

## Pastor's Pen

### From the Heart of God

After 37 years of bearing some responsibility for the stewardship life of congregations, I have stories to tell and thoughts to share. I was not a month into serving a church when a member came to give me advice and insight, among which was this statement, "If you only want us to tithe then preach on stewardship." I had to think about that a bit but the key word was only. In that faith community most members were already giving beyond the biblical standard of a tithe and she did not want me to mess that up with my preaching. She had already heard me preach a few times.

At another church there was an elderly woman who lived modestly. By appearances she was poor; an old trailer in the country her home, no car, and she wore the same dress to church each week. Yet, every Sunday she gave me an envelope with cash in it saying "It is for God and I don't want any credit for it." She did not have a bank account and I am sure the rest of the congregation had no idea what a faithful giver she was to the church.

At still another church, I listened as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader gave a testimony in worship that she was going to give up her daily soft drink for a year and give that money to the church building fund. Needless to say, her sacrifice set the tone for a successful campaign.

I have encountered members so steeped in being a Methodist (this is plural because it happened in more than one church) that they would come to see me the last few days of the calendar year to ask if the apportionments were fully paid. If there was a shortfall they took out their checkbook and paid the balance.

And maybe the most spiritually instructive experience I have had regarding stewardship was by a man who had become estranged from the congregation. Something happened many years prior to my appointment that had been devastating for him professionally. The congregation and pastor did not provide the support he expected and needed, causing hurt feelings and his decision to stay home on Sundays. He was still a member and I called on him often. My pastor's heart hoped to lead him and the congregation to reconciliation; it did not happen in my time there, if it ever did. Yet, he was incredibly generous with his financial gifts, telling me he was upset with the members not God. In fact he loved his church.

I could go on, but from just these anecdotes I have seen how sacrifice inspires giving, how communities and denominations form givers, and how giving to God is what it is all about. And God knows, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21) I remain excited to be in ministry here at Crievewood and I give thanks for your financial gifts to God through this church. Our stewardship together makes possible the mission and ministry that flows within and through Crievewood.

I want to thank all who have sent in 2017 commitment cards, the commitment to Crievewood has been deep. In this season of Advent we prepare to hear again the marvelous story of incarnate love gifted to the world through the birth of Jesus Christ; reminding us that giving flows from the heart of God. Let it flow mightily through us.

Peter van Eys

# Up-coming Events

## Parents' Night Out Fundraiser

The Youth will host a Parents' Night Out on **December 2** from 6-9 p.m. Drop the kids off at the church for games, crafts, dinner, and a movie while you go out for dinner, shop, or just get some rest. The Youth are asking for a donation to the youth ministry in exchange for this night of childcare. Please reserve your spot with Leigh Ann Cate if you plan to participate.

## Cool Yule

Our last WNL program for this fall session will be **Cool Yule** at 6:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, December 7**. Expect a fun night of Christmas favorites. To help the festivity along, please bring a dessert to share.

Cool Yule will follow a holiday supper at the regular scheduled WNL dinner time of 5:30 p.m. Dinner features two famous soup makers. After a cup of delicious hot cider, enjoy the savory taste of John Jetton's vegetarian beef soup and Chris Carter's potato soup, both served with cornbread. The dinner is free, a holiday gift, but please make a reservation with Jan if you plan on coming so there is an accurate head count. If you have a standing WNL reservation, let us know only if you will NOT be attending.

## Caroling in Crieve Hall

Join us Sunday, **December 11** at 3:50 p.m. on the front steps of the church as we load the "Big Red Bus" and head out into the Crieve Hall neighborhood for caroling. Singers are invited back to the church for a chili supper immediately following caroling.



## Lesson and Carols

The Chancel Choir will share a musical gift on Sunday, **December 18**, at the traditional service as the choir presents *Lessons and Carols*. Please plan to attend this special Christmas worship.

# Missions

## Christmas Poinsettias

This year the Worship Committee is modifying the way we honor our loved ones through the flower offering at Christmas. The committee would still like to decorate the sanctuary with white poinsettias, but would purchase only plants that people wish to take home by Christmas day. A second way to honor a loved one or friend would be to simply give a money donation. All flower gifts honoring and remembering loved ones and all monetary gifts would still be printed in the bulletin on Christmas Eve in the traditional fashion.

The Christmas flower envelopes will be used for BOTH ways of giving. At the top of the envelope there will be a stamped line "Plant Yes No". Please circle "Yes" if you want a plant to take home or "No" if you simply wish to make a monetary donation.

If you want a plant, the cost is a minimum of \$12 per plant. The amount of a Christmas monetary donation is up to you. Any Christmas memorial money collected will be applied to the church budget. Deadline to place an order either way and still get it in the bulletin is December 11.

## Room in the Inn

Criewood will be expanding the Room in the Inn mission this winter by hosting two Friday nights a month beginning December 16<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are needed to perform a number of tasks. If you wish to help, please contact Joe Buffler or Charlotte Swor.

## **Backpack Snacks for Norman Binkley**

The Searchers Class would like your help. They are collecting items to assemble in food packs for children with need at Norman Binkley Elementary School so that the food packs will be available to the children over the holiday school break. A complete list of what is needed is on the PowerPoint slide show. Please bring any donations to the Searchers' classroom.

## **Open Table Nashville**

Winter is coming and the homeless population in our community needs help. This year, CUMC will be gathering items for winter survival kits to be handed out to the homeless. Beginning **November 27<sup>th</sup>**, a Giving Box will be located in the narthex to receive your donations. These are some of the items that are needed: emergency blankets; warm sleeping bags (preferably rated 10° or lower), tarps (8 x 10 or larger), tents, hand and foot warmers; warm socks; warm gloves; high protein snacks; and water. Items will be delivered to Open Table Nashville the week of December 11<sup>th</sup>.

## **TP Sunday**

Please bring toilet paper, any size package, on **December 4**, the next TP Sunday. Toilet tissue packages may be left in the narthex. They will be delivered to Community Care Fellowship where they will be used by the homeless community of Nashville.

# **Activities**

## **WNL**

Our last Wednesday Night Live for 2016 will be "Cool Yule" on December 7. WNL will resume on March 1, 2017, with our Ash Wednesday Service.

## **CUMC Music**

The Chancel Choir will practice at 7:10 p.m. on November 30 and on December 7 after Cool Yule. The Gathering band usually gathers on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. The Children's Choir meets on November 30 at 6:15 p.m. And the Hand Bell Choir will meet Sunday, December 4, at noon to prepare for Christmas Eve.

## **JOY Club**

On **December 8** Joy Club will gather at the church and travel (car pool) to Monell's on Murfreesboro Road for lunch. The restaurant does not take reservations so members must arrive as a group. The car pool will leave the church at 11 a.m. and return to the church afterwards. Be sure to make a reservation with Jean McCurdy by December 4 so that planning is efficient.

## **Men's Breakfast**

The next Men's Breakfast is on Saturday, **December 10**, at 8:00 a.m. This meeting features a Christmas breakfast with country ham. Always a favorite, a breakfast that you do not want to miss. Joe Buffler will bring his slide show of the Mountain Top projects that were completed this fall and speak about the mission trip.

## **UMW General Meeting**

The Creevewood United Methodist Women will be meeting on Saturday, **December 3, 2016**, at 9:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. The women will have light refreshments, a short program, business meeting, and singing of Christmas hymns. Come join this wonderful group of ladies for a fun morning of fellowship. Also, check us out on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/CreevewoodUnitedMethodistWomen](http://www.facebook.com/CreevewoodUnitedMethodistWomen)

## Advent Bible Study

The Tuesday Bible Study invites you to join them for a five week Advent Bible study from author James Moore entitled *All I Want for Christmas* which explores how we can open the gifts of God's grace. The group meets at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesdays.

## Special Holiday Schedule

<b>Christmas Eve Worship</b>	<b>Saturday, December 24, 5:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Christmas Day Worship</b>	<b>Sunday, December 25</b> <b>One Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.</b> Refreshments at 9:30 a.m. No Children's Sunday School or Children's Church; Adult Sunday School Optional
<b>New Year's Day Worship</b>	<b>Sunday, January 1</b> <b>One Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.</b> Refreshments at 9:30 a.m. No Children's Sunday School; Adult Sunday School Optional

## Children's Corner

### Nursery Schedule

	<b>1st Shift</b>	<b>2nd Shift</b>
December 4	Bill and Nina Tucker	Sheryl Roos and Bekah Cates
December 11	Kim Boyce and Adele White	Kim and Glynnis Boyce
December 18	Bob and Mary Bryan	Blake and Rachel Leyers

### WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS...

As 2016 is drawing to a close, our Crieveewood Kids and their families would like to publicly say "thank you" to our full-time, year-round Sunday school teachers. These adults give week after week, and we are so grateful that this is the means through which they choose to serve God and the church at Crieveewood! Daphne and Steve Hardison, Eileen Vaughan and Anna Sitter, Mary and Steve Curry, Dick and Sara Bickell, and Sharon Ferrell...we appreciate you!

### Children's Church 2017 Schedule

We have opened up our 2017 volunteer schedule at the following link:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0d44a8a82bab9-childrens1>

Please contact Leigh Ann Cate with questions, and note there are three available Sundays in January. What an awesome opportunity to serve the Crieveewood Kids!

### Child Care News

What a joyful time of the year! Our halls are filled with singing, decorating, and anticipating the birth of Jesus!

To celebrate, we will be having our annual **Christmas Program on December 8, at 4:30 p.m.** where even our youngest (2 year-olds) will participate. We are grateful for Ms. Charlotte as she continues to work with both our classes of preschoolers in preparing their musical selections for the program.

**CHRISTMAS WISH LIST:** kid-size party dresses, suit coats, tutus, high heels, shoes, scarves, and uniform shirts.

Our staff is filled with gratitude and so thankful for allowing us to serve as an outreach and ministry of CUMC. It is our pleasure!