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Articles

Directions...

By Kevin Van Wyk

I hate not knowing where I am going. On some occasions Steph knows where we are headed and, though I trust she will tell me when to turn, I question her at every turn. (So, I could go into a whole thing about trusting your spouse here, but that was not the plan.) More often than not, I just tell my phone to give me directions and listen carefully as all kinds of other discussion goes on in the car. (At this point I could take another route and talk about listening to Jesus over the directions of the world, but that was not really my intent either.) My point is that we need direction in life, otherwise we end up in the wrong place.

As Christians, our goal or destination is to become like Jesus. We must pursue his character, his wisdom, his kindness, his courage, and his calling. You won't arrive and become fully like Him, but we must keep heading in that direction. It is so easy for us to be taken off course. We pull over for gas and then linger at Buffalo Wild Wings for hours (like watching tv because we feel emotionally exhausted from our day and choose to "take a break" from processing the emotions). Or maybe we choose to take an easier road, enjoying the scenery and comforts of 4-star hotels (like ignoring the conviction of the Holy Spirit and continuing on the easier path of keeping an old friendship that isn't healthy). Are we really abiding in Christ? (John 15)

I want to help you live like Jesus! I am excited that we are taking steps to be more effective in how we develop and deploy Christ-like leaders.

1. The Equipping Adults Team and the youth and children teams are evaluating and seeking new ways to develop believers.
 - a. They've brought you RightNow Media, which provides great videos for children to learn about the Bible, youth videos that address relevant topics, parenting videos with great advice, marriage videos that may save your relationship, discipleship and leadership videos that will benefit everyone, and much more. Just search a topic!
 - b. They have started two new Sunday School classes and plan to have a four-week class after Easter on marriage. Couples, you must make time for this one!
 - c. They are also exploring D-groups. Groups of 2-4 people who simply ask two questions: What has God been saying to you? And What does he want you to do?
2. The Outreach Team is seeking creative ways to engage our community.
3. The Consistory recently approved the creation of a Hospitality Team with Bridget Lammers leading. They are seeking to mobilize the congregation to offer a great 1st impression for visitors with an incredibly welcoming experience of fellowship with other attenders and to connect them with others to grow and serve so that they can't wait to come back.
4. The Consistory also approved the creation of a Foster Family Support Team to mobilize the congregation to encourage and help foster families and children thrive. Benita Ter Beest is leading this effort.

While we are sorting through the precise path, we do know the destination: developed and deployed Christ-like leaders.

So, are you headed in the same direction? What are you doing to grow your faith? What would be beneficial? Are you getting practical experience in leading?

You will not arrive at the destination by accident. You must make intentional choices that will take you in the right direction. The choice is yours.

Classis Update

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

On March 12, 2019 Randy Bruins, Reuben Hopp and I attended the Classis of Wisconsin Spring meeting. Some highlights include...

The RCA General Secretary, Eddie Aleman, joined us via the internet and shared his hope in the Vision 2020 Team to bring a beneficial plan next year, his hope for Western Theological Seminary with the hiring of a new president, and his vision to plant 1000 churches in the next 20 years.

Gary Harrison, a consultant hired by the classis, shared some great stuff on our mission and what we measure. When are we as a church "successful"?

The Fall classis meeting was rescheduled for Oct. so that it did not conflict with the Gospel Alliance Meeting on Oct. 8 & 9.

Pastor Kevin presented information from the Rocky Mountain Classis on biblical responses to division... pursue peace (it's a disputable issue, so we should continue to learn and love), discipline (it's a non-disputable issue which calls for rebuke), or separation (it's a non-disputable issue, but for the sake of mission the two parties go separate directions.) Kevin also shared our letter to the 2020 Vision Task Force, our process, and an encouragement for churches to discern and prepare their church for the 2020 decision.

Keep the End in Mind

By Doug Shotsky

Ecclesiastes 7:2-4

Better to spend your time at funerals than at parties.

After all, everyone dies—

so the living should take this to heart.

- ³ Sorrow is better than laughter,
for sadness has a refining influence on us.
- ⁴ A wise person thinks a lot about death,
while a fool thinks only about having a good time.

As Christians we have the privilege of not only living in the here and now on earth, but also of living eternally in the presence of the Lord. The questions we all must answer are: Do we truly believe this? Do we believe that Jesus did what the bible says He did, and that He is who He says He is?

If this is true (and I 1000% believe it is), then as Hebrews 6:19a states, “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” (NIV) But if it were not true then Paul has several things to say about that in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19: “¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. ¹⁸ In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! ¹⁹ And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.”(NLT) That’s a lot to stomach! If Christ has not been raised, our faith is useless, we are still guilty of our sins, and we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world! Praise that Lord, that He has revealed Himself to us and that He IS faithful and true!

Over the years, and particularly over the past 7 months or so, I have had the honor to walk closely with people who are sick and dying. It seems that it’s the natural inclination of most to want to avoid situations like this, and to put the thought of death and dying out of our minds. But the older I get, and the more I encounter these types of situations the more I am convinced, that this is right where we need to be.

We need to keep our eyes on the finish line, which really isn’t a finish line at all! So how can we practically do this? I don’t think we have to look too far to take the advice of Solomon as he wrote the words in Ecclesiastes that are at the beginning of this article.

Spend time at funerals. Even if it’s to support a friend or co-worker, our presence makes a difference to them, and the impact on our hearts is that we keep our perspective of our own mortality, and what’s most important.

Embrace your times of sadness, and reach out to others in their times of distress. As much as we want it to “just be over with”, as the Solomon states, “sadness has a refining influence on us.” None of us likes to go through these times, but I think we can all agree, that our times of sorrow have molded us in a far greater manner than our times of elation.

This may sound morbid, but lastly, ponder death. Again, it’s hard to argue with Solomon who says, “A wise person thinks a lot about death”. As I previously stated, the hope that we have beyond death is really the anchor for our souls that is firm and secure. Our security in this life is held by one who is beyond this life.

So visit the sick, go to funerals, embrace sadness of your own and with others, ponder death, and God will do a work in you that is refining and bless you for trusting Him and being a blessing to others.

Children & Families Update

By Adrea Daane

Join us for a night of family fun, Wednesday, April 10th from 5:30-7:30. We'll start the night out with pizza and move into some fun activities for families of all ages. We will also have the opportunity to pack up duffle bags for "Together We Rise", a group who helps support foster kiddos with these duffle bags and packed supplies. This service project was supported with the offerings raised through the fall Sunday School offerings. We are excited to be able to partner with this group and put together almost 200 bags (so we'll need lots of hands that night!). Any questions, feel free to contact Adrea. See you there!

Women’s Ministry Update

By Debbie Bruins

Thank you for all the food and other donations brought to church for the Waupun and Brandon Food Pantries during the month of March! Blessed are those who are kind to the needy! Also, a thank you to the men and women of the church that will help or helped (depending on when you're reading this) with painting at church on April 5th and 6th. The goal is to refresh an area of our church home each year to keep it looking clean and inviting.

Watch the bulletin for details on the upcoming events:

- The Mother-Daughter-Sister-Friend Event will be Sunday, May 5th beginning at 2:00 pm.
- Spring Bible Study led by Marlaina Shotsky.

A big shout out to the women of the ARC for all food donations made to the Community Table on Friday, March 29th. This isn't a service under Women in Ministries, but it was the women of the ARC who donated food and served to make this meal possible.

Do you have any events or activities you would like to see happening by women at the ARC? Contact any Board member (found in the purple pamphlet) and share your ideas!

Golden Lifers Update

By Julie Medema

We have begun our regular sessions again. So far, we have had a lesson on Psalm 145, taught by Pastor Ted, and one on Psalm 90, taught by Dr. Carl. Both of these Psalms reminded us again of God's faithfulness and love.

Now we are close to Easter – more reminders of His love. Sometimes, we fail to consider the agony and sorrow that Jesus faced in His final week before that cruel, unbelievably painful death! Ponder for a moment what it meant for Jesus to leave the glory of heaven (I can only imagine) and come to this sinful world. It's real, and I don't need reminders! They are all around me. All I need to do is look at the newspaper or turn on the TV.

But, praise God, we've come to Easter!

Easter means: Empy Tomb
Angelic Announcement
Scripture Fulfilled
Tears Removed
Exalting Disciples
Risen Savior

Hallelujah! What a Savior! Lord, make us worthy of Your love. Make us worthy to be called Your children!

Messages

I know that my God is a Great God, and continues to show me His magnificence through people of the ARC. You are a gift and a blessing, and I want you to know just how good you have been to me over the past years at ARC. Thank you for your continued prayers and support before, during and after my heart surgery. I will be forever grateful to you. May God continue to bless this church, ARC and congregation of which I am proud to be a member of.

Jim Parrish

Thank you to all who remembered me in prayer, with cards and encouraging words while dealing with the sciatic nerve pain. We covet your prayers for the healing that has begun and that it will continue to bring relief.

Audrey Elenius

It was great to meet you and worship at Alto Reformed on Sunday. Thank you for the chance to share about the work of AT3 and Converge in the U.K. We are grateful to the Lord to have you all on our team!

Best Regards!

Steve Bialy

Thank you for your support of the Trinity Pork Chop supper.

Jim Nummerdor

Events

April 7th at 7pm – Men’s Chorus Program

April 18th at 7pm – Maundy Thursday Service

April 19th at 1pm – Good Friday Service

April 21st at 9:30am – Easter Service

5:00pm – Easter Meal at the Union

5:30pm – Easter Egg Hunt at the Union

News

Phone/Address Change

Helen Straks

452 Fox Lake Rd, Apt 200

Waupun

324-7715

Missionary Update

Potratz Posts

Listening, Learning, and Serving

- Please pray as God stretches us in directions that are sometimes unexpected and outside our comfort zones.
- Praise that there are so many opportunities here. Pray that the Lord gives us strength and energy for each role.
- With hot season beginning, pray that we cope well with it.
- Pray for our sons back home. We miss them much.
- Praise for all of you who, through Christ, make our service here possible. May Christ be magnified through your sacrifice.

***Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!-- 1
Chronicles 16:8***

Dear Friends,

We have found that there are times in our ministry, that one becomes a bit too busy. Maybe potential opportunities overlap, or circumstances end up putting multiple projects in the same timeframe. I'm

sure it happens to you too. We have found ourselves in that position for the last month, and will likely be in a similar mode through May.

Wanda and Bonnie are continuing to work in literacy at the two centers. In the last few months they have been at the Bible school and with a few individual private sessions with younger children. They also have been spending time at Sahel Academy by helping students who have English as a second language. The last item has just dropped from their list, which is good, since with all that activity, they had lost their prep day each week! Part of what they are working through now is what the literacy program looks like when Bonnie goes on home assignment later this year. A good portion of what Bonnie does is in Zarma, and Wanda does not have that capability. So either another person with good Zarma would have to come along side Wanda, or the program will focus on French literacy. As Wanda has been considering some of those options, the Lord has been moving in the background. Some things that might have posed potential problems are being minimized. It has been neat to watch the fog being lifted from some of the paths ahead.

Since we talked, we also travelled to Galmi, where Wanda attended a literacy conference with some of the missionaries that are involved in literacy throughout Niger. It was a great time to exchange ideas get to know those who are working in literacy. Piggy-backing off of that trip, I was able to get a feel for what has changed IT-wise at Galmi, and go on to another hospital at Danja and help them get better connected to the information super highway. Before I went, they had a one way dirt track to the internet. I left them with a paved county road, and some instructions on how to improve that.

For me, the extra busy time started at the beginning of this month when I started to teach the computer class at Sahel Academy. With six classroom hours, there is also preparation and paper correcting. The class is also an IGCSE class, so much of my time has been preparing the students for the series of exams they will have starting in late April.

Also during this time a couple of other opportunities came to the fore. One I had been researching and thinking about since shortly after we got here. The other was unexpected. The one that had been thinking about was improving the processes at the office. Since this is an area I had been working in the last few years, I saw places where processes could be improved and standardized. Even at a low level, this can be a big project for an office that has few standardized processes.

The unexpected one grew out of a need and opportunity I had heard about concerning a ministry to university students (FEU). The FEU was going to be closing over the summer due to overlapping home assignments. However, there continues to be a good number of university students that stay over the summer and take classes. My involvement will be creating a summer team that will allow the FEU to stay open over the summer. We also see this summer as a time to try some new things and renew vision for the FEU. The heavy lifting for the summer FEU starts in May.

Also, during this summer, a technical team will be coming out. Their expertise is in phone systems, and they will be doing much work at our school and hospitals in the country. I am trying to coordinate their time and work schedule here, and with much help, gather items that have been pre-shipped to Niamey, and forward them on to other points in Niger.

Add this to the normal office computer issues, and working on an IT strategy for the field, and I feel pretty stretched right now. All in all though, I think we are doing well. We are becoming more comfortable in our new (and old!) roles.

Randy and Wanda