

ALTO



REFORMED CHURCH

ARTICLES

Plants Grow

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

My office has two plants in it. One I used a couple of years ago for a sermon illustration as someone had given it to the church, and it did not get any water for a few weeks. Its leaves were drying up, so I tried to revive it. Unfortunately, it was too late. The leaves are all gone and the sticks continue to dry out on my desk, reminding me of what happens when we are not nourished by the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

The other plant was a Christmas gift from Jessa. It's at least a couple of years old. I recently repotted it as it was in a tiny pot all this time. I've watered it a couple times a week all this time and it has thrived. Now, consider Psalm 1...

1 Blessed is the one

who does not walk in step with the wicked

or stand in the way that sinners take

or sit in the company of mockers,

2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,

and who meditates on his law day and night.

3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,

*which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.*

This is why we included this statement in our Covenant Partner Vows. “I will grow to be like Jesus by studying God’s Word.” The psalm calls this meditation, but this is not about some New Age practice or Eastern religion. You don’t just sit there and repeat words over and over in hopes that God will reveal something to you. This is about prayerful, theological reflection. You must learn to study God’s word.

But this is not for the church’s sake! This is for you! Notice verse three. If you do this, you are like a tree planted by a stream. You are being fed continuously. This is more than a once a week drink.

So let me give you some practical steps to drink...

1. Open your Bible often. The YouVersion Bible app makes the Bible available wherever you are. You can even let it read to you. So, next time you are harvesting, crank up the Bible and listen to First Corinthians.
2. Get a Study Bible. This is one of the most helpful tools you can get for easy access to answer questions as you read the Bible. I wrote about the best options back in December 2021.
3. Join a small group this fall. Tell Pastor Doug you are interested, and we’ll do all we can to plug you in.
4. Read “Knowing Scripture” by RC Sproul. This is a fabulous book in our library and on Hoopla that helps you grasp the power, authority, and necessity of the Bible.
5. Read (or listen) to audiobooks. So, I am on vacation taking Steph to help her mom and dad recover from surgery and illness down in Florida. We made it here a few hours ago. On the way here...
 - A. We finished a biography on Benjamin Franklin and found out he kinda believed in God, but didn’t really trust Jesus. It was an eye opener about liberalism in America’s beginning.
 - B. We started a biography on George Whitefield and learned he initiated Methodism as a Calvinist movement. This was an inspiring book!

- C. We listened to half of Francis Chan's most recent book with much discussion about his flawed theology on unity and disregard for truth.
- D. We then started "The Doctrines that Divide" by Erwin Lutzer. This one took a far better approach to true unity, even though I disagree with his conclusions on baptism.

Obviously, It's a long drive, but we've had great discussions, and I feel like I've been laying in that stream in Psalm 1. Join me for a swim!

Equipping Adults Update

By Pastor Doug Shotsky

I am thankful for those who have invested their lives in mine in so many ways over the years, and my prayer is that we here in Alto will remain faithful in following the Great Commission for years to come. Our Mission is to "Know Jesus and Make Jesus Known" and our Vision is to "Develop and Deploy Christ-like Leaders". I think it's worthwhile for us to often reflect on how we're doing this, and specifically for me it's pondering how we're doing this for the adults in our congregation.

The Women's Ministry Team has been meeting faithfully and planning diligently to provide opportunities for the women in our congregation and community to grow in their faith and to fellowship together during this upcoming year.

The Men's Ministry will meet this week to make plans to provide both discipleship and fellowship opportunities for the men.

We have successfully completed our first 2 membership classes and continue to see God blessing our congregation by adding to our family.

Women's Mission Circle has continued their faithful prayers, support, fellowship, and discipleship which has been a blessing to so many for so many years.

Golden Lifers is getting ready to kick off another year of bible study, fellowship, laughter, food, and likely some adventures.

Our Outreach Team has really hit their stride with facilitating community

activities and events that God has blessed with fruitful opportunities for us to connect with the community.

The Sunday School Guide class will resume meeting this fall, and will continue to be a solid group of wonderful teaching and fellowship.

Finally, Small Groups. We have a number of small groups that have been meeting for years, and with the hard work of our Equipping Adults Team, we are launching many new groups for the first time in years beginning this September!

I may have missed someone here, but one thing is for sure, God is working. We certainly don't have to look hard to see that, and I hope that all who are reading this will pray that we will never look at what's happening as something we've accomplished, but that we'd give God all the glory for all He is doing and have a deep gratitude that He would allow us to be a part of His work!

Bible Class & Sunday School Kickoff!

By Adrea Daane



Youth Calendar

By Jessa TerBeest

When	What	Time	Who	Where
September 7	High School Kick-off Cookout/Car Tag	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Church Hill
September 11	Middle School Kick-off Color Wars	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Church Hill
September 14	Lesson: The Challenge	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
September 18	Lesson: The Challenge	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
September 19	Bible Study: The Chosen S1:Ep 6 (1/2)	7-8pm	HS Ministry + 8th	Youth Room
September 21	Lesson: The Creator	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Field Trip
September 25	Lesson: The Creator	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Field Trip
September 28	See You at the Pole	7:15-7:45am	Everyone	Your School Flagpole
September 28	Testimony Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
October 2	Question and Answer Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
October 3	Bible Study: The Chosen S1:Ep 6 (2/2)	7-8pm	HS Ministry + 8th	Youth Room
October 5	A-Teams	7:00-9pm	HS Ministry	TBD
October 9	Testimony Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
October 12	Alto Chase	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Church/Alto CC
October 14-16	Silver Birch Retreat	TBD	MS Ministry	Silver Birch Ranch
October 16	NO MS YOUTH GROUP	---	---	---
October 19	Question and Answer Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
October 23	Lesson: The Plan	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
October 26	Lesson: The Plan	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
October 30	Game Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
November 2	Family Night: Packing Party	5:30-7:30	Everyone	Church Basement
November 2	Lesson: The Reason	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
November 6	Lesson: The Reason	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
November 7	Bible Study: The Chosen S1: Ep 7	7-8pm	HS Ministry + 8th	Youth Room
November 9	Testimony Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
November 13	Service Project Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	TBD
November 16	Thanksgiving Scavenger Hunt	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
November 20	Bridge Dinner	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Church Basement
November 21	Bible Study: The Chosen S1:Ep 8 (1/2)	7-8pm	HS Ministry + 8th	Youth Room
November 23	Thanksgiving Eve Service	7-8pm	Everyone	Sanctuary
November 27	Testimony Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
November 30	Question and Answer Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
December 4	Lesson: The Life	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
December 5	Bible Study: The Chosen S1:E8 (2/2)	7-8pm	HS Ministry + 8th	Youth Room
December 7	Lesson: The Life	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
December 11	Christmas Caroling	5-6pm	Everyone	Meet in Youth Room
December 11	Christmas in Alto	6-8pm	Everyone	Alto Feed Mill
December 14	Bridge Christmas Party	7:30-8:30pm	HS Ministry	Church Basement
December 18	Kid's Christmas Program	7-8pm	Everyone	Meet in Youth Room
December 19	Bible Study: The Chosen - Christmas	7-8pm	HS Ministry + 8th	Youth Room
December 21	NO HS YOUTH GROUP	---	HS Ministry	---
December 28	NO HS YOUTH GROUP	---	HS Ministry	---

Library Update:

By Deb Navis

Changes have been happening in the library this summer. Hopefully, you have stopped by and have noticed them. If not, here is a short update.

New adult fiction books bought in 2022 and 2021 are now located on new shelving just to your left as you enter the library. There are also new shelves to the right by the desk. These are for the youth fiction books new and old. Also, on this shelving are the DVDs. DVDs are labeled into groups such as Family, Veggie Tales, etc. These books and DVDs are part of the summer Bingo game going on this summer. Hope you are enjoying the game and using the books and DVDs available in the library.

Also, you will notice that there are not any non-fiction books in the library at the present. These books are being reorganized and will be back in the library in the near future. Be on lookout for their return.

As always if you have questions a librarian is available on Sunday mornings to assist you.

MESSAGES

Dear ARC,

Thank you for paying all that money so that we could go to camp. My favorite part was chapel because of the songs. I loved growing closer to Jesus.

From, Trase Mulder

Thank you for the many acts of kindness shown to Gary and I during our recent health issues. Whether it was a prayer said, a card sent, a phone call or text message, a home visit or the delicious food that was brought in, ALL were greatly appreciated! We are truly grateful!

-Gary & Marlene Navis

Dear stork society and church family,

Thank you for the visit from Grandma Kathy when Evelyn was born. The gift card to ReachOut Bookstore is greatly appreciated, as were the delicious cinnamon rolls! Adding Evelyn Grace to our family has once again proven to us God's goodness and faithfulness. His loving care has been evident in all the times our church family has reached out to us with encouragement in phone calls, text messages, gifts, cards, and meals. We are so very blessed to be a part of the family of God!

Love, Luke and Sarah Bruins, Blake Chael Mara & Evelyn

EVENTS

Mark your calendar...

Alto Reformed Church
August 2022

August 14
Outdoor Worship + Church Picnic
Join us on the church hill for the outdoor worship service at 10am followed by the church picnic at 11:30am. Bring a lawn chair/blanket and check your email/church mailbox for further details.

August 28
Summer JAM
All 3 year olds - incoming 5th graders are invited to join us for Summer JAM (Jesus and Me) during the service. Kids will be invited to the basement before the sermon starts for games, activities or crafts focused around a Bible lesson just for kids (split into PreK & elementary groups).

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



Sunday, August 14th, at 11:30 a.m.
(following the 10:00 outdoor worship service)

Come to the church hill for some food and fellowship!

We'll provide the sandwiches, chips, drink,
and tableware (plates, glasses, silverware, etc.)

Please bring:

Last name A-G: veggie/lettuce/pasta salad
to serve 10+

Last name H-R: 2 dozen bars/cookies

Last name S-Z: fruit/jello salad to serve 10+

**Lawn chairs and blankets to sit on

**Due to the loss of some shade trees we'll be setting up canopies as well for some additional shade. If you have one you'd like to bring, we'd appreciate it!

NEWS

Baptism:

7/31/22 - Axel Wade, son of Marlie and Brittany Page

Covenant Partners:

7/17/22 - Chris Enders, Jim & Laurie Ford, Seth & Jacqueline Huizenga, Jonathan & Christina Westphal, Joe & Joslyn Ware

Updates:

New Bylaws have been approved! This is a big relief for me and the leaders. I'm sure we will have to revisit some things, but we are in a great place to move forward. One of the biggest additions is a new category of Professing Believer. Essentially, we want to celebrate decisions to follow Jesus. Read more in our bylaws under Article III.1.4. It's on our [website](#).

Our Leadership Covenant was also updated. We did not really change any content, but simplified the structure and headings. Now, we can simply remember that all leaders need to "guard the mission, purity, and unity of the church." A new [Leadership Covenant and Ordination packet](#) is available online and at the Information Center.

Hired! I am excited to announce the hiring of Lynnae Loomans as our Equipping Children and Families Ministry Assistant. She will work with Adrea, the Equipping Children and Families Ministry Director, who is reducing her hours here to teach a 4k class in Waupun. Both are contracted for 15 hours/week for the remainder of 2022. They are working out the details of responsibilities. Join me in welcoming Lynnae to our staff!

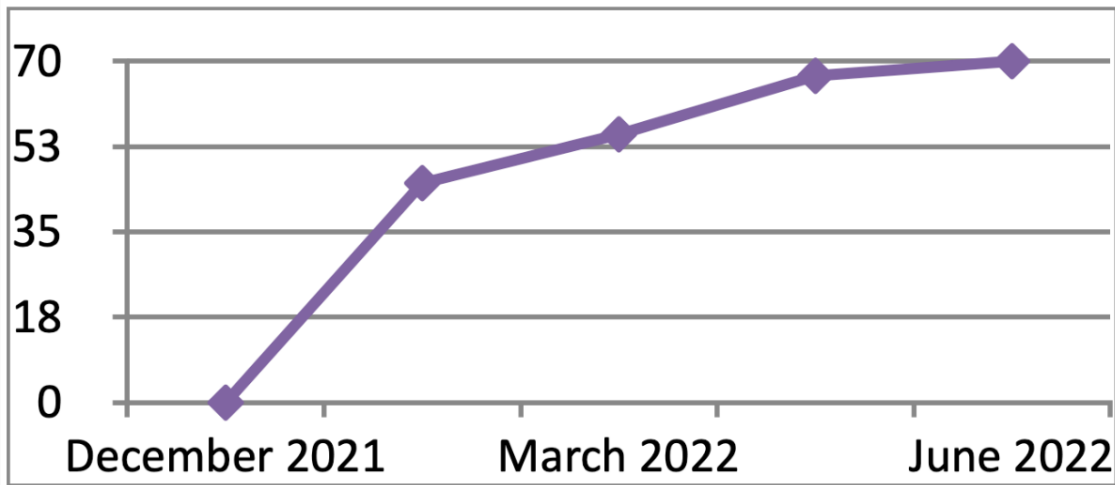
Ceiling Renovation Project - The congregation voted in favor (95%) of taking out a loan for up to \$450,000.00 for the ceiling renovation project.

Alliance Update:

Dear Alliance Community,

I'm not sure if people take more pictures in the summer – or – if it just feels that way. Whatever the truth, it seems like at summer gatherings, events and vacations; someone has their phone out and is recording video or taking pictures of every moment. I think that happens because we're making memories. I think it also happens because summer

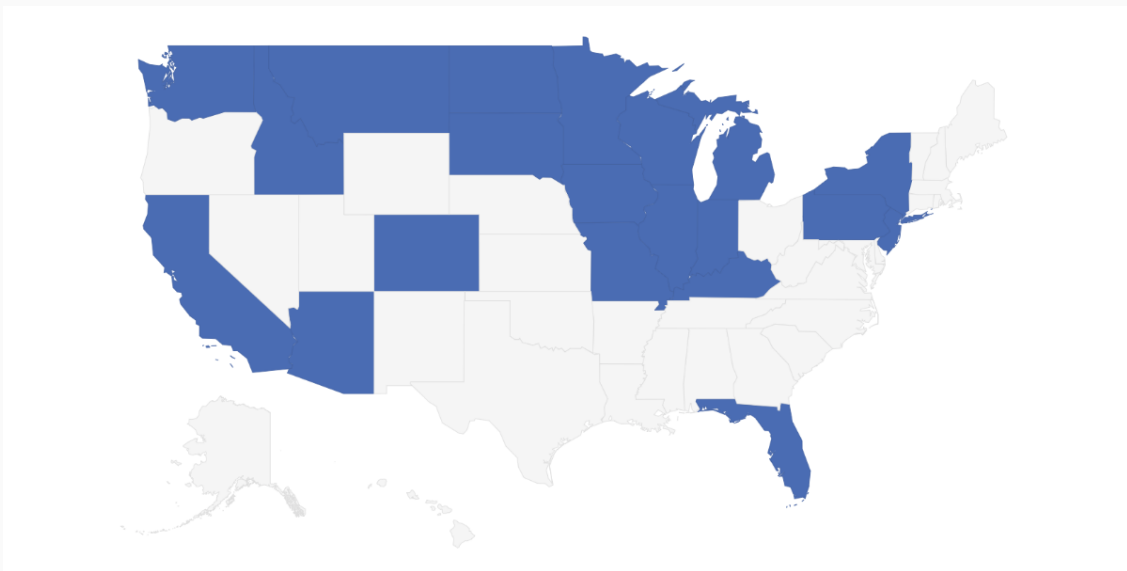
often provides a different schedule with different activities. Again, whatever the reason, that seems to be how it works. So, here is summer snapshot of the Alliance.



The picture of congregational growth in the Alliance over the last 6 months that now includes 70 congregations.

The picture of those congregations who have voted and are awaiting release at fall classis meetings: California, Iowa, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Wisconsin

The picture of congregations who have filed petitions and have told us they will finish the process sometime this fall: Washington, Idaho, California, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota. New York



The picture of pastors. On July 15, 2022, the Ordination Oversight Team met to approve the ordination application of the first 26 pastors into the Alliance of Reformed Churches. The majority are from the Dakota Network (including SW Minnesota and NW Iowa), but also pastors from California and Michigan.



One last snapshot. We continue to receive invitations to speak with congregations around the world who are view the Alliance as a place for them to call home. We're excited that those conversations are arising from a place of partnership, encouragement and similar journeys.

From our photo album to yours, we wanted to share some pics of what God is doing within the Alliance.

He is building his church. He is leading congregations, who want to live with others in a consistent, Biblical theology, to consider and join the Alliance.

So, now that we've pictured what God is doing, how can you help?

1 // PRAY

Pray that God would sustain our staff and board as we continue this quick growth phase. From 0 – over 100 congregations in 12 months is certainly taxing our bandwidth at times.

2 // GIVE

Give – Personally. We are at a lean moment in our finances as I write this blog. To date, God has provided the \$35,000 - \$40,000 that is required each month to keep the Alliance moving forward. As of July 18th, we have \$22,000 in the bank. We have not engaged in some ministry that we desire to start because God did not provide the funding. We have not traveled to some meetings because God did not provide the funding. We know God will provide in his time, but it will take generous individuals – not just congregations – to make that happen.

3 // LEAD

Lead your local congregation to talk about starting consistent giving to the Alliance. Some of you have been with us for 9 months; some for 3-4 months; some for less. A few congregations have started regular giving already. As your church onramps into the Alliance, we ask you to consider starting your regular partnership offerings (1% gift - based on 1% of your budget) as part of your 2022 4th quarter expenses.

4 // PLAN

Plan with us for 2023. In the next 2 weeks, each Alliance congregation will receive a letter from us asking you to let us know when you will start your regular giving to the Alliance in 2022-2023. We'll also ask you to let us know what 1% of your 2023 budget will be so we can start building the Alliance budget for 2023.

God has been faithful. God has supplied our needs. God has begun a good work in us and we know he will carry it on to completion. The great news as I write these words is that we serve a sovereign and loving God who knows our needs even before we do. As the Alliance moves forward, we will always hold to this posture.

Checks can be made out and sent to
The Alliance of Reformed Churches
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Suite A
Grandville, MI 49418



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