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ARTICLES

Keeping Focus

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

I had an eye appointment the other day, and, yep things are a bit blurry. They did all the regular tests and even high tech pictures of my eye. In the end, I'll have some new glasses with slightly changed lenses.

My physical vision will be clearer. That was an easy fix.

We live in a very blurry world.

Politically, socially, racially, and spiritually our world is divided and distracted. Our news media and social media are filled with conflicting arguments over everything. Should kids play sports? Should they wear masks? Should the government close businesses? Should the federal government send troops into cities?

I can see some of you boiling over in



frustration. These issues and others have become very contentious as we want people to see our side is right. So often I want to play devil's advocate to push back on strong opinions, but isn't that really being an advocate for the devil?

Paul challenges Timothy...

"Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful."
(2 Timothy 2:23-24 NIV)

I do believe it matters more how we interact on these issues than whether we "win" the debate. In most of these quarrels, our eyes become blurred, anger and hurt filter what we hear, and we respond by fighting or fleeing. Now, more than ever, we must be the Lord's servant and be kind to everyone.

The only way we can do that is through the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Again, Paul gives great direction to Timothy...

"Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them." (1 Timothy 4:13 NLT)

What might happen if we truly focused on, i.e. devoted ourselves to, these three things? Read. Encourage. Teach.

We are nudging you to read the minor prophets this summer, [watch the Bible Project videos](#) on each one, and then dig into the book with us.

In the Fall, we will give you another great opportunity to Read, Encourage, & Teach. We plan to use "Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ." We hope many of you will use the workbook in your private devotions, discuss it in discipleship groups, and be inspired by the correlating sermons in worship services. This is a significant step in our discipleship path, [Journey to 412](#), toward intentionally growing to be like Christ.

It's tempting to think more COVID, political, or cultural information will clear up our vision, but don't count on it. Let's keep our eyes focused on the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2) as we read Scripture, encourage believers, and teach each other.

OCC Packing Party

By Adrea Daane

I know November seems a long way off...but it will be here before we know it!! As quoted from the Samaritan's Purse website, "We want boys and girls around the world to know that God loves them and has not forgotten them during this

time of fear and uncertainty. We're looking forward to a great Operation Christmas Child season." What a great goal and way to reach out!

We are again planning on hosting our Operation Christmas Child packing party this November. We want to encourage you to be thinking of ways you may want to donate to this event. Our needs will be similar to years past, including hygiene, school supplies, WOW items, fillers/toys, and clothing/practical items.

With school supply shopping underway for most families, we encourage you to take advantage of some of the sales and deals going on this time of year and pick up a few things to add to our cause. Just a reminder that we try and send pencils, pens, large pink erasers, coloring utensils (crayons, markers, colored pencils), pencil sharpeners, a ruler, and some sort of paper in each box.

In years past, we have set the goal to put together 200 boxes and we'd love to meet that goal again this year. Let's take this opportunity to reach out to those around the world and spread God's love to all who may receive these boxes!

We will have a tote located by the Children & Families Resource Center for any items you may want to donate. As the time gets

closer we will be posting more information and needs, but for now, feel free to drop off anything you may have bought ahead of time. I don't know about you, but I love stretching my money and seeing how much I can get 😊 Thank you in advance for any support for this event. It's always a fun church family night and gives us all a real hands on way to serve God's kingdom.

Equipping Youth

By Jessa Ter Beest

When	What	Time	Who	Where
September 9	High School Kick-off Cookout	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Church Hill
September 13	Middle School Kick-off Color Wars	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Church Hill
September 16	Lesson: The Story of the Bible	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
September 20	Lesson: The Story of the Bible	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
September 21	Bible Study	7-8pm	HS Ministry	Pizza Ranch
September 23	See You at the Pole	7:15-7:45am	Everyone	School Flag Pole
September 23	Lesson: The Beginning	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
September 27	Lesson: The Beginning	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
September 28	Bible Study	7-8pm	HS Ministry	Pizza Ranch
September 30	Lesson: The Exodus	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
October 4	Lesson: The Exodus	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
October 5	Bible Study	7-8pm	HS Ministry	Pizza Ranch
October 7	Lesson: Q&A Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
October 10	Fall Harvest Fundraiser	5:30-7:30	HS Mission Trip	Alto Community Ctr.
October 11	Lesson: Q&A Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
October 12	Alto Chase	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Meet in Youth Room
October 14	Girls/Guys Fun Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Church/Alto CC
October 18	Lesson: The Law	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
October 21	Lesson: The Law	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
October 23	Silver Birch Ranch (Fri-Sun)	TBD	MS Ministry	Silver Birch Ranch
October 25	No MS Youth Group	--	MS Ministry	--
October 28	Lesson: The Temple	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
November 1	Game Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
November 4	Lesson: The Exile	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
November 8	Lesson: The Temple	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
November 9	Operation Christmas Child Shop	6-8pm	Everyone	Meet at Church
November 11	Family Night	5:30-7:30pm	Everyone	Church Basement
November 9	Bible Study	7-8pm	HS Ministry	Pizza Ranch
November 11	Thanksgiving Scavenger Hunt	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
November 15	Lesson: The Exile	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
November 16	Bible Study	7-8pm	HS Ministry	Pizza Ranch
November 18	Lesson: Q&A Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
November 22	Service Project Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	TBD
November 23	Bible Study	7-8pm	HS Ministry	Pizza Ranch
November 25	Thanksgiving Eve Service	7-8pm	Everyone	Sanctuary
November 29	Bridge Dinner	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Church Basement
November 30	Bible Study	7-8pm	HS Ministry	Pizza Ranch
December 2	Lesson: The Prophecies	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
December 6	Lesson: The Prophecies	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
December 9	Lesson: Q&A Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
December 20	Christmas Caroling	5-6:30pm	Everyone	Meet in Youth Room
December 20	Christmas Party	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
December 16	Bridge Christmas Party	7:30-8:30pm	HS Ministry	Church Basement
December 20	Kid's Christmas Program	7-8pm	Everyone	Meet in Youth Room

Last of the Last

By Roxy Schouten

Perhaps many of us remember “last words” of a loved one before they passed. Maybe it was not a word but a squeeze of the hand or other acknowledgement of your presence. We relive those again and again for comfort and sometimes regrets.

Jesus' last words have been the theme of many a sermon and books written on the significance of those words. The Apostles Peter and Paul also had last words when they knew that their lives on earth were coming to an end.

II Timothy is one such letter from Paul to his beloved “son” (not by blood but in spirit). Paul gives instruction and reminders how to continue teaching and leading. Paul also gives warnings about events that will happen in the “last days”. In II Timothy 3:1 he warns “there will be terrible times in the last days”. Unlike the English language, the Greek language has levels of meaning to words. The word “last” here means “last of the last”. It’s like describing the very last cookie in the cookie jar versus “the remaining few”.

Paul goes on to describe what signs will signal the “last of the last” in Verses 2-5. Not a pretty picture! Knowing this can

bring fear, dread and a feeling of helplessness. We seek for protection and strategies to displace this fear. Following are practical and helpful attitudes and activities to help us navigate through these “last of the last” days. (I cannot cite the source but when I came across this I wrote this in my Bible for future reference. I hope that they both challenge and comfort you as they have and continue to be for me.)

1. **Remember Psalm 2**
– God’s purpose will prevail. The nations, organizations and people may conspire and plot but God laughs and scoffs at them because His purpose will prevail.
2. **Cast your cares upon Jesus (1 Pet 5:7)** – I once heard a message on this passage and she dramatically demonstrated it by pointing out this “casting” was not to be half-hearted nor with a string attached so that we could reel it back in. She took off one of her shoes and “cast” it as far as she could till it landed far away and out of her sight. Now that is “casting”!
3. **Pray for those in authority over us (I Tim 2:2)** – Our prayers are especially for those who are trying to follow the way Scripture teaches us to live. For those in opposition to those teachings we can pray for

an awakening to the error and folly of their ways.

4. **Listen for the trumpet** – We are counseled in Lk 21:28 to “look up for our redemption draws nigh” when we see signs of prophesy beginning to unfold.
5. **Obey the Father** – Our ways may seem right to us but our hearts are deceitful (Jer 17:9) and we easily want to follow our own ways of what seems right to us.
6. **Teach and hold on to the truth regarding the theory of Evolution** –The 2 books in the Bible that are attacked the most are Genesis and Revelation. In Gen 3:1 the Serpent began his temptation by questioning the Word of God by saying “Hath God said?” and thereby placing doubt on God’s Word. Finding Truth in the world today is difficult to say the least. ALL Truth lies in Scripture and all information and teaching needs to be compared to this standard. Accepting Darwinism Evolution has resulted in a progressive disregard for people’s lives as created in God’s image.
7. **Don’t get distracted!** – We have a God given mission in life to walk in the WAY and share that Truth with others. We can get distracted by just trying to meet people’s physical

needs and leave their souls and spirits unfed. The Social Gospel is really no gospel (good news) at all.

8. **“Set no evil thing before your eyes” Psalm 101:3** – Our eyes are one of the first lines of entry to what happens in our soul and spirit. An “innocent” peek is not advisable. Evil is evil and always will be. Putting “lipstick on a pig” will not change the pig into something it never was nor will be. A current mantra of rioters is that we can use evil to accomplish the “greater good”. For all eternity that will not be true. God can turn the evils aimed at us for His purpose but that is not our job nor within our power to do so.

All ages need to be reminded of this – children, teens, and adults of all ages. Golden Lifers are no different. Our fears may differ slightly from younger years but we are never far from the fear trap. Fear and reverence of and to the Lord is the only room we must make for fear.

Heavenly Father – our “Abba” – Remind us to walk in Your Way. We have forgotten or ignored You so often resulting in so many traps of the Evil One ensnaring us and compromising our witness. Please, for Jesus sake and in

His Name, forgive us and empower us to walk in Your WAY. Remind us we are "dust" (Psalm 103:14) and soon our bodies will return to dust. We thank You that time after time in Your Word You remind us to fear not and follow the narrow WAY that leads to Life. Thank You Father, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit. Amen

Library Update

By Deb Navis

Sometimes while browsing for a book to read in the ARC library, I will take one with an interesting title or an author I have never read. So when browsing one day I took a fiction book titled "Loving Isaac" by author Heather Kaufman. An author I was unfamiliar with. And I was pleasantly surprised by the story and really enjoyed reading it.

The author reveals pieces of a puzzle as the story unfolds for the characters Hanna, Isaac, and Pastor Shofield. It's a story of a mother's love for her autistic child, Isaac. And realistically portrays difficulties of dealing with autism - everything from misguided advice of strangers to the strain of marital relationships. But also a story of God's guidance, love, forgiveness, and friends' kindness.

It's a thoughtful and eloquent story of compassion and trust. In my opinion, it's a "must read"! And I hope you will look for it

in the ARC library while you are browsing for a book.

MESSAGES

To my ARC church family,
I would like to thank you for your prayers, the prayer shaw, cards, phone calls from Pastor Doug & Pastor Kevin and many friends before and after my double knee replacement surgery. It was very much appreciated!

-Larry Bille

We would like to thank everyone who came out to help us clean up after the storm. We live in such an amazing community with so many caring people. God is so good!

Thank you-

Bill & Sandy DeMaa

Thank you to all the volunteers from our church family for helping us clean up after the storm. God bless you for your kindness.

-Willy & Carol Jansma

I appreciated all the ways I was remembered during recovery the past months especially your prayers. I got back to my apartment June 4 and we still have a lot of restrictions but they're for our good.

-Donna Kastein

Many thanks for your \$1,059.30 donation. We are able to carry out our mission because of the generosity of people like you. Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness.

-Waupun Area Food Pantry

Thank you to my church family for the birthday cards and good wishes.

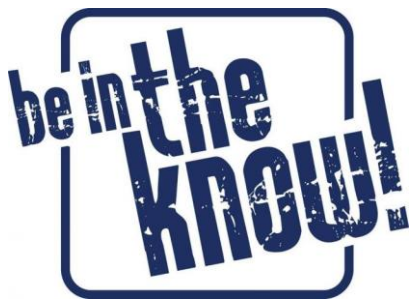
-Gerald Mills

25 at 6:30-8pm in the Prayer Room
Quite a few folks have inquired about a financial class and we decided to put together Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University. We will go over his 7 baby steps, figure out where each of us need to start, and learn how to change our habits, while still enjoying life! Doug and I have taken these classes and have used Dave Ramsey's principles most of our marriage.

We have paid off over \$126k over the years (thanks student loans!). These classes will be laid back, personalized, and fun, with no judgment wherever you fall in regards to debt and financial freedom. Please join us as we learn about emergency funds, debt snowballs, paying for college, saving for retirement, and everything in between! If you have questions, please feel free to contact Marlaina Shotsky at mshotsky@gmail.com or (517) 673-4991.

EVENTS

Informational Meeting



Sunday,
August 2 at
5pm in the
sanctuary.

This
meeting is to
answer

questions regarding the RCA report, our Task Force's recommendations, and the Consistory motions.



Get Out of Debt Class
Tuesdays,
August 4,
11, 18, &



Outdoor Worship & Church Picnic
Sunday,
August 16
Worship at
10am & Picnic at 11:30am on the church hill.

The church will be providing and serving all food, beverages, and utensils this

year. Come hungry for burgers, brats, and sides.

Just bring your lawn chairs.

This year we ask that you RSVP for the picnic, if you are attending, by using this [link](#) by August 9.

Any questions, contact Adrea or Megan.



Men's Golf Outing

Sunday,
August 23 at
3:30pm

at The Rock Golf Club in Waupun.

9 holes of golf (including cart) + meal = \$45.

Sign-up individually or as a group at the information desk or by contacting Joel Bruins by August 16th.

If you'd rather not golf, but still want to join in you're invited to join us for the meal, just talk to Joel (920) 948-0938.

Marriage Night



Saturday,
September
12 at 6-
9:30pm live
simulcast in

the sanctuary.

Cost: \$15/person, \$30/couple

A happy and healthy marriage doesn't just happen by accident. It takes work. Join us for RightNow Media's Marriage Night

2020, a night dedicated to focus on your marriage. Make your marriage a priority!

We'll provide individually packaged snacks/drinks. Half of the registration fee will be used to support schools in providing masks to students/staff.

Register at <https://events.rightnowmedia.org/attendee/site/2964> and invite your friends.

Any questions, contact Pastor Doug Shotsky.

NEWS

Births

7/14/20 - Ellis Shay, son of Tom & Lindsey Bruins

7/18/20 - Ezekial Lee, son of Eric & Beth Ann Redeker

The **RCA's** [task force report](#) is out and our consistory has taken an initial step in accordance with that report to notify the RCA of our "likely intent" to leave. Please note, there is a detailed process involving the congregation in order for us to leave. We are actively researching and evaluating our options. Join us Sunday night (Aug 2 at 5pm) for more information!

Consistory meets on August 11 to discuss our future COVID practices. Please pray for discernment.