

The Messenger

Crievewood United Methodist Church

June 13, 2012

Weddings and Marriage and Covenant Love

We had a wild, wet, wonderful wedding weekend in our family. Hailee (our niece) and Erick were married Saturday with the wet the result of sweat, not rain. Yet, there was no chance of dampening the enthusiasm and joy of the event; it was a high and holy, fun and festive occasion. A meaningful time that honored the ties that bind family and friends, and the covenant that binds two people in marriage.

I am in a bit of a season of marriage ceremonies; officiating (or sharing that role) in four weddings over seven weeks, with my own anniversary in that span. Consequently I have been reflecting on the institution and meaning of marriage in our society. Given that the percentage of US citizens who are married has declined over many years, and there is a growing national conversation regarding a definition of marriage, there is much to ponder. I have a couple of thoughts to share in this column, and I welcome any discussion that might follow.

First, I always remind myself that an understanding of marriage has been changed many times over the centuries. In the Old Testament, men routinely have more than one wife (Solomon had 700), often marrying members of the family tree (Abraham and Sarah had the same father). Too, there is a strong emphasis upon marriage as an act designed for the purpose of procreation and for preserving cultural identity. Over time marriage laws and customs of Israel changed trending toward monogamy. As for Greek, Roman, and Western civilization, historically, marriage was long understood as a business arrangement between families; more a matter of economics than romance. That there is benefit to society is a common thread; at one point in ancient Greece the lawmaker Solon proposed to make it compulsory.

The rise of Christendom had a profound impact on marriage, though more slowly and less consistently than one might imagine. The Church had a positive influence on raising the status of women in marriage; adding dignity to what was a prosaic agreement, and giving value to singleness. Also, the Church established a new understanding of whom one could marry, restricting marriages of consanguinity (blood relations), affinity (extended family members), and spiritual affinity (family of godparents). The priest became more involved in determining these relationships, but it was not until the 13th Century that the priest took the primary role in the marriage service and marriage became understood as a sacrament of the Church.

In the Protestant Reformation however, Martin Luther called marriage a “worldly business” and sought to clarify the role of the church and the government in the matter, writing *A Marriage Booklet for Simple Pastors, 1531*, while John Calvin questioned the theology of marriage as a sacrament. Calvin’s reasoning is unusual, preferring to call marriage an institution of God and a holy ordinance by noting that shaving, agriculture, architecture, and shoemaking are ordinances but not sacraments (*Institutes of Religion, Book IV, Chapter XIX*). Though the Catholic Church solidified its position at the Council of Trent (1563) requiring marriages before a priest and two witnesses, after the French Revolution (1792) most of Europe granted authority to marry to civil officials. A religious ceremony could follow.

Second, I understand marriage as a covenant relationship, meaning a commitment between two people who have asked God to be lead partner in a life-long relationship of love and faithfulness. The marriage vows we traditionally hear in a wedding service have roots in the story of Naomi and Ruth. After the death of her husband and her two sons, Naomi decides to return to her homeland but releases her two daughters in law from any obligation to go with her. Orpah accepts the offer, but Ruth responds with these words: *Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you, where you go I will go, where you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your god my God. Where you die, I will die (Ruth 1:16-17)*. Those words have become a model for what it means when two people choose to commit their lives to the welfare of each other. Though not a vow of marriage, it is a covenant made in the heart, sealed in the mind, and kept in deed.

People are not of one mind on the definition of marriage; which is really not surprising given it has a long, fluid, and

interesting history. Personally, I have found it to be a means of grace in my life, a commitment of love and faithfulness between myself and Patti and God. Ours was not an arranged marriage, it was not based on economics, protecting family property, preserving cultural identity, or procreation, nor do we have other wives, husbands or concubines. We were granted married status by the State of Tennessee and we chose to publically declare our vows in a religious service officiated by an ordained United Methodist Elder.

It is an honor for me to be able to officiate at wedding services, a privilege to be witness to couples giving their lives to each other in marriage, and a sublime experience to offer blessing to covenant love in the name of the Church. I stand near as couples exchange vows and have a close perspective of the joy and meaning that flows when they are offered and received. Authentic covenant love is a beautiful thing.

Peter van Eys

Missions

Youth Fundraiser



Join Us At Spirit Night!

Stop by and present a form
(available at the church) at

Chick-fil-A at Brentwood

on Thursday, June 14

from 5-8pm

and the CrieveWood UMC Youth Group
will receive a donation
from your purchase for
CrieveWood UMC Youth Missions

Dirty Car?

The Youth will be doing a Car Wash on Saturday, June 23rd, 8am-12, at Advance Auto Parts (4851 NOLENSVILLE ROAD) across from ThriftSmart. Please come out and get your car washed as all donations will go towards youth missions.

Carmel Corn

Charlie's Homemade Carmel Corn will again be available in the narthex on Sunday, June 17, just in time for Father's Day. To enjoy this treat just donate to youth missions. The honor system will be in place. This will be the last chance for caramel corn until fall.

AIM Fall Trip to Mountain T.O.P.

Make your plans now to be part of the CUMC fall mission trip to Mountain Top. The dates are October 18th through 21st. We will work hard fulfilling the physical and spiritual needs of the residents of the Cumberland Mountains, enjoy good food and Christian fellowship, and feel the real presence of our Lord and Savior as we serve and praise Him. For more information call Joe Buffler at 615-351-0601.

UMW Request

The UMW wants to remind everyone that we will be hosting our annual book sale on Sunday, July 8, the same day as our salad luncheon. WE NEED YOUR HELP! Please save your used books to add to our sale. We want gently used books, CD's, and DVDs. Books for all ages (children included) are needed. We cannot use encyclopedias, video cassettes, or magazines. Start now to collect and put your items in piles in a corner at home or in a closet, then bring them to the church any time

during the week of July 2 when we can then put them in the youth room downstairs. Thank you in advance for your donations. And don't forget to mark your calendar for July 8, your chance to enjoy one of the biggest salad bars that Nashville offers!

Habitat Build

Crievewood is supporting the Methodist Habitat Build this year with both service and money. Our money commitment is met. If you would like to participate in the actual build on Saturday, September 15, please contact Joe Buffler at 615-351-0601.

Beersheba, 2012

Frequently Asked Questions

When? The weekend of August 17-19, 2012 with REGISTRATION DEADLINE on **June 19, 2012**.

Who? Families and individuals looking for fun, good food, and time together in a relaxing, mountain atmosphere.

Registration? Forms are available in the narthex.

Options?

Option 1: Drive up Friday night, spend the day on Saturday, and come home Saturday evening after dinner. (One Night, plus 4 meals)

Option 2: Drive up Saturday morning, spend the day on Saturday, and come home Saturday evening after dinner. (No hotel nights—just cost of meals)

Option 3: Drive up Saturday morning, spend the day on Saturday, sleep over, have breakfast, and come home Sunday mid-morning. (One Night, plus 4 meals)

Option 4: Drive up Friday night, spend TWO nights, and come home Sunday morning after breakfast. (Two Nights, plus 5 meals)

Why so many options?

In order to offer various pricing for families, we have again offered a one or two-night option.

Ocoee Rafting?

This adventure will require a separate registration and fees. If interested, please sign the interest form in the narthex and/or contact the office at 615.832.2897, and ask Jan to add you to the list. Once we have a number of participants, we will finalize times and cost. This trip will take place on Saturday AFTER breakfast at Beersheba. Our plan would be to return in time for dinner at Beersheba.

What about the kids and rafting?

If parents would like to raft, we will happily provide child care. Please indicate ages and how many children on the form in the narthex.

Other Questions?

Please contact Leigh Ann Cate at lac723@comcast.net or 615.833.4528.

Softball

The softball team plays on Friday, June 15th at 6:15 p.m. and 7:20 p.m. at Paragon Mills Park and on June 22 at 6:15 p.m. and 7:20 p.m. If you haven't signed up yet, there is still time. We would also love to have fans to come out and support our team! Contact Stephanie if you need more information.

Joy Club

The popular mystery lunches return this summer. The first mystery lunch will be on Thursday, June 28. The clue for the June destination is "everything should come up roses." Participants should be at the church by 10:15 a.m. Please bring money for lunch and \$2 for the bus. Also, if you have not registered with Jean McCurdy, please do so immediately so that adequate transportation can be arranged.

Dorothy Cortner Boone Scholarship Recipients

The Dorothy Cortner Boone Scholarship Committee congratulates the following recipients of this year's award: Allie Arnette, David Roos, and William Tucker. Good luck, and we wish you well as you continue your studies in college.

Children's Corner



VBS: Welcome to Babylon

Dates: June 18-22

Times: 5:45-8:00 p.m.

Daniel was way more than the guy who survived a den of hungry lions! Travel back to Babylon and join Daniel who was torn from his home and forced into the king's service. Imagine the pressure of learning a new language and culture and the shock of discovering your best friends have been tossed into a fiery furnace. Explore exotic sights and smells in a Babylonian bazaar!

Would you like to visit Babylon and meet Daniel and his friends?

Register for VBS: Welcome to Babylon

Just go online to this address:

<https://www.groupvbspro.com/vbs/hl/Crievewoodumc>

or visit the Crievewood UMC website at www.crievewoodumc.org

Bluegrass and Pancakes

Come join your Crieve Hall Neighbors in raising support for Music City Honor Flight serving WW2 veterans. Enjoy hot pancakes and a live bluegrass band (led by Buddy Greene), for \$5 a person or \$20 a family, on Saturday June 23rd from 8-11 a.m. at Crievewood United Methodist Church. Please bring a blanket or a chair with you as seating is limited.