

A Note from Pastor Wendy 14

July 4, 2020

If my parents were alive today it would have been their 79th wedding anniversary. My sister got the flowers placed on their gravesite yesterday and we shared in conversation about their lives together. We realized that much of their lives were filled with struggles either due to financial or health issues. Yet, they both had a strong faith in God and raised their family in the teachings of the Bible. They did not have much to live on, in fact they started out living their first few years together in a tent.

They built the house that I grew up in and it had a stove in the center of the first floor that heated the entire house. There was no air conditioning. We were considered poor in material things; however, we were rich in love. I am sharing this because as Missy shared last week about hospitality, I thought about my parents. They never had a lot, yet during their lifetime together they were foster parents to over 32 children.

When some of these children arrived in our home, they looked as if they had never eaten anything for months. Some children had big bruises on their bodies and were scared of any noise that they heard. We received one six-month old baby girl who was so fragile she could not raise her head. She had been born with a large hole in her heart and was not expected to live more than a few more months. The foster care program wanted her to be in a home where she would receive loving care for the remainder of her life. After a couple of months she started running an extremely high temperature. We took her to the hospital. They had us take her to a heart specialist in Columbia, Missouri. This doctor determined that the medication that she was on was damaging her heart. He changed her medication. In a few weeks, her skin tone changed to a beautiful peachy color and she began to grow and develop like any normal baby. By her first birthday she took her first steps. Before her seventh birthday she was having surgery to correct the valves on her heart. By her eighth birthday she was standing before the judge stating that "yes" she did want to be adopted by my parents. There were two brothers who were six and seven years old. Their mother had just passed away and their father had some psychological problems that kept him from being able to care for them full time. These two boys were placed in our home to raise in our family until they finished high school. The great thing was that at the same time my brother was seven years old. They became great friends.

My parents had an open door policy for people in need. We saw hospitality in work. In reality it was giving us a chance to share Jesus with each of the people who stayed in our home during those years.

Now we are involved with the AFS program. We have hosted three students from other cultures: Chile, Italy, and now Liberia. Each of these hosting experiences has provided us an opportunity to these students to visit this country and share their culture with us and we share our Christian heritage with them.

I believe as church members we need to have open-door hospitality with one another and to those in need. During this time of social distancing, we can do that by calling each other to make sure each other is healthy or if they are in need of anything. We can just visit with each other to keep each other company. We can pray together on the phones. We can even play games together on Zoom or on Skype. Be creative and have fun. Most of all Love each other and pray for one another.

One of these days we will be able to be in one another's homes and have meals together again. Until then, God Bless and Keep Healthy!