

Shepherd's Staff

July 2013

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

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

Independence

This month our nation will celebrate the anniversary of our independence as a nation. While the holiday is actually Independence Day, we often refer to it as the Fourth of July. Many will venture out to watch or participate in parades, watch fireworks displays, or find time to spend with family or friends. We spend time together to celebrate independence. I find this fascinating when I stop to think about it.

As a people we are proud of the fact that we "pull ourselves up by the bootstraps." Our nature is to be ready to stand alone against the world if we need to. This we find evident in our history both recent and past. Going up against the enemy seems almost like our second nature even if we must do it alone. It does help that we are the remaining superpower when we take on such formidable foes as terrorist networks around the world. We do this in keeping with our remaining independence or free of the outside oppression or influence.

The quest for independence, in the realm of personal freedom has had some problematic areas. We tend to pursue causes that place one freedom against another as with the issue of prayer in public schools in our nation whose motto is "In God We Trust." We adopt laws that go against the morality of some groups to ensure freedom for all, or so the argument goes. Through these freedoms we divide ourselves while still showing our capability for unity when disaster strikes.

Many of us who will celebrate Independence Day also have dual citizenship. We are citizens of the United States but also of the Kingdom of God. This clash of natures can be daunting. As Americans we celebrate independence. As citizens of God's Kingdom we are to exercise our dependence.

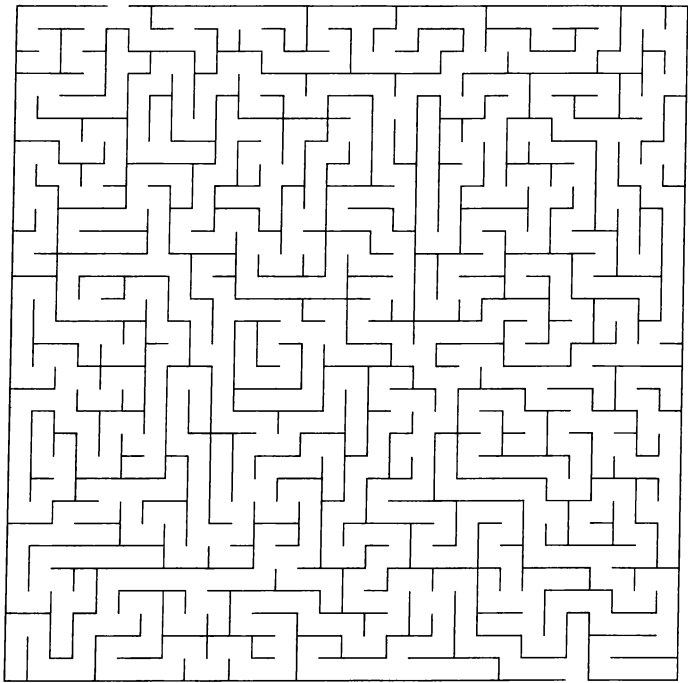
When we try to be members of God's Kingdom through our own efforts, we fail! The only way is to be completely dependent on the One way. That way is only through the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Paul tells us we are to die to our self if we wish to live for Christ. This dying includes giving up our independence! We also must acknowledge the standard for living that comes with this citizenship. While we may bristle at the thought of surrender regarding our earthly nation, we are required to surrender to God completely to live within the benefits of his grace.


Living for Jesus does not make us less patriotic for the nation we live in, but does encourage us to live with a clear picture of who we are in Christ. Being true to God's Kingdom enhances the joy as we live in harmony with our neighbors and in compliance with the civil laws, at least those that are in keeping with God's law. This should make us good citizens of both realms. So we can celebrate how God has blessed our nation but always from the point of view that we are first citizens of God's Kingdom. We must also pray for our nation and leaders. This is living with our dependence on God while living with freedoms that independence can bring. Only then we will have first things first...independence through dependence.

Happy Fourth of July!

Pastor Rus





4TH OF JULY 
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July Birthdays/Anniversaries

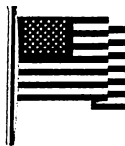


Happy Birthday

| | |
|------|-------------------|
| 7/2 | Gaylen Mulder |
| 7/3 | Sylvia Jansen |
| 7/3 | Janet Johnson |
| 7/3 | Darrell Druvenga |
| 7/8 | Clarence Karsjens |
| 7/14 | Curtis Kalkwarf |
| 7/14 | Michael Mulder |
| 7/20 | Frank Pott |
| 7/20 | Marcia Allspach |
| 7/21 | Marjorie Aswegan |
| 7/22 | Luke Edeker |
| 7/25 | Carla Mulder |
| 7/26 | Kenneth Johnson |
| 7/26 | Mary Vry |
| 7/26 | Kamie Shepard |
| 7/26 | Amy Swanson-Haan |
| 7/27 | Gene Venenga |
| 7/28 | Joy Kneppe |
| 7/31 | Jenna Siems |

Happy Anniversary

| | |
|------|--------------------------|
| 7/5 | Dale & Angie Meester |
| 7/23 | Dennis & Sharon Schipper |



HAPPY 4TH OF JULY

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> |
|------|--|-------------------|------------------|
| 7/7 | Kevin & Shelly (N) Steve & Charlene (S) | Delbert Cordes | Paul Haan's |
| 7/14 | Larry & Mary (N) Clarence & June (S) | Gerald Haan | Mary V., Mary B. |
| 7/21 | Ryan & Stacy (N) Marlyn & Marcia (S) | Clarence Karsjens | Kevin & Shelly |
| 7/28 | Ken & Nancy (N) Pat & Deb (S) | Ken Mehmen | Ken & Nancy |

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

Music Has a Way of Touching One's Soul

Battle Hymn of the Republic (1861)

Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Psalm 24:8

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, a national service of prayer and remembrance was conducted at Washington's National Cathedral. America's most powerful leaders prayed together, listened to brief sermons by evangelist Billy Graham and others, then joined voices to sing the defiant anthem, "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Its words seemed to perfectly signal America's intention to battle the forces of terror in the world.

"Battle Hymn of the Republic" was written by Julia Ward Howe, a leader in women's rights and an ardent foe of slavery. Julia, who came from a wealthy New York family, was married to prominent Boston philanthropist and humanitarian, Dr. S.G. Howe. They were both crusaders for progressive political and moral issues of the day.

In 1861, during the darkest days of the Civil War, the Howes visited Washington, and Julie toured a nearby Union Army Camp on the Potomac in Virginia. There she heard soldiers singing a tribute to John Brown, who had been hanged in 1859 for attempting to lead an insurrection of slaves at Harper's Ferry: "John Brown's Body Lies a-mold'ring in the Grave." The music was rousing, but the words needed improvement. Julia's pastor, who accompanied her, asked her to consider writing new and better verses. That night, after the Howes retired to their room at the Willard Hotel, the words came.

I went to bed and slept as usual, but awoke the next morning in the gray of the early dawn, and to my astonishment found that the wish-for lines were arranging themselves in my brain. I lay quite still until the last verse had completed itself in my thoughts, then hastily arose, saying to myself, I shall lose this if I don't write it down immediately. I searched for an old sheet of paper and an old stub of a pen which I had had the night before, and began to scrawl the lines almost without looking, as I learned to do by often scratching down verses in the darkened room when my little children were sleeping. Having completed this, I lay down again and fell asleep, but not before feeling that something of importance had happened to me.

Julie gave her song to a friend who worked at *The Atlantic Monthly*. The magazine published it in February, 1862, sending her a check for five dollars.

Quoted from *Then Sings My Soul: 150 of the World's Greatest Hymn Stories* by Robert J. Morgan



Travel Instructions:



A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!" His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you know what the Bible means?" The son replied, "I do know!" "Okay," said his father. "What does the Bible mean?" "That's easy, Daddy," the young boy replied excitedly, "It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.'"

Did You Know?

Life expectancy for weekly churchgoers is 82; for those who attend more than once a week, it's 83. Non-churchgoers live an average of 75 years. - USA Today