

Shepherd's Staff

December 2022

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.

Tangled Lights and Untangled Lives

Earlier this week I was out for my daily walk when I happened to pass a homeowner preparing to put Christmas lights up on the roof line of her house. The lights were in the required tangled mess after having been stored from last year. To lighten her mood, I suggested that if someone could only invent tangle-proof lights it would make celebrating Christmas a lot easier. She readily agreed. It seems that we often get ourselves into a tangled up mess in life without even trying.

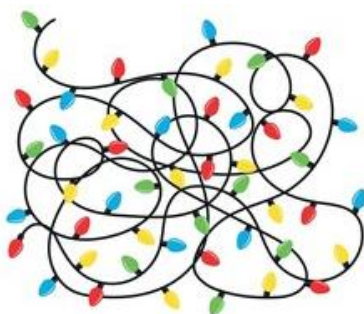
The situation also got me thinking about how God is able to call out the stars one by one every evening without a single one missing. The lights of heaven shine brightly every evening with such clarity and brilliance yet never is one missing. We can even plot our course by the consistency of the stars as sailors did for centuries. The beauty of the stars is that God does not have to deal with tangled cords to power each one. The miracle of creation is truly amazing. It is a good thing that God is not too busy with such entanglements because we have a tendency to give him enough to do untangling our lives.

This is the one thing that we should be thankful for at Christmas time. The hope we have to untangle our lives with the greatest untangler of all times. Jesus came so that we could have the entanglement of sin taken away from our lives. This is no small matter. We don't have to think very long about the mess we were in before Christ came to make us one with the Father. The shortcomings we lived with, the anxiousness we dealt with not knowing where we were headed. It is great that we have the joy in our lives of not having to live with the tangled mess of sin.

Still some people seem to doubt that Jesus is who he says he is. The Messiah came to take away the sin of the world at just the right time in history. The fact that he has not returned as of yet is an example of grace. The time of waiting is to ensure that all who are to be the children of God can come home. This is the time of year when we should be asking ourselves if we are indeed at peace with Christ and participants of his salvation. If we are, then we should also be asking ourselves if we have done all we can to share the Good News?

Untangled lives are what Christ offers in a world of tangled lights and tangled lives. While the tangled lights, especially the icicle lights that have the tails that hang down, can test our patience, still God is ready and willing to untangle our lives so that we can shine with the glory he had in mind for us from creation. We do not come tangle free but with God's help and offer of salvation we can live free of the entanglements of life and shine for his glory forever.

Pastor Rus



*"The candy cane reminds
us all of how much God cared.
And like His Christmas gift to us
It's meant to be broken
and shared."*

~ By an Unknown Author

 loveliveson.com



CHRISTMAS GIVING IDEAS FOR THIS CHRISTMAS SEASONS

- **INVITE SOMEONE OVER WHO MAY NOT HAVE FAMILY AROUND FOR CHRISTMAS OR MAKE A MEAL FOR A NEIGHBOR WHO'S BEEN STRUGGLING** -- Even though people may not outright say it, a lot of people are struggling or don't have family around with whom they want to celebrate Christmas. Whether it be medical issues or family living far away, make a meal and invite someone over to spend part of the holiday celebrations with your family.
- **STOP BY AND VISIT A NURSING HOME OR SENIOR CARE FACILITY** -- There is nothing better than bringing a smile to someone's face. And chances are, you'll do just that when your family visits a nursing home or senior care facility during the holidays.
- **MAKE AND DELIVER CHRISTMAS COOKIES TO YOUR LOCAL FIRE STATION, POLICE STATION, OR LIBRARY** -- Dig out a favorite cookie recipe, whip some up, and give some people around your community a special Christmas treat.
- **DONATE YOUR EXTRA COATS, GLOVES, SCARVES, AND BLANKETS** -- Take a look at the winter gear you NO LONGER need. Take that extra winter gear and donate to a family in your community who needs some winter clothes.
- **DONATE OR HELP AT A LOCAL FOOD PANTRY** -- Food pantries can always use help from people in the community. This is certainly true during the holidays as well.
- **PUT TOGETHER A BOX OF ITEMS FOR SOLDIERS OVERSEAS** -- One of the greatest things you can teach your kids is to appreciate our military. Whether you agree with everything the government does or not, our servicemen and woman are sacrificing, many of whom have children they are missing during the holiday season.
- **BABYSIT FOR A FAMILY WHO CAN'T AFFORD IT BUT NEED A BREAK** -- Take a look around your friend "tribe". Who could use a free night out without their kids? Offer to have their kids over while they get a date night out or some free time to do Christmas shopping without the kids snooping in the shopping cart.
- **MAKE CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR A LOCAL NURSING HOME OR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL** -- If your family and friends enjoy doing arts and crafts, host a card-making night at your house. There are super simple card-making kits available. Take the handmade cards to a local nursing home or hospital. This is one of the easiest Christmas giving ideas your family can do together.
- **OFFER TO PUT UP CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FOR SOMEONE WHO CAN'T** -- If you have a connection to someone who you know would enjoy Christmas lights, but they're physically unable to put them up themselves, offer to put up Christmas decorations for them. For so many people, Christmas lights bring a lot of joy, and you can make that happen for someone this Christmas season.



December Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

12/6	Darlene Bruns
12/7	Delbert Cordes
12/7	Joel Reints
12/12	Angie Meester
12/14	Clayton Groeneveld
12/17	Rylan Ascher
12/20	Duane Anderson
12/31	John Oltman

Happy Anniversary

12/10	John & Karen Oltman
12/17	Mark & Lanae Kramer
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 Armstrong by the 20th of the month.



Name: _____

Date: _____

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS!!

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

Baby

Bethlehem

Bible

Celebrate

Christian

Christmas

Crown

Donkey

Forgiveness

Frankincense

Gabriel

Gifts

God

Gold

Guardian

Jesus

Joseph

Joy

King

Lord

Love

Manger

Mary

Myrrh

Noël

Salvation

Sheep

Shepard

Star

Wise Men