

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

April 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.

### **Anticipation**

This time of the year it seems as if everyone is in eager anticipation of spring. We have tired of the cold temperatures and have been teased with warm days and we are ready to move into the new season. Many have begun to talk about the planting of gardens, with seed packets in hand or at least ordered, yet the days seem to drag by. Still the signs of the change are apparent as the Robins have returned even though they had to deal with the snowfall. Their arrival seems to bring on one last blast of winter with a final snow to be dealt for a few days. I have also noticed the tulip bulbs we planted last fall are starting to push their way up through the surface bringing even more eagerness for spring.

The one thing I do not look forward to is the yard clean up. It is the one time when having a larger yard has its drawbacks. Yet for the promise of warm days and not so cold nights, this too shall be accomplished, in due time. This is perhaps the reason we may not be so eager to look forward in time as believers as well. We have become too at ease with life as we know it and are just not ready for the "unknown".

As spring is also Easter time, we are reminded of the death and resurrection of our Savior. We rejoice in the fact that he ascended, and is reigning in heaven, interceding on our behalf. Still, unlike the believers early in Christianity, we are not so in tune with the return of Christ. We are content with the seasons which are fairly predictable. We know that spring follows winter with summer soon afterward. We long for the harvest of all the good things grown in gardens or on the farms around us that taste so much better when fresh out of the field. But are we equally eager for the harvest of souls at the end of time as we now know it?

If the seasons are an indicator of what we should be expecting, the return of Christ will be when the taste of salvation will be sweetest. Living as the harvest of grace planted within us, the sweet taste of God's love will fill all who are the children of God to overflow with love. It is hard to imagine the beauty of that day when all we often talk about are the horrors of the judgment. Still for those who have their name written in the Book of Life, it will be a celebration beyond our wildest dreams!

If that is what we have to look forward to, why do we avoid thinking about Christ's return? For many we may have fallen into the same frame of mind that believers in the early church fell into. The time that has passed makes the urgency of being ready, and even for longing for the return, seem unnecessary. Complacency may be one of Satan's most powerful tools. We have the promise of Christ's return. Simply shrugging it off will not make it go away.

We also have become more at home than we should have. We do not think about the fact that God has told us we are travelers in this world. The brevity of life should tell us something about this. If we have any doubts, take a walk in a cemetery and look at the life spans noted on the markers. We see a birth date and a date of death with all of life neatly wrapped up in a hyphen. For some it may only be hours, as when a baby dies at birth while others live one hundred or more years. Still considering the date of the world God has made, it is only a brief mark in all of history.

Maybe we also wish God would not come back! We have life quite easy compared to many in the world today as well as the persecution endured in the past. I say this because we have not had our faith tried as many of those who have gone before us. We live so comfortably that, in many ways, heaven may have lost its attractiveness. We do not have a clear picture of heaven in our minds so it is difficult for us to get excited. No brochures have found their way to our churches to show us what to expect like we may find for vacation spots. The unknown is tough to long for when we have it so good already.

I wish I could tell what heaven will be like. I can't. I do know that it will be one amazing place if for no other reason than the fact that we who believe will be able to walk with God as Adam did before the fall into sin. Temptations will be non-existent and our life will be endless. No more need of a dash on a stone because we will never die but live as God intended for eternity. If we have no other reason, this should be enough to look forward for that day when Christ will return. After all, the grave is empty as He said and He promised to come for us to take us to be with Him!

Pastor Rus

## Run to the Empty Tomb 5K... it's almost here!

If you haven't registered for walking or breakfast, do so today! Would you like to see the runners/walkers? Park or stand at one of the route points and cheer them all on!! The route is posted on the table in the fellowship hall. Would love to have you help us out with the cheer team! After a couple of miles they need a little cheer. Any questions, please contact Deb.



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### Easter Morning Breakfast

Pastries, coffee, and juice will be provided for everyone before Easter morning service. Come a few minutes early to enjoy and just celebrate this joyous celebration. Because HE LIVES we can face tomorrow!!! What a wondrous love HE has for us.

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### Maundy Thursday – Celebrating the Last Passover

Have you ever wondered about the history of the Last Passover in which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper? Or the connection between Passover and Christianity? Or the significance of a special family holiday meal called a Seder?

Join us on Maundy Thursday to learn the importance of the Passover rituals as we follow Christian Reformed ordained minister, renowned teacher, author, and historian, Ray Vander Laan, while he helps us experience that evening in historical context in *The Last Passover*.

After the video, we will celebrate the Last Passover with a symbolic Seder meal, which comes from the traditional Jewish celebration of Passover. However, it is also a Christian commemoration.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us that it was at Passover that Jesus inaugurated what became known as the Lord's Supper. The Passover was the memorial of Israel's redemption from the bondage of Egypt; and the Lord's Supper is the memorial of the church's redemption from the heavier bondage of sin and Satan.

We are going to celebrate Passover as Christians in ways that are similar to what Jesus and the disciples might have done in the Upper Room. Celebrating what is traditionally a Jewish remembrance reminds us that:

- First, God revealed himself to the Hebrews and Israelites;
- Second, that Jesus was Jewish, and;
- Third, that we are connected to over 4000 years of God's work.

If Jesus has commanded that we commemorate his death until he comes again, eating of the bread and drinking of the cup in remembrance of him, should we not eagerly and affectionately come to the table and participate in this observance of his death? Please plan to join us Maundy Thursday evening.

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### Spring time fund raising project

For our Sunshine Circle Mission project we are planning on putting some new and not so new, but usable or interesting items in fun bags. You will be able to pick a surprise or fun bag for a donation to our mission fund.

For this project we need your help by donating items that you may have in your closet or cupboard that you could donate. Sample items are: Books, Devotionals, Cookbooks, Jewelry, Greeting cards, Knick Knacks, Liquid soaps, Lotions, Candles, and Christmas decorations are some ideas or any small item that would be of use to somebody. NO CLOTHES. We could also use some gift bags.

Have these items at the church by April 19th. Looking forward to your donations. It will be a fun way to donate to Missions and get a little something back.

You will be able to pick out your surprise bag and donate to our mission fund on Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup> after the morning worship service.

Call Janet Venenga @346-1853 if you have any questions.



## 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  
 4/22 Paul Bruns  
 4/22 Ida Folken  
 4/23 Betty Pott

### Happy Anniversary

4/8 Arnie & Kay Swanson  
 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 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Sunday School Teachers w/Lesson Topic<sup>#</sup></i>		<i>Coffee*</i>
4/2	Paul & Darlene (N)	Dale M.	Ryan & Stacy	Jesus The Bread of Life	Ken & Rhonda
	Mike & Kayla (S)		Jodi	Full Armor of God	
4/9	Ken & Nancy (N)	Gerald H.	Kayla & Shelly	RUNNING THE RACE	Gene & Janet
	Clarence & June (S)		Stacy	RUNNING THE RACE	
4/16	Dennis & Sharon (N)	Mark K.	EASTER SS during service		EASTER Coffee before church service
	Arnie & Kay (S)				
4/23	Rollyn & Kathy (N)	Delbert C.	Kamie & Nancy	Unity in the Church	Marlyn & Marcia
	Marlyn & Marcia		Brandy & Joel		
4/30	Ken & Janet (N)	Ken Meester	Amy & Kay	Spiritual Gifts	Dale & Angie
	Gene & Janet (S)		Brooke	Spiritual Gifts	

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

#The teacher schedule and lessons will be in the bulletin. You can always check the website as well- the bulletin is always on there (even before Sunday!!) [www.parkersburg-crc.org](http://www.parkersburg-crc.org) If you need to change a Sunday, please call one of the teachers.



# Easter Story

## Word Search

S C B M N E J E S U S C H R I S T  
K A A P O D V G V A R E J O I C E  
J R V M S P R A Y E R W C B V F S  
Y N O I X I F I C U R C T R M L E  
L A P C O I E B Q O X B B N O O L  
I R E S U R R E C T I O N R E S T  
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E K E R K O S E W N E I D A L S U  
P U T O N I R N W R P Y A O E A D  
L E Z W R W M D R Q I T Y F O P A  
B S M N D I S C I P L E S C X G S

APOSTLES  
BETRAYAL  
CAVE  
CHURCH  
CROSS  
CROWN  
CRUCIFIXION  
DISCIPLES  
FAITH  
GOOD FRIDAY

JESUS CHRIST  
JUDAS  
LAMB  
LAST SUPPER  
LENT  
MARY  
MIRACLE  
PASSOVER  
PENANCE  
PENTECOST

PRAYER  
REDEMPTION  
REJOICE  
RESURRECTION  
RISEN  
SAVIOR  
SON  
THORNS  
TOMB

