

ALT

REFORMED CHURCH

ARTICLES

No More Members

By Kevin Van Wyk

It's true. The consistory affirmed the recommendation of the elders to shift from "Confessing Members" to "Covenant Partners." So, the action was not to end all membership, but to clarify what membership is with some new (yet) old language.

On the one hand this was a pretty quick decision, on the other hand we've discussed the issues and possible changes for years. I have had many discussions with the elders over the years about communicating what membership means to the congregation and trying to understand why some take the membership vows, but then do not make any real effort to live them out. We moved forward in March, largely because we have individuals wanting to join us now.

With leaving the RCA, we are no longer restricted to their terminology and needed to update our bylaws to fill in what we left to the RCA's Book of Church Order. So we discussed the following terms...

- "Confessing Members" - means belonging to the church because you confess Jesus is your Lord and Savior.
- "Communicant Members" - means being permitted to take communion at the church.

- “Participating” or “Active Members” - means belonging and being involved in the church.

In the end, the elders preferred “Covenant Partners” for several reasons. They are addressed more fully in the new “Covenant Partnership” packet.

The Covenant Partnership Packet Update

Elders have just received a copy along with our youth who are interested in joining at the youth service in May. We do plan to distribute this to all in the near future and are planning on a “Covenant Partnership Class” for guests and attendees on May 15 from 11am-1pm.

The primary reason for the change was to bring greater weight to the vows which we make in joining a church, as we believe the Bible clearly calls us to be devoted to one another (Acts 2:42-47), to love one another (John 13), and partner with one another (Phil. 1:4-5). There really is to be a linking of arms as we serve each other and witness to the world.

We covenant with one another to build trust in one another and faith in God. As we make commitments to believe and act in God-honoring ways and then urge each other along in living out those commitments, we build our faith, maturity, and unity. As well, the practice of covenanting is all throughout the Bible. **So, we encourage you to join us in covenanting and partnering in ministry.**

I join Paul in his prayer for Philemon that you may be greatly blessed in partnering with other believers.

“I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ.” (Philemon 1:6)

Titus Two

By Doug Shotsky

Titus 2:1-7a - 1 You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. **2** Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

3 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be

slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. **4** Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, **5** to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

6 Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. **7** In everything set them an example by doing what is good.

Titus Two. I want these two words to become familiar to everyone in our church. The principles found in this chapter are the essence of discipleship and this is where we're headed as a church. We need, need, need to intermix our generations so that those who are further along in life can pour into those in the previous seasons with the wisdom and experience God has given them.

When I say Titus Two, this certainly includes things like Sunday school, bible class, and youth group, but I want it to include bible studies, small groups, life on life mentoring from older men and older women pouring into the lives of younger generations. I hear so many young women pleading for someone to take them under their wings, teach them, talk to them, listen to them, and to be a person of peace that they can confide in and count on. Men are less inclined to express this desire, but I see a generation of young men coming up that are going to be discipled by the world if we don't have men of God stepping up and stepping in to mentor, guide, teach, and correct.

I believe that Satan has many of us caught up in negative thinking and believing lies that keep us from building these necessary relationships. I so often hear people say things like, "I don't have anything to offer." "I don't really know the bible that well." "I'm not as good at that as other people." "My season has passed, it's time for someone else to do it." All of these types of thoughts are just the things that Satan wants us to believe to keep us from fulfilling the work that God has for us.

So next time you're tempted to believe your negative thoughts, instead be reminded of these words from Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:5 & 7:

***5** For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— ...**7** Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.*

It's so easy for us to look at ourselves and think that we lack what we need, but when we remember that we're in Christ, we have all we need! Someone else needs you. The Body of Christ needs you. So familiarize yourself, not only with the words of Titus Two, but with the ways of Titus Two. The truth is you need others, and others need you.

Prayer Requests and Praises in Youth Ministry

By Jessa Ter Beest

- Praise! We have 25 people signed up for the Jamaica Mission Trip in June including 17 kids and 8 adults.
- Praise! High School numbers have been in the upper 20s and 30s and many of these students are doubling up on their learning by coming to Monday night Bible studies as well.
- Praise! Many Middle Schoolers are still leading prayer with their lunch tables or before school!
- Praise! We have several students excited about becoming Covenant Partners at Alto.
- Prayer Request: For our students to be bold in their faith and standing up for truth while also showing the love of Jesus. This is tough for anyone, but as a teenager in today's world it's even more difficult.
- Prayer Request: For students preparing to share their testimony at the youth service in May.
- Prayer Request: For preparations and fundraiser for the Jamaica Mission Trip
- Prayer Request: For our students, coaches and teachers to continue learning The Truth by reading and studying their Bibles and spending time in prayer.

Save the Date

By Adrea Daane

June 20-24

Take a walk through Genesis with us this summer for our annual VBS week!

Volunteer sign-ups will be out in the next couple of weeks for any incoming 6th graders and up. Registration for all 3 year olds through 5th graders will open on May 1st and run through the month. Keep your eyes open for upcoming announcements and details!!

We spent a day over our spring break working on some of the decorations. So thankful for those who came and served in this fun way!!



MESSAGES

A loving thank you for all the ways you remember me and most of all your prayers. We have a wonderful church who loves our wonderful Lord. I also want to thank the middle schoolers for the wonderful valentine card you wrote me. You are so special and you made me so happy and always walk with Jesus.

-Helen Straks

I'm sorry this is so overdue. First, we want to thank the church for the visit from Jerry Medema at Christmas and for the box of candy. It was much appreciated. We also want to thank everyone who sent cards during Al's recent surgeries. Thanks for visits, calls from pastors and our elder, goodies brought and most of all for the prayers for his recovery. We are also very thankful for rides to Madison. Al still is not mobile, but the fusion is healing. Please pray for continued healing in Al's ankle and for good results at his next doctor visit on April 14. We are thankful for our very loving and caring church family. God is good!

-Al & Doris Harmsen

EVENTS

Mark your calendar...

Alto Reformed Church
April 2022

April 01-02 ***If Gathering***
Ladies, join us Friday at 6-9pm and/or Saturday at 8:30am-12pm for live worship, breakout, testimonies, prayer, fellowship & more!

April 14 ***Maundy Thursday***
Join us at 7pm as we celebrate the Last Supper.

April 15 ***Good Friday***
Join us at 1pm as we celebrate Jesus' crucifixion on the cross.

April 17 ***Easter***
Join us at 7am and/or 9:30am as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

April 22-24 ***All Church Retreat***
Join us for our 1st All Church Retreat at Silver Birch Ranch. Sign-up by March 31st.

For detailed information:
Call 920.346.5505 or email office@altoreformedchurch.org

NEWS

Baptisms

3/6/22 - Nova Beth, daughter of Scott & Mel Bruins

3/20/22 - Jace Timothy, son of Shawn & Morgan Montsma

Covenant Partners

3/20/22 - Shawn Montsma