

Shepherd's Staff

December 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.

Giving of Ourselves

We all seem to complain about the clutter in our lives. We state that we need more space to contain everything we have amassed over time. We have bigger homes with more rooms that gather items we could not live without but never seem to use. We have added spaces in our garages yet we never seem to have enough room for all our "toys" or collectibles. Still as the season of Christmas comes around we daydream about the packages that will be under the tree that will make us happy, for a little while at least.

A lack of room is an easy way to look at this problem. It takes the pressure off from us. We don't even want to consider that the problem could be us. A problem of having too much stuff is a real problem for some who can never throw anything away so we justify ourselves that we do throw things out. Still we must admit, if we are being truthful with ourselves, that we have much more than we really need. We even try to make ourselves feel better through jokes claiming we are the "president of the too much stuff club."

We do talk about "downsizing" with our friends as we gather to share our common problem but we never seem to get past the talk stage. Parting with the treasures of the past does not come easy! After all, we have endured tough times in the past when the collections we had become vital to our survival. Now we find ourselves blessed but fear still holds us back from doing what we desire.

Something new has started to take hold in our communities though. It does not require going through our hoarded resources to find the things that we have not used in five years, or even the things we are sure we will never use again. No, this is a much more obtainable goal. Still it requires sacrifice. A giving up what we do not have so that others can be blessed. I have spoken with many friends who have already made the transition and they not only lived to tell about it, they are excited about how wonderful it was!

The transformation begins with looking at those we see around us. Paying special attention to how they are doing without being obvious that we are watching. When we see someone, especially someone we do not know, who could use the love of God shining in their lives we simply act! Instead of spending more on the clutter we have more of our share of (for how many really need anything this year?). This is where the love of Christ grows in us and we give the money we would have spent on our loved ones with plenty and give the money, anonymously if possible, to them.

Can you imagine the look on a mother's face when at the checkout of a large store she finds an envelope given to her with one or two hundred dollars in it after just having to tell her children they would not be getting gifts this year? If you cannot give money, we have different ways we can care for "the least of these" as Christ directed us. Isn't it time we took time to do a heart check and give even as we have been given to? If we cannot give from our abundance as we celebrate the greatest gift ever given, when can we? Let's make this year special to someone. Give so that your heart may rejoice in the Lord!

Pastor Rus



At Home with Christ

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two...
If he came unexpectedly, I wonder what you'd do;
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored guest,
And all the food you'd serve to him would be the very best...
But when you saw him coming, would you meet him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome to your heavenly visitor?
Or would you have to change some things before you let him in?
Could you let Jesus walk right in where he had never been?...
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
Would you keep right on saying the things you always say?
Would you be glad to have him stay forever, on and on,
Or would you sigh with great relief when he at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do
If Jesus Christ in person came to spend time with you.

--Lois Blanchard

Christmas Cookies

Yield: about 4 dozen 2-1/2-inch cookies

- 2/3 cup butter
- 2/3 cup shortening
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3-1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder



Cream the butter and shortening with the sugar, then beat in eggs and vanilla. Combine flour, salt, and baking powder, then stir them into the creamed mixture to make a soft dough. Chill *thoroughly*.

Work with only a small amount of the cold dough at a time. Use lots of flour to roll dough. (May use a combination of flour and confectioners' sugar instead of plain flour. This gives the cookies a sweeter taste, and they do not taste like flour.) Roll about 1/8 inch thick, cut out cookie shapes, and use a metal spatula to transfer them to a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees F for 7 to 10 minutes, or until lightly browned.

These cookies can be decorated a variety of ways. Can frost them after they are cool. Or use colored sugar sprinkled on them before baking. Can use a mixture of egg yolks, a little water, and some food coloring and "paint" them before baking, too.

Recipe from The Old Farmer's Almanac



December Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

- 12/6 Darlene Bruns
- 12/7 Mildred Rewerts
- 12/7 Delbert Cordes
- 12/7 Joel Reints
- 12/12 Angie Meester
- 12/14 Helen Druvenga
- 12/14 Clayton Groeneveld
- 12/20 Duane Anderson
- 12/20 Betty Mulder
- 12/27 Austin Shepard
- 12/31 John Oltman

Happy Anniversary

- 12/10 Ken & Jan Johnson
- 12/10 John & Karen Oltman
- 12/17 Mark & Lanae Kramer
- 12/26 Paul & Ruth Haan
- 12/27 Irv & Amy Haan

Reminder: If you have anything you'd like included in the Shepherd's Staff, please try to have it to Wendy Mulder by the 20th 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> |
|-------|--|---------------|----------------|
| 12/6 | Mark & Lanae (N) Ken & Janet (S) | Ken Kramer | Don & Annie |
| 12/13 | Pastor Rus & Mary (N) Henry & Kathy (S) | Ken Mehmen | Pat & Deb |
| 12/20 | Jean Trey (N) Delbert & Sharon (S) | Dale Meester | Irv & Amy |
| 12/27 | Cory & Kamie (N) Ken & Rhonda (S) | Gerald Haan | John & Karen |

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

Christmas



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|-----------|--------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Christ | Child | Baby | Born | Wisemen |
| Shepherds | Angels | Sing | Hallelujah | Savior |
| King | Prince | Peace | Love | Joy |
| Manger | Hay | Swaddling | Mary | Joseph |