

Shepherd's Staff

December 2019

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.

First

It recently occurred to me that many things in our lives strive to be first. Taking first place is what we all seem to be challenged to do in the competitive world we live in; but, in reality, only one can be first in the contests that are before us. Still every activity clamors to take the coveted spot of first in our lives.

What sets things apart to make them worthy of first place can vary as widely as a dog wanting to play when there is work to be done to which child gets to be first to gain our attention. Does the job take first place in a competitive work market or does family take top spot? Then there are the things that we all must take into account of planning for the future or living only for today.

Perhaps this is a good place to mention that church also calls for our first consideration. Participation in worship is something that is expected yet the events that also seem so important draw us away from what we grew up with, namely worshipping on Sundays. The question remains, how do we decide that is rightfully first?

In religious circles we find that church is often seen as demanding the first place as we have the promise of all being worthwhile in the everlasting time frame. Yet family events that never used to compete for the time when worship occurs now frequently call us to participate in sports or other extracurricular events. Children often take the priority in our decision making process because of the peer pressure they are under. Still is this the best case for putting God second?

Since only one can be first, anything we put first before God makes God second or worse. While we all want to do right with our children are we teaching them the wrong priorities? If we find it easy to give up on church so we can give our children the opportunities in life, what are we saying about the value of church in our lives? Scripture is clear, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God...." We no longer live with heaven in view but have become near sighted, looking to what this world has to offer.

I am proposing that we all concentrate on our far sighted vision and look to the glories of heaven as being of more long lasting value. How we choose what is first in our lives will have an eternal effect on the lives of our children. If we choose the world over heaven, will God choose to give us what we want instead of what is truly best for us?

This advent season and into Christmas let us resolve to place Christ first in our lives and in the lives of our children. Heaven is too wonderful to chance missing out on living there. No sport is worth it. No other activity is able to compare. So let's live with Christ in our hearts so that we have first things first and everything else in the proper places in our lives. God first then all else is the only way Christians should live.

Pastor Rus

OREO COOKIE CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

These cute Oreo Cookie Christmas Ornaments are a quick and easy holiday treat! They're so simple, even the kids can help make them. Serve them at a holiday party, or package a few and give them as edible gifts to friends, neighbors, or teachers.



INGREDIENTS

- 16 oz white candy coating wafers
- 24 chocolate sandwich cookies like Oreos
- 24 miniature peanut butter cups
- Miniature M&M candies or other small candies

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper or parchment paper. Place the candy coating in a medium microwave-safe bowl. Microwave in 30-second increments, stirring after every 30 seconds to prevent overheating, until the coating is melted and smooth.
2. Using forks or candy dipping tools, dip a cookie in the melted coating until it's completely covered. Remove it from the coating and let the excess drip back into the bowl, then place it on the baking sheet.
3. While the coating is still wet, press a mini peanut butter cup onto the side of the cookie. Add mini M&Ms to the top in a decorative pattern.
4. Repeat, dipping the remaining cookies and decorating them with peanut butter cups and M&Ms. If the coating gets too thick while dipping, re-warm it briefly in the microwave until fluid again.
5. Refrigerate the tray to let the coating set completely, for about 10 minutes. Store these cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to two weeks.



A Christmas Prayer

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Loving Father,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing
which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds
with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.
Amen.



December Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

12/6 Darlene Bruns
 12/7 Delbert Cordes
 12/7 Joel Reints
 12/12 Angie Meester
 12/14 Clayton Groeneveld
 12/17 Rylan Ascher
 12/20 Duane Anderson
 12/20 Betty Mulder
 12/27 Austin Shepard
 12/31 John Oltman

Happy Anniversary

12/10 Ken & Jan Johnson
 12/10 John & Karen Oltman
 12/17 Mark & Lanae Kramer
 12/26 Paul & Ruth Haan
 12/27 Irv & Amy Haan



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.

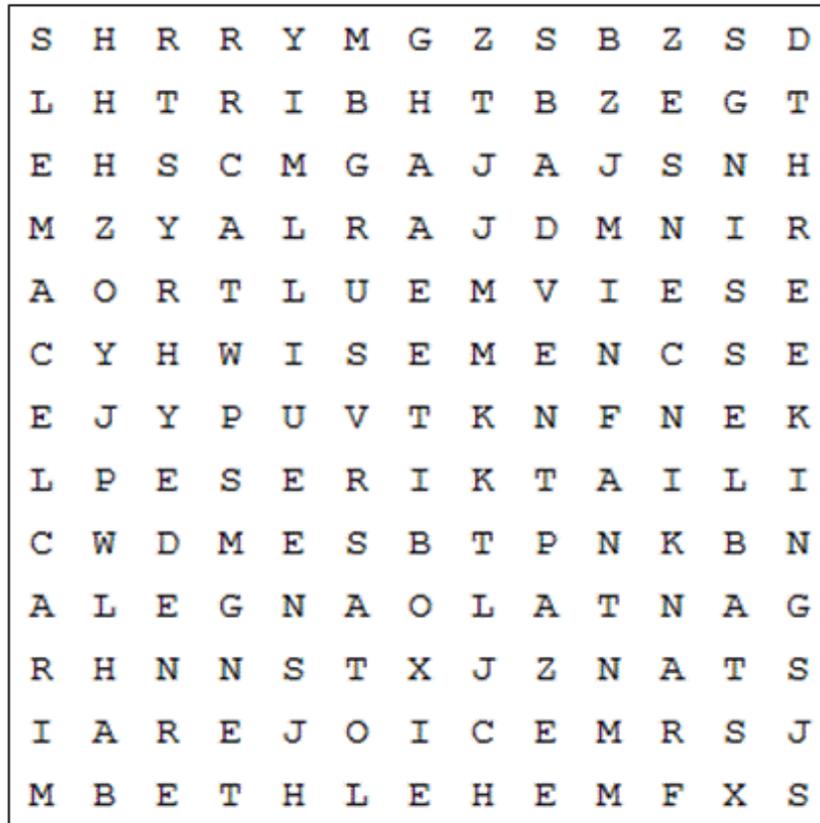
	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Sunday School Teachers[#]</i>	<i>Coffee*</i>
12/8	Mike Stirling Family (N)		Amy & Kay	Ryan & Stacy
	Marlyn & Marcia (S)		Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God	
12/15	JoLynne & Lauren (N)		Joel & Brandy	Larry & Mary
	Arnie & Kay (S)		Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace	
12/22	Marlyn & Marcia (N)			Dennis & Lois
	Melvin R. & Rod Mulder (S)			
12/29	Pat & Deb			Pat & Deb

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

#The teacher schedule will be in the bulletin. You can always check the website as well- the bulletin is always on there (even before Sunday!!) www.parkersburg-crc.org If you need to change a Sunday, please call one of the teachers.



Joy to the World



ADVENT
ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
BIRTH
BLESSINGS
CAMELS
FRANKINCENSE

INFANT
JESUS
JOSEPH
MAGI
MANGER
MARY
MIRACLE

MYRRH
NATIVITY
REJOICE
STABLE
STAR
THREE KINGS
WISE MEN