

Another Word December 28, 2021

To our friends and family of First Christian Church

It will be very close to New Year when you receive this – so I wish you a very Happy New Year! Let us pray we have a wonderful 2022 knowing that God is with us, no matter what! Due to Pastor Rich taking a few days off for some much-needed rest – here is another letter from Ellie. Please know that if you contact the church and leave a message, Linda or myself will get will get back to you.

The gift baskets and Christmas bags were delivered last week and we received so many thank you's. Just took a call from Jane McVey, who just loved her "goodie bag" and wants everyone to know that. Thank you to all who brought in items or money and all of you who helped assemble and deliver them. We are such a "giving congregation".

Some good news to share – Our new doors for the office and lower hallway area will be installed on the 4th of January. They will be wonderful I am sure and much easier to lock and unlock.

There will be a Celebration of Life for Karen Light this Thursday, December 30th. Visiting is 10:00, and the service at 11:00 a.m. Please keep Stewart and their family in your prayers.

Our service for Sunday, January 2, 2022 will include a short message followed with a hymn sing. I am Elder and will be reading Psalm 147: 12-20. The message, "Do You Still Seek Him?" is from Matthew 2: 1-12. Hope you can be there and help us "Sing in the New Year"!

Kim has asked me to mention if you have checks that you want to have included in this year's giving, to please get them to the office by Thursday, the 30th. If no one is here, leave them in the black box by the office door. Thank you.

We remember in prayer Rich's nephew Chase, Linda's brother-in-law Jonas, and John Whitmer. We pray for our members in nursing homes or assisted living and those who are home-bound and unable to attend. Shall we pray:

Heavenly Father, we come to you for help, for without you we are sure to fail. We love you and we know you love us. Give us courage and strength. Save us from our timidity and doubt. Open our eyes to the joy of simple pleasures. Let us glow with the blessing of friendship. Help us to make this New Year rich in growth, in vision, in service. We look to you, O God, and we trust in you alone for your mercy which endures forever. In Jesus name, Amen

From Luke 2: 8-14 "Fear not . . . A Savior has been born to you."

Linus, in the Peanuts comic strip, is best known for his blue security blanket. He carries it everywhere and isn't embarrassed at needing it for comfort. His sister Lucy especially dislikes the blanket and often tries to get rid of it. She buries it, makes it into a kite, and uses it for a science fair project. Linus too knows he should be less dependent on his blanket and lets it go from time to time, always to take it back.

In the movie *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, when a frustrated Charlie Brown asks, "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?" Linus, with his security blanket in hand, steps center stage and quotes Luke 2: 8-14. In the middle of his recitation, as he says, "Fear not," he drops his blanket – the thing he clung to when afraid.

What is it about Christmas that reminds us we don't need to fear? The angels that appeared to the shepherds said, "Do not be afraid . . . a Savior has been born to you" (Luke 2: 10-11).

Jesus is "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). We have His very presence through His Holy Spirit, the true Comforter (John 14:16), so we don't need to fear. We can let go of our "security blankets" and trust in Him.

An added note: The producers wanted to delete Linus quoting the scripture about Jesus' birth. However, Charles Schultz wanted no part of that because it was too important to omit. And what was too important to omit? As Linus said, "That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown!"

May God bless each of you in the coming year and always!

Ellie