

The Messenger

Crievewood United Methodist Church

October 3, 2012

Pastor's Pen

Charge Conference Report

Dr. J. Peter van Eys

Reggie Jackson told us, "A baseball swing is a very finely tuned instrument. It is repetition, and more repetition, then a little more after that." With Middle Tennessee still aglow from the Little League World Series, Major League Baseball heading into post-season play and Crievewood United Methodist Church deep into a Capital Campaign, repetition and baseball are prominent backdrops to our gathering today. Indeed, there is not much I can report in this setting that is not already being stated as many ways, as many times, and by as many people as we can muster. But then that is the beauty of the moment; repetition in motion.

Over the past decade members of this congregation have dreamed, studied, prayed, and imagined renovated property, new construction, and expanded ministry. Two years ago we entered into conversation with an architect, and our vision was given expression through drawings, repeatedly fine tuned through our feedback. This past year we held a Church Conference and voted for both a renovation and expansion project and a Capital Campaign to fund the scope of work. What had been consistently expressed as need in order for us to be faithful to God's purpose for Crievewood UMC is now before us as another opportunity to follow God's lead.

Muhammad Ali noted, "It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen". Clearly meetings happened, professionals were hired, concept renderings are on display, and money will be required, but the more important markers of this season for Crievewood are found in the integers of that equation - affirmation, belief, and conviction.

We find ourselves as a congregation in the enviable position of having charter and longstanding members who provide a robust institutional memory. The affirmations of what this church has meant to individuals and families for over half a century are a living witness regularly shared. Coupled with that is the demographic reality of a neighborhood in transition, as young adults and young families with children move into Crieve Hall. It is no secret that the birth of a child and the call of parenting are key motivations for folks to be (or become) active in a faith community. That affirmation of the ministry of the Church is a blessing that Crievewood currently experiences over and over, and should expect to increase.

In fact, we are in some ways repeating in present tense the story of our founding. Just as a group of faithful Christians first determined that this forming neighborhood was in need of a Methodist Church, and acted to establish one, so too do we realize that Crieve Hall is in a time of transition that calls for us to offer a fresh and renewed mission presence. To hear about the commitment and sacrifice of those who organized Crievewood Methodist Church, and the development of our property and buildings over several years, provides perspective on what it means for conviction to birth action. It is a humbling honor to be the ones God is calling today for the same purpose; to ensure a strong and vital "Methodist" congregation in this neighborhood, sharing the love of God and proclaiming the good news of Christ Jesus.

Like I prefaced, what I have to say in this Charge Conference Report is beautifully redundant, and with the ***It's About Time*** Capital Campaign entering its intensive phase this week, the message will echo with even greater intention. There is however on the horizon, a point at which excitement will take on new wings, the day renovation and expansion work actually begins. As the poet W. H. Auden observed, "The ear tends to be lazy, craves the familiar and is shocked by the unexpected; the eye, on the other hand, tends to be impatient, craves the novel and is bored by repetition". Because an elevator has taken on metaphorical meaning for the project, it provides illustration for the patience and determination of the faith community to see Crievewood UMC strengthen its present and future ministry. I have heard so many of our older members say they hope to live long enough to ride the new elevator; I can name some who expressed that desire and have since passed away. What a great joy is coming, when our eyes will see that which our ears have heard discussed for so long.

Before bringing this report to a close, let me shift to offer a few other comments about Crieewood UMC. Positive signs include growth in membership, the number of visitors, and active lay leadership. We expanded our nursery space by creating a second room in order to separate infants and toddlers, had a large Confirmation Class that has now matriculated into our Youth Group, and had an intergenerational team of 20 go to the Bahamas to work for the Methodist Habitat ministry there. We added a Sunday School Class that caused us to reclaim a room we had given to an outside group, even as we expanded the ways our property is used by neighborhood organizations. Significantly, our 2011 Stewardship effort resulted in the 2012 Operating Budget being fully funded by financial commitments, and while I admit it is subjective, the general mood of the congregation is upbeat. I sense a people happy to be in covenant life together and a Holy Spirit confident in our love of God and neighbor.

There are some challenges both present and coming. Obviously the outcome of the Capital Campaign remains to be seen, whether the renovation and expansion plan will need to be scaled back or whether we need to seek God's guidance on how to use an excess of funds. However, some work will begin and with it will be a concurrent rise in enthusiasm and the immediate task of maintaining excellence in ongoing ministries and programs while a construction site. That will be particularly imperative with regard to our Child Care Center; the children and families served as well as its staff and teachers.

More globally, there are growing edges that must claim priority in the coming year. The desire to strengthen our nursery ministry, for both the children we know and those we have yet to meet, has brought with it growing pains. One of the sublime gifts we have to offer children at Crieewood is a loving, intimate, intergenerational community that delights to see them and care for them, and we certainly do not want to lose that dimension to more formal policies and procedures. And yet, we have rightly chosen to live into a Safe Sanctuary policy that requires some change to how we have operated in the past. Another growing edge is in our youth ministry where the numbers have increased to the point that group dynamics are much different than from just a few years ago. We are seeing the pendulum swing, having moved many years ago from a Jr. High/Sr. High split to one large group and now back to a hybrid of large group and small group programming. With this wonderful reality comes need for more volunteers and more space. Finally, we need a more concerted, structured plan for the welcome of and follow-up with visitors, such as evangelism teams. We are fortunate that people living in Crieve Hall mingle and know their neighbors, providing old-fashion opportunities for extending invitations to come join us at Crieewood UMC, but we must pay attention to the realities shaping church growth in 2012 and beyond, such as our internet presence, use of social media, and clarity of purpose.

It bears repeating that this truly is an exciting time to be among the body of Christ that gathers at Crieewood; I am aware of the good fortune provided me by the appointment system. By every vital statistic we are a healthy congregation, and the sense is that we are on the same page with each other and determined to be a finely tuned instrument for God's Kingdom. The poet philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge divided the mind into two distinct faculties, imagination and fancy; the first creative and the second rote. He understood there to be primary and secondary imagination, with primary being our ability to perceive "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am". At the risk of oversimplifying Coleridge, I hear in his writing a description of our life here at Crieewood where the ancient story of God's people is rehearsed weekly, where gratitude for those who established this congregation is expressed regularly, and where our embrace of a particular future is affirmed almost daily; precisely because we are repeating that which is sublime and eternal.

Up-Coming Events

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One Worship Service

Please mark your calendar to show that on Sunday, October 7, the Capital Campaign Kick-off, there will be **one worship service at 10:00 a.m.** Sunday School will begin at 9:00 a.m. The Capital Kick-off luncheon follows worship. Please join us for an exciting day!

Blessing of the Animals

There will be a short service on Sunday, October 7, at 5:00 p.m. to bless our animals and pets. Please assemble on the church grounds to the west of Fellowship Hall.

Retirement Celebration for Cherie White



You are invited to a gathering of persons from Cheri White's ten supporting churches, friends, and family to celebrate her life ministry and work on **October 20, 2012, from 3-5 p.m. at Crieewood UMC** in Fellowship Hall.

Please RSVP if you would like to attend as the planners need a count to prepare properly.

RSVP by October 12 to Ruth Moore by email or phone at jlmoore@bellsouth.net or 615-646-0850 or to Cyndy Goodrich at cynygoodrich@aol.com or 615-496-1734.

Missions

Community Care Fellowship

Community Care Fellowship is in need of all sizes of men's undershirts and is greatly appreciative of those delivered last month. Crieewood's T-shirt total for September was 37. Thanks to everyone who contributed. The next T-Sunday will be November 4. If you have any donation, please leave it on the table at the top of the stairwell off the narthex.

Thank You from the AIM Volunteers

The CUMC adult members who will go to Mountain Top in October would like to thank everyone who has supported the mission trip by making contributions and attending the spaghetti lunch fundraiser. Please continue to lift and strengthen their mission trip through your prayer.

Jesus Closet

This is the 6th year that Crieewood has partnered with Nolensville UMC in their Jesus Closet project. Jesus Closet will take place on November 17th at their church in Nolensville. This project provides clothes and toys for Christmas to the needy of the Hispanic community in South Nashville and Nolensville .

They are currently in need of:

New and gently used toys

New or gently used coats-sizes infant through junior. **Coats are particularly needed.**

New and gently used Winter clothes—Infant through junior

Used but working electronics

You can sponsor a child with a \$25 contribution or a family for \$75. Contributions (money or items) should be turned in by the end of October.

Volunteers are needed to sort and set up Thursday and Friday the 15th & 16th of November and also to work on the 17th.

If you have items that you would like to contribute please call Jennifer Bizwell at 832-6121 or 749-6431. Checks should be made out to Nolensville UMC. They can be mailed directly to Nolensville UMC or given to Jennifer.

Capital Campaign

Capital Campaign Prayer Vigil

As God's people, we want to be in prayer for our world, our church, and our up-coming programs. Prayer calendars for the month of October are available to you if you would like guidance in your prayer. If you have not already received one, you can pick up a calendar on the table in the narthex.

On **Wednesday, October 24**, there will be a special prayer vigil in the church sanctuary to seek God's blessing on the congregation and the up-coming renovation and expansion of the church building. The sanctuary will be open for the prayer vigil from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and people are invited to come and go as they wish during that time. There will be a printed booklet available as an aid, but the prayer vigil is self-directed.

Sunday School Capital Campaign Presentations

A Capital Campaign video presentation has been scheduled on Sunday, October 21 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. The video features interviews with various members of our congregation including youth and children, and others who are present will be encouraged to share their stories about how Crielwood UMC has enriched their lives. There will be four presentations given during the one hour class period with the following assignments:

- (1) Builders, Hilltop and New Creations will meet with Tandy Taylor in the Builders classroom.
- (2) Fellowship Forum, Wesley, and Young Spirits will meet with Dick Bickell in the Fellowship Forum classroom.
- (3) Searchers, New Journey, Coffee and Discipleship Class , and the Youth will meet with Jim Fuller in the Searchers classroom.
- (4) There will also be a presentation in the sanctuary for members who are not currently affiliated with a class.

Please plan to attend this important event as we prepare our hearts and minds to grow our church.

Wednesday Night Fellowship

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Our Wednesday Night Fellowship has these exciting October programs:

- Eileen Vaughan will lead participants in the continuation of a five-week book study for parents based on *The Blessing* by John Trent and Gary Smalley.
- Jim Strickland will present the remaining sessions of a three-week series on the life of Henri J. M. Nouwen, a Roman Catholic priest and popular Christian writer.
- The Children's Choirs will meet as usual each Wednesday. K-6th graders will gather in the choir room upstairs, and the Pre-school choir (ages 3-5, not yet in Kindergarten) will sing in Room # 109 downstairs.
- The Disciple program for Youth will continue.

WNF Menus

Wednesday, October 3 — Poppy-seed chicken casserole, rice, green beans, rolls, and dessert

Wednesday, October 10—Wacky Wednesday: eggs, pancakes, bacon or sausage, biscuits, grits, and cook's choice

Wednesday, October 17—Taco soup, tortilla chips, cheese quesadillas, green salad, and dessert

Music Matters

Military Photos Needed

The Music Team is collecting photos of anyone in the Crielwood family who has served in the military. The youth choir wants to honor all military service on Veterans Day, Sunday, November 11, in both worship services. You can help us do that. If you have a digital copy of your military photo, please email that copy to Robert Grubbs at ragrubbs@comcast.net. If you only have a hard copy of your photo, please bring it to the church office to have it scanned. Please label any photo so that it can be properly identified and can be returned. All photos should be sent to Robert or turned into the church office no later than Sunday, October 21, in order to be included in the Veterans Day service.



Fall Festival

**Saturday, October 27
4:00 p.m.**

It's ALL Free—Come and join the fun!

Volunteers Needed in the Nursery

Crievewood is blessed to have a thriving and growing congregation, and given the number of toddlers in our midst, we have opened a new infant nursery in the former children's library area. What we need now, in addition to our current nursery volunteers, are volunteer baby "rockers."

We are staffing the new nursery with TWO adults each week from hours are 8:15-11:45.

Please let Sheryl Roos or Leigh Ann Cate know you are willing to help.

Crievewood Child Care



Crievewood Child Care has once again qualified as a three star program! This is cause to celebrate and an occasion to express gratitude. It truly requires a team effort to provide such a high quality ministry, and we are blessed to have excellent teachers and staff, a dedicated Child Care Board, and invested church members. To be a 3 star program reflects year round commitment and a shared purpose to offer extraordinary care to the children and families we are privileged to serve.

Youth

Pumpkins Are Coming. . . .



Activities

UMW General Meeting and Brunch

The annual UMW fall meeting will be a brunch on Saturday, October 6, from 9:00-11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. All women are invited. We will begin the morning with one of our delicious meals with a program to follow. This year our speaker will be Rev. Andrew Fiser who will speak to us about the neighborhood ministries at Edgehill United Methodist Church. The Reverend Fiser is co-pastor after completing a 3-year Turner Internship at the church. He has spoken to our CUMM and comes highly recommended. You won't want to miss hearing him. Join us for a great morning of food, fellowship, and information. See you there.

Pick up a Good Book . . .

Fall is here and time to get busy with your UMW Reading Program. Plenty of good books are waiting on the shelves of the UMW bookcase in the Wesley Library to complete your yearend record. Enjoy!



Men's Breakfast

Gil Hanke, the top staff executive of the General Commission on United Methodist Men, will be a guest presenter at our October United Methodist Men's Club Breakfast. It should be a great chance to get a high level perspective on UMM happenings throughout our region, our country and throughout the world.

While he travels extensively, it is somewhat rare for Mr. Hanke to participate in local church UMM meetings. To this end, it would be great for us to have a good crowd on hand to showcase our group!

Please make plans to join us at **8:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 13**, for a wonderful breakfast, warming fellowship, and what is sure to be an informative program!

JOY Club

On **October 25** the JOY Club will travel to the home of Dave and Patty McIntyre for the JOY Club monthly gathering. Members should meet at the church at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday morning to catch the van and will arrive at their destination about 11:30 a.m. The cost for the van is \$3, and the cost of lunch is \$10.

If you plan to go on this outing, please give your check made out to Crieewood UMC to Jean McCurdy no later than October 19.