

# Shepherd's Staff

July 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. ~ Church School 10:45 a.m.*

## Clouds Without Rain



Lately, I have been encouraged whenever storm clouds arise in our area. The lightning and the thunder that can be seen and heard is often promising for the gift of rain that the land needs so desperately. But I have been dismayed that the rain seems to fall all around us and not on us. This has only increased the threat of the drought that we are in for damaging the field crops as well as the lawns around us. The lack of rain is already slowing the growth of the crops, so the effect of no rain is seen already. In his letter to the church, the biblical writer Jude uses the term of clouds without rain as identifying people that were infiltrating the church. These people are devoid of the true faith that leads to salvation.

In our society we can see many cases where those who have fallen away from the faith that is biblical still seek to find comfort in the church. The many denominations that are falling to societal views of what the Bible calls sin is astounding. The lack of courage to stand on the truth of scripture is frightening as society continues to attack the morals of the church and society itself. Jude is very explicit in the warning he gives.

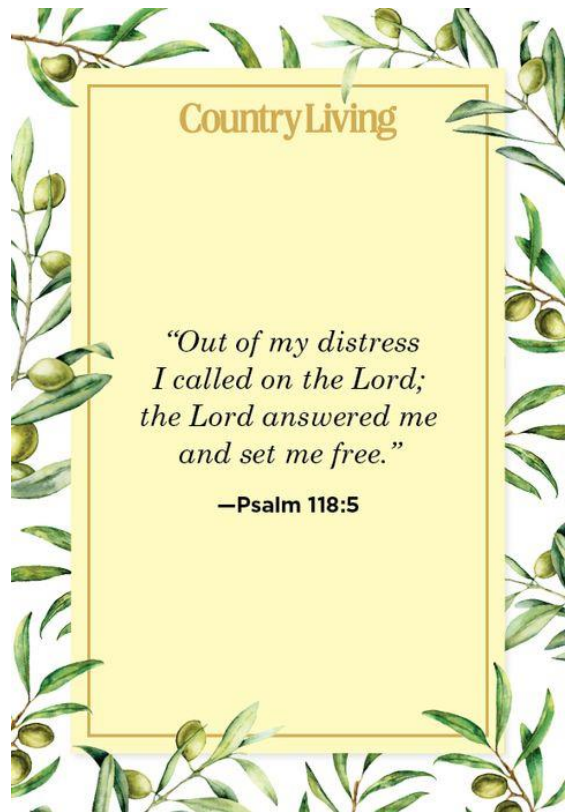
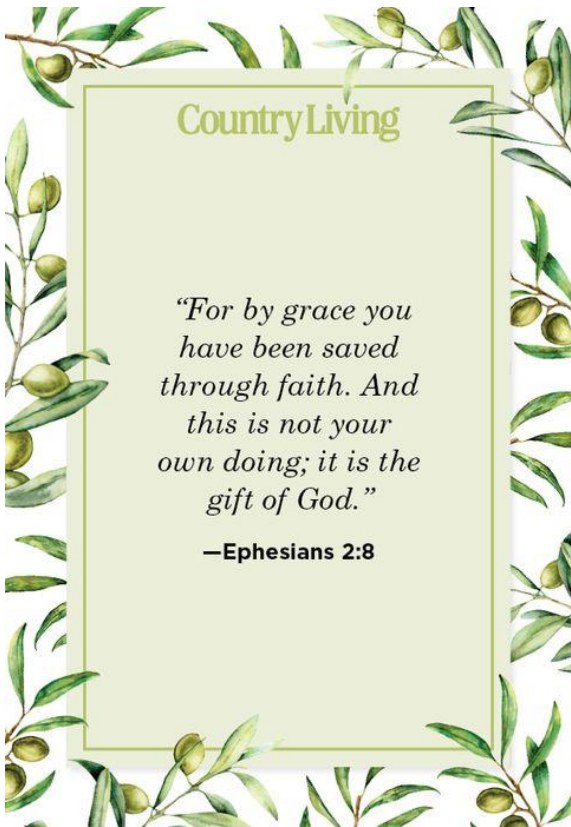
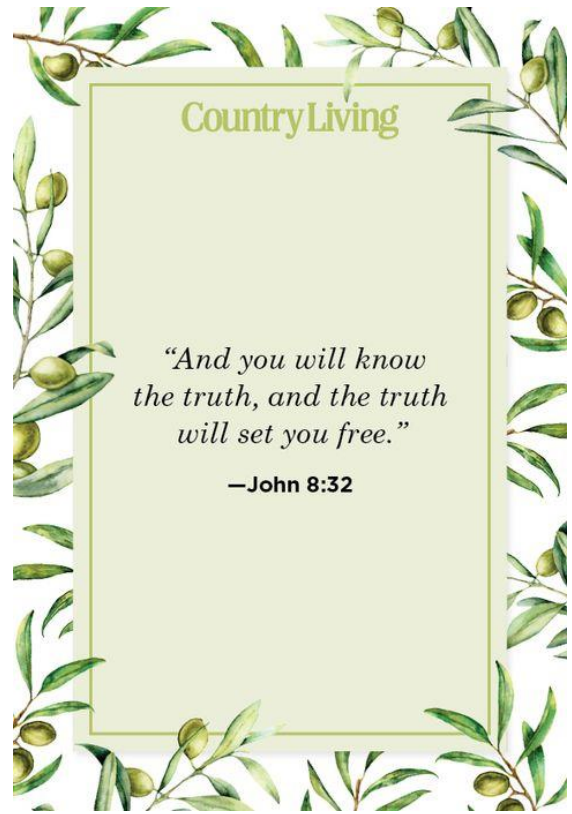
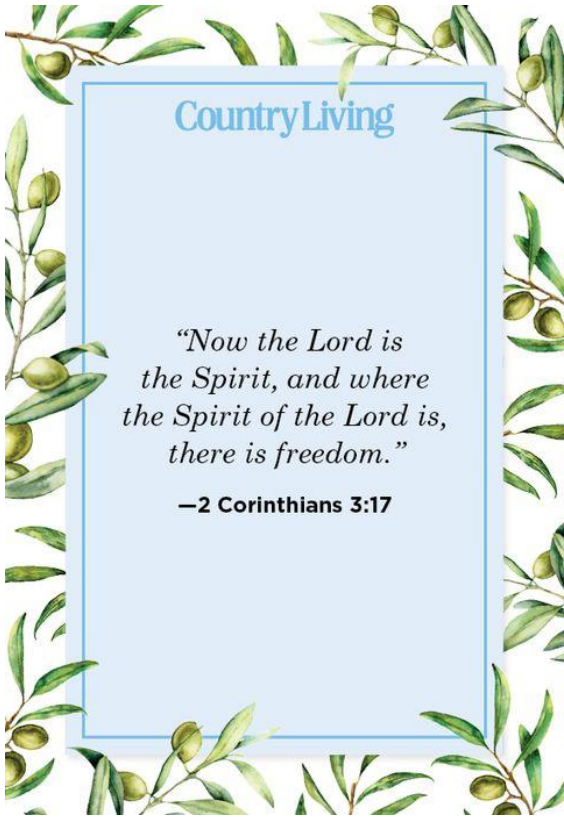
Jude intended to write the church a letter of encouragement but was unable to do so because of the sin that was rampant in the church. We hold that one of the signs of a healthy church is the exercise of discipline. This is how we can make a mark on society by holding to the moral values scripture offers. Yet in the world of today we find the churches remaining silent or worse, accepting the cultural shifts that minimize sin into a new normal. We are falling to the use of science to define what is truth instead of looking to God's Word.

The fact that God created humanity male and female, in his own image is being questioned with the sin that brought destruction on Sodom and Gomorrah being mainstreamed into our culture. We also have the sanctity of marriage being challenged with marriage no longer being limited to a male and a female. This is a disgrace that we must be willing to speak out against. The silence of the church must not be seen as an acceptance of these sins.

So, what is the church to do? The call to be militant against these sins has been challenged in the courts of our land. Still, we must remember that we are called to acknowledge that we have dual citizenship as Christians. We are citizens of God's Kingdom first and then of the nation we live in on earth. As we stand, we must also work to bring the lost to repentance so that we can heal our nation. Prayer is the voice we have to bring about change in the hearts of the lost. We also have the opportunity to care for the lost as a way of nurturing them into life within the scope of God's love and instruction as found in the Bible.

If we are living the truth of God's word, we may begin to see the promise of the Spirit in the lives of those around us. We may also see the promise of clouds that produce more than thunder and lightning but beneficial rain. The power of God to change the world is not limited to our work but God does challenge us to work with him in changing the world for the better.

Pastor Rus





# July Birthdays/Anniversaries



## Happy Birthday

- 7/3 Darrell Druvenga
- 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 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 Armstrong 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.

## 4th of July Fruit Platter

Take advantage of summer berries for this 4th of July Fruit Platter that is the perfect dessert for a hot summer night. It's simple to throw together, looks festive, and is not very heavy. It's also a great make ahead dessert too!

**Prep Time** 20 minutes    **Total Time** 20 minutes

### Ingredients

- 2 pints strawberries
- 1 pint blueberries
- 1 large angel food cake

### Instructions

Wash and dry berries. Chop strawberries in half and cut cake into 1x2 inch cubes. Place blueberries in a rectangle bowl in the top left corner of an 11x17 platter. Alternate layers of strawberries and cake in straight lines across the rest of the platter to create the stripes.



### Nutrition Information: Yield: 8 Serving Size: 1

*Amount Per Serving:* Calories: 59 Total Fat: 0g Saturated Fat: 0g Trans Fat: 0g Unsaturated Fat: 0g Cholesterol: 0mg Sodium: 27mg Carbohydrates: 14g Fiber: 3g Sugar: 8g Protein: 1g

# Summer Gardening

## A Tasty Maze Puzzle

