

# Shepherd's Staff

April 2015

*We gather to worship, we go to serve our Lord.*

**"You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth!"**

*Parkersburg Christian Reformed Church*

*Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. ~ Church School 10:45 a.m. ~ Life Plus Wed., 6:30 p.m.*

## Random Thought About Easter

Easter is perhaps the most important event in the Christian religion. We often, and rightly so, think about the wonder of the resurrection and what that means to us as believers in the One who was resurrected. Lately I have been thinking about the time before the resurrection but after the cross. This is in part because of a book I read in seminary and another one that I am currently reading.

The first book, the title of which I cannot recall, speaks about the holy Saturday, the time of Christ Jesus' body resting in the tomb. The second is written by two unlikely paired individuals, a seminary professor and a mortician titled *The Good Funera: Death, Grief, and the Community of Care* by Thomas Long and Thomas Lynch. These authors are making the point of how we humans are alone in the care we extend to our dead, while expressing a concern with modern times of the distance we are placing between ourselves and death. With the history of families caring for our own dead, we now employ the professionals to do the morbid work of preparing the dead for the final goodbye and interment.

While we still hold reverence for the body, we have lost the value of touch in the care. Society is working to sterilize the process of death with cremation removing the body from our presence before we have a chance to say our proper goodbyes. When we think of the death of Jesus we see the caring, but up till now secret, followers of Christ stepping forward to care for the body of their beloved Christ. Tenderly washing the remains and wrapping the lifeless form in the spices and cloths that would, unknown to them, soon be left empty was an act of love even in the terrible loss they were feeling. Prepared in death also meant Christ's body was prepared for rising again!

This is against what many are looking at in life today. The ancient belief that the soul or psyche is the only important part of humanity at the expense of the body can have consequences. Long and Lynch write about how failing to care for the body can have an effect on how we care for the less fortunate, the elderly and very sick in society. While, in the past, what set Christianity apart was the care given to the sick and injured. If we see no value in the body, they claim, we lose the concern for the disadvantaged.

With Christ as our example, we can see that care for those the world would discard, and the dead, can have eternal implications. As God said when he created humans, "it is very good!" we have value that the world seems to be losing awareness of. Even the dead must still be treated with respect as we mourn and remember the life that was lived and now lost to us.

Christ's body was removed from the cross and laid to rest in a tomb rather than tossed aside carelessly with importance in knowing the resurrection. If discarded, we might never have known about the empty tomb and the assurance of the resurrection with a possibility of a "ghost" presence without the tomb being empty. While our bodies will decay in the grave we also can have an assurance that we will be raised to reign with Christ. Body and soul reunited in perfection will rise from the decay that was sown to live forever with our Lord.

Knowing that God provided for his Son's body we also must continue to care for our loved ones. Saying goodbye is not easy but hoping the dead will just go away is not healthy for us either. We too should mourn our loss and then lay our loved ones to rest holding to the promise we have in Jesus Christ our Lord, the first fruits of all who die in him.

Pastor Rus

## SUNSHINE CIRCLE NEWS

Sunshine Circle has been studying the book of Proverbs. This has been enjoyed by all. We will be having our Spring Supper on Sunday, April 12 beginning at 5 p.m. The following menu is being planned:

Beef  
Cheesy potatoes  
Green beans  
Fruit salad  
Pistachio Cake Dessert  
Rolls  
Coffee/Milk

Andrew Voss from Aplington will provide our program. He will entertain us with guitar and music selections. Mr. Voss is very talented and will guarantee a delightful evening.

The whole family is invited. (No need for sitters!) Please come and enjoy an evening with dinner and friends.

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### Easter Symbols

#### Easter Lilies

Easter lilies bloom in the spring close to Easter time. Because they are shaped like trumpets, lilies are symbols of immortality (1 Corinthians 15:52).

#### Butterflies

The life cycle of a butterfly is a symbol of eternal life. While in its cocoon, it undergoes a metamorphosis and emerges in a new and beautiful form (1 Corinthians 15:53,54).

#### Eggs

When some people think of Easter, they immediately think of eggs. Eggs symbolize the new life that returns to nature during the spring. The egg is a symbol of fertility and immortality. Thus, Christians also view it as a reminder of the tomb from which Jesus Christ arose (Luke 24:1-4). Early Christians used red colored eggs to symbolize the Resurrection.

#### Lights and Candles

Lights, candles, and bonfires are used as a way to celebrate Easter in some countries. Many Christians often light seven candles in the church on Good Friday and then extinguish them one by one as Jesus' seven last words are read. At the end of the service, worshipers leave the church in darkness and silence. Candles are lit again with the Pascal Candle, or Easter Candle, on Easter Day.

#### The Cross

The cross is a symbol of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Crucifixion was a common way to punish criminals and to publicly humiliate them in the ancient world. In Jesus' day, the Romans used crucifixion to put criminals to death. A person was tied with cords and nailed to a wooden cross that was shaped like a T or like a plus sign (+). Jesus was accused of starting a revolt against the Roman government by allowing himself to be called "King of the Jews" (Mark 15:6-15). Jesus' resurrection is his victory over the power of sin and death (Romans 3:25,26). That is why the cross has become the major symbol for God's power to forgive sins and give new life to people (1 Corinthians 1:18). People often bake hot cross buns to symbolize this event.

#### The Lamb

The lamb is another symbol associated with Jesus. He is often referred to in the Bible as the "Lamb of God" (Revelation 5:6-14). John the Baptist described Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The Passover lamb (Exodus 12:1-11) has been interpreted by Christians as foreshadowing Jesus' sacrificial death (1 Corinthians 5:7).



## April Birthdays/Anniversaries



### Happy Birthday

### Happy Anniversary

4/4 Kevin Meester  
 4/5 Shelly Meester  
 4/8 Marjorie Siebenga  
 4/8 Mary Johnson  
 4/10 Michael Allspach  
 4/22 Paul Bruns  
 4/22 Ida Folken  
 4/23 Betty Pott

4/8 Arnie & Kay Swanson  
 4/12 Gaylen & Carla Mulder  
 4/30 Rollyn & Kathy DeGroot



**Reminder:** If you have anything you'd like included in the Shepherd's Staff, please try to have it to Wendy Mulder by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. The goal is to have the newsletter in your mailboxes on the last Sunday of the month.

### CRC Service Schedule

	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Coffee*</i>
4/5	Larry & Mary (N) John & Karen (S)	Ken Johnson	EASTER—No Coffee
4/12	Ryan & Stacy (N) Steve & Charlene (S)	Ken Mehmen	AnnaMae Henry & Kathy
4/19	Ken & Nancy (N) Clarence & June (S)	Ken Kramer	Dale & Angie
4/26	Dennis & Sharon (N) Marlyn & Marcia (S)	Dale Meester	Marlyn & Marcia

\*If you are unable to serve coffee on your Sunday as listed, please find your replacement. Thank you.



# Easter Story

## Word Search

S C B M N E J E S U S C H R I S T  
K A A P O D V G V A R E J O I C E  
J R V M S P R A Y E R W C B V F S  
Y N O I X I F I C U R C T R M L E  
L A P C O I E B Q O X B B N O O L  
I R E S U R R E C T I O N R E S T  
T R E P P U S T S A L Y E M B L S  
S H L U P V Y T K V F D M T E K O  
O C A R N E P A X R E S I H M R P  
C R M E P E N L D M A N A O I E A  
E U B I K G A A P I J R R R R V V  
T H X C H Y N T N H R S M N A O X  
N C N C A M I E O C T F Y S C S J  
E K E R K O S E W N E I D A L S U  
P U T O N I R N W R P Y A O E A D  
L E Z W R W M D R Q I T Y F O P A  
B S M N D I S C I P L E S C X G S

APOSTLES  
BETRAYAL  
CAVE  
CHURCH  
CROSS  
CROWN  
CRUCIFIXION  
DISCIPLES  
FAITH  
GOOD FRIDAY

JESUS CHRIST  
JUDAS  
LAMB  
LAST SUPPER  
LENT  
MARY  
MIRACLE  
PASSOVER  
PENANCE  
PENTECOST

PRAYER  
REDEMPTION  
REJOICE  
RESURRECTION  
RISEN  
SAVIOR  
SON  
THORNS  
TOMB

