

Shepherd's Staff

April 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.

Tulips and Daffodils

This morning I could not help thinking about spring. The calendar tells me it will begin in just a few days as I am writing these thoughts. I am not sure the calendar has looked outside lately though. I just spent over an hour clearing the snowdrift away from in front of our garage and from the drive turn around. Two feet of snow needing to be moved in the northwest wind and single digit temperatures is not my idea of spring.

After warming up with a cup of coffee I turned my thoughts to the incredible signs that welcome us in the spring, the bulb flowers known as tulips and daffodils. They wait in the soil as the winter snows pile up over them for the warmth of the spring sunshine to chase the frost out of the ground. With the lengthening daylight hours, the ground does eventually allow the new life to emerge from the ground. The promise that better days will come even as I look out and see the wind whipping the snow across the yard.

Maybe it was God's plan all along that at such a time when we are tired of winter and longing for the new life of spring that we pause to remember the Passion of Christ and long for the celebration of life in His resurrection. In a powerful way we can see the reality of this as the flower bulbs wait in the ground for the time to be right even, as Christ waited for the assigned day for His rising.

Flowers need to push away the stubborn sod that had covered them all winter as the new growth pushes toward the warmth of the sun. Ready to spread out the green leaves, reaching to be the plant that will bring its splendor into view for all to see, the leaves unfold, taking in the warmth so the flower can appear. This is the beauty after the suffering of winter that we can all enjoy.

If we all are anxious to celebrate spring with such expectation, why is it that we so often fail to celebrate the greater event of Easter with the same longing and joy? Christmas is a wonderful time for celebrating the arrival of the Christ yet Easter is the climax of the salvation plan! How can we be so casual about such an event as this? With the focal point of new life, this time of the year should remind us of the new life we have in the One who died, was buried, and rose again, doing it all for us!

Today we simply seem to be so busy that we fail to get our lives in proper step with what is really important. Even television advertisements remind us of the importance of being parents hoping to get us back into the proper rhythm of life. After the coldness of winter, both literally and figuratively, we should be ready to welcome the hope, the joy, the promise of new life. With joy and song, we should be ready to celebrate the resurrection with reckless abandon as we give the glory to God unashamed. We, like the tulips and daffodils, should be moving the clutter from our lives and soaking in the warmth of God so we can reflect His glory when we bloom in His love.

Let us today begin the new life we have in Christ as we celebrate the time for growing in the Lord. Let's be the joyful witnesses reflecting the love of God as we reflect His glory in the world around us. Let's live as the new creation already as we wait for the day when Christ will return and the final "spring" of creation arrives.

Pastor Rus



Aplington/Parkersburg Food Pantry
"Making a Difference, One Meal at a Time"

The Aplington/Parkersburg Food Pantry provides supplemental food assistance to individuals and families in Butler/Grundy county. We cover an area the approximate size of the Aplington/Parkersburg school district. We collaborate with sources in our communities. We are a member agency of the Northeast Iowa Food Bank in Waterloo.



Supplemental Food Boxes:

We provide families and individuals with extra food each month to help stretch their monthly food dollars. Each box consists of canned fruits, vegetables, soups, boxed dinners, fruit juice, cereal, shelf stable milk, pasta, spaghetti sauce, pancake mix, pancake syrup, some meat and paper products. (Products may vary as to availability.) These boxes are meant to be a means of assistance. Unfortunately we cannot begin to give out enough food for a whole month. Our families range from one individual to as many as eleven in a family.

The Aplington/Parkersburg Food Pantry enables families to stretch their money further and use the savings that would otherwise not be available. On an average we distribute 60-65 food boxes per month. December and January saw the usage up to 73 food boxes each month.

Crisis Food Boxes:

The crisis or emergency boxes go to families who have recently experienced some sort of crisis. For example, loss of their home due to a fire, experienced a death in the family, or are new residents of our communities.

Aplington/Parkersburg Food Pantry Hours of Service:

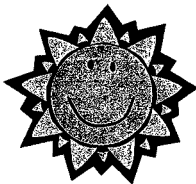
We require requests for food boxes to be made the Wednesday before the third Friday of each month. Calls are made to the United Methodist church in Parkersburg from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on that Wednesday (346-1076). Clients who have previously used the pantry may leave a message on the answering machine prior to the posted hours. Distribution/pick up of the food boxes takes place on the third Friday of the month from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Parkersburg Civic Center (lower level). The Center is handicap accessible. Crisis or emergency boxes are always considered. Pantry clients are required to sign an Income Eligibility form.

Community support is vital to what we do. The pantry is assisted monthly by our area churches and MidWestOne Bank.

On behalf of those we serve, THANK YOU.

A/P Food Pantry Coordinators: Jan Eldridge and Margaret Schuck

~It never hurts your eyesight to look on the bright side of things.~





April Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

4/4	Kevin Meester
4/5	Shelly Meester
4/8	Marjorie Siebenga
4/8	Mary Johnson
4/10	Michael Allspach
4/14	Dorothy Kalkwarf
4/15	Marie Kuperus
4/22	Paul Bruns
4/22	Ida Folken
4/23	Betty Pott
4/27	Austin Graham

Happy Anniversary

4/8	Arnie & Kay Swanson
4/12	Gaylen & Caria Mulder
4/30	Rollyn & Kathy DeGroot



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>
4/7	John & Karen (N) Jean Trey (S)	Ken Kramer	Chet & Teresa
4/14	Ken & Rhonda (N) Cory & Kamie (S)	Delbert Cordes	John & Karen
4/21	AnnaMae (N) Kevin & Shelly (S)	Gerald Haan	Larry & Mary
4/28	Sylvia & Ivadell (N) Larry & Mary (S)	Clarence Karsjens	Marlyn & Marcia

*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

This Is My Father's World (1901)

...For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Psalm 50:12b

Maltbie Babcock was arguably the most remarkable student Syracuse University had ever seen. Hailing from an aristocratic family, he was a brilliant scholar with a winning personality. Tall and steel-muscled, he was an outstanding athlete, expert swimmer, and captain of the baseball team. He also directed the university's orchestra, played several instruments, and composed original compositions. A proficient vocalist, he directed the university glee club. He entertained other students by drawing and doing impersonations. On the side, he was an avid fisherman.

He would have been successful in any profession, but God called him to the ministry; and after further training at Auburn Theological Seminary, he became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Lockport, New York. It was a beautiful area—midway between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, not far from Niagara Falls—and Maltbie enjoyed hiking and running in the hills outside town. Telling his secretary, "I'm going out to see my Father's world," he would run or hike a couple of miles into the countryside where he'd lose himself in nature.

It was during his pastorate at Lockport that he wrote a sixteen-stanza poem, each verse beginning with the words, "This is My Father's World."

In 1886, Maltbie was called to the Brown Memorial Church in Baltimore. While there, he traveled widely and was in great demand on college campuses. He was a fresh, engaging speaker who never failed to stimulate students. In 1899, he moved to the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City. Here he found it more difficult to take off on his hikes. The work load was enormous, but Maltbie faced it stoically, writing:

*Be strong! We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle. Face it. 'Tis Gods gift. Be strong!*

When he was 42, his church presented him with a special gift—a pilgrimage to the "Holy Land." With great excitement, Maltbie departed by ship. While enroute at Naples, Italy, he was seized with a deadly bacterial fever and died at the International Hospital on May 18, 1901.

After his death, his wife compiled his writings into a book entitled *Thoughts for Everyday Living*, published in 1901. Included was Maltbie's "This Is My Father's World."

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

I Am...

1. A child of God (Rom 8:16)
2. Forgiven (Col. 1:13, 14)
3. Saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8)
4. Justified (Rom 5:1)
5. A new creature (2 Cor. 5:17)
6. Led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:14)
7. Kept in safety wherever I go (Ps. 91:11)
8. Casting all my cares on Jesus (1 Pet. 5:7)
9. Doing all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)
10. Bringing every thought into captivity (2 Cor. 10:5)
11. Being transformed by a renewed mind (Rom. 12:1, 2)
12. The righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21)
13. An imitator of Jesus (Eph 5:1)
14. Filled with laughter and rejoicing (Job 8:21)

Spring Hidden Picture Puzzle—How many items can you find?

