

Shepherd's Staff

March 2014

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.



Praying in a Texting World

Technology is changing the way we live. I am sure you have noticed the factualness of that statement. After all we do use cars to get around, live in homes heated without needing to split firewood or have coal delivered. In many ways technology has improved our lives. Yet as I was responding to a text message from my son I began to wonder if we are losing our ability to communicate with God?

If your family is anything like ours we have the ability to screen our calls and often make use of this feature on our phones. This makes the texting a more preferred form of communication for many as a response is likely to be received before a return phone call comes along. While I do not wish to imply that this technology is not valuable, for receiving pictures of grandchildren is always welcome, I do miss the idea of just picking up the phone and talking.

If I miss talking with family and friends we can also wonder if we are "screening" the calls that come from God. We have many older songs that talk about the closeness of conversation with God. Spending time alone with God in prayer is even spoken of as being as vital as having our breath! But are we taking opportunity of this wonderful privilege of having a God who actually wants us to speak with him? Are we so wrapped up in our new technology that we would be happier if we could send a text, short and sweet, taking little time and just wait for a reply? While this may qualify as communication it leaves much room for relationship.

This shortfall can have serious consequences. We are told by our Savior that "My sheep know my voice..." but how can we know if we never hear this beautiful voice? Punching keys on a telephone is not the same! Maybe it is time we get back to the basics of our faith and spend a little time in the original wireless communication, prayer! God tells us he delights in hearing from his children. What parent or grandparent doesn't? So when was the last time you scheduled into you busy day time alone with God?

Technology will have its place in our world as we continually work to do more in less time and with less material. But we should never lose sight of what is worth keeping from the past. Prayer is what God the Son taught us. The lasting value of Christ's teaching should be not only explored but sought after and put into use. If we spend time talking with God and being alert to a response we will be better able to hear his voice and know who is speaking. Samuel needed to learn this after many tries on God's part. Are we missing out on something really big because we are screening the voice of God waiting for a text message?

Pastor Rus

A Letter From Our Friend:

To the Congregation of Parkersburg,

I want to thank you for the cards and the church news that Marcia sent me. I have been doing better here after having problems with my hearing and dizziness. I have been to different doctors here and they give me more pills to take and advise me to use my cane.

The weather is so changeable here. We've had snow, rain, and fog. I'm waiting for it to clear up and warm up. It was nice, 55 degrees, and we went for a walk to the corner. The bird is doing fine. It does a lot of jabbering. Their cat tries to get him all the time. Their dog sleeps most of the day and waits by the door for Linda to come in. She works at the college and Red goes to elementary school, first grade to help the teacher. So we are alone on Mondays until noon. Ethan, their grandchild, comes here after school. Red has to get him. He likes having Oma here. Our granddaughter works at Walmart in the eye department, giving glasses for people's eyes.

I get a lot of sleep in the afternoon when we are alone which seems to help a lot.

Linda sees to it that I eat a lot. She dishes my food up and says 'eat it.' It's good to eat someone else's cooking. Red does some of the cooking too.

I'm closing for now. Hope everyone is OK there. I miss being there but it is not possible. Thank you for everything you've done for me.

Love you all,

Francis Frieling

144 Elizabeth Dr.

Lake View, Arkansas 72642



Cal & Jamie Hofland, West Africa

Dear friends,

Transitioning back and forth between two worlds involves many first and lasts. Here are a few of our 'lasts', and 'firsts' as we settle here in our West African village.

Leaving the US 'lasts':

- last hot shower
- last putting on boots, hats and mittens to go outside
- last piece of bacon
- last time to watch the news on TV, or hear a Christmas song on the radio
- last time putting on shoes without first checking for scorpions inside
- last time loading the dishwasher and washing machine

Arriving again in West Africa 'Firsts':

- first glimpse of the star filled sky without light pollution
- first non-store-tasting bananas
- first tick (on Calvin, Jamie picked it off)
- first case of the runs (Jamie. She is better now)
- first batch of homemade yogurt 'incubated' in the sun
- first trip walking to the local market
- first snake killed (by Levi and our tutor, in the front yard)
- first time praying for someone in Pular and telling them about Jesus (the best 'firsts' of all)



Psalm 150:1. "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands!"

Hear ye! Hear Ye!

Make A Joyful Noise at our **Spring Supper**

Sunday March 9th at 5:30

Special Feature will be:
Chad, Michelle, Elizabeth and Matthew Swanson
(Arnie and Kay's family)
and
Isaac and Eli Smith

Invite your friends and children

RSVP

Marcia: 319-346-2200

Free will offering for Missions



March Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

3/9 Michael Stirling
 3/11 Kathleen DeGroot
 3/15 Kay Swanson
 3/18 Greg Allspach
 3/24 Teresa Hay
 3/25 Brenda Brown
 3/26 Naomi Allspach
 3/28 Rhonda Meester
 3/29 Jennifer Meether

Happy Anniversary

3/19 Pat & Deb Prier
 3/21 Don & Annie Allspach



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.

Greeters

Ushers

*Coffee**

3/2	Dennis & Sharon (N) Don & Annie (S)	Ken Mehmen	Arnie & Kay
3/9	Ken & Janet (N) Mark & Lanae (S)	Delbert Cordes	Gaylen & Carla
3/16	Henry & Kathy (N) Steve & Charlene (S)	Mark Kramer	Paul & Darlene
3/23	Delbert & Sharon (N) Clarence & June (S)	Ken Kramer	Ken & Rhonda
3/30	Ken & Rhonda (N) Pastor Rus & Mary (S)	Gerald Haan	John & Karen

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



Everything Spring

Name as many things related to spring as you can - one for each letter of the alphabet!

A _____

J _____

S _____

B _____

K _____

T _____

C _____

L _____

U _____

D _____

M _____

V _____

E _____

N _____

W _____

F _____

O _____

X _____

G _____

P _____

Y _____

H _____

Q _____

Z _____

I _____

R _____