

"A Few Dates to Remember" -- 1 John 4:10-11

The Wedding of
Leslie Webb & Rebecca Petrie

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Emmett, Idaho
Pastor Michael L. McCoy

20 June Anno Domini 1998

Dear members of the Petrie and Webb families, friends of the bride and of the groom, neighbors, members of the family of God here at Our Redeemer, and especially to you -- Becky and Les:

It is good to be here at this time and in this place. The when is right now, your wedding day, and the where is this holy place consecrated to the Lord our God. This is an occasion which we will all remember. We do all sorts of things to remember the time of your wedding and the place where you have gathered. Many people have come to be eyewitnesses of this blessed event. A service bulletin is all printed out so everyone here might be able to recall exactly what happened today in this place. Pictures are taken to remind us of who was here and how we looked. A video-tape will record and help us remember what was done and said.

Recalling important times and places is a must and I would encourage both of you, Becky and Les, and all of you here today to bear five dates and places in mind. The Biblical text for your wedding sermon is 1 John 4:10-11. Please listen to that portion of the Word under the theme ...

... A Few Dates to Remember

"In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

Thus far the Word of the Lord our God.

25 December 4 BC in Bethlehem

In the hopes of remembering important events, let's begin with an easy one. Consider December 25th in the year 4 bc in the little town of Bethlehem. Easy, right? That's Christmas Day in Bethlehem. Actually, we don't really know the exact date, but have assigned December 25th as the traditional date when Jesus was born.

God knew that this world and everyone in it was heading for a date with eternal destruction. By nature people do not love God and if left to themselves would die without and apart from the Lord. We are sinful and indeed sin much every day, deserving only God's wrath as the penalty for our many transgressions. God did not and does not want that for anyone. As our text declares, in this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins.

God sent His Son and He came into this world as a baby in Bethlehem. The Son of God and the Son

of Man was born for you, Les -- for you, Becky -- for everyone of you who are here today -- for everyone in the history of this world. 25 December 4 BC.

3 April 33 AD at Golgotha

The second event took place some 33-36 years later. As near as we are able to determine, it was what we would call the 3rd of April in the year 33 AD and occurred at a place called Golgotha which means "the place of the skull". That was the first Good Friday, the day when God Incarnate was crucified for the sins of the world. In His great love, Jesus Christ shed His Blood for all sins. That's the Apostle John meant when he wrote: in this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins. Jesus died a horrible, awful death on the cross for you, Becky -- for you, Les -- for everyone of you here today -- for everyone in the history of this world.

According to His loving and gracious promise, three days later, Jesus rose from the dead ... defeating death, conquering sin, and overcoming the devil. Jesus rose from the dead for you, Les - for you, Becky - for each one here today - for everyone in the history of this world. 3 April 33 AD

26 May 1969 in Burns, Oregon

Becky, please let me tell you about the third date and place. It was 26 May 1969. God had overseen the events of history from the Garden of Eden, from the rising and falling of entire civilizations, across thousands of years, to that specific date in Burns, Oregon when He blessed a couple with the birth of a baby boy. Here it was that Leslie N. Webb was born to Marvin and Jackie. As loving parents they cared for Les, providing him with what he needed to remain healthy ... physically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally.

Through the Word of God, they introduced Les to this God Who loved him so much that He sent His Son to be born, to live, to die, and to rise again. For Marvin and Jackie, today, May 26, 1969 probably seems like so long ago and yet also it seems just like yesterday. From that date, as he began to crawl, toddle, walk, run, ride a bike, and drive a car, to this day when they are sitting in a church pew and watching him stand here beside you, Becky, they have realized, and are fully realizing, the truth of God's Word which says that a man will leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife. 26 May 1969.

3 January 1978 in Lewiston, Idaho

Les, please let me tell you about the fourth date and place. It was 3 January 1978. God had overseen the events of history from the Garden of Eden, through the earth-covering flood of Noah's day, through the plagues, through the discovery of the Americas, to that specific date in Lewiston, Idaho when He blessed a couple with the birth of a baby girl. Here it was that Rebecca Ann Petrie was born to Gordon and Pat. They, too, loved and cared for her, wanting the best for her.

Twelve days after she was born, her parents carried her to the baptismal font where she was born again and received all the blessings that God gives in and through baptism ... forgiveness of sin, eternal life, and salvation. As loving parents, they too wanted then and still want now the very best for their daughter. They have prayed that the Lord would lead her to meet a man who would join together with her in being loved by God and join with her in fearing, loving, and trusting in the Lord

God above all else. They pray that you would love Becky just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her. And so, Les, here they are today looking at their beautiful daughter standing beside you on her wedding day. 3 January 1978.

20 June 1998 in Emmett, Idaho

So we come to today's date, 20 June 1998 and God has loved you so very much. He created the universe for you. He sent His Son for you. Jesus lived and died and rose again for you. He gave you life on this earth. He has given you eternal life. He has preserved you and provided you with every good thing to support this body and life. The holy writer reminds us when we read that in this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins.

Now we are ready for the other half of our sermon text: Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. Becky and Les, motivated by the love of God in Christ ... in response to all that He has done for you, you also ought to love one another. Each one of you is marrying a sinner and if God so loved you, you also ought to love one another by confessing your sins to one another and announcing God's forgiveness to one another.

Don't forget the important dates and events: Christmas at Bethlehem - Good Friday at Golgotha - Easter in the Garden - birthdays in Burns and Lewiston - and a wedding day in Emmett when you stood side-by-side in the House of the Lord and received the blessing of God upon your promises and the benediction of the Lord on your marriage.

The Lord is to be the third person in your marriage. Come to worship together. If the Lord blesses you with children, bring your babies to the gracious water and Word of Holy Baptism. Call upon God in prayer and for the strength to do what is pleasing in His sight.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed for you and if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. Therefore, pray for yourself and for one another. Les and Becky, on behalf of myself, your parents, and all congregating here today, thank-you for letting us be here at this time and at this place. It is truly a date to remember. Amen.