

Shepherd's Staff

November 2013

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.

Eye On the Sparrow

This summer we decided watching the birds in the neighborhood would be a great pastime. With the installation of a couple of bird feeders and many bags of the feed we had attracted a good sized flock of sparrows. While not always the bird that seasoned bird watchers desire, we enjoyed their antics. Watching and looking around and to the sky, the sparrows seemed nervous all the time. The slightest indicator of trouble would send the little creatures into the bushes we have in our landscape. For a while we thought the scouring of their surroundings a little excessive but we soon learned they knew what they were doing.

On a pleasant late summer day we were watching the sparrows when they suddenly took to their hiding places. It did not take long to discover what was causing this sudden panic and retreat. It seems the sheer number and intense activity caught the eye of another "bird watcher." Swooping in with elegance and grace, a predator had also been watching our sparrows. Emboldened by hunger the chicken hawk came within feet of our living room window, landing on the shrubs that contained the hiding sparrows! Looking in among the tightly spaced branches but unable to penetrate into the core, the hawk waited. Circling around the base of the bush could not scatter the sparrows that were safely sheltered just out of reach.



Eventually the hawk flew away, at least for that day. The level of excitement of the sparrows was easier to understand. Once having spotted the "hot spot" of activity the hawk made frequent trips back in search of a careless sparrow. The vigilance of the sparrows seemed to be winning the day until after spending time in our kitchen one day I came back to discover the hawk on the ground under the feeders. Persistence had paid off for the hawk.

Seeing this scenario play out just outside our picture window started my mind to race. I began to wonder how my life may be like that of the sparrow. We often face dangers in the world around us as temptations wait for an opportune time when we let our guard down. We at times become complacent after avoiding so many of the scrapes and hazards of life that we become calloused to the threat that is ever around us. I began to wonder how it is that we are able to do so well when we do so little to defend ourselves.

Like so many times a song came to mind, based on scripture that gave me some level of comfort. *Sheltered In the Arms of God* started playing in my head. The lyrics reminding me of feeling "the touch of hands so warm, so tender" brought a calming, knowing that our Heavenly Father is watching us as well as the sparrow. Even better than the shrubbery that hides the sparrow we have the hand of God to shelter us. What a difference between my watching the sparrows, unable to see them constantly, to defend them and the way God watches them and us all the time! He also reminds us of our infinite worth compared to the sparrow, which the Bible told us sold, two for a penny.

It is good to be reminded that our value in God's eyes is reflected in what he has done for us. The very death of his Son was for you and me! When God had the chance to choose, he chose us! Yet how do we live in the light of this powerful truth? The sparrows were diligent where we more readily slip into complacency. The command to "watch and pray" found throughout scripture would have us acting more like the sparrows than many of us do. We become numb to the threats which play into the hand of the predator of our souls. (Continued on next page)

(Eye on the Sparrow...Continued from previous page) God's protecting hand is real but so is the threat around us. God has given us the ability to discern the hazards around us and to stand when we are dressed in the armor of God. But that armor must be worn. We are told to put on each piece with prayer and yet how often do we pray for this power in the world? How often do we succumb to the lie that we are able to take care of ourselves?

Diligence regarding the threat around us, while relying on the mighty hands of God is how we can resist the temptations and trials we face. Praising God through all our lives, both the good times and the troubling, is how we can defeat even the strongest attack, as we turn our trials over to the one whose eye is on the sparrow and we can know he cares for us.

Pastor Rus

The Noble and the Brave: A Veteran's Day Tribute



When America had an urgent need,
These brave ones raised a hand;
No hesitation held them back;
They were proud to take a stand.

They left their friends and family;
They gave up normal life;
To serve their country and their God,
They plowed into the strife.

They fought for freedom and for peace
On strange and foreign shores;
Some lost new friends; some lost their
lives
In long and brutal wars.

Other veterans answered a call
To support the ones who fought;
Their country had requirements for
The essential skills they brought.

We salute every one of them,
The noble and the brave,
The ones still with us here today,
And those who rest in a grave.

So here's to our country's heroes;
They're a cut above the rest;
Let's give the honor that is due
To our country's very best.

By Joanna Fuchs

Remember our veterans
--both past and present-- on
November 11th. If you see a
veteran, give them a hug;
give them a handshake; give
them a 'thank you.'

THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR THIS THANKSGIVING

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you have a computer you are part of the 1% in the world who has one.

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the many who will not survive this day.

If you have never experienced the fear in battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 700 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church without the fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death you envied by three billion people in the world.

If your parents are still alive and still married, you are very rare.

If you can hold your head up and smile, you are not the norm, you are unique to all those who live with doubt and despair.

If you can read this list, you just received a double blessing because you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

Have a good day, count your blessings, and above all THANK GOD FOR ALL YOUR BLESSINGS.



November Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

11/3 Erma Aswegan
 11/3 Lois Mennen
 11/3 Dennis Schipper
 11/4 Brandy Reints
 11/6 JoLynne Husz
 11/8 Rus Boersma
 11/13 Jean Trey
 11/14 Diana Mulder
 11/14 Brooke Merrill
 11/14 Wendy Mulder
 11/17 Annie Allspach
 11/19 John Husz
 11/20 Noah Merrill
 11/22 Kayla Stirling
 11/25 Nancy Mehmen

Happy Anniversary

11/6 Kevin & Shelly Meester
 11/10 Dennis & Lois Mennen



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>
11/3	Mark & Lanae (N) Ken & Rhonda (S)	Ken Johnson	Ken & Jan
11/10	Pastor Rus & Mary (N) Sylvia & Ivadell (S)	Mark Kramer	Gene & Janet
11/17	Jean Trey (N) John & Karen (S)	Ken Kramer	Mike & Kayla
11/24	Cory & Kamie (N) AnnaMae (S)	Delbert Cordes	Steve & Charlene

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



*Happy
Thanksgiving*