Beginning with Scott and Annette Morrow in 1982 right through Cara Soukup and Chris Kearney last Saturday, one of the great thrills of my ministry has been to officiate at the Christian wedding. Now, in the “fourth quarter” of my ministry, with hundreds of ceremonies large and small, I am still excited to lead weddings.

Marion Methodist will be the site of a large handful of weddings between now and October, and as we pastors call it the “wedding season.” Each of our couples has completed our six-week marriage class led by Gregg and Becky Tallman or taken a class in the city where they reside, and endured three sessions with me. Throughout them we don’t work on “weddings” (we are pretty good at that) but work on “marriage,” an institution that has a high default rate, while at the same time brings the opportunity to express ourselves fully in a life-giving relationship.

This minimum of 9 sessions of preparation helps the couple put some tools in their marriage “toolbox” and of course are filled with loving conversations, a lot of laughs and some tears. Always, the result is growing the couple closer together with each other and with God.

Some years ago, as more and more folks were choosing not to get married, we began having the Summer Ministry Intern walk alongside the pastor in marriage preparation. Then, after the wedding we asked them to write a one-page paper entitled “Why marriage is important in my generation.” Here are three students’ thoughts:

I’m well aware of what marriage means or doesn’t mean to people in my generation and aware of the fact that it often doesn’t coincide with God’s purpose for it… I hope that in my own life I treat marriage in the way that God intended for us and I know that several of my peers still value marriage in this Christian way.

The main event in a Christian wedding is saying the vows. These vows are promises to God that you are committing to this relationship with this person; becoming one flesh. When we enter marriage the way that God designed for us, I believe that He will bless our marriage. These vows are our declaration to God that we will love this person through our marriage. I believe that when we honor God in our marriage, God will honor our marriages as well by making them fulfilling relationships.

Another wrote:

In my generation divorce and cohabitation is up while Christian marriage is down. The phrase, “for richer or for poorer” is used in every wedding I have witnessed. Today that phrase just means that you should try but if your partner is not making you happy, then you have a right to leave. My generation is seeing marriage lose its value. More emphasis is placed on the ceremony than the next 60 years together………..

The wedding ceremony in its purest form comes down to a celebration. A celebration of what God has done through Holy Matrimony and bringing together two and creating one flesh. The ceremony is a celebration of two families joining into one family. The most important celebration should be a celebration of the Glory of God.

Lastly a third wrote:

Though over the years the ceremony has evolved, it’s main purpose is still to celebrate a life long commitment to another. Marriage should be highly valued because it is the closest earthly reflection to what our relationship and commitment to God should look like. God should be the foundation upon which a marriage is built, the knot that holds it all together.

These are, of course, students that are involved deeply in their faith walk and they are children of their time. They state clearly that marriage is very important and their thoughts are part of the reason why the old preacher loves to roll over to the church for a Friday night rehearsal for which he needs no practice, wait 20 minutes on the one attendant who can’t find the church, laugh at all the traditions I have seen a hundred times, embrace the beauty and joy of families coming together for fun, fellowship and typically pretty good eats afterward.

Saturdays (or whatever the day the wedding is on) are pure joy. Hope and love fill the air. The “experienced” in each family, who serve as the marriage role models for the couples, look forward in greatest anticipation and everyone prays that God will bless the two who come to stand before him this day with all the best marriage can be.

Oh yeah – I love this season!

Pastor Mike
**Youth Mission Trip**
The 4:12 Student Ministry will be going to the Unite Work Camp on June 18-21 this summer! The students will be painting houses in the Clinton area. This is going to be a great opportunity for a service project for the students. For more information and registration form please go to [http://marionmethodist.org/learn/youth](http://marionmethodist.org/learn/youth)

For any questions please contact Kelsie DeReus kdereus@marionmethodist.org or 377-4856

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**4:12 Lock-In**
On May 17th, there will be a 4:12 Lock-in for 6th-12th grade students. This will start at 6:30 and end at 8:30 the next morning and will be at the church. There will be games, fellowship, worship, and an escape room! Please bring $10 for dinner and breakfast, sleeping needs, any snacks you want to eat through the weekend, dark clothes for night games outside, and any appropriate games to play. Find the form to sign up here: [http://marionmethodist.org/learn/youth](http://marionmethodist.org/learn/youth)

For any questions please contact Kelsie DeReus kdereus@marionmethodist.org or 377-4856

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**Registration is open**
Summer Games University is a Christian Summer Camp for students who have completed 6-12 grades. This one-week camp is an experiential, relationship-focused camp where students will have the opportunity to learn more about who Jesus is and build relationships with other Christian students.

July 8-12, 2019 at Grinnell College
Register at [www.sgu.camp](http://www.sgu.camp)

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**TV Broadcast**
Marion Methodist worship services are typically rebroadcast on Mediacom or ImOn Channel 4 at 7:00 PM on Monday evenings. There is a multaweek delay between when a sermon is preached and when it airs on TV.
Marion Methodist is Praying for:

Prayer is a powerful way of caring for each other in our Marion Methodist family. There are several avenues open to everyone – the prayer cards on Sunday morning and the prayer wall which is available 24/7, are two that are used most often. You can have a more active part in entering into prayer for each other. Check out the prayer wall frequently as prayers are submitted there often. Each time you visit, and pray for one of the requests found there, click the "I Prayed For This" tab; more prayers are always better.

As proms and graduation parties start to pop up, we pray for a time of joy and celebration to surround our youth and their families, and pray for the safety and well being of students through our metro area.

CPR/AED Training
The Safety team will be offering a CPR/AED course in May.

Date: May 11th
Time: 7:30 am - Noon
Location: Marion Methodist Church
5050 REC Drive
Cost: FREE ($25 if you wish to obtain a card).

Class is open to 50 participants
(Registration Required)

Register at MarionMethodist.org/CPR

Watch LIVE at 10:15 AM
Go to our YouTube channel or
online at MarionMethodist.org/watch-live

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