



Christ United Methodist Church | Cedar Mill
open hearts. open minds. open doors.

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January 24th, 2019

To our dear family at Christ United Methodist Church,

Joanna and I are overwhelmed by the love, support, and prayers that you have showered down on our daughter, Clementine, and our family, in these past 10 days. Your love has carried us and held us close to God in our darkest moment, and words fail to express our love and gratitude for you.

I am also thankful that our church is not a collection of people who merely attend and consume a nice worship service. But you are a people who come together to make community and worship happen. God is glorified among you. It's a blessing to know that Christ is proclaimed and God is praised in our community, in my absence. I hope to re-enter community-life with you soon, but gradually, as we pray for God's guidance in the coming weeks.

Let me end this letter with this thought on Jesus' first miracle (I am still your pastor after all!). When Jesus turned water into wine, almost no one knew a miracle had happened. The Groom and the wedding party got all the credit. The head waiter simply thought the Groom had been radically generous, saving the best wine for last. The party went on, and the partiers had no idea they had just benefited from a miracle. However, the Scriptures say that Jesus' disciples, those who followed and learned from him, recognized the miracle, and believed in him because of it.

We experienced a miracle this past week. My daughter was born with an undetectable cluster of deformed veins in her brain. These deformed veins would have inevitably ruptured at some point in her life. The rupture happened last Friday, during the day, under the supervision of the incredible teachers of A Child's Way kindergarten. The rupture happened when Clementine was 6 years old, old enough and healthy enough to endure a 5 hour emergency surgery, and young enough for her brain to heal and adapt to new realities. The rupture happened when we were within minutes of the finest children's hospital and pediatric neurosurgeons in the world. For these reasons and others, Clementine suffered no strokes, is completely free of any remaining blood clots or deformed veins, and her future is full of hope.

We have witnessed a miracle, and we are praising God.

In our difficult world, God is turning water into wine in subtle ways, all around us. I encourage you to look for the miracles, and give thanks. I'll see you soon in worship.

Blessings and peace to your souls †

Ric Shewell