

Shepherd's Staff

August 2015

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.

How Does Your Garden Grow

One of the things I have learned since arriving in Parkersburg is that gardening is a skill that takes cultivating. I have been blessed with the tutelage of wonderful teachers who are patient with my attempts (and failures). The advice is always helpful although I do have that stubborn male gene that does not allow me to heed all the advice as perhaps I should. Still I have been grateful for the fresh beans, tomatoes and potatoes as well as the gifts from other gardeners in the church community. It is always a pleasure to share the bounty we are able to harvest.



One of the rules of gardening that I needed to learn is knowing when to plant! Hampered by vacations I do not always get this vital step just right as one year our plants froze while the next we were late starters. In a project where timing is important it is reassuring to know even here there is grace! Having time each week to keep after the weeds is also helpful as it seems these invaders thrive more readily than the desired plants! Having a garden also helps to understand the farmer's concern for rain in the proper time and amount. Still, in spite of all the challenges and setbacks, gardening proves to be a wonderful escape from the rigors of the office.

Gardening also gives me a chance to ask how my other garden grows, the one that is nurtured by God in my heart. It too takes being aware of the time in our life. We are never too young to begin learning of the gifts of grace and love that can be planted in the hearts of children (and the rest of us) before they learn the ways of the world. We also can see the importance of keeping the "weeds" out of our lives through all our days as these unwanted thoughts and habits invade and seem so quickly to take our mind off what is really important in life.

Just as we can learn from the farmers who rotate crops, we need a balance of learning of the wonders of God. A little fertilizer can also take us a long way on growing in the grace of God. The spiritual nutrients help us to grow so that we can produce the fruits desired in the garden of our hearts without depleting us of the sweet communion with our Lord. This too takes a conscious effort on our part. What we choose to ingest is vital to our spiritual heart health as we exercise our devotional renewal times.

Fortunately, there are many guides available to teach us in our life gardens. God gave us the examples of the prophets, priest and the disciples as well as his most precious gift, Jesus! The harvest we seek is of a life grown well, watered with care in the right amounts and the knowledge that allows us to grow tall and strong bringing in a crop that brings joy to the Master Gardener. Spend time with this Gardener in quiet time each day and you too will see amazing growth with fruit in abundance for sharing. I pray your garden is growing wonderfully blessed this year!

Pastor Rus

Billy Graham's Prayer For Our Nation

'Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem. We have abused power and called it politics. We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, Oh God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from sin and set us free. Amen!'

I asked God to take away my pain. God said no,
It is not for me to take away, but for you to give it up.

I asked God to grant me patience. God said no,
Patience is a byproduct of trials and troubles, it isn't granted, it is earned.

I asked God to give me happiness. God said no,
I give you blessings. Happiness is up to you.

I asked God to spare me pain. God said no,
Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me.

I asked God to make my spirit grow. God said no,
You must grow on your own, but I will prune you to make you fruitful.

I asked God for all things that I might enjoy life. God said no,
I will give you life so that you may enjoy all things.

I asked God to help me love others as much as He loves me.
God said.....Ahhhhh...finally you have the idea.

To use some of the wonderful veggies from the garden, here's a recipe to try.

Summer Vegetable Tian

Prep time 15 mins

Cook time 45 mins

Total time 1 hour

Serves: 6

Ingredients

1 Tbsp olive oil	1 medium yellow onion	1 tsp minced garlic
1 medium zucchini	1 medium yellow squash	1 medium potato
1 medium tomato	1 tsp dried thyme	salt & pepper, to taste
1 cup shredded Italian cheese		

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Finely dice the onion and mince the garlic. Sauté both in a skillet with olive oil until softened (about five minutes).
2. While the onion and garlic sauté, thinly slice the rest of the vegetables.
3. Spray the inside of an 8x8 square or round baking dish with non-stick spray. Spread the softened onion and garlic in the bottom of the dish. Place the thinly sliced vegetables in the baking dish vertically, in an alternating pattern. Sprinkle generously with salt, pepper, and thyme.
4. Cover the dish with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove the foil, top with cheese and bake for another 15-20 minutes or until the cheese is golden brown.



August Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

- 8/10 Ruth Haan
- 8/11 Kathy Heeren
- 8/12 Donald Allspach
- 8/18 Charlene Kramer
- 8/24 Doris Allspach
- 8/24 Lanae Kramer
- 8/24 Lilly Stirling
- 8/26 Karen Oltman
- 8/30 Mike Pott
- 8/31 Paul Haan
- 8/31 Stacy Edeker

Happy Anniversary

- 8/6 Ryan & Stacy Edeker
- 8/6 Joel & Brandy Reints
- 8/10 Frank & Betty Pott
- 8/13 Dave & Betty Mulder
- 8/23 Paul & Darlene Bruns
- 8/27 Ken & Nancy Mehmen
- 8/30 Gene & Janet Venenga

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. My goal is to have the newsletter in your mailboxes on the last Sunday of the month. Thanks!



CRC Service Schedule

	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Coffee*</i>
8/2	Jean Trey (N) Delbert & Sharon (S)	Ken Meester	Irv & Amy
8/9	Cory & Kamie (N) Ken & Rhonda (S)	Ken Johnson	Dennis & Lois
8/16	Kevin & Shelly (N) Sylvia & AnnaMae (S)	Ken Kramer	Clarence & June
8/23	Larry & Mary (N) John & Karen (S)	Ken Mehmen	Arnie & Kay
8/30	Ryan & Stacy (N) Steve & Charlene (S)	Dale Meester	Paul & Darlene

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

How to Read the Bible

ACCOMPLISH LEARNED PROMISES	ANSWERS LESSONS PROSPER	CLAIM OBEY QUESTIONS	COMFORT OFFER READ	COMMANDS PRAISE SOOTHE	GUIDE PRAYERS WARNINGS	HEED PRINCIPLES
-----------------------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	--------------------

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