

Pastor's Pen

To be Wholly Committed

We have had a blessed year together as the Crievewood United Methodist Church faith community. I am grateful for each of you and the ties that bind us, one to another, in Christ Jesus. Consequently, I am eager for the new year and all that God would have us be and do in 2016. To be sure the turning from one calendar year to another may seem an arbitrary threshold for reflection and re-direction, nevertheless, it is an established pattern in our culture and a helpful exercise in life.

It is also in our DNA. In 1775, John Wesley introduced a Covenant Service to the Methodist Societies, which came to be used on, or a Sunday close to, January 1st. It was an annual renewal service in which folks would rededicate themselves wholly to God. Imagine us all doing that!

We will soon move into the liturgical season of Epiphany and revisit the story of Jesus calling the disciples, individuals who exchanged their known life for the unknown life that following Jesus would bring. Hearing those scripture texts again will help us reflect on how God calls us. Though there is no indication that the disciples hesitated, to follow Jesus is a profound, life-changing decision to make. It is not quite so tidy in our own lives when we weigh following Jesus to all of life's options, when we calculate the cost of time, energy, and resources. This is a monumental decision that demands thought and conviction and, here's the kicker as Wesley understood, being wholly in.

Robert Frost wrote a poem that I think captures the very real angst that we experience when choosing our way in life.

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as long as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the road less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

The poem highlights the inner conflicts that must be worked through when making decisions, and the value of choosing well. I believe following Christ is a major decision, and frankly, to truly and wholly do so is the road less traveled; I further believe it will make all the difference.

Up-Coming Events

Youth Group Alumni Night

All youth group alumni and college students are invited to join the youth group for a movie night on **January 3**, 5-7 p.m.

Wednesday Night Live

All Wednesday Night Live programs, including children's choir, will start fresh for 2016 on January 13.

Menu will be announced later. Standing reservations from the fall will carry over, and if you would like to be added to or removed from the list, please contact Jan in the church office.

Please Note: Our meal start time in the spring session will be **5:35 p.m.**

Missions

Our Sister Church in Estonia

In the upcoming weeks you will become acquainted with our new sister church in Estonia. Our sister congregation in Rapina, Estonia, has sent us Christmas greetings and pictures of their church family which will be posted soon on our PowerPoint display in the narthex. Below is a note that accompanied them.

Dear Peter and your congregation!

We are happy and blessed, because God is awesome and everywhere!

Thank you for being a part of our story of life.

May God bless you abundantly!

In His Love and Mercy

Ele and Tanel

Benjamin and Daniel

Room in the Inn

Criewood has partnered with Room in the Inn this year to provide meals and shelter to Nashville's homeless. We will host six men every Wednesday night in January. Volunteers are needed as drivers, innkeepers, cooks, and clean-up crew. A sign-up poster is located in the narthex if you would like to help.

We also need prayer for the ministry and for the individuals whom we will be hosting. The Men's group and the Mission Ministry team hope to see our participation in the Room in the Inn ministry grow. You may call the church office for more information about how you can be involved.

Old Christmas Cards

If you wish to recycle old Christmas cards, the church will accept them to use in mission projects. Please give these cards directly to Nancy Rosdeutscher. There is no receptacle for them in the church building.

Altar Flowers

If you would like to celebrate God's grace in your life and enhance Sunday worship, consider donating flowers for the altar. The altar flower calendar for 2016 is posted in the church office near the pastor's office door. If you would like to offer the gift of altar flowers, just sign the chart for your selected week or call the church office.

Activities

Men's Breakfast

The next meeting of the United Methodist Men will be on Saturday, **January 9**, at 8:00 a.m. After the traditional breakfast Molly Martin will speak about the *Contributor* newspaper.

JOY Club

On **January 28** Joy Club will meet at the church at 10:00 a.m. and travel to Mt. Juliet to visit NOAA, the national weather service. There will be a one hour tour starting at 11:00 a.m. which includes demos of the equipment used by the service. The tour is followed by a seated program. Lunch is after the program at Golden Coral. This activity is open to all members of the Creevewood family.

Chili Cook-off



Mark your calendars and dust off your chili recipes for our Chili Cook-Off, January 24, immediately following the traditional service.

For questions or to volunteer to help with set-up, taking in food, or clean-up, contact Family Ministries Team Chair, Kathryn Buffler, at 615.598.5998.

Children's Corner

Confirmation Class

Please be in prayer for our Confirmation class, nine students in the 6th and 7th grades led by Patti van Eys, which kicks off later in January.

Nursery

January 3
January 10
January 17

1st Shift

Tom and Becky Freck
Tracey and Jillian Lee
Chris and Kelly Cates

2nd Shift

Tom and Becky Freck
Bill and Nina Tucker
Blake and Craig Leyers

Child Care Center News

Our first "Big Red Bus" caroling trip was great fun. The bus was decked out with bows, wreaths, and lights, and about 50 people (youth, children, child care and church families, seniors) boarded the bus to bring musical cheer to some of our Creevewood families. Thanks to Kathryn Buffler for the delicious chili supper as we wrapped up our evening. Make plans now to include this event in your holiday traditions in 2016!

Openings and Summer Camp-

We currently have two openings in our school-age program.

Summer Camp registration will begin in early March so watch for more information regarding available spots and registration packets.

HELP WANTED!

It has been great having some of our college students helping over Winter Break, but we still need permanent afternoon help. If you know of anyone who loves children, art, games, and needs some extra cash, hours are M-F between 2:00 and 6:00 (hours can be somewhat flexible). Please share this message, and have potential caregivers contact Sharon at 615-834-7255.

Looking forward to a fun-filled 2016!

Sharon Ferrell

Other Items

Boxed Offering Envelopes

2016 offering envelopes for those who requested them are located on a table in the hospitality center in the educational hallway upstairs. If you would like offering envelopes and you do not find a box with your name on the table, please contact the church office.

Weather Reminder

The church's weather policy follows the Davidson County School's schedule. If Metro schools are closed for inclement weather, all church activities scheduled that day are also canceled.