



REACHING OUT
First Congregational Church of Berkshire, NY
State Route 38 & Glen Road
P.O. Box 196
Berkshire, NY 13736

Becoming One: What God Meant Marriage to Be

"Haven't you read," [Jesus] replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will **become one** flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." (Mt 19.4-6)

Ever have a problem with these verses? Does "becoming one" seem an impossible ideal? Starting on Saturday, September 24, we'll come to understand what God means when He says marriage is "becoming one." We'll use both psychology and the Bible to understand marriage more realistically and to find ways to grow more towards God's ideal.



We start with a full day Saturday to look at how our personalities differ. We use the Myers-Briggs

Type Indicator to discuss how our personalities matches up with each other. (No surprise: most of you won't match up all that well. But that's just what we'll talk about.) For this long day, we'll have snacks, lunch, and baby-sitting if you need somewhere to put your kids.

From there, we'll meet from 7-8 on the following Fridays (Sep 30 - Nov 4) to see what God says about key issues in marriage like "love is not enough" and "financing your marriage." We'll look at how God made us different so that He could create a couple that is more than the sum of its parts.

We're limiting this course to ten couples, so sign up early for a spot. There is a \$25 fee for the materials we'll use.

Reaching Out

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERKSHIRE, NY

Volume 31

September, 2011

Number 09

Why Should I Go To Church? by Pastor Chuck

Last month I talked about casual Christians: "believers" who don't become disciples. This month I take on the next major challenge I hear: "I don't need to go to church: I have my own relationship with God." The classic version of this line is "I feel closer to God on the golf course than in a church."

This approach, like that of the casual believer, shows a misunderstanding of what the Bible says. This first misunderstanding is a common one: people think "church" means a building (as in the "Red Brick Church"). You're not really at fault here: the Bible translators are. The Greek word that you see in English as "church" is *ἐκκλησία* (*ecclesia*). A better translation is "congregation." You see, the Greek word never means a building, but the people whom God has chosen and gathered together. You don't "go" to a church building, rather, you "become" part of a church family.

This leads to the next misunderstanding: that your relationship with God is purely personal. This reflects an American preference for individualism, but that is not what the Bible says. This time we cannot blame the translators, but the English language itself. You understand that "me" refers to one person while "us" means the group. But when I say "you," do I mean an individual or the group? From that one word, we cannot tell. In the Greek, however, *σὺ* means "you singular" and *ὑμεῖς* means "you plural." In the New Testament, most of the "you's" are *ὑμεῖς*. The Bible is written to the church family, not to individuals. We can see this in the very way that most epistles (letters) were written to churches, not individuals. Of the four

letters that did go to individuals (I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon), three were written to pastors giving them advice on how to *lead* their congregations.

In the New Testament, the "church" is called the "Body of Christ" (I Corinthians 12.27; Ephesians 4.12). Paul talks in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 about how the body has different members that must work together. You cannot be an "arm" if you are not linked to the rest of the Body. In fact, a part of the body that is cut off... dies.

All of the Bible's commands about "loving one another" (see John 13, for example) happens when we interact with each other. Hebrews 10.25 tells us: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another..." God wants us to come together as His children.

The final reason for being part of a congregation is based on this fact: the easiest person to lie to is yourself. God knows that we need brothers and sisters in Christ to help us grow and to keep us from those "comfortable" lies we tell ourselves about how good we are. We don't grow in Christ or serve Him as "lone-wolf" Christians. We may start out with the best intentions, but without the encouragement and building up of other Christians, we go off track or just stop thinking about God altogether. We need each other!

So the local congregation is God's blessing to His children. It builds us up and gives us the chance to serve Him. If you aren't going to a local congregation, try it out. See what you're missing.

CONTACT US: You can reach our church by sending an email to BCC_Secretary@yahoo.com or calling us at 657-2677.

For Pastor Chuck,
call 657-8058 or
email him at BCCPastorChuck@yahoo.com

Men in Ministry

Starting on Monday, September 12th, the M² will study Oswald Sanders' book, *Spiritual Leadership*. God has called on His men to be leaders in their homes, congregations, neighborhoods and

workplaces. *Christian* leadership is not the same as what we see in our culture. Join us for this study and have your own copy of this classic work. We meet on Monday nights at 7.

Heritage Sunday

Berkshire is have its Heritage Day on Sunday, September 11th. The Deacons have decided to cancel our Sunday morning activities and share in the 9 a.m. worship service at the Fire Station. It's early, but it will be a great kickoff to the day. Plan on joining the others of our congregation to share in this community worship service. (The Youth Band will be leading the Praise songs.)

We'll also have a booth for Heritage Day with things to give out telling about our congregation and where God is taking us. Would you be able to help with that? If so, contact Ede Adams (657-8231; edetrap@frontiernet.net).

September 18th: Our Sunday Changes

On September 18th, we go back to our fall schedule. That means Sunday school for both children and adults runs from 9:30 to 10:40 a.m. and worship starts at 11 a.m. And there are more changes on that day. First, we have **three** adult courses for you to choose from. Each will run for 8 weeks. They are:

- **The Congregational Way of Life** by Harold Rouser. We studied this book years ago, but it has even more significance as we prepare ourselves for a new pastor.
- **The Five Love Languages** by Gary Chapman. This is great advice for all your close relationships.
- **The Christian's Roles**. What does it mean to be a disciple, pilgrim, ambassador or steward? (It repeats the "applied" section of the *Christian Basics* course.) This course is great for anyone considering membership or just looking into what God wants of His people.

Our Youth Group also starts up this Sunday evening a 6 p.m.

Lessons and Activity sheets have been purchased and will be distributed to those that are scheduled to help about a month in advance of their scheduled dates. This should make it much easier for all of us. All materials can be photocopied so students can receive a worksheet and project for taking home. Helpers for Junior Church I have also been added. Many times the children need help cutting and pasting. It is rather difficult for one person to lead, read and supervise. It is hoped that getting some of the high school kids to participate will help them grow as well as learn about serving Christ and having fun doing it. (Some of them do not come to Sunday school, but do come to Church services).

Junior Church II will be handled as it has been in the past. Weekly sermons will be given to the volunteer and copies will be made available for each student to work with. If they are helping with Junior Church I, copies of Junior Church II lessons will be available for them to take home. This way they will not miss their 'grown up' lesson.

Nursery / Junior Church

Can you believe September is just around the corner? As some of you already know, I have been trying to get a schedule set up for helpers with Nursery, Junior Church I, and Junior Church II. I sent out a list with 'suggested' dates to those that have volunteered in the past and have received feedback from most of them.

It's okay to 'trade-a-date' among yourselves too. As always, if any of the volunteers listed below are unable to participate on the dates listed, please call Jackie Morris at 657-2536 or Church Secretary, Amanda Wait at 657-2677. Leave a message and replacements will be sought.

Jackie Morris

Statements of Faith

During our August communion, we received Tamara Payne and Amanda Wait into active membership. Both of these women have already been active in our congregation and were ready to take the next step in their walks with our Lord. Here are the statements of faith they shared with our Deacons.

Jesus is the Son of God and my savior. He died to give me life. When I pray I picture Him and me sitting down at a picnic in the grass and just chatting like best friends. One of those kinds of friends who listens but also tells you the truth even if it isn't what you 'hoped' to hear. I have no doubt that the man I picture when I talk to him is always there, and that knowledge gives me peace at just the right times.

This church family is just that to me, a family. I can count on them to lend an ear or to answer my sometimes silly questions. They are not judgmental and are always happy to see me. I'm ready to commit myself to this church.

Tami Payne

I believe God is the creator and maker of Heaven and earth and all things in the heaven and on the earth. He is the beginning and the end. He is Sovereign. I believe in the trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They have been one and the same since before creation, are One this present day, and forever will be One and the same. Jesus being the Son of God, sent to earth in the form of a baby, grew to be a man, and placed upon a cross to die for my sins as the final sacrifice. He defeated death, and rose three days later, providing us with eternal life upon accepting Him as our Savior.

The Holy Spirit is given to us to help us in our walk through life while on earth. The Holy Spirit comforts us, guides us, leads our conscience, leading us from making wrong choices when we are willing to listen. I believe God is the author of the Bible.

The Bible is the inspired Word of God, God-Breathed, Infallible. Given to us for wisdom, telling us how to live with one another, love one another, take care of one another, help one another, encourage one another, and witness to our friends and enemies. I believe that Jesus Christ is coming back for His Church, that we will spend eternity with Him. I believe in the existence of both Heaven and Hell. Heaven being the Paradise with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Hell being the lake of fire with Satan, whom Jesus will lock in there permanently one day after His return. Those believing in Christ will go to Heaven, those who don't will go to Hell.

Amanda Wait

Transition Team Report

August 25, 2011

The Transition Team has continued to meet twice a month. We have finished reviewing the survey's and have used this information in preparation for the documents needed in our search for a settled pastor. As we begin working through step five of the transition tasks, Pastor Chuck has been coaching us on how to achieve these tasks, although he himself is not taking part in these final steps. He has been teaching us what we need to do in preparing documents to send out in our search, and how to interpret correctly the information sent back to us from prospective candidates. He will not participate in these final steps as the choice for our new settled pastor (with God's leading) will be made by the church. It is up to us, the members of the 1st Congregational Church of Berkshire (again, with God's leading) to make that decision.

On August 25th, we met with the Constitution and By-laws Team for a final review of the proposed Constitution and By-laws. The Transition Team voted to endorse their proposal. We thank the Constitution and By-laws team for their dedication and faithfulness to Christ and this church, evidenced by the long hours and hard work that went into preparing this document.

As always, all of us on the TT are open to any questions you may have. And, as always, we covet your prayers for God's leading and Wisdom to help us find the right pastor for the job.

In Christ,

The Transition Team

Ladies Tea: September 22, from 1:30-3:30pm in Ede Adam's back yard. Please bring a finger food to share.

Women's Fellowship: We meet the 3rd Thursday of the month, so our meeting for this month will be on Sept. 15 from 7-8:30pm, in the church's Social Hall. Lil Hoffmier is our new President. Hope to see you there!

Monthly Memory Verse:

Since we're doing the series on I Peter, why not pick one of his verses. Here is one on how we should share our faith:

I Peter 3.15: But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

Newsletter Policy

The newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Berkshire is an outreach into the community. As such, it should inform the community of church activities and challenge the readers to consider their relationship with Christ and His Church.

The Pastor has the primary responsibility for the contents of the newsletter. He may delegate responsibility to contributors such as the Sunday school superintendent and others who contribute to its contents. Further, he may delegate editorial duties to a lay person who will arrange the contents and deal with routine issues. Questions of content may be referred to the Board of Deacons for discussion.

Red Cross Blood Drive:

In August, the American Red Cross held a blood drive at our church. 18 people donated. The Red Cross says that 3 people are helped by every donation, so that means that 54 were blessed by what we did. PTL.

Becoming One (Again): We Need Your Help

For those of you who are not interested in taking the "Becoming One" course, could you help us with that first Saturday? We'll need some people to serve lunch and clean up after that. (If you could help with the snack times, too, that would be wonderful!) Thank you in advance for your loving help.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:

Anniversaries:

Mark & Darcy Friebel	9/01
Ken & Carol Mott	9/12
Mike & Rhonda Moulton	9/20
Alan & Marleta Anderson	9/20
David & Joan Ann Howland	9/28

Birthdays:

Rosalie Martin	9/04
Marcia O'Loughlin	9/05
Jackie Morris	9/09
Destiny Mount	9/11
Darin Walker	9/12
Mark Friebel	9/18
Dustin Thomas	9/24
Sheryl Kunik	9/21
Katie Schultheis	9/22

We are trying to get all of our birthday and anniversary information in one place. If you see an error or omission, please let our church secretary know. Thank you

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SUPPORT:

Greeters:

September 4 th	-	John Adams Ede Adams
September 11 th	-	Heritage Day
September 18 th	-	Amanda Wait Dave Michaud
September 25 th	-	Mike Wells Mike Kemmerer

Ushers:

September 4 th	-	Mike Kemmerer Scott Albrecht
September 11 th	-	Heritage Day
September 18 th	-	Bob Wait Bob Maynard
September 25 th	-	Dave Michaud Jim Willard

Junior Church:

September 4 th	-	Darlene Wait Emma Willard
September 11 th	-	Heritage Day
September 18 th	-	Darlene Wait Hanna Willard
September 25 th	-	Darlene Wait Cassie Willard

Junior Church II

September	-	Mike Kunik
-----------	---	------------

Nursery:

September 4 th	-	Vicki Kemmerer
September 11 th	-	Heritage Day
September 18 th	-	Carol Olcott
September 25 th	-	Tami Payne

Congregational Church Events - September 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 8:30 AM- Sunday School 10:00 AM- Worship 3:00 PM- Riverview Nursing Home (leave from church)	5 7 PM- Trustees Meeting 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study	6 7 PM- Youth Group Band	7 7:30 PM- Choir Practice	8 7:30 PM- Deacon's Meeting	9	10
11 9:00 AM- Heritage Day worship at Community Center 10:00 AM- visit our Heritage Day booth	12 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry	13 7 PM- Youth Group Band	14 7:30 PM- Choir Practice	15 7 PM- Women's Fellowship	16 7 PM- open meeting of Congregation and CBT	17 10:00 AM- Senior Pantry
18 FALL SCHEDULE STARTS! 9:00 AM- Sunday School 11:00 AM- Worship 6:00 PM Youth Group	19 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry	20 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Youth Group Band	21 7:30 PM- Choir Practice	22 2:00 PM- Ladies Tea 7 PM- special Congregational meeting: vote on Constitution and By-laws	23	24 8:30 AM- 4:00 PM Becoming One
25 9:00 AM- Sunday School 11:00 AM- Worship 6:00 PM Youth Group	26 7 PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Men in Ministry	27 1:30PM- Ladies Bible Study 7 PM- Youth Group Band	28 7:30 PM- Choir Practice	29 7 PM- Transition Team Meeting	30 7 PM- Becoming One	October 1 7 - 9 PM- Men's Game Night

