

Wednesday Musings October 4, 2017

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We are all still in shock. Nearly 60 people are dead and over 500 wounded in the worst shooting in modern American history. We may never know what went through the mind of that shooter in Las Vegas Sunday night. Clearly, any sense of humanity was missing. 23 years ago during the genocide in Rwanda, the Hutu ethnic majority murdered as many as 800,000 members of the Tutsi minority. In part, the Hutus were able to do this because they constantly referred to Tutsis as “cockroaches.” If a whole group of people can be seen as loathsome bugs rather than actual people, it makes killing much easier. Is that what the killer imaged as he opened fire? Not 22,000 **people** down below him, but something far less? Or was he just trying to make history with his infamous crime? And how many others, whose mental health may be paper thin, will decide to follow his lead and make their own history? How many will acquire military grade weapons that have been modified so as to essentially become high powered machine guns? And what will be their next target: a Williams High football game, or one at Elon or Duke, UNC, or perhaps in Charlotte at a Panther’s game? Over the years we have seen so many senseless deaths and, in each case, we have rightly offered our prayers as we must do in the days ahead for so many families that have suffered so much. But then, after offering those prayers, we as a society seem to move on with little changing. From a distance, it would appear that we as a people have made a peace with such massacres. From a distance it might seem that we have accepted such acts as a part of modern life. But I’m not sure that’s the case, especially when the casualties are so high. And if you stop to think that, next time, it could be you or me in some innocent crowd, or one of our children or one of our grandchildren – it puts everything in a different light. Is this really the type of society you and I want to live in? As with most things, such issues are complex, yet we need to find a way to make life safer for all of us. So, in addition to our prayers, let us all demand that our public policy makers begin having serious conversations about guns, violence, mental health care and all the other sub-issues that swirl around this larger issue. Who was it that said, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results”? What we have been doing isn’t working. It’s time to find a better way!

As you may have heard, Doris Allen passed away Monday morning at 11:30 am. Doris had been battling a number of smaller health concerns lately, but in the end, it was a pernicious pneumonia that just became too much. Her service will be held next Tuesday at 2 pm here at First Christian. There will be a time of visitation with the family immediately before the service from 1 – 2 pm in the church parlor.

This coming Sunday will be our Stewardship Sunday. A stewardship letter and pledge card was mailed a few weeks ago. Hopefully you’ve had an opportunity to prayerfully consider your support for the ministry of Jesus Christ through our church for 2018. We ask that you fill out your card and bring it with you to the service on Sunday. That’s when we will dedicate our pledges for our ministry together in the new year. If you’ve misplaced your card, extras will be available on Sunday, and if you can’t make it on Sunday, just drop it in the mail or stop by the church office.

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Then, on October 15th, a couple things will be happening. That Sunday will be our annual Family Day Service. Already a number of young people from the church have agreed to participate. They will be our readers, greeters, ushers and the source of a lot of special music. I hope you'll be able to join us. Then, during the service, we will be collecting a special offering in support of the victims of recent hurricanes. On the news lately, there have been a number of reports about difficulties in rebuilding many communities have experienced since Hurricane Matthew struck last year. Yet, the destruction caused this fall by the three major hurricanes that struck Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico almost make Matthew seem small by comparison. On the island of Puerto Rico, Irma's eye passed over the entire island. Many of you may already have contributed to relief efforts, but if you haven't, please bring your checkbooks on the 15th. Recovery from these three storms will take years. Let us do our small part to help.

Then, looking down the road a bit, on the 22nd at 9:30 a.m. in the Bray Fellowship Hall, Matt Rice will share with us a multimedia presentation on his recent mission trip to Africa. Matt has shared a preview of this video with me and it's very good. This presentation will take the place of our regular Sunday School classes on that day.

On the prayer concern front, this is the week that the Andes will be moving. We've received an update on their new address. The address published last week was incorrect. The correct address is: 606 Birch View Dr., Apt 12, Matthews, NC 28105. We will miss them tremendously. They go with our loving prayers. This past Sunday, Mark Garrison, Matt Rice's partner, was in worship after suffering a partially torn retina and surgery to repair it. His vision is slowly improving and he still has some travel restrictions, but he is making progress. Eleanor Lovgren has been making great strides since coming home from rehab. She wanted me to thank you all for your prayers, cards, flowers and visits. Also, on Sunday Jo Horne was in room 11 at the Hospice House, recovering from a fractured hip. She was expecting to move to a rehab center sometime this week so you might want to call before visiting. Finally, please continue to keep in prayer Lola Pipes, Nancy Thomas and Donna Freeman.

Hope to see you Sunday.

Mark