

# First Presbyterian Church of Glidden

November/December 2017



Around the time of Jesus, weddings looked somewhat different than they do today. They began with a negotiation. Usually, the fathers of the bride and groom would arrange the marriage themselves and then inform their children of who their future spouse would be. Often, the bride and the groom had veto power over a match they didn't like, but most of the time your spouse was picked for you. This agreement is the betrothal.

A couple that is betrothed to each other is sort-of already married. They're legally married, but they live in separate homes. The expectations of marriage are placed on the couple but they're still waiting for the marriage to truly begin. And after the betrothal is finalized, the groom and his father return to their home so that they can "prepare a place" for the new wife to live.

This is what Jesus is talking about when he's talking to his disciples in John 14. Jesus says, "In My Father's house there are many rooms... and I go to prepare a place for you. And soon I will come back and take you to be with me." This statement can be interpreted as a betrothal promise. It is what the groom says before he leaves to get his home ready for the bride.

In fact, Jesus uses this image several times in the Gospels. He often calls himself "the bridegroom." He tells a parable about bridesmaids waiting for the groom to return. He constantly tells his followers to watch and wait for him, to be prepared when he comes back. Jesus talks to his followers like they are an expectant bride, waiting for the groom to finish his preparations.

But during this time, they're already married. They've already finalized the deal. During the time of waiting, the bride isn't free to do whatever she wants or to make different arrangements – she is betrothed. But the same applies to the groom. He will return. He must return. This is not the sort of promise that a person backs out of. It is surest promise that Jesus can make to his followers: "I will return, just like the bridegroom always does."

And when the groom does return, that's when the party begins. They have a huge celebration at the bride's home, full of friends and family and neighbors – and then, after a few days, they take the party on the road and celebrate as they travel to the couple's new home.

Weddings involve a lot of waiting, but no one is waiting idle. There are endless preparations to be made. And I can tell you that with less than a month to go until my wedding date, we're nowhere close to ready. There is still so much to do. But the wedding will happen, even if we're not ready – even if we forget some minor (or major) details. In a way, it already began when Abby and I made our original promises to each other. And that's what faith is. It is the recognition that love comes before the celebration. I know that even if everything else falls apart, both of us will still say, "I do" on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017.

And that's the sort of promise that God makes to us. The betrothal is set. The wedding is coming. There may still be preparations to be made, but nothing can stop the day from coming. And – just so you know – my wedding is also coming. December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, at 3:00pm at the church. You're invited! And I can't wait to celebrate with everyone.

Blessings,  
Pastor Brian

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## Where are they now?

Our journey this month lead us to the home of Janel Conner Bihn and her husband Pat Bihn. They live at 9100 Highland Drive in Rock Island, Illinois. We connected by telephone for a great conversation.

We began the conversation with Janel recalling a little family history. Grandparents Tom and Alma Conner lived in rural Glidden and were long term member of First Presbyterian. Ralph and Laura Clipperton were the other set of Janel's grandparents and lived in Jefferson, Iowa. Janel's parents were Ralph and Norma Conner and were long time members of First Presbyterian.

Janel entered this world at St. Antony Hospital in Carroll on her mother's birthday. She joined her older brother Dennis Conner. They grew up as farm kids doing chores, working on the farm, attending church and spending the next few years attending Glidden-Ralston School beginning in kindergarten and graduating as seniors. A memory of Janel's was attending fourth grade in Ralston and riding the bus to and fro with her classmates. Miss Pagles was a welcoming teacher in fourth grade as was Mrs. Legore who taught Janel in kindergarten and again in third grade. Another elementary teacher that brought memories to Janel was Mrs. Hermansen, who in Janel's words was a sweet lady. During her elementary and Junior High years Janel took an interest in music and learned to play the flute and piano.

In 1967, Janel joined GR high school as a freshman and was a good student. She especially liked math subjects taught by Jan Boluyt and Dave Darling. Another subject that was high on her list was accounting courses taught by Jerry Mathine. Like her days in junior high, she played the flute in high school band along with singing in the mixed chorus, girls' chorus and playing the piano for the Swing Show. During her high school days, she also took organ lessons at Drake University. She played the organ during her junior and senior years of high school for the Presbyterian Church.



Janel graduated GR in the spring of 1971 and in the fall enrolled into Buena Vista University in Storm Lake where she studied many math courses. She received her B.A. degree in 1975. Sometime later she did graduate work at Rosemont College in Philadelphia, Pa. and received her Master's Degree in Computer Education.

Upon graduating from BV, Janel taught at Lawton-Bronson from 1975-1977. In 1977 she taught in the Grand Community School District for two year. For the next = year she taught in Underwood, Iowa. Through these years, Janel taught classes in General Math, Calculus and all courses in between. She also taught courses in secretarial skills and accounting.

Janel attended an Iowa State Education Association meeting where she met Pat Bihn. Pat was working for the ISEA and a courtship began. This young couple were married on June 21, 1980 at the First Presbyterian Church with Rev. Scott Burkley officiating. The rehearsal dinner was held at the church manse as they grilled steaks. For their honeymoon, Janel and Pat attended a National Education Association meeting in California. On their honeymoon, they pulled a pop-up camper as they traveled to California, Texas, Oklahoma and other states for thirty days. Once they returned home, Janel taught junior high math for two years in Coon Rapids. Pat continued his employment with the ISEA.

In 1982, Janel and Pat started their family with the birth of Leanne in September. Janel had taken a break from teaching and in December of 1984, Michael was born. Early on in Michael's young life they suspected he had hearing problems. By the time Michael was three or four the doctors had determined that the young man was autistic. He was examined by several specialists and the long term feedback was not good. The family rallied around Michael and through much effort from family, Michael graduated high school from Riverdale in Port Byron, Illinois. He lived with Janel & Pat until one day at 28 years of age he decided to move to his own condo. Michael has had a full time job for many years as he works on an assembly line. He is capable of driving his car, keeps his own house, plays the trumpet and plays in the Community Band. What a wonderful story and life.

We haven't forgotten about Leanne. She graduated from Iowa State University in Computer Engineering and has been employed at Rockwell Automation for thirteen years. She is married to Joe Fernandez and they live in Green, Ohio. After being told they probably wouldn't have any children, Leanne gave birth to twin girls on June 26, 2017. They were delivered six weeks early because of health problems. Paige weighed 2 lb. 15 oz. while Zoey weighed 2 lb. 8 oz. Janel said they are doing fine now as they are up to 9 pounds and very cute!

Janel didn't just sit around following the birth of their two children. She filled in as a substitute for the late Karen Ploeger for one semester. In 1985 she taught part time in Rock Island, Illinois and in 1989 she taught full time until she retired in 2008. She taught math, computer courses and was the Vocational Director. Pat retired in 2002 after teaching for seven years and being employed by the Illinois Education Association for 25 year. In 2012, Pat suffered a stroke but is doing well with only limited side effects.

Janel likes to quilt. Their quilting club makes quilts for veterans. She also enjoys reading, knitting and spending time with the twin grandchildren.

Pat and Janel have been members of the United Methodist Church for thirty years. They still remember their times at First Presbyterian. Janel recalls the pews her grandparents sat in. She recalls the father-son banquets and their Sunday drive after church to visit Grandpa and Grandma Clipperton in Jefferson.

Janel and Pat realize the many blessings they enjoy. They learned from Michael's autism how to be patient, show compassion and caring and these lessons carried over in their careers.

The Bihn's are now in the process of listing their home for sale as they wish to downsize to a condo. They plan on traveling the 500 miles to watch the grandchildren grow and do not wish to be required to return home to mow the grass and scoop snow.

It was delightful to make contact with Janel and Pat and recall old memories that we all cherish. We closed by wishing them and their entire family continued blessings and the best in life that God has to offer to each one of us.

## **Wedding Celebration!!**

You're invited to the wedding of Brian Camara and Abigail Stonner! December 3rd, 3:00pm at the First Presbyterian Church in Glidden

There will be a dessert reception in the church basement.



## **Thanksgiving Celebration!!**

Thanksgiving Sunday and potluck is on Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, after church

Bring a covered dish to share and table setting!



## **Anniversary Celebration!!**

Join us in celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of

*Bill and Elaine  
Crawford*

Open House from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.  
Sunday November 19, 2017

At the Odebolt Presbyterian  
Church

## November/December Birthdays and Anniversaries

### November

- 4<sup>th</sup>-Wayne and Shirley Seaman Anniversary
- 7<sup>th</sup>-Tyler Stidham
- 13<sup>th</sup>-Marion Junker
- 16<sup>th</sup>-Cooper Mueggenberg
- 19<sup>th</sup>-Blayce Nelson
- 19<sup>th</sup>-Bill and Elaine Crawford Anniversary
- 22<sup>nd</sup>-Zachary Mueggenberg

### December

- 1<sup>st</sup>-Lora Reever
- 3<sup>rd</sup>-Harry Reever
- 5<sup>th</sup>-Annette Douglas
- 6<sup>th</sup>-Larry DeVries
- 6<sup>th</sup>-Mandy Frazier Huff
- 10<sup>th</sup>-Shirley Seaman
- 12<sup>th</sup>-Bob Wagner
- 12<sup>th</sup>-Charlie Newman
- 13<sup>th</sup>-Tami Burdine
- 17<sup>th</sup>-Judy Reever
- 21<sup>st</sup>-Kirsten Stidham
- 28<sup>th</sup>-Lillian Draves
- 28<sup>th</sup>-Shelly Strahl
- 30<sup>th</sup>-Tim and Lora Reever Anniversary



## Announcements

-Sunday School meets on Sunday Mornings at 9:30am

-Adults at the United Methodist Church

-Children and Students at the Presbyterian Church

-Thanksgiving Sunday and potluck is on Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, after church

-Bring a covered dish to share and a table setting

-Pastor Brian and Abigail Stonner are getting married!

-The service will be on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at the church at 3:00pm **You are invited!**

The Special Offering for November and December is **Grocery Gift Certificates**

No family should ever go hungry during the holiday season, so we make sure that even the poorest people in Glidden have a little bit extra food for the holidays. Special offerings this month will go to purchase gift certificates to the Glidden Grocery, which will be distributed to anonymous low-income households in Glidden. This is one way that we truly love our neighbor.

### Volunteers Needed!!

The City of Glidden is starting a meal delivery program, and our church has been asked if we can help out. We are looking for four to five volunteers to deliver lunches one Tuesday a month (one volunteer for each Tuesday). It takes around thirty minutes to deliver meals to eight different homes in town. No money will be exchanged and, right now, we're only delivering when school is in session. If you're interested in helping, contact Suzy Danner or Pastor Brian.