

Shepherd's Staff

November 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. ~ Life Plus Wed., 6:30 p.m.



The Cycle of Life



The changing of the seasons has brought to my mind the cycle of life for the leaves on the trees. This became apparent with the falling of the leaves that need to be cleaned up in my yard. The cycle is, of course, one that traces the life of the leaves beginning in the winter with the trees in a state of dormancy. The warmth of the spring brings out the buds that will become the life-giving leaves of summer. Still the fall comes around when the shorter days and cooler nights cause the leaves to die off and fall to the ground as the cycle begins again with the long nights and cold of winter. Life in a church, the experts say, follows the same cycle of life.

Churches do seem to have stages in life that follow the cyclical pattern of life. We find that there is a barren time where no church exists in a community. The people of the community gather to form an assembly of believers who organize into a life bringing church. Like minded, they welcome the opportunity to gather and praise God that invites growth both in number and spiritually. This is the combination of the spring and summer of the church.

The fall season likely sneaks up on the church as congregations become comfortable in the numbers and growth begins to slack off. It may not be obvious at first but after a time some members start to lose interest and fall away. At the same time the members themselves reach the fall of their life cycle and some begin to pass away. The decline is not rapid, but the numbers begin to decline and not be replaced with new members. This is often the start of the internal matters that soon take the attention of the members. Budgets become more difficult to reach and programs find it more difficult to find the volunteers needed to function properly.

The stagnate stage of winter is one where survival is the only thing on the mind of the congregation. We see examples of this stage in our Classis already. The sad fact of the matter is that the worship becomes more self-serving than God glorifying. The dormant stage of a church is one where hope begins to fade. Still, we must realize that the church is not about us but about God and being the body of Christ.

We are at a time when we must make the difficult decisions about our future. Since the time I came to this church, according to my count, we lost thirty-two members to glory. We have also lost some of our children to other churches when they moved from the area or simply for a more contemporary form of worship. This still leaves us with a deficit number to carry on with. This does not mean that the future holds no hope for us. It simply means that we must look to how we can become more inviting to the community around us. We live in a town where there are many unchurched people. Yet we must ask ourselves, what are we doing to attract this growing number of people?

We also must decide who we are going to reach out for. Are we looking to reach out for the traditional worshipper or are we looking to become a blended style of worshipping church? If contemporary is too far for us, what can we do to bring the lost into the fold of Christ. These are the questions we must be asking ourselves before we become the worshippers that gather for our own benefit and not to the glory of God. These are all questions to ask ourselves in the next year as we will need to define who we are so we can look for a new pastor in my impending retirement. We also will want to be as strong as we can be to draw a new pastor to our church. Having a plan will help us reach not only the strength to carry on but also to be what God wants us to be. Let's all work together to bring in the lost to God's honor and glory.

Pastor Rus

We Gather Together

*We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
He chastens and hastens his will to make known;
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing,
Sing praises to his name: He forgets not his own.*

*Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
Ordaining, maintaining his kingdom divine;
So from the beginning the fight we were winning;
Thou, Lord, wast at our side, All glory be thine!*

*We all do extol thee, thou leader triumphant,
And pray that thou still our defender wilt be.
Let thy congregation escape tribulation;
Thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!
Amen*

--Traditional Thanksgiving Hymn



THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR THIS THANKSGIVING

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you have a computer you are part of the 1% in the world who has one.

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more blessed than the many who will not survive this day.

If you have never experienced the fear in battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation, you are ahead of 700 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church without the fear of harassment, arrest, torture or death you envied by three billion people in the world.

If your parents are still alive and still married, you are very rare.

If you can hold your head up and smile, you are not the norm, you are unique to all those who live with doubt and despair.

If you can read this list, you just received a double blessing because you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world who cannot read at all.

Have a good day, count your blessings, and above all THANK GOD FOR ALL YOUR BLESSINGS.



November Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

11/3	Lois Mennen
11/3	Dennis Schipper
11/4	Brandy Reints
11/6	JoLynne Husz
11/8	Rus Boersma
11/14	Wendy Armstrong
11/17	Annie Allspach
11/19	John Husz
11/22	Kayla Stirling
11/25	Nancy Mehmen
11/29	Diane Roberts

Happy Anniversary

11/6	Kevin & Shelly Meester
11/10	Dennis & Lois Mennen



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.



Thanksgiving

WORD SEARCH



CHILDREN

DINNER

FAMILY

GATHERING

GRATEFUL

HOLIDAY

HOME

JOYFUL

MEMORIES

OCCASION

PARENTS

RELATIVES

SEASON

VISITING

THANKFUL