

ALTO



REFORMED CHURCH

ARTICLES

The Big Decision

By Kevin Van Wyk

On Sunday, Oct. 3, we face one of the biggest decisions in the history of Alto Reformed Church. We've been part of the RCA since 1855; that's 166 years of history. Some of you have a deep personal connection to the RCA. Some of you have little connection at all. Regardless, God has us walking this road together, and I pray this brings greater unity and a more fruitful mission than ever before.

For those who really don't care about the RCA... I get it. I could not have cared less about the founders of my church, community, or nation 30 years ago. I'm not entirely sure what changed. I suppose having navigated more hardship, suffering, and conflict, I've come to appreciate those who have faithfully stood up for the truth and tried to lead the church, community, and nation to a stronger, safer, and more fruitful place.

For those who really do care about the RCA... I get it. There is a sense of legacy and responsibility to family members who invested so much into the church and denomination. But, remember, their devotion was first to Jesus and the Kingdom of God, not the organizations or buildings they built.

For all of you, bear with me as we look back a bit...

Imagine Albert Meenk leaving his home, family, and friends in the Netherlands; taking the long journey across the Atlantic; traveling, likely by horse, nearly 1,000 miles to settle on a small hill outside of Waupun, WI. 10 families followed soon after and began worshipping together. By the

early 1850's they had apparently formed as a Presbyterian Church. However, in 1855 they officially organized as a Reformed Church. Certainly, the Dutch roots made the Reformed denomination a better fit. Just note, this is not the first time Alto has realigned with denominations.

This must have been an exciting, yet troubling time. Our records state that it was a time of "unrest and anxiety." And so, they found some solace and hope in aligning with churches in their mission. The RCA provided many pastors who are variously described as "faithful," "very powerful," "effective," "very constructive," "worthy successor," and "of a high character." Of Rev. J.H. Karsten, it is said "he labored among them in the spirit and power of an Elijah." (Wow, this humbling.) In more recent times the RCA has been there through some very difficult situations. The RCA has quietly helped and supported this congregation in becoming what it is today. So, we do want to honor the good that has come over the years.

Back to our current reality...

Unfortunately, the RCA has been hijacked by promoters of progressive theology, the belief that the Bible is not inerrant and that current culture should influence interpretation. This has led to embracing universalism and an abandoning of biblical marriage by a vocal minority in the RCA. Many attempts have been made to clarify the biblical teaching and to discipline those who reject it, but efforts have fallen short.

Can and will the RCA affirm biblical marriage? A few years ago, five of the best leaders in the RCA were commissioned to find a way forward. They were dubbed the "Council of Five." They hit a brick wall with 40% of the RCA classes voting against defining marriage as being between one man and one woman. Several other overtures have been attempted and most recently the Vision 2020 Team presented a final report which essentially encourages conservative congregations to leave and invites the General Synod to permit progressive churches to do as they want, officiate same-sex marriages, and ordain more progressives.

There is one more overture (#11) presented in the 2021 General Synod Workbook which offers a potential conservative solution. I love the heart behind it. It seeks to address the division with both grace and truth. Unfortunately, I doubt that it will make it to the floor for discussion. If it does, it will likely be amended to a point of ineffectiveness. And even if it were approved, I am confident that progressives will find a way to undermine and sabotage the intent.

Can and will the RCA affirm biblical marriage? It would take a miracle, one many have prayed for over many years. Instead, I believe God is calling the Church, true believers, to stand against the false teaching of our day.

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. (2 John 1:10; See 2 These. 3:14 & 1 Cor. 5:11)

Lord, may we show grace and truth in our words and actions as we leave the RCA and align with the Alliance of Reformed Churches. May you guide those churches who stay to walk faithfully with you. And may you empower those churches who go to bring renewed hope and light to their communities.

Perfect Peace

By Doug Shotsky

Colossians 3:1-3 - Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. (NIV)

Isaiah 26:3 - Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. (KJV)

The world is pretty chaotic right now, but in a lot of ways since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden it's always been that way. I'm not much of a news watcher and I tend to stay off of social media and the internet to a large degree, so others could certainly accuse me of sticking my head in the sand, but I certainly don't see it that way.

I like to be informed to a degree about what's going on in the world, but I know that no matter what it is, good or bad, that these two scriptures should be the guiding principles for my thoughts and life. All that is going on during our time on this earth is temporary, but eternity is where our hearts and thoughts should dwell because this will be our permanent home.

Is life going well? Set your mind on things above and give glory to our Father in Heaven? Is life a struggle right now? Keep your mind on Him and His promises to love and care for you and He will bring you perfect peace.

Grateful for Student Leaders

By Jessa Ter Best

On Wednesday, September 22nd, our students led groups in prayer at Waupun Jr/Sr High and Rock River Intermediate. This was the first year that we tried something new in making it 100% student led, and wow did God show up through our kids! Two different groups were led at the Jr/Sr High and included some parents, several teachers and students. So many of our high school and middle school students volunteered to help lead! At Rock River, our 5th and 6th grade Bible Classes took up the leadership role by making and putting up posters for the event, sharing with students, and then gathering a group that morning. If you haven't seen the pictures or videos, check it out on our Facebook page! Some of our 5th graders enjoyed prayer with other students so much that they've decided to lead prayer next to the ropes course each Wednesday morning before school. If you have a student at RRIS encourage them to join!



These kids are such an inspiration to us as adults. Keep leading your families in prayer!

Kids Being a Light

By Adrea Daane

This past Wednesday the Bible classes were challenged to bring a friend along for the night. Every week, I go around to all the classes, saying "hi", collecting offering, and giving any necessary announcements. This week however, was more fun than usual. As I traveled from room to room I was met with extra excitement and along with that a lot of new faces! I loved hearing the kids introduce their friends and hear how much fun they were having together. I heard visitors reciting our weekly memory verse, kids participating in games, and others answering questions and joining discussions. What this one week challenge started, I hope continues for some of these kids or other friends they may decide to bring throughout the rest of this year.

As a church we strive to equip our kids to reach out to others around them in their faith and Wednesday night was such a great example of that. Seeing the kids enjoying themselves and bringing Jesus into the middle of it...what is better than that! But it doesn't end there.

The kids yet again, amazed me. Wednesday night reminded me just how much we are blessed

with so many kids in this church who truly love God and aren't afraid to share it. Next week Thursday is Bring your Bible to School Day. I went around with posters and informational cards for the kids to put on their lockers and share with friends. I ran out before I got to all the rooms as so many of them were excited to hang a poster on their lockers and encourage their peers to join them in this event. Just another way our kids are excited to share and stand up for their faith.



Finally, a group of students from Rock River Intermediate have decided to keep on going with the Wednesday morning prayer time before school. What started as a See You At the Pole event on the 22nd of September has turned into a passion to continue to invite and encourage friends to pray on a weekly basis at our schools.

Where any of this goes...inviting friends to attend classes here, praying in our schools, or encouraging kids to read and share God's word... I'm so excited to see! God is working in the hearts of these kids and I couldn't be more proud of them!

Keep shining your light for Jesus!

MESSAGES

A big, belated thank you for prayers, cards, visits, and goodies at the time of Alvin's surgery. We have a wonderful, caring church. Thank you Jerry for rides to Madison. We still need prayers for continued healing, as he still has pain. God is good and we are trusting him.

-Alvin and Doris Harmsen

I want to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, visits, and food. It is definitely uplifting to know that people are thinking of you. It felt like it seemed to make my recovery go faster. Thanks again.

-Renee Bruins

I want to thank you for your love and generosity. Also, thank you for all that attended the Renewal and thanks to everyone for showing Madison and I such love and for welcoming us to your beautiful community.

We enjoyed our time in Waupun and Alto. Such beautiful country and such friendly and generous people. We so enjoyed being able to share God's love and His Word during the

Renewal at Alto Reformed. We truly enjoyed our stay with you.

Thank you to Pastor Kevin and his family for welcoming us with open arms and a big thank you to Pastor Doug and his family for their friendship over the years and for Doug's vision for the Renewal and for allowing us to be a part of it.

We would also like to thank Joel for showing us their beautiful farm and the fascinating dairy life of Wisconsin. He was so kind, insightful, and generous with his time. And, to Mayor Bob for showing us a great time and a beautiful day of enjoying the beautiful countryside of Alto - what beautiful country and what beautiful people! Thanks Bob!

We really enjoyed our time and think of you all often. Thanks again for everything and many blessings and much love to you all!

-Rob & Madison

EVENTS



Alto Chase



Monday, October 11
At 7:30



NEWS

Please plan to attend the congregational meeting that will take place on Sunday, October 3, 2021 at 2:00 p.m to meet with representatives from the RCA. The meeting is scheduled to last no more than two hours, but may be completed earlier. After hearing a brief summary of both sides of the issue and a time to ask questions, all of the confessing members of Alto Reformed Church will vote on the petition to withdraw from the RCA by secret ballot. Absentee ballots are available at the Information Center. Please read the instructions on the ballot carefully and place your ballot in the sealed envelope in the box marked 'Absentee Ballots' prior to the congregational meeting.



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Our mailing address is:
N3697 County Road EE
Waupun, WI 53963