

# ALTO



## REFORMED CHURCH

### ARTICLES

#### Did You Forget to Harvest? (Part 11 of Pathways to Maturity)

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

Every winter there are fields full of corn. One farmer told me as we drove by a field covered in snow “he’s just lazy and leaves it til Spring.” I’ve heard from others that some farmers just couldn’t harvest with the rain and then snow, or that they lack the storage and don’t want to pay the grain elevator to store it.



**Regardless of the reason, it’s sad to see a field ready for harvest without a harvester.** I suppose the raccoons and deer appreciate it.

Matthew 9:35–38 (NIV) gives us a weighty spiritual connection to these corn fields...

*<sup>35</sup> Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Ask the*

*Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

**Notice these key points...**

- 1. Jesus was compassionate.** He was not judgmental or mean. He was grieved by the helplessness of the people. They were being harassed (by Satan) and could not see their way out of sin and guilt.
- 2. Jesus went.** He moved from town to town, going to the people in need. He was not content to let them come to him, but made it as easy as possible for them to hear of his love and grace.
- 3. Jesus helped.** He healed every disease and sickness. Some claim we have the same power and to some extent we do. Yet we are not God and we cannot demand our will of God. We do what we can... we must pray for healing and help as much as we are able.
- 4. Jesus spoke.** He taught and proclaimed the gospel/good news. He explained that God’s kingdom was now being implemented. It was not the freedom from Rome they hoped for, but he assured them that repentance would lead to freedom from sin.
- 5. Jesus called for prayer.** His application is not to be nicer, to go, to serve, or to witness to the lost. **He calls, really commands, the disciples to pray for God to raise-up workers.** He realizes the harvest is bigger than the 12 and that they will need more workers.

I think every ministry leader has bemoaned the lack of workers/volunteers. There is always a need for Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, greeters, and nursery workers, while these ministries are sometimes seen as just maintaining the church, they are essential to the mission.



These ministries exist to raise up the next generation of workers. No doubt we need to send missionaries, but we have to first equip them for the mission. This concept is interwoven into our mission, vision, core values and strategic priorities.

Our call to “develop and deploy Christ-like leaders” is exactly what this area of competency for ordination in the Alliance is about. Alto Reformed Church exists to be part of the harvest.

**I encourage you to check out all three of the following resources to help you engage in the mission of God.**

A. For motivation, watch “The Insanity of God”. It is free to stream on [RedeemTV.com](http://RedeemTV.com).

B. For inspiration and training in witnessing, watch the “[Go & Tell Evangelism Workshop](#)” from South Blendon Community Church which we watched during Sunday School in January.

C. For reminders to pray for your neighbors, use [app.blesseveryhome.com](http://app.blesseveryhome.com). This is a fabulous tool (mobile device app and website) where you can get reminders to pray, learn names of neighbors, and track if you have prayed for them, listened to them, eaten with them, served them, or shared your story with them.

### **PRAY:**

Lord, help me think beyond myself and to pray for the lost, love the community, share my story of faith, and raise up workers to go into the world as missional, Christ-like leaders. Amen.

## **Equipping Children & Families Update**

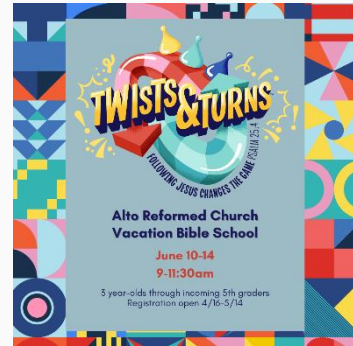
By Lynnae Loomans

The 3rd Annual Pinewood Derby was another



success! Thank you to everyone who made cars, cheered, helped behind the scene with set up, made/served food, and helped clean up.

It's time to sign up for Twists and Turns Vacation Bible School! VBS will be held June 10-14 at 9-11:30am. Please register your 3 year old through incoming 5th graders by May 14<sup>th</sup> using this link <https://forms.gle/rS8v4Y9UoT3LXtbY9>.



We couldn't do this without our fantastic volunteers! Volunteers (incoming 6th graders-adults) can sign up to help by May 14<sup>th</sup> using this link <https://forms.gle/A4xbDrVwDnALAEFq7>. Any questions, please contact [Lynnae Loomans](#).

Bible class has come to an end and Sunday School will wrap up this Sunday. I want to thank all of my teachers, helpers, and subs for volunteering their time and gifts this year! I am so blessed to have such awesome volunteers. If you feel called to be a teacher or sub, please don't be afraid to reach out. These programs are not possible without the help of all the volunteers.

## Best Moments in Youth Ministry - Part 2

By Jessa Wedel

As my time in youth ministry is coming to a close there are so many great memories to reflect on. For the last couple of months my articles share some of these moments. There are way too many to write every one down and I'm sure over the 11 years there will be some that I forget to mention, but it's been a blessing of a ride and I want to celebrate that with you.

1. Celebrations when kids decided to follow Jesus for the first time! When students would accept Christ at spring camp or overnights we celebrated with cake and balloons sometimes, confetti poppers, loud cheering, and at the very least - lots of hugs! The biggest decision in a person's life deserves just as much celebrating on earth as there is in Heaven! When your child accepts Jesus for the first time, I encourage you to make a huge deal out of it - way bigger than winning a baseball game or getting first place in a competition. Throw a party! Call all of your family! Do something special to commemorate it! We do so well with that for birthdays, graduations, and weddings, but wouldn't it be

amazing if we had way bigger parties for accepting Christ? And when it comes down to it, that's way more important than any of those other things.

2. Texting prayers to students. Those first few months of Covid was a tough time for youth ministry because we were all a little "zoomed out" and we couldn't get together in person. So I resorted to texting kids for prayer requests and sending prayers in return. This created a good habit in my own life of not just typing "praying for you" in the comments of someone's facebook status or in reply to a text - because if I'm honest, I usually forget when I say I will. So instead, it taught me to type out a prayer that the student could read just once, or read over and over if they felt they needed to. It also kept me accountable to actually saying the prayer I said I would!
3. Senior Retreats to the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum. It's awesome to watch kids absorb all of this scientific evidence for their faith, especially kids that are moving on to adulthood where there will be plenty of people that disagree with their beliefs.
4. Phone calls, coffee, texts, or mission trips with former students. I hope and pray that this will always be a part of my life. I received a phone call a few weeks ago from a student that was a senior during my first year in ministry. She was trying to answer some theological questions from a friend and called me to confirm her answers, but we also got the chance to talk about her life. She shared how she had strayed from making Godly decisions for a time and had moved in with her boyfriend, and then as both came back to Christ they were convicted to move apart, get baptized, and start living their lives for Him again. It was because of this witness that these friends wanted to come to her to start asking faith questions. Wow God! I hope I never stop hearing stories of how God is working in these kids as they become adults.
5. Kids' leadership. Early on in ministry shortly after Kevin came, we read a book called "Growing Young". This book had a chapter about giving youth the "keys to leadership". It's stuck with me for a long time and I definitely see that our church has implemented this more and more over the past 7 or so years. This is SO unique to our church compared to any other ministry I've seen and it truly shows where our church's priorities are. We want our kids to know that they are our church's future AND present. That they are just as valuable as any adult volunteer and their gifts are just as needed to help this church function and to spread the

gospel. From youth praise bands, video tech, nursery, helping with sunday school or Bible class, leading prayer and up front stuff in youth group, and sharing their faith with people in school - we are so blessed to have students that are so passionate about serving the Lord.

6. The last one I'll mention (although there are definitely more) is the service scavenger hunt when the kids go out and pray for people and do kind things for others. I'll save most of this sharing for the youth service, but I love having the opportunity to listen to the kids' excitement when they come back from this event - to share how God perfectly put them in the position to pray for someone at the right time - or even the times when they're rejected but know that God is still working! Listen for specific stories coming up at the youth service May 12th.

I'm sure I'll be a blubbering mess when I give my final speech as youth director at the Youth Service, so I'll say a bit here. I am so incredibly thankful for the past 11 years in this job. From the 22 year old that accepted this job without feeling equipped or knowing what she was getting into, I can honestly say this was the best experience God could have given me to challenge me, grow my faith, and show me His love through all of these kids and all of You. You have been so supportive not only of the ministry but also of my personal life with all your prayers, hugs, and cards. I could not ask for a better church to work for and continue to serve. You may not see Mitch and I around as much over the summer, but please do not let the rumors fly that we are leaving the church (yes, I heard that rumor was going around earlier this year. haha). We plan to continue serving here at Alto and love our church family here. Thank you for everything! I would not be who I am today without you.

## MESSAGES

Thank you all for the prayers and concern that was shown during my procedure. To know that so many care is truly a blessing.

-Colleen Bille

Dear Alto Reformed Church Youth Group, Jessa Wedel, and Chas Glewen- My name is Julie Keach and I was the lucky recipient of your "act of kindness" on Sunday, April 14 at the Waupun Piggly Wiggly. One of your youth members

politely approached me in the check out line and asked if he could pay for my groceries. I wanted to reach out to say thank you for setting such an amazing Christian example for your youth and to let you know how much I appreciate the generosity shown to me. I want to personally thank Blake Bruins, Linden Zuehlke, and Brady Buwalda for showing me such kindness. I promise to pay it forward.

God Bless,  
Julie Keach

A huge thank you for all the wonderful prayers you gave Taylor, and also for the goodie care package you mailed to Taylor. We are so blessed to have a great church family!

-Clay & Angie Daane and family

Thank you to the congregation for thinking of me and sending the snack package!

Thank you,  
Ella Bruins

Thank you to everyone who prayed, sent cards, visited, and showed concern and encouragement during my illness and our move to the Christian Living Center. We thank God for the healing and for His faithfulness in difficult times. We are blessed to be a part of a loving and caring congregation here in Alto.

-Ardyce and Barrie Tenpas

Thank you for your thoughts, prayers, cards, and visits as we grieve the loss of Betty. We appreciate everyone who has reached out.

-The Family of Betty Daane

## **EVENTS**

# May Events

May  
05

Sunday, 9:30am

## Sunday School Service

Join us as the PreK–5th graders lead worship. This is also the last session of Sunday School until the fall.

May  
12

Sunday, 9:30am

## Youth Service

Join us as the Middle & High Schoolers lead worship and we recognize the class of 2024.

May  
19

Sunday, 6:00pm

## Hymn Sing

Join us for an evening of singing some of our favorite hymns.



## NEWS

### Consistory Update

- The Consistory approved Pastor Kevin as Randy McDaniel's mentor for the Alliance Pathway to Ordination.
- According to our Bylaws, since Randy McDaniel is joining staff as the Equipping Youth Director he is ineligible to be a member of Consistory. Consistory approved a motion to appoint a member of the Greater Elder Board to finish this year. We will then elect a fourth Elder to finish Randy's final 2 years at November's congregational meeting. Berwyn Van Buren was asked to finish this year and has accepted the position beginning June 1.
- A motion was made and supported to add a sentence to the second vow of our [Leadership Covenant](#), guarding the purity of the church. The sentence "If one has a dispute with any of our non-salvation beliefs, they must teach that which we affirm, avoid creating division, and dialogue only with the Elder board about their concerns." shall be added as the second sentence after "Those who disagree". Motion carried.



