

Another Word November 30, 2021

To our friends and family of First Christian Church

The first tic of the Advent clock sounded Last Sunday. We were introduced to Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah, the journey God has placed them on and the ancient prophecies they will fulfill. This coming Sunday we will explore the life of a young woman by the name of Mary, and the “incredible” journey placed before her. We look forward to worshipping with you as we watch God’s promises be revealed to us in the most extraordinary ways.

As a brief reminder; our support for The Lord’s Pantry in West Salem will extend through the month of December. Individual snack and meal servings are needed.

Also, our congregational meeting will be December 5th to vote for our slate of officers and our 2022 budget.

It’s not too late to join our Bible study, “Because of Bethlehem,” by Max Lucado. Every Tuesday during December at 10:30 and 6pm.

Our Old Testament reading for December 5th is Micah 5: 2-5a read by Elder Shelley Carpenter. Mike McCormic will light our second candle, the Candle of Peace. The New Testament Scriptures are Luke 1:26-38, and Matthew 1:1-6, and 16, read by Dale Campbell. “The Birth of Jesus is for-told to Mary.”

May we pray,

Loving God, we fall to our knees with gratitude and thanks for Your unlimited goodness and blessings. We rejoice in the love You give that draws us closer to You, and to each other. Our daily lives often bring fear and uncertainties, but we have faith, and with faith comes hope. You are always there guiding us and giving us comfort, granting us peace. May we pass along Your love to help those who are in great need, and to encourage others to know You better. In Jesus most precious name we pray, Amen.

During Advent, I thought it might be interesting to look at a few Christmas Carols and how they came into being. But then I thought, it could be even more interesting to find a Carol that goes with each of the 4 candles of Advent, as well as why they were written.

Sunday's candle was "Hope." This is a word we use quite often in our daily lives. We hope for this, and hope for that. "I hope I don't get lost," "I hope I win the lottery," or "I hope that they will like me." But what is hope?

The dictionary tells us that hope "Is a feeling of expectation, and a desire to obtain something, or to trust that something will be fulfilled." And then a little side note said, "With confidence." That's interesting! Do we actually hope with confidence? I then looked up "Hope" as it is used in the Word of God.

Romans 15:4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope."

Titus 3:13, "...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

There are many more verses containing the word hope, but these 2 seem to best fit our discussion.

Now, let's look at the Carol I chose.

Charles Wesley was a prolific hymn writer, as well as an evangelist who rode on horseback from town to town, facing mobs, and enduring harsh conditions and severe weather. He composed as he rode, and often, when a melody or words were rapidly flowing, he would stop at a house and ask for pencil and paper so he could record them before they were lost.

On one of his evangelistic trips, he was going to Garth, Wales, not only to preach, but to see Sally Gwynee, his sweetheart whom he hoped to marry. However, her parents wouldn't consent because Wesley had no steady income.

Undaunted, Charles amassed 455 of his original hymns in a 2-volume set called "Hymns and Sacred Songs," and the royalties he made from the sale of the books brought in enough income to satisfy the parents, and he and Sally were soon married.

Interestingly, one his best known and loved Christmas Hymns was not included in this set. "Come, O Long-expected Jesus," was written a few years earlier in a little book of 18 hymns for Christmas. This hymn went unnoticed until J. F. Lampe had it published in a collection called "Festival Hymns." It was later set to a Welch tune known as "HYFRYDOL," which is Welch for "Good Cheer."

Charles Wesley fills this beautiful hymn with the images of Advent, especially expectation, rest, release of sin, confidence, trust, as well as our hope of our salvation to be fulfilled by the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

I think you will find it very hard to just read the words of this favorite hymn because the “HYFRYDOL’S,” the “Good Cheer’s,” beautiful melody will burst through with every meaningful word of hope!

“Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free.
From our fears and sins release us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be.
You our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart;
Dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a longing heart.”

“Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king,
Born to reign in us forever, born your gracious realm to bring.
By your own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by your all sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne.”

Have a wonderful week,

In His Hope,

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