

Shepherd's Staff

February 2016

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.

Lead, Follow, or Get Out of the Way

It occurred to me that this saying may be helpful in our understanding of the beginning of Christianity. We often use this to express our frustration with others when we are trying to accomplish a goal or task, but can it give us a picture of the response of the Apostles? Let me explain what I mean.

In the early days of the ministry of Jesus, he was looking for some followers willing to go the distance with him in bringing the Good News to the world. We see from the scriptural reports that these men did not always understand what they were to do. They were rebuked when they got in the way or even for failing to understand what was being said. As followers they were average at best but did improve, at least most of them did.

We can also observe that most of them did finally get an understanding of what it meant to follow; but it was, for the most part, when the time to follow was complete. When Christ had completed the work he came to accomplish, he left the work to those poor followers to then take up the task of leading as he had demonstrated. The Gospels and the letters in the Bible give us a picture that the Apostles did take up this mission and yet we read of only some of the Apostles doing the work. Does that mean the remaining Apostles were still followers or simply that leaders can, and do, a great work behind the scenes?

We need to flash back a little to pick up the idea of "get out of the way." This too is seen in the Gospels in the person of Judas. After having followed Jesus for such a long period in Jesus' ministry, he was dismissed to do what he must. He was not ready to lead in the direction God had in mind for the other Apostles and was therefore given the latitude to get out of the way. In his doing so, we are reminded that not all will be saved.

Through the Gospels and the Acts we see that leaders then must call for others to take the role of followers so that growth will continue. Jesus called on his followers to go into all the world and make disciples, or followers! The spread of the Good News would be by way of followers becoming leaders in an effort to bring in new followers and so on. We are still aware of those who must be given room to "get out of the way" so that the mission of Christ's ministry will continue.

This brings me to where we are. If the choices are the three options, are we still following? In their letters to the churches, the Apostles encouraged the believers to move from Spiritual milk to the more substantial nutrition of scripture that prepares for a closer walk with Christ. Walking closer to our Master should be understood as being in a role of leading. Taking the lead can be done in a number of ways as seen in the examples of the Apostles. Some were the "front" men while others were the strength behind the scene. Still we are called to grow in our relationship with our Lord and become what he has been preparing us to be, his witnesses or leaders to the blessing of being found in Christ.

If we are stuck in time as followers, we should do what scripture teaches. We should pray for the wisdom that God promises to those who sincerely ask. As we look forward to our celebration this Spring of God's blessing on our church in the past we should also look forward to what we are called to be in the future. Following is the preparation stage for growing into the leaders God would have us be. Moving forward then is our duty in Christ as children of God. Being like the Apostles should not be an option but a goal, after all, as Jesus was able to make an unlikely group of followers into a powerful force that changed the world. Today we should not be any less willing or ready to change the world for Christ. Where are you, a follower, a leader, or one who should get out of the way?

Pastor Rus

God's Valentine Gift

God's Valentine gift of love to us
Was not a bunch of flowers;
It wasn't candy, or a book
To while away the hours.

His gift was to become a man,
So He could freely give
His sacrificial love for us,
So you and I could live.

He gave us sweet salvation, and
Instruction, good and true--
To love our friends and enemies
And love our Savior, too.

So as we give our Valentines,
Let's thank our Lord and King;
The reason we have love to give
Is that He gave everything.

By Joanna Fuchs
www.poemsource.com



Cherry Chocolate Ice Cream Pie

3/4 cup dried cherries
2 cups boiling water
3-1/2 cups chocolate ice cream, softened
3/4 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
1 chocolate crumb crust (9 inches)
Hot fudge ice cream topping and maraschino cherries, optional



Directions

1. Place dried cherries in a small bowl; cover with boiling water. Let stand for 5 minutes; drain.
2. In a large bowl, combine the ice cream, chocolate chips and cherries. Spread into crust. Cover and freeze until firm.
3. Slice; drizzle each piece with fudge topping and garnish with a maraschino cherry if desired. **Yield:** 8 servings.



Raspberry Parfaits

2 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 tablespoons seedless raspberry jam
1/2 cup whipped topping, divided
1/2 cup fresh or frozen raspberries

Directions

1. In a small bowl, beat cream cheese and jam until smooth. Fold in 1/4 cup whipped topping.
2. Place 2 tablespoons raspberries in each of two small parfait glasses or dessert dishes; layer with cream cheese mixture and remaining berries. Top with remaining whipped topping. Refrigerate until serving. **Yield:** 2 servings.



February Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

- 2/1 Andrew Haan
- 2/7 Pat Prier
- 2/7 Lacey Hay
- 2/8 Mackenzie Allspach
- 2/10 Marlyn Allspach
- 2/14 Nolan Prier
- 2/17 Sharon Cordes
- 2/20 AnnaMae Mehmen
- 2/24 Rodney Mulder



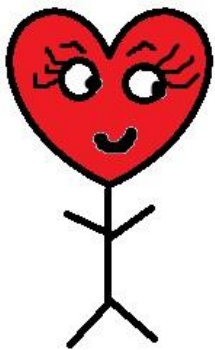
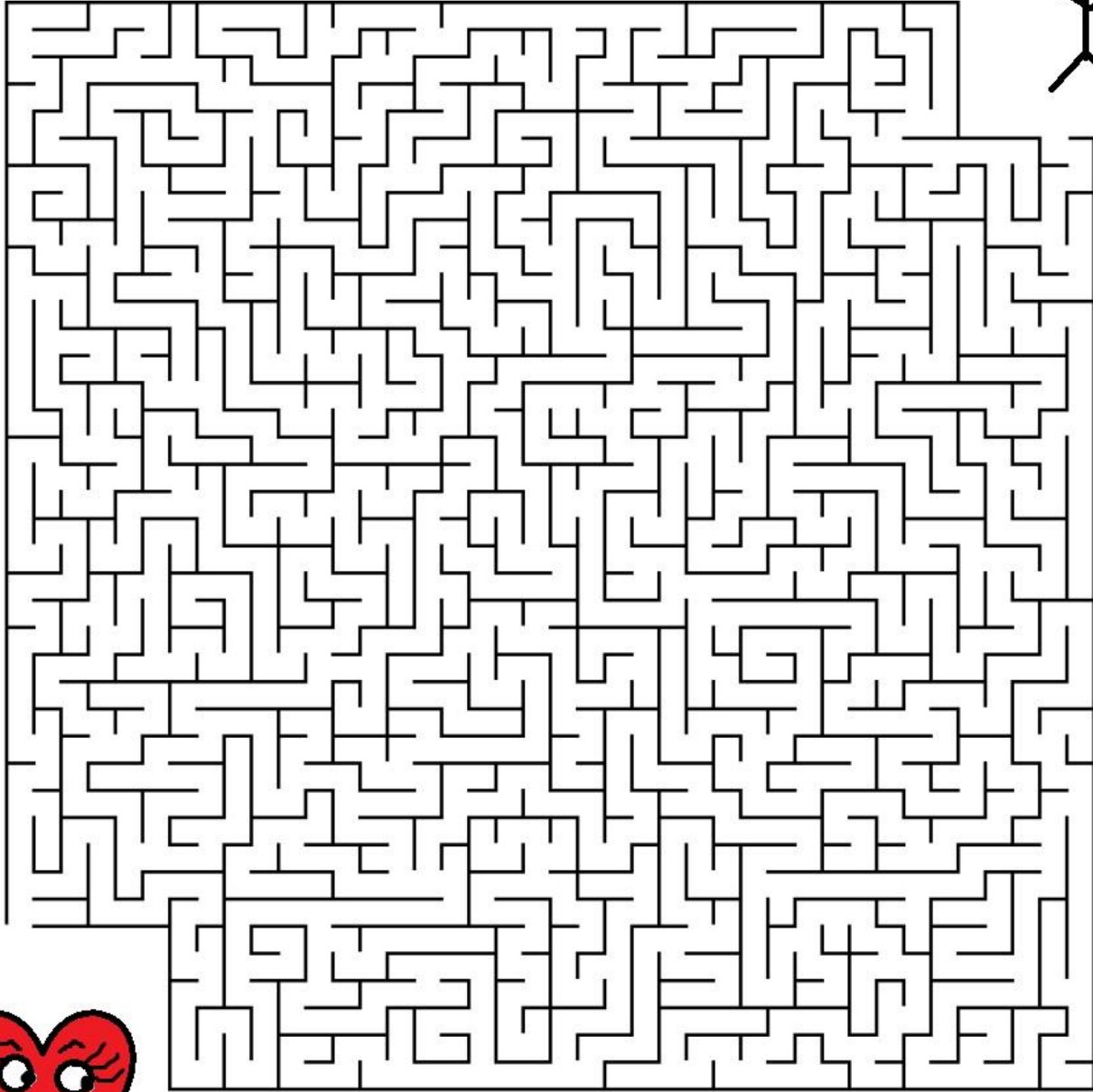
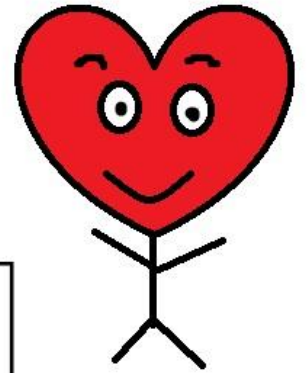
Reminder: If you have anything you'd like included in the Shepherd's Staff, please try to have it to Wendy Mulder by the 20th of the month. The goal is to have the newsletter in your mailboxes on the last Sunday of the month.

CRC Service Schedule

	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Coffee*</i>
2/7	Ken & Janet (N) Pastor Rus & Mary (S)	Ken Mehmen	Pat & Deb
2/14	Henry & Kathy (N) Jean Trey (S)	Dale Meester	Ken & Nancy
2/21	Delbert & Sharon (N) Cory & Kamie (S)	Gerald Haan	Arnie & Kay
2/28	Ken & Rhonda (N) Kevin & Shelly (S)	Mark Kramer	Larry & Mary

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

Happy Valentine's Day



**Help Mr. Heart get
to his sweetheart.**