

Shepherd's Staff

October 2020

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.

Clouds of Smoke

The haze that we are experiencing of late is smoke from the fires in the western part of our country. The fires that are generating this smoke are burning more intensely this season than normal according to the officials. With all this smoke in the air I began to think about the sign that God used often in the Old Testament for his presence. In the exodus of Israel from Egypt, God would appear to his people as a pillar of smoke by day and a pillar of fire at night to show his presence. When Moses met with God he appeared as smoke covering the top of a mountain complete with lightning and thunder. We also read when the temple was completed that God showed up as a cloud of smoke and entered the most holy place. All these appearances make me wonder if God is trying to make his presence known to us today?

There are three things that this layer of smoke could be trying to tell us. The first is that God is still present with us in a real way. Even though we do not always smell the smoke we can see the result of it being in our atmosphere. A good reminder that God is the God who is always just a prayer away and always close enough to hear when we call. Second, we can still see the sun through the haze of smoke and receive the benefits of the sun's warmth and light. When I think that the presence of God is so close we can still see the blessing of the Son through the presence. The love of Jesus is still able to shine through to us with all the blessings he has purchased for us at Calvary. The third thing I think about is that while we can see the effects of the smoke we are not left without a choice. Many of us continue to go about our business like the smoke is not even there. God still gives us the free will to come to him or reject his love.

With the smoke and all the other "natural" events that are happening in the world it seems to make sense that God is sending a calling card for us to wake up from our sleepy attitude. The fires out west and the storms in the southern parts of our nation, the droughts and the winds that take and decimate communities do seem to be happening at an increasing rate not to mention a pandemic that is changing the way we live and move about. If God is trying to wake us up, are we listening? Have we become so complacent that we don't see God in our lives anymore? The Bible warns about drifting away from the presence of God. Still God is merciful and may just be sending a warning to come back to him before it is too late.

The next question is likely to be, how should we respond to what is happening in our world today. The first thing we should do is to make sure that we have our hearts in the right place. See if we have displaced God with the things of this world or if we have the first things first, God as number one in every part of our lives. What follows next should be that we are praying for those that God has placed around us. Our families, both the one God allowed us to be born into and the one in the Body of Christ, are living in the way of the cross of Jesus. It is easy to change our priorities in life but are we living our lives with Christ as head and first in all we do. With so many things vying for our attention it is easy to push God to the background. The third thing that we must also do is to live out the mandate that Christ gave on his leaving the world. Are we spreading the Good News of salvation to those God has placed around us? This is more vital as the time is running out for the return of Jesus to claim the redeemed.

Maybe the smoke is just smoke but if it is a wakeup call, we should not be found sleeping through it. God is still with us and he still expects us to place him above all else. If the smoke is that call to return, can we afford to disregard it?

Pastor Rus

Iced Pumpkin Cookies



Wonderful spicy iced pumpkin cookies that both kids and adults love!

Prep: 20 mins

Cook: 20 mins

Additional: 40 mins

Total: 1 hr 20 mins

Servings: 36

Yield: 3 dozen



Ingredients

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

½ teaspoon ground cloves

½ teaspoon salt

½ cup butter, softened

1 ½ cups white sugar

1 cup canned pumpkin puree

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups confectioners' sugar

3 tablespoons milk

1 tablespoon melted butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

Step 1

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, ground cloves, and salt; set aside.

Step 2

In a medium bowl, cream together the 1/2 cup of butter and white sugar. Add pumpkin, egg, and 1 teaspoon vanilla to butter mixture, and beat until creamy. Mix in dry ingredients. Drop on cookie sheet by tablespoonfuls; flatten slightly.

Step 3

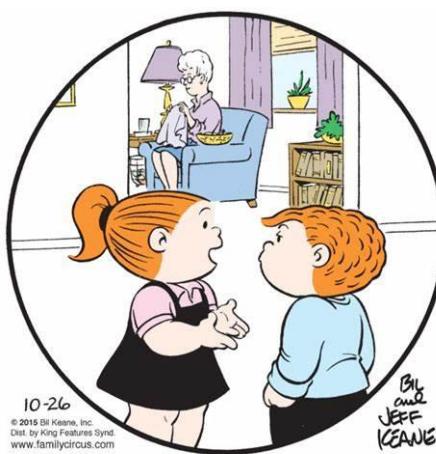
Bake for 15 to 20 minutes in the preheated oven. Cool cookies, then drizzle glaze with fork.

Step 4

To Make Glaze: Combine confectioners' sugar, milk, 1 tablespoon melted butter, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Add milk as needed, to achieve drizzling consistency.

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“The two places we know we’re
always welcome are church
and Grandma’s house.”



October Birthdays/Anniversaries



Happy Birthday

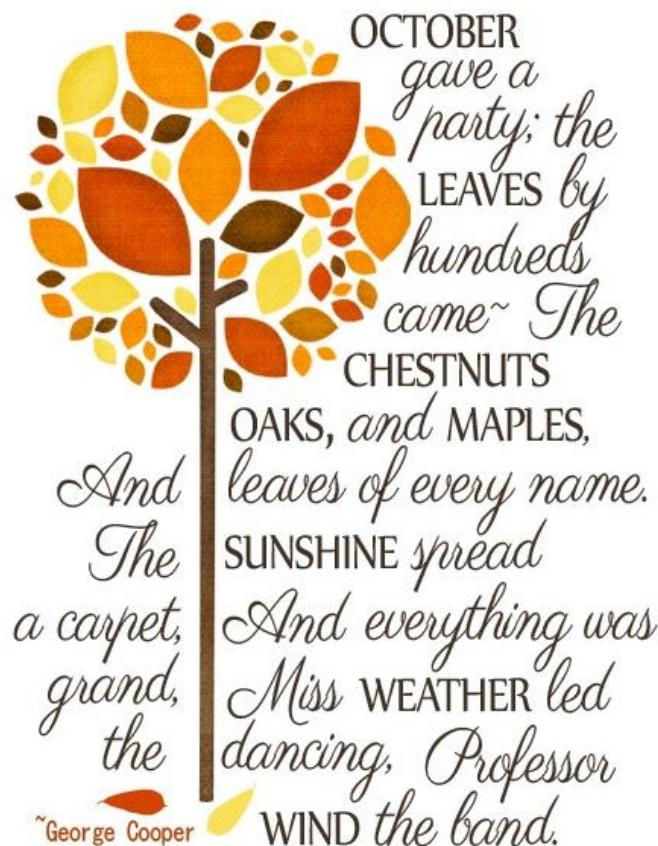
- | | |
|-------|-----------------|
| 10/7 | Twila Jansen |
| 10/8 | Janet Venenga |
| 10/16 | Stacy Ascher |
| 10/23 | Ken Mehmen |
| 10/24 | Madeline Geiken |
| 10/24 | Kenneth Kramer |

Happy Anniversary

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|-------|----------------------|
| 10/15 | Ken & Rhonda Meester |
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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 Armstrong by the 20th of the month.



Fall Fest

D N Z P J
R O R E L



Acorn

Apple

Autumn

Caramel Apple

Carnival

Corn

Fall

Festival

Gourd

Harvest

Hay Ride

Leaves

October

Pumpkin

Scarecrow

Squash

Straw