

Shepherd's Staff *We gather to worship, we go to serve our Lord.*

March 2018 *"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.

Why the Fuss over Easter?

It seems that Easter is best known for egg hunts, Easter bunnies, and of course being able to dress in wonderful new clothes. Well, maybe not the new clothes anymore, but we often lose sight of what Easter is all about. Perhaps it is because we live in the age of political correctness. After all, who really wants to hear of crowns of thorns, whippings, and a cross of all things? These really only work to bring us down when we would rather take a "selfie" to share or find out if we have more "likes" on Facebook as we show off our newest gadget.

The simple fact is that Easter is the most important day of the Christian calendar, yes even more than Christmas! While Christmas does mark the entry into the world of the Savior, Easter is the climax of the redemption plan God put into effect. What changed on the day we know as Easter is that death lost its grip of fear on all who believe in Jesus as the Savior. Easter is the assurance that the debt of sin, calling for death, is paid in full for all who claim Jesus as Lord and Savior. What we have been given is a new beginning!

Recall that when God created heaven and earth, we are told that that was the beginning of all things, in regard to our origin. The beginning was created perfect where God and the creation were able to walk together in harmony because it was "very good!" As we know, things did not stay that way. Sin changed everything. Death became the penalty for sin and even the ground was cursed, causing hardship and pain. Most tragic was that the relationship between God and humanity was destroyed. Sin and God could not co-exist. Atonement was needed to restore the relationship. The trouble arose in that nothing on earth, nor any simple human, could atone for the sins because every human was tainted by sin and no other "thing" could pay humanity's debt.

This is where Jesus entered the picture. He was not an ordinary human. He was born as the Son of God and the Son of man. God intervened in the world he created to restore all things to himself. Jesus took our guilt, our debt, and made it his own even though he had no sin of his own. He died the death of the cursed, suspended between earth and heaven on a cross as a sign of being rejected by both. Even God the Father turned his face away, unable to look at the sin his only begotten Son was bearing for the crown of creation, humanity.

On Good Friday, the Son of God died! It is not the living who are buried, only the dead. Yet on the first day of the week, Sunday, a new beginning dawned on the earth. Death's hold was broken and Jesus, the Christ arose! Gloriously the presence of God came out of the tomb with many observances of him recorded for our benefit. The new beginning would find those who believe in Jesus as God and Savior would no longer need to fear death. Jesus opened the way to the presence of God to dwell among us again. No longer excluded because of sin because the atonement came in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus! This is the most important news to ever come to humanity. Still, some chose to turn away from God and this gift of redemption.

For anyone who believes, we should also be shouting from the rooftops the story of God's salvation. Still we get caught up in the ways of the society we live in as travelers. We fail to see that life is about the promise God made even at the "beginning". The new beginning is the promise fulfilled and the finally will come when Jesus returns to take home the redeemed. For those of us who believe, standing before Jesus the judge will show the extent of the mercy of God on our lives. Still we will be judged as to what we did with the most wonderful news of all times. If we hoard the news we will need to answer for the souls lost because we were silent. If we lived in celebration of the resurrection, telling any who will listen, we will receive the crown prepared for the righteous. Letting our light shine is what is expected. Living up to that expectation is how we live out the assurance of the atonement in our lives.

We are saved through believing in faith that the grace of God reaches us but we live that salvation through the obedience of sharing the hope Easter gives us. That is what the fuss of Easter should be about. Not chocolate bunnies and eggs, but the hope of the new beginning we have in Christ Jesus, our Savior, through his atoning work assured because he rose and lives today.

Pastor Rus



A Prayer in Spring

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers today;
And give us not to think so far away
As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
All simply in the springing of the year.

Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,
Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
And make us happy in the happy bees,
That swarm dilating round the perfect trees.

And make us happy in the darting bird
That suddenly above the bees is heard;
The meteor that thrusts in with needle bill,
And off a blossom in mid-air stands still.

For this is love, and nothing else is love,
The which it is reserved for God above
To sanctify to what ends He will,
But which it only needs that we fulfill.

Robert Frost



Cheery-O!

If you smile the day will be cheery,
If you smile the day will be bright.
If you think good thoughts you'll be happy,
And everything will work out just right.
So don't let a frown turn you sour,
Don't let bad thoughts make you blue.
Just always remember, think positively,
For how you feel is up to you!

Susan L. Wiener



March Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

3/9 Michael Stirling
 3/11 Kathleen DeGroot
 3/15 Kay Swanson
 3/18 Gregory Allspach
 3/24 Teresa Hay
 3/26 Naomi Allspach
 3/28 Rhonda Meester

Happy Anniversary

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



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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.

	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Ushers</i>	<i>Sunday School Teachers[#]</i>	<i>Coffee*</i>
3/4	Don & Annie (N) Ken & Nancy (S)	Joel & Kellen	Ryan & Stacy Deb	Ryan & Stacy
3/11	Dennis & Sharon (N) John & Karen (S)	Ken J.	Kayla & Shelly Stacy	John & Karen
3/18	Ken & Jan (N) Rollyn & Kathy (S)	Luke E.	Amy & Kay JoLynne	Pat & Deb
3/25	Mike Ascher Family (N) Arnie & Kay (S)	Rollyn D.	Kamie & Nancy Brandy	Paul & Darlene

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

#The teacher schedule and lessons 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.

Spring Fun Word Search

Can you find the words associated with the coming of Spring?

C U K K M F X S R E W O L F U Q T
I A X I K A O R N R Z G N P U D R
L T S W T S D E E S E F N G B T A
R B A L I E E E H T S T F C T S I
P G U V B R R G L S M M S B B D N
S X H D G M R I R X A X L A L R S
U F Y M S O R E T R R O E B E I D
N P W F W P W K B O S Z Y G G B A
S C I I A O O L B S I P R A N Z F
H W N L H M E I O S Z Y W O I E F
I G C S U S N M T C A M P R N H O
N U O G H T S N D M E C I H E C D
E I X U O Q P U D D L E S Q D R I
A G Y V G W A G N I T S E N R A L
D U Y N D P F S D N I W N Z A M S
Y B A S E B A L L V P I C T G Z A
L S J Y X A M G N I T N A L P M J

APRIL
BASEBALL
BIRDS
BLOSSOMS
BUDS
DAFFODILS
EASTER
FLOWERS
GARDENING
GREEN
GROWING
KITE
MARBLES
MARCH
MAY
NESTING
PLANTING
PUDDLES
RAIN
ROBIN
SEEDS
SHOWERS
SUNSHINE
TULIP
WINDS