice 62 degrees, and some of the leaves have already turned yellow and orange. But the biggest sign of fall comes from the stack of mail on my desk from Christian book and Church supply houses telling me it's time to get our orders in for Christmas. Yep! It's fall alright! Just so you know, info for our fall supplies came last May. Makes perfect sense!

And another sure-fire sign of fall is the annual Crop Walk campaign. All this month, Dick Reich will be collecting donations before and after our services through Sept. 29. 80% of the collected funds are used to help stop hunger around the world, and the other 20% stay and are used to fight hunger locally. If you haven't already, stop by to see Dick and give your best gift to help others in need.

We would also like to thank all who have given funds and food items that will be used for lunches for LifeWise students who may have forgotten or couldn't purchase a meal at school. We are expecting over 120 middle school students this fall. Classes will begin Sept. 25. We are still in need of a couple of helpers, so if you can give a few hours on Wednesdays, just give me a call. Thanks.

Our scriptures for the next few weeks are:

Sept. 22- Psalm 1 and Mark 9: 30-37

Sept. 29- Psalm 124 and Mark 9: 38-50

Oct. 6- Psalm 26 and Mark 9: 14-29

As we go to prayer please remember: Chuck Gardner, Ken and Mary Bee, Ralph Wertz, Cheryl Pate, Lyle Easterday, Shannon Miller, Wendy Zimmerman, and Dale Campbell over the loss of his sister-in-law, a cousin, and 2 close friends in one week. Let us go to our Father in prayer.

O Holy Father, there is nothing or no one greater than You. You are brighter than the brightest star, and Your love for us is immeasurable. At times, when we feel overwhelmed and lost, it is then we remember who created us, who protects us, and who guides us with love. We are nothing without You. We ask for healing for those within our church family, and for those we hold dear in our heart. We also ask for wisdom, strength, and protection for all those who put their lives in danger to keep us safe. May Your will be done, this day and always. In Jesus' perfect name we pray, Amen.

Have you ever tried to get away with something... and then think you did... only to find out... you didn't? Well, in my 9<sup>th</sup> grade science class, I thought I did.

Early at home that morning, I remembered that there was to be a test. And as normal, I forgot to study. I can still see myself writing out answers on small strips of paper in our living room. It was the first class of the day. I sat down, pulled out my "cheat sheets" and filled in the answers. I was so proud of myself that I even "missed" a couple to make my test score more believable. I turned in the test, the teacher smiled, and I walked down the hall to my next class. All was right with the world... until...

A friend of mine caught up with me in the hall and said that someone in the class saw me cheating and told the teacher. Que the absolute

feeling of doom! I was caught! Placed in an unescapable barrier! No where to turn! Let's just say, the rest of my day was not pleasant. What should I do? What should I do? I was a good student. This was the first (and only) time I tried anything like this. I realized God would not allow me to get away with cheating and He gave me a guilty conscience to push me to make a decision... and that decision was to confess.

David describes a time of confession in his life. He tells God, "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away... for day and night, Your hand was heavy on me...but then I acknowledged my sin to You." Psalm 32: 3-5

At 8 o'clock that evening, feeling much like David described, I called my teacher and told him what I had done. He first thanked me for coming forward. Then he said he knew, and that he was prepared to fail me for the entire period. But then he said that I could retake the test, verbally with him. Then whatever score was made would be reduced by one grade. I cannot begin to tell you the sheer relief I felt to have the burden of guilt lifted off my shoulders. And of course, the new respect I now had for my teacher. So, what happened?

Truth matters to God. We are to confess our sins to Him and to ask forgiveness to those we have wronged. David finished verse 5 by saying, "You forgave the guilt of my sin." You need to know that I paid the penalty for what I did. Believe me when I tell you that my bones ached and God's hand was very heavy on me. But then He forgave me, and so did my teacher. And when I finished taking the test, I truly felt that all was again, right with the world!

In His Peace,

*Rich*