

Shepherd's Staff

July 2016

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.

It Works

Many in the world today may claim that the church is broken. Young people seem to leave home and the church behind as something that was only important to their parents and grandparents but not relevant to life today. After all, who needs an all knowing deity when there is Google as close as the cellular phone carried with them everywhere they go? There is also the claim that many in church are hypocrites, looking pious on Sunday but not so much on any other day. So how do we reach those who have walked away with the relevance of belonging?

The idea of being religious instead of being a participant in a religious body is often accepted as the substitute for going to church, after all God is everywhere. So, if I worship while shopping or playing, it is all the same. The old way of religion just isn't part of the philosophy of life in younger persons. At least that is what they may be thinking for a while.

The trouble with the logic that is portrayed is that when times of trouble come, the union with other believers is not in place to bring the support and encouragement that is so much in need. The idea of independence is what is at the base in many of these arguments. Trying to be wiser than God is dangerous ground. Many of the youth are quick to turn to friends for a form of community that church once stood for. But this is problematic as the "Prodigal Son" of Jesus' parable pointed out.

There is good news though. For many who have strayed for a time, the trend is that many will eventually return. The power of prayer still works. The time may come when facing the realities of raising children that the comforts of faith lived in the Body of Christ is once again appealing. The knowledge of the hope that believers share is sought after once again. The seeds planted in the early days and promised by God through baptism can lay dormant for what seems an eternity and still sprout and come to life.

As church members we must also be faithful to the instruction that God has given. We must live our lives in step with the calling that God has placed on us. Know that every action we do is being watched by the very ones we hope to have come to Christ. If our walk and talk do not line up, we are hurting ourselves as well as our loved ones. The example of living our faith in such a way that the blessings brought by being in the communion and fellowship of believers must be seen in us if we are to make an impression on youth today.

Of course, through it all we are called on the Spirit of God to do the real work. The moving of a cooled heart takes the fire of the Spirit to warm. Thus the prayer that is brought must include the request for this unstoppable power to be unleashed in all its splendor. Believing that God is able to bring back even the most stubborn child is also important. That is what we believe is promised in baptism, when God marks our children as His. Some just need more time to realize how important this promise is. Praise God though it still works.

Pastor Rus

Fourth of July: Remembering America as Nation Under God

"The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: that it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity." - John Quincy Adams



Christian Today 06 July 2004

America became a free country on July 4, 1776, however, what many may not know - or forget - is that America is also a nation under God founded on Christian principles.

54 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Christians, 27 held theology degrees. Many went on to form Bible societies.

The signers intended the document to officiate the separation between America and Great Britain. However, they based the Declaration which has served as a foundation to the beginnings of the American nation upon a greater foundational belief that God, or as written in the Declaration "Creator", was the source for men's irrevocable rights.

Samuel Adams, who signed the historic document and writer of the Rights of the Colonists (November 1772), once said, "Just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty, in matters spiritual and temporal is a thing that all men are clearly entitled to by the eternal and immutable laws of God and nature, as well as by the laws of nations and all well-grounded and municipal laws, which must have their foundation in the former."

Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration, also believed "God who gave us life gave us liberty."

Two of the Continental Congress' first actions were to hire military chaplains and to purchase 20,000 Bibles to remedy a national shortage.

Although America was already a free nation during the presidency of George Washington, the first president of the United States, he suggested that only religion could uphold its morality. During his farewell address he said, "And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Even if America's roots were traced back to its primitive stages, the marriage between the early inhabitants of the land and Christianity are inseparable. The Pilgrims clearly stated the purpose for their voyage even before stepping off the Mayflower: "...undertaken for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith..."

The U.S. Supreme Court also identified America as a Christian nation in 1892, after 10 years of examining hundreds of documents on the foundation of the country. The justices came to the unanimous conclusion that the documents undeniably "add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a religious people, a Christian nation."

John Quincy Adams, the sixth president of the United States, summed up the historic event that led to America's independence best when he said, "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: that it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."

The conviction that God cannot, and should not be moved from the social and governmental construct of America continues to echo in the voice of the USA's more recent leaders.

According to the late Ronald W. Reagan, the 40th President of the United States, "Without God there is no virtue because there is no prompting of the conscience....without God there is a coarsening of the society; without God democracy will not and cannot long endure....If we ever forget that we are one Nation Under God, then we will be a Nation gone under."

Katherine T. Phan
Ecumenical Press



July Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

7/3	Darrell Druvenga
7/3	Sylvia Jansen
7/3	Janet Johnson
7/8	Clarence Karsjens
7/14	Curtis Kalkwarf
7/14	Michael Mulder
7/20	Frank Pott
7/20	Marcia Allspach
7/21	Marjorie Aswegan
7/22	Luke Edeker
7/25	Lola Stirling
7/26	Kenneth Johnson
7/26	Mary Vry
7/26	Kamie Shepard
7/26	Amy Swanson-Haan
7/27	Gene Venenga
7/28	Joy Knepe

Happy Anniversary

7/5	Dale & Angie Meester
7/23	Dennis & Sharon Schipper

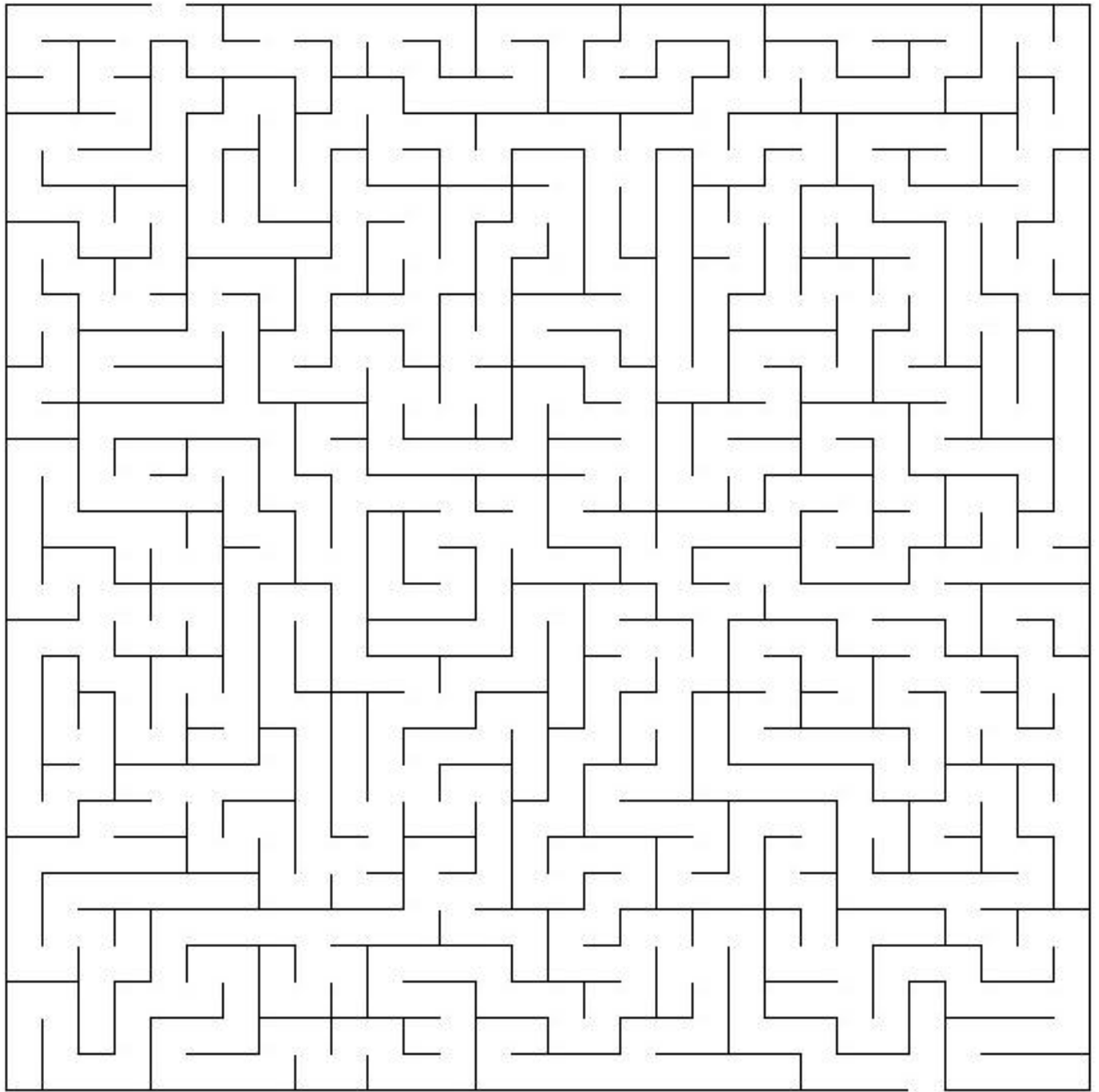


Reminder: If you have anything you'd like included in the Shepherd's Staff, please try to have it to Wendy Mulder by the 20th of the month. The goal is to have the newsletter in your mailboxes on the last Sunday of the month.

CRC Service Schedule

	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Coffee*</i>
7/3	Mike & Stacy (N) Sylvia & AnnaMae (S)	Ken Meester	Paul Haan's
7/10	Larry & Mary (N) Dave & Betty (S)	Ken Johnson	Dennis & Lois
7/17	Ryan & Stacy (N) John & Karen (S)	Ken Kramer	Joel & Brandy
7/24	Joel & Brandy (N) Frank & Betty (S)	Dale Meester	Ryan & Stacy
7/31	John & Jody (N) Steve & Charlene (S)	Gerald Haan	Kevin & Shelly

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



4TH OF JULY
MAZE

