

Riley Shields & Megan Roush

Riley and Megan have known each other since high school, and by their own admission it took 13 years for them to get engaged. Many of you had wondered, “What are they waiting for?” The answer to that question is not “A pandemic” because a wedding would seem too simple otherwise, but they got one anyway. They still managed to keep their preparations focused and on track. Even the engagement took place at a simple yet meaningful backyard barbecue.

The scripture readings they’ve selected for us to hear today are also simple yet meaningful. We hear from the very first chapter of the very first book of the bible how God created man and woman after his own likeness both to have dominion over the rest of creation and to populate the earth with their children. God looked at all of this and found it not just good, but very good. Everyone enters the world as a result of the union of man and woman, and those with faith see the hand of God working the miracle of creation again.

Each of us is here because of someone’s desire, an emotion that St. Paul says is best elevated to love. Desire is a feeling, but love is a commitment. Even people with faith have nothing, Paul says, if they have no love. They may have the gift of prophecy, they may comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge, they may have faith that moves mountains. But without love, they have nothing; they are nothing.

Engaged couples give us a fine example of what St. Paul wants: their love is patient, kind, not jealous, not pompous, not inflated, not rude, not self-seeking, not quick-tempered. If you brood over injuries, Paul says, you’ve created an obstacle to love. If you rejoice over wrongdoing, you don’t have love. “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” It’s a difficult way to live because sometimes our desire for ourselves impedes our love for others, but it’s a beautiful way to live because it is so satisfying. Engaged couples love well, but Paul expects that kind of love from each of us for all of us. A couple like Riley and Megan can teach us the importance of love that is patient enough to wait 13 years, kind enough to love other people, and strong enough to endure whatever life throws their way, including a pandemic.

Each of us was created in love; each of us has the capacity to love. Jesus expects something more of those who follow him. He wants us in the world like salt that seasons everyday life with Christian value. He wants us to be light, so that others may come to know and follow him. He wants people to see the good deeds we perform, not so they can praise us, but so they can praise the Father. Christians love not just for our own desire, not just for another person, but ultimately because love glorifies God.

Riley and Megan, you come together in this church so that we may stand with you in the presence of God, followers of Christ who praise God for the example of your love. We accompany you with our hopes that others may know Christ through the way that you live. We rejoice with you today, we thank you for your love, and we pray: When God looks upon you from this day forward, may he see the miracle of his own creation anew and declare it not just good, but very good.

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