

Shepherd's Staff

January 2023

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.

New Year's Already

As we begin a new year, we may be asking ourselves, "Where has the year gone?" It seems the older I get the faster time flies and this past year was no exception. Still with the turning of the calendar we have an opportunity to reflect on the blessings as well as the challenges from last year as well as to look forward with great expectation as to what we may expect in the new year.

For some of us we are ready to turn the page on the year with challenges that gave us financial concerns with the changes to the economy as well as the challenges to the climate. The cost of everything seems to have gone up forcing us to cut back on some of the luxuries we have grown accustomed to. In some cases, we have had to change our diets and style preferences. Still, we can say that for most of us at least we have not gone hungry. Some of us have had to curtail the amount of driving we do because the cost of driving went up so drastically. Still, we can rejoice that we are still blessed.

We were able to reestablish our worship in the sanctuary coming together with the family of believers to praise God. This is truly a blessing we can celebrate. The importance of the congregational meals that have been provided have been another source of blessing for building one another up. The church was also able to remain solvent during the difficult times which is a matter of praise and a sign of God's care for us. In difficult times we are doing quite well, all things considered.

One thing the new year does bring is the promise that God will continue to be with us. He is God Emanuel after all. That is a blessing that no one can take away from us. We also have each other. The blessing of being a part of a church family is something that we should never take for granted. When I see the family come together in times of loss, I thank God for this blessing. I also thank God for the times that are good. Family laughter is something that we can all enjoy. Gathering at special events lighten the burdens we think that we need to bear alone.

We are also blessed to live in a community that makes worship easy. When we think about parts of the world where being a Christian is forbidden, we may shudder a bit. We live in a country where we are free, but that freedom does come with some complications. Just as we are free, it seems that sin is free to run rampant. The challenges to our faith are always before us. We have the moral failures in our nation that, I believe, are the major cause for the violence in our land. We have taken God out of our schools, our courts, and in many ways our homes. Is it any wonder that we are reaping such chaos?

There is hope though. God still reigns! The church is not dead! And the fight is still on. We must continue to pray for our church, our homes, and our land. We must also be ready to take our place on the front line of the fight. Bringing the Good News to our own little part of the world is one way to start. If each one of us could bring one new member to our church this year we would start to change the world. We would make our church family stronger. We might just change one life for eternity. What a blessing that would be. Let's live for Christ in the new year and be the witness he has called us to be.

Pastor Rus



CHEESEBURGER SOUP

- 1 lbs Lean Ground Beef
- 1/4 cup Onion chopped
- 3/4 cup Celery diced
- 1 (14.5oz) can Tomatoes diced
- 3 cup Low Sodium Chicken Broth
- 2 tsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 tsp Dried Parsley
- 1/4 tsp Salt (optional)*
- 1/4 tsp Black Pepper
- 7 cup Baby Spinach
- 4 oz Reduced-Fat Cheddar Cheese shredded



1. In a large soup pot, cook the beef until brown. Add the onion and celery; saute until tender. Remove from heat and drain any excess liquids.
2. Stir in the tomatoes, broth, Worcestershire sauce, parsley, salt, and pepper. Cover, and simmer on low for 20 minutes.
3. Add the spinach, and cook until wilted, about 1-3 minutes. Top each serving with one ounce of the cheddar cheese.



THE FAMILY CIRCUS®

By BILL KEANE





January Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday


1/2 Mel Riebkes
1/6 Lila Reints
1/11 Dennis Mennen
1/16 Gerald Haan
1/17 Lauren Husz
1/28 Mary Boersma
1/30 Harold Coplen

Happy Anniversary

1/13 Larry & Mary Johnson



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.



“A snowflake
is one of God's most
fragile creations, but
look what they can
do when they stick
together!”

Snowy Feast

By R. Michael Palan



In the big picture, find these objects.

03455



sock



fish



bell



fishhook



tack



mitten



needle



baseball bat



apple



ladle



mushroom



spoon



ice-cream bar



candle



pencil



mallet