

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

August 2016 "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.

Lessons Learned from the Garden

All creation, we are told, is able to teach us about the Creator God so we are without excuse for not knowing Him. This summer this became clearer, even to the point that creation can teach us about our behavior in life and what marvels God would have us know. I will share two things I learned from gardening this year.

The first thing I learned is about the brevity of life and what it is that is important for while we live. I learned this while picking beans, of all things. Let me explain what I mean. In my effort to get every last bean every time I am perhaps a little rough on the plants so that some branches snap. The next time I go back to pick the beans I find that while the branch is failing from the damage, the beans on this stem have continued to grow. The energy of the plant is all used in making the beans that are already started grow even at the cost of the branch dying.

This made me wonder if God is trying to portray to us the power of bearing fruit in the world around us? We all know that we are appointed a time for life and a time to die. The Teacher in Ecclesiastes points this out in chapter three. When it is evident that our time is drawing near we seem to fight for every last second but the plant fights to leave a seed, an heir in the form of a next generation.

Even our churches could learn from this example. Many churches struggle and expend much energy to sustain life for the church often at the cost of following the mandate Christ gave as he was leaving this world. "Go and make disciples" was not an optional activity for us to ponder if we are comfortable in our churches but the imperative or command for us to follow. What would our churches look like if we took our Savior's command seriously and expended our first effort in reaching the lost and then, if any resources were left use these for our comfort?

I also noted that while picking beans I would at times take the fruit before I should. Thinking the bean was larger and ready, only to find it a bit younger than I thought while still on the stem, does not change things. Once a bean is severed from the stem, it cannot be returned to grow a little more. While it is easy to simply place the smaller, tender bean in the bucket or simply eat it to hide my mistake, it still reduces the quality that could have been.

Do we ever find ourselves picking at the blessings too quickly in our churches? It can be an intimidating thing when new believers are asked to carry a burden of leadership before having time to learn and grow in the faith to a level of maturity. This can happen when we try to push children to grow too fast in the life of church or with visitors. I know this happens as simply as being a visitor to a church we once attended and I was asked to be an usher after two visits! While we did stay and join the congregation, it did seem strange and could have pushed us away without giving this church family a chance. Once plucked, the fruit cannot be put back!

Church life has changed in recent years. What may have been expected of members cannot be assumed any longer. Growth in the church is what God desires, both in number but also in spirit. We can leave an example for others in putting our first efforts into making the Kingdom known to the seeker. We must also give room for growth to occur in those seeking to find their way while being attentive to helping them to grow with opportunities that are appropriate for where people are in their faith walk.

When God told us that all creation points to His majesty we do not always listen. Picking beans gives plenty of time to think and listen to what God would have us know. The only thing we need to do is listen so we can hear what God is saying.

Pastor Rus



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>
8/7	Ken & Nancy (N) Mike & Kayla(S)	Mark Kramer	Ken & Nancy
8/14	Paul & Darlene (N) Clarence & June (S)	Delbert Cordes	Arnie & Kay
8/21	Dennis & Sharon (N) Arnie & Kay (S)	Ken Meester	Pat & Deb
8/28	Rollyn & Kathy (N) Marlyn & Marcia (S)	Ken Kramer	Larry & Mary

*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