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Choosing Life or Death

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

Did you read that? Really? Let it soak into your brain a moment. Read it again.

My heart aches as I read this; I long to be one who chooses life. God speaks this rebuke, challenge, and promise through Moses. He warns the Israelites of a most certain destruction if their hearts turn away from God (vs. 18). He also promises blessings if they keep loving and obeying God.

In Christ, we have life. Because of his death, we are forgiven and indwell with his

Spirit. Life is planted in us.

Then why does it seem we experience death and curses? Could it be that we are very much like the Israelites, circumcised and part of God's people, yet ever prone to wander from the God who made us and the family who loves us?

Too often Christianity is presented as a single choice. I made that choice to accept Christ as my Lord and Savior almost 29 years ago as a sophomore at Drake University. That was not the end of my choosing Christ.

I chose Christ when I went on my first mission trip in 1992.

I chose Christ when I took a position leading worship in 1993.

I chose Christ when I moved to California for seminary in 1995.

I chose Christ with each major life transition...

but I've also had to choose Christ every day.

There certainly have been days of choosing my agenda. Looking at my to-do-list, diving in, and



getting things done. Prayer and Bible study take a back seat to work and family. And according to our passage above, I chose death and curses. I didn't die physically, but my soul suffered. It's only in God's grace through Jesus I am not destroyed.

Oh Lord, forgive me for choosing death and curses. Have mercy on me for choosing work and family over you.

Help me put you in your rightful place as Lord of my life.

Help me make time for prayer and Bible study every day.

Help me build a solid foundation of biblical understanding.

Help me nurture Godly character in every area of my life.

Help me develop healthy connections with my family, friends, fellow believers, and neighbors.

Help me pursue Your purposeful calling on my life.

Help me choose life!

If you want to be more intentional about your choosing life, I urge you to join us this Fall for “Acts of God” as we address the challenge of pain. You can go much deeper this Fall by stepping onto our leadership path. It’s still under development, but talk with Pastor Kevin if you would like more information.

What’s up with our 2020 Task Force?

We will be meeting on September 15 and welcome your prayers. A couple of things that have developed in the past month...

1. The Gospel Alliance has chosen to cancel their annual meeting due to low numbers. They are disappointed, but realize churches are mostly waiting to see what will happen at General Synod in 2020.
2. Bill Bruins and Carl VanderKooi attended a three-hour workshop in Brandon, which reviewed the implications of possible outcomes at the 2020 General Synod. They found this informative and will discuss this at our next meeting.
3. We did receive a letter from the RCA’s Vision 2020 Task Force thanking us for our letter and asking for prayer.

4. You are invited to an Engaging in Difficult Conversations/ Emotional Maturity Workshop on September 7, 2019 at Bethany Reformed Church in Sheboygan. The intent is to help congregations have healthy conversations about the possible outcomes with the RCA. If you are interested, contact Pastor Kevin ASAP.

What’s up with staffing plans?

The consistory met with Gary Harrison in July. He is a church leadership coach and the consistory had these things to say in their meeting evaluation forms...

- Gary had a great presentation. A lot to chew over. I think we have to review our vision before we consider filling our position.
- Valuable meeting. So important to keep focus on God. Not making an idol of pastor, church, people, programs.
- Good idea bringing Gary in. Very transparent. His time here will help us go in God’s direction with current staff situation.
- I am thankful that Gary came tonight and I was able to be in the room. His message was inspiring,

and I wish everyone could have heard it!

The Executive Team met on August 26th and had a great discussion about how we might tweak the current job description. We will be working on that and look forward to the next step of establishing a search team.

What's up with our Classis?

The Classis of Wisconsin has several things on their plate.

1. This year is the end of the two-year terms of the Servant (Executive) Team. I welcome any suggestions for nominating elders or pastors to this team.
2. The Revitalization Team, which I chair, has given out nearly \$30,000 this year in outreach grants to churches! We have approved about 2/3 of the requests, so churches have had to bring a quality plan to reach their neighbors.
3. The Multiplication Team, which has been merged with the Revitalization Team, is looking into doing a classis-wide sermon series in January, which would urge churches to consider how they can multiply.
4. The Leadership Team is working with a Hispanic pastor to potentially adopt his church plant.
5. The Servant Team is still looking to sell the church building in Racine as they closed last year.

Reorganizing

By Adrea Daane & Megan Vande Zande
Over the last few months we've wrestled with the best ways to display our different resources and information items here at the ARC. This past week we've done some "remodeling" in hopes that these changes will make it easier to know where to find information and spread things out a bit.

The information desk, located by the mailboxes, will hold general church documents and still be used as a sign up area for most overall ARC areas. The bulletin board area that used to hold community news (across from the elevator) has now become the Children & Families Resource Area. This new set up will be focused on all documents, sign ups, and general information that deals with things such as Sunday School, Bible Class, VBS, family ministries, and more. It was the ultimate goal to create a more user friendly area for members and visitors for our education opportunities. Classroom locations,

memory verse details, schedules, sign ups, etc will now have their own place. We never knew where to fit in many of these things in the past and think this will be a great solution. As we start another year of classes and programs we hope you will find what you're looking for as well as be able to point others to this area as a first place to start.

The community news area has been shifted across the hall next to the elevator. The memorial desk, which used to be placed there, is now moved down into the library if you're ever interested in looking through the memorial binder.

If you have any questions or have suggestions of pieces of information you feel would be helpful to include in one of these areas, please talk to Megan or Adrea!

Do You Dare?

By Jessa Ter Beest

Have you ever been afraid to ask a question about your faith in Jesus? Too embarrassed because it's something you "should have" known already or worried that someone will think you're stupid for even coming up with the question? I know I've been in that boat plenty of times and I

think every adult could say the same, even if they didn't want to admit it.

Fuller Youth Institute has determined through much research that it is way more dangerous to someone's faith to go through life with unasked questions than it is for a person to doubt (and ask those questions). So, this year we're daring our youth at Alto to ask those questions - what is it that you doubt? What's hard to believe? Why is something a sin? Is Jesus really the only way to Heaven?

Between our new Acts of God series, Bible Class, Heidelberg Catechism and youth group's Do You Dare? theme we're hoping to really open up about the questions we have about life and faith.

Do you have a question you've always thought about but never asked? Please submit it to Jessa! You can write it anonymously and put it in the youth director mailbox any time. We'll address them with youth group but also try to answer some through these AMEN articles in the coming months. Let's work through our faith together and grow stronger as we learn more about our Savior!

Women's Ministry Update

By Tiffany Arndt

After the summer months, we are now discussing the events for the rest of the year.

Food pantry boxes will be placed out in October, so please be mindful of items that can be donated. These include mac 'n cheese, spaghetti o's/ravioli, chunky soup, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti sauce, pasta, bar soap, shampoo, and toilet paper.

We will be starting a Bible Study o



n Tuesday, October 1st at 6:30pm called Gospel of Mark by Frances Chan. This will run for 5 weeks, ending Tuesday, October 29th. We will pick up the remaining 6 weeks in Spring. Watch for the sign up sheet!

SAVE THE DATE! Friday, November 1st at 6:30 join us in the basement for a Bunco/Appetizer night of fun! Grab a friend and join us!

Lastly, do you have an interest in joining our Women's Ministry committee? We have 12 members, and each year we are

looking for new members to replace the ones who have finished their term. Let us know, we'd love to have you!

Golden Lifers Update

By Roxy Schouten

Most of us have heard antidotal or first person accounts of Mama bears being protective of their cubs. Perhaps closer to our encounters with creatures would be geese protective of their young as they take on predators or humans much larger than themselves. Certainly human young have dangers not unlike these situations but a bigger danger is to entice and capture their vulnerable minds. There are numerous things that come to mind without giving too much thought to preparing a list. Golden Lifers can attest to the fact that those dangers do not let up even into later years of life.

Everyday we see the protective acts of parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, teachers etc of children but as much as we try there are times the young are out of our ability or proximity. How do we equip them and ourselves? In recent weeks we have been led in messages on "Handling the Sword" and that certainly has alerted us all to the need for the power of God's Word and to use it appropriately. There is no other truth that comes close to the wisdom and power revealed between

Genesis thru Revelation.

Here are some practical directives which were shared with me for training children but also serve as a check-up for adults of all ages – including Golden Lifers. These are the “Big 6” to evaluate our training for children and how much we as adults have yet to live up to.

1. Know how to share and defend the Gospel. (It might be enlightening to find out how many adults actually know what the Gospel is.)
2. Know how to think and live Biblically versus the World View
3. Know how to think critically and analyze statements and challenges
4. Know how to refute Evolution (Scientists know admit it is a false premise but still being taught)
5. Know how to respond to claims of moral relativism (such as “everybody is doing it”)
6. Know how to recognize and respond to Biblical compromise (RCA among other Denominations are struggling with this right now as many compromises have crept into our midst).

How are we doing? If we were faced with the challenges that our children and young

adults face each day in their encounters how would we fare? If we are not equipped with answers and lives to match how can we equip them? This is not to say that we have ALL the answers nor ever will have but this serves as a “check-up” for our health as a Born Again Believer.

Golden Lifers know that we do not have all the answers and yet have a need to grow in the knowledge and application of God’s Truth. So, we continue to meet for that training. We share our concerns, our struggles to live out those “Big 6” signs of maturity in Christ as we study God’s Word and find new nuggets of wisdom that we have read many times but come alive in a new manner. So, we invite you to join us as we start anew this fall. We have laughs, snacks, prayer for needs and study of God’s Word. Our summer “outing” was an enjoyable time spent meeting with a volunteer at a Clinic in Dalton providing affordable care for the area and rounded that up with a delicious dinner in an Amish home with interactions with our hosts.

See you soon??

MESSAGES

Thank you to all who contributed to the

August 16th Community Table dinner. We couldn't do it without the support of our church family.

Thank You! God blesses us so we can be a blessing to others. Once again, the Waupun area churches and community have given from their hearts to help our area children start school with the supplies they need. Thank you to all of you who donated supplies and monetary gifts this year. We had a wonderful response. Over 200 children received backpacks and supplies they will need. Any supplies that were left are made available through school personnel during the school year for students in need. Thank you for your continued support of this program.

God Bless,
The Church Women United of the Waupun Area

Thank you to everyone for the birthday wishes and nice cards!
It was greatly appreciated!
Dayton TerBeest

EVENTS



See You at the Pole - September 25 at 7:30am at the Waupun Area & Laconia Schools. Join the kids for prayer. Ask Jessa for more details.

NEWS

Births

Harrison Myles, son of Mitch & Amanda Badtke, born on July 25th.

Aleena Rose, daughter of Scott & Melanie Bruins, born on August 13th.