

# Shepherd's Staff

December 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.*

## Remembering

Time flies! As I am writing this on Thanksgiving Day I recall the Thanksgiving Day five years ago when Mary and I spent the day with family in Michigan. We had spent the day before packing the largest U-Haul we could rent in preparation for our journey to Parkersburg. The only things left were the mattress on the floor, a lamp, and our alarm clock. We did not need the clock. Excited about where God was leading us made sleep a little less important.

Waking up at five in the morning we went out to a frost covered truck, with our van already loaded on a trailer and turned the key after placing the last items in. Leaving our temporary home we stepped into the truck and said to each other, "Let's go home!" The trip went quickly. We arrived to find that volunteers were ready to move us in. It was amazing how fast everything was brought into the parsonage.

Of course we did have a few challenges it seemed. The snow storms seemed to come every weekend that year. I was wondering if I would ever get the chance to preach in Iowa! Even Christmas was put in jeopardy with many of the programs canceled. It gave an uneasiness sending the same information to Naomi week after week hoping for an opportunity to actually use the material in worship. Let's not repeat that process.

We have been blessed being a part of this community. Our church family is a joy that we cannot begin to describe. We have never had time to be home sick when we have so much "family" so close. Being welcomed from the very first convinced us we were in the very place God had prepared for us.

The many memories we have include both joys and sorrows. As with all families, change has come about. Friends have come and gone. Births have brought joy and a new hope for the future but we have also said good bye to dear friends as well. The fluid nature of relationships is a part of life that leaves a permanent mark in our memories.

Some change has also taken place within the church building. Moving ahead with technology has enabled us to do more through making services and bulletins available on the web. The control booth area built in the back of the worship center continues to serve in this area. Keeping each other close through technology keeps us strong and united.

Growth within the spiritual realm encourages us to continue to trust that God is still calling us to serve and grow. Seeing what God has done builds our expectations into what the future holds. Being true to who we are as heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven we can live each day in the assured hope of blessings that we can experience now and in eternity. Together we can walk through faith knowing that the One who began the good work is faithful to complete it.

Pastor Rus

# Christmas

The word "Christmas" means "Mass of Christ," later shortened to "Christ-mass." The even shorter form of "Xmas" - first used in Europe in the 1500's - is derived from the Greek alphabet, in which the first letter of Christ's name is Xristos, therefore "X-Mass." Today we know that Christ was not born on Dec. 25th. The date was chosen to coincide with the pagan Roman celebrations honoring Saturnus (the harvest god) and Mithras (the ancient god of light), a form of sun worship. These celebrations came on or just after the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year in the northern hemisphere, to announce that winter is not forever, that life continues, and to be an invitation to stay in good spirits.



A lot of folks like Christmas  
with its gifts and mistletoe,  
It seems some folks are happier  
most anywhere they go.  
They like to think of Jesus Christ  
asleep on bed of hay  
But some folks seem to leave Him there  
and kinda' walk away.

The wise men and the shepherds  
make a pretty Christmas scene  
But Christmas is much more than that  
with colors red and green.  
God gave His greatest Gift to us---  
His very, very best  
So we could have eternal life  
and be forever blessed.

Christ Jesus in the manger, friends,  
is nice, but there is more—  
He asks us all to follow Him,  
no matter rich or poor.  
We are Christ's hands and feet, you know,  
and we should do our part,  
But most important we should have  
Christ born within our heart.

## Christmas Cookies

Yield: about 4 dozen 2-1/2-inch cookies



- 2/3 cup butter
- 2/3 cup shortening
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3-1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

Cream the butter and shortening with the sugar, then beat in eggs and vanilla. Combine flour, salt, and baking powder, then stir them into the creamed mixture to make a soft dough. Chill *thoroughly*.

Work with only a small amount of the cold dough at a time. Use lots of flour to roll dough. (May use a combination of flour and confectioners' sugar instead of plain flour. This gives the cookies a sweeter taste, and they do not taste like flour.) Roll about 1/8 inch thick, cut out cookie shapes, and use a metal spatula to transfer them to a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees F for 7 to 10 minutes, or until lightly browned.

These cookies can be decorated a variety of ways. Can frost them after they are cool. Or use colored sugar sprinkled on them before baking. Can use a mixture of egg yolks, a little water, and some food coloring and "paint" them before baking, too.



## December Birthdays/Anniversaries



### Happy Birthday

12/6 Darlene Bruns  
 12/7 Mildred Rewerts  
 12/7 Delbert Cordes  
 12/7 Joel Reints  
 12/12 Angie Meester  
 12/14 Helen Druvenga  
 12/14 Clayton Groeneveld  
 12/20 Duane Anderson  
 12/20 Betty Mulder  
 12/27 Austin Shepard  
 12/31 John Oltman

### Happy Anniversary

12/1 John & Ellen Hanna  
 12/10 Ken & Jan Johnson  
 12/10 John & Karen Oltman  
 12/17 Mark & Lanae Kramer  
 12/26 Paul & Ruth Haan  
 12/27 Irv & Amy Haan

**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. 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>
12/1	Kevin & Shelly (N) Steve & Charlene (S)	Gerald Haan	Greg & MacKenzie
12/8	Larry & Mary (N) Clarence & June (S)	Ken Mehmen	Dennis & Sharon
12/15	Ryan & Stacy (N) Marlyn & Marcia (S)	Clarence Karsjens	Don & Annie
12/22	Ken & Nancy (N) Pat & Deb (S)	Ken Johnson	Pat & Deb
12/29	Dennis & Sharon (N) Don & Annie (S)	Mark Kramer	Kamie & Cory

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

# THE ANGEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SHEPHERDS

\*\* Use the code to find out what the Angel said to the Shepherds.

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