

## *Shepherd's Staff* *We gather to worship, we go to serve our Lord.*

July 2017 "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.*

### Thirsty

This has been an unusual spring and start to the summer. Rains came in goodly measure, as they must, to prepare the land to receive seeds in the planting stage of the growing season; but in some cases the seeds were already in the ground making conditions too wet for the germination to occur. What followed were the early warm temperatures and lack of rain just when it was needed had many of us starting gardens with hoses and water cans called into service to keep the fledgling plants alive. Many lawns were also showing signs of stress moving toward a dormant condition, thirsty for water to bring it back to life. Many on the agricultural talk shows were talking of drought conditions and the effect on the coming harvest.

Watching the effects of the weather on our garden, I did get out and re-sow some of the produce I was hoping to grow as the time of seed to plant sprouting came and went with no sign of life of what was planted. The delay in planting will extend the waiting until the rewards of the labor will be realized. Still, hope in a harvest remains.

As I was thinking about the garden it occurred to me that perhaps our lives are often like the growing stage of a garden. In our spiritual lives we have the seed time when we are on a spiritual high. The abundance of hope and life has us living a euphoric period where God is central in our world. This seems to be the time when life closes in on us. We take our eyes off the hope of the world, Jesus, only for what seems like a little while. The rain stops coming! Dry conditions start to appear, subtle at first, with an inward effort of self-survival absorbing all our strength and energy. We lose sight of the source of life.

Those around us notice what is happening, sometimes even before we are willing to see the loss we are going through. Prayer is brought on our behalf, that the rain of the Spirit will once again come to our parched souls. Still we look to the sky with the hope of rain while the warm dry winds blow into our lives. We begin to drift farther away from the source of our healing instead of seeking what satisfies where it has always been available.

Putting first things first is an expression that is often used for expressing priorities in life. What is most important needs to be put first and then the rest of the pieces will fit together with greater ease. God tells us that to have the life we desire we are to place our love for Him above all other things. We are to seek Him first in all things, even when we would rather put our likes or desires first. Gathering with others in the journey of life in faith is an important matter. Still we are tempted to do what the world is calling us to do. Taking our eyes off God for only a few moments should not hurt us that greatly. Yet this is when we see the rain diminish.

Life as a believer never came with a promise to be easy but always to be rewarding. What appears to be the more difficult road can quickly turn into the lifesaving way. It is simply a matter of staying in the grace that had us so excited when we focus on our Savior first and let the world fall into place as it may. God will send His Spirit to make all things new again when we turn to Him. When the soil of our soul starts to feel parched, look to Jesus and let the Spirit reign down with all the joy it brings.

Pastor Rus

## Red, White and Blue Dessert

- 2 packages (8 ounces *each*) cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream, whipped
- 2 quarts strawberries, halved, *divided*
- 2 quarts blueberries, *divided*
  
- In a large bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar and extracts until fluffy. Fold in whipped cream. Place a third of the mixture in a 4-qt. bowl. Reserve 20 strawberry halves and 1/2 cup blueberries for garnish.
- Layer half of the remaining strawberries and blueberries over cream mixture. Top with another third of the cream mixture and the remaining berries. Spread the remaining cream mixture on top. Use the reserved strawberries and blueberries to make a "flag" on top.
- Yield: 18 servings.



### **Q: When was the actual vote on the resolution for independence?**

A: The actual vote on the resolution for independence was made on July 2nd, and John Adams was certain that this date would be celebrated forever as the date of the nation's birth. But when the Declaration was read after its adoption, and people celebrated with fireworks and church bells ringing, the 4th of July became fixed as the nation's birthday.

### **Q: Who wrote the original Declaration of Independence?**

A committee of five was assigned to draft a Declaration explaining the resolution: Ben Franklin, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Robert Livingston of New York, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. The committee turned the job over to Jefferson, who was 33 years old at the time he wrote the Declaration of Independence. The Continental Congress made more than eighty changes to Jefferson's draft, which had been slightly amended by Adams and all of which Jefferson hated.

### **Q: Why didn't George Washington sign the Declaration of Independence?**

He was already in New York commanding troops when the Declaration was adopted. George Washington, who had limited and mostly disastrous military experience, was popular with his officers. But he had to battle Congress and jealous fellow officers throughout the war. Washington also did not chop down a cherry tree and have wooden teeth -- his dentures were made of ivory, hippo's teeth and even human teeth.

### **Q: Who was the first person to sign the Declaration of Independence?**

John Hancock was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence. And it wasn't until August when the 55 other signers got the chance. The document had to be formally prepared on the nice parchment we have today. Hancock was a very ambitious politician so he signed his name very large on the center of the document, that way everyone else would have to sign around his name in very small print.

### **Q: What country helped America win the Revolution?**

France provided a navy, troops and 90 percent of the gunpowder the Patriots used. Without French help there would be no America. That's why there is a Lafayette Square across the street from the White House.



## July Birthdays/Anniversaries



### Happy Birthday

7/3	Darrell Druvenga
7/3	Sylvia Jansen
7/3	Janet Johnson
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	Lola Stirling
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

### Happy Anniversary

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

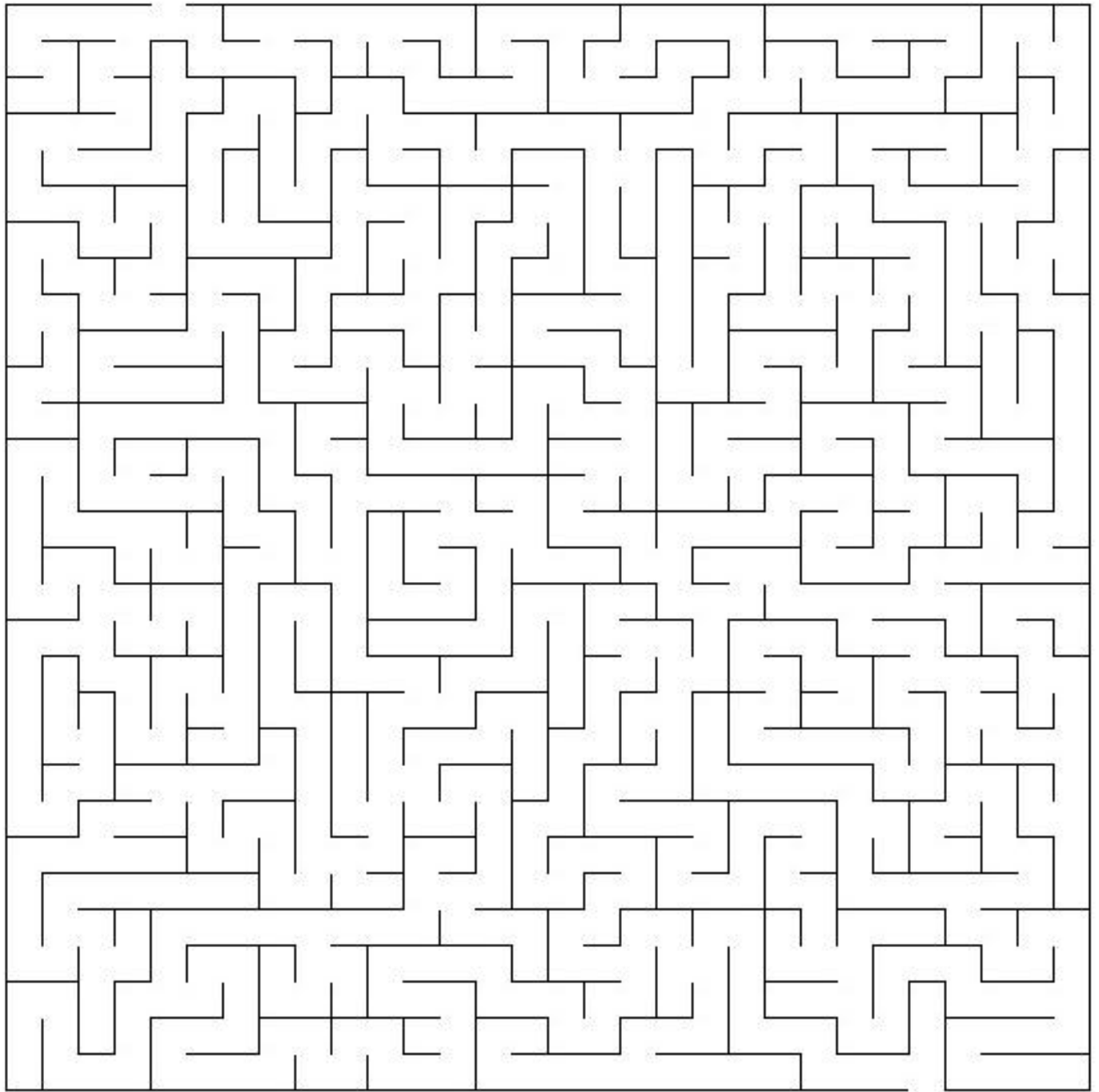


**Reminder:** If you have anything you'd like included in the Shepherd's Staff, please try to have it to Wendy Mulder by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. The goal is to have the newsletter in your mailboxes on the last Sunday of the month.

### CRC Service Schedule

	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Coffee*</i>
7/2	Dave & Betty (N) Larry & Mary (S)	Ken Kramer	Paul Haan's
7/9	John & Karen (N) Dennis & Sharon (S)	Gerald Haan	Dennis & Lois
7/16	Frank & Betty (N) Ryan & Stacy (S)	Mark Kramer	Joel & Brandy
7/23	Steve & Charlene (N) John & Jodi (S)	Ken Meester	Ryan & Stacy
7/30	Mike & Kayla (N) Paul & Darlene (S)	Ken Johnson	Kevin & Shelly

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



**4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY**  
**MAZE**

