

Another Word December 1, 2020

To friends and family of First Christian Church

I trust that each of you, over the past week, had an opportunity and time to connect with family and friends, and to give thanks for all of God's endless bounty.

The cards collected this week will be delivered to Brethren Care Village. Last weeks were delivered to Crystal Care. As a reminder, Christmas cards are greatly appreciated at our nursing homes this time of year. In speaking with the Elders, because of the impact we are making, we will extend our card ministry into the next few months.

Because of the rise in virus cases, we will continue with our on-line church services at least through the month of December. We miss being in person with you, but your health and safety are of the utmost importance in these trying times.

Call in voting to approve our 2021 budget and slate of officers has started. The deadline to call the office is December 9th.

As a reminder; the current Sunday service will be replayed on the following Tuesday in our sanctuary at one o'clock, for anyone not able to watch on line.

Our scriptures for this Sunday are: Isaiah 40: 1-11 and Mark 1: 1-8. "Prepare for Peace"

Our love and sympathy is extended to Mitch and Jenny Hastings and family for the loss of Mitch's father Bill, and to Nellie Myers for the loss of her son, John. May God's comfort surround you all.

As we enter into prayer, please remember David Franklin, Arlene Whitmer, Joyce Bradley, Carol Cochie, Ellie's sister, Jude Lybarger who has been diagnosed with the coronavirus, and all those who we know are in need of God's love, comfort, and healing. May we pray:

Dear Holy Father in Heaven. Please, first make us aware of the nearness of your Son Jesus. May we discover that Jesus lives within us through every contact we make, every embrace we share, and in every word spoken in love. As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth, may we make ready our hearts, to sweep clean our lives, and to be filled with hope and peace. May your love show through in every act of kindness we do. In the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior we pray, Amen

There is a well-known Christmas song that has the line; "It's the most wonderful time of the year!" I think most of us would agree with that sentiment.

As a young boy, there were 2 things that really got me excited. One was when December first rolled around, and two, when the Sears Christmas Toy Catalog came. From that time on, I could think of nothing else but Christmas day. Especially the presents, the presents, and oh, did I mention the presents?

However, one cold December day years ago changed Christmas for me, forever. While looking for a misplaced sweater in a spare bedroom

closet, I stumbled upon a treasure trove of Christmas Presents. I didn't realize that Santa routinely delivered some presents early, allowing him to finish his work on time. (This was before UPS, FedEx, and Amazon you know!) Well, temptation got the best of me and I opened every one of them. I was able to see what I, as well as my brother and sister would receive on that Christmas morning. Pretty cool, huh?

However, when the big day arrived, there was no anticipation. There was no excitement. There was no joy. That morning, I realized I had ruined "...the most wonderful time of the year." And I learned an important lesson. Gifts are to be opened only when they are given.

Luke 2:12 says, "You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Note, God waited to reveal His gift to the shepherds at a specific time. Many prophecies pointed to a moment in time when this gift would come. But it would be revealed at an appointed time. Not one minute sooner. The world knew a savior was coming. But only God the Father knew when.

We are in the first days of Advent. It's a time to prepare ourselves, to make ready our lives, and (no peeking), to wait. Christmas will come. So, don't rush past Advent. It's the time we need to fill ourselves with joy and anticipation of the coming celebration, for the greatest gift the world has ever been given; Jesus, our Savior.

In His Peace,

Rich