

ALT



REFORMED CHURCH

ARTICLES

Who Cares? (Part 10 of Pathways to Maturity)

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

Who cares about me?

That's the question most people are asking. We lament... "No one calls me," "No one asks me out," "No one really cares if I come."

Back in Junior High, I distinctly remember that massive lunchroom. There were two, actually. Windows on one side; cinder blocks on the other sides; and tables for 8 stretching from wall to wall. Pale yellow walls and sterile white floors still haunt me. (Maybe that's why I was glad to see the yellow kitchen in the parsonage get painted.) **The only thing more drab was my soul longing to be accepted.** That room is where I stood among a couple hundred peers and yet felt all alone.

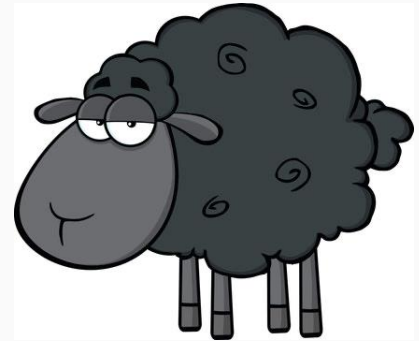


I found out in college, I was not alone. Every other freshman was searching for the same thing. Connection. Compassion. Care.

With all our technology created to help us be social, we are seeing an enormous gap in actual connectedness. We can see what all our friends are doing... without us. We sink into a "black sheep" mentality... "I don't fit in." "I don't belong."

The 10th competency for ordination in the Alliance is vital for all of us, as it addresses this monstrous, awful problem. The competency is called “Pastoral Care,” but it’s not just for pastors.

You see, the Good Shepherd in John 10:11 gave his life for his sheep. He has defeated the thief (10:10), protects his sheep from the wolves (10:12), and rescues lost sheep (10:16). We have a loving Shepherd who calls us to abide in Him (John 15).



As God’s sheep, we no longer walk alone and are consumed with the need for acceptance and love from others. We are blessed with the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Phil. 2:1; 2 Cor. 13:14). We are being strengthened inwardly day by day! (2 Cor. 4:16)

That should be enough, but God also gave us the support of the Church. After Jesus washed the feet of the disciples he told them...

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” John 13:34 (NIV)

The church is defined by this love and care for one another. Jesus would later turn to Peter and say, “Take care of my sheep.” (John 21:16) “Care” (poimainō) means to shepherd, tend, or pasture; and figuratively, to lead, guide, or rule.

Did you catch the shift? The sheep become shepherds!

Yes, pastors and elders are shepherds. Their shepherding must include devotion to prayer and teaching (Acts 6:4; James 5:14; 1 Tim 3:2), particularly guarding against wolves that bring division and heresy (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

Deacons also shepherd the believers, as they were given responsibility for caring for the widows (Acts 6:1-3).

We also see Paul calling the church to care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25-26). In many ways, we might even say that the churches become shepherds to Paul (the

missionary/pastor). Not that they had authority over him, but that they cared for his needs (Phil. 4:10-17).

Sheep are becoming shepherds!

So, Who Cares?

Let's make some practical application to all this.

1. Jesus cares about you! **If you are struggling with feeling accepted and loved, look first to Jesus. Look second to Jesus. Look third to Jesus.** If you look to others, even the church, you will be disappointed. Some, I fear, are so cared for by family and the church that they see little need to actually go to Jesus. **Unfortunately, many find it's much easier to just call mom or a best friend and vent than to go to Jesus.** Will you bow your knee in prayer and find comfort in Jesus?

2. The church cares about you. I guarantee there are believers who care about you. At prayer on Tuesday morning, we lamented over sex trafficking and prayed for those to whom we cannot put a name. We care. We just don't always know how to help. **Don't give up on the church.** God has a whole lot of amazing shepherds

3. You must care for others. We see in 1 Corinthians 12 the many ways which God gifts his sheep to shepherd others. Some teach, some help, some give, some organize, some encourage... Shepherding happens in all kinds of ways. Sure, it might be a "pastoral visit" where I read some Scripture and pray, but you can do your part. Maybe you just need to listen, bring a meal, send a note, or sing a song. **Find your niche and be the shepherd God made you to be.**

Look at it this way, life is a lunchroom and someone needs you to eat with them.

PRAY: Lord, I've been a lonely sheep for too long. Be my shepherd. Lay me down in green pasture. Lead me to the still waters. Restore my soul. Help me rest in you and become the shepherd you made me to be. Open my eyes in the lunchroom to see the one in need and give me courage to shepherd that one. Amen.

Equipping Children & Families Update

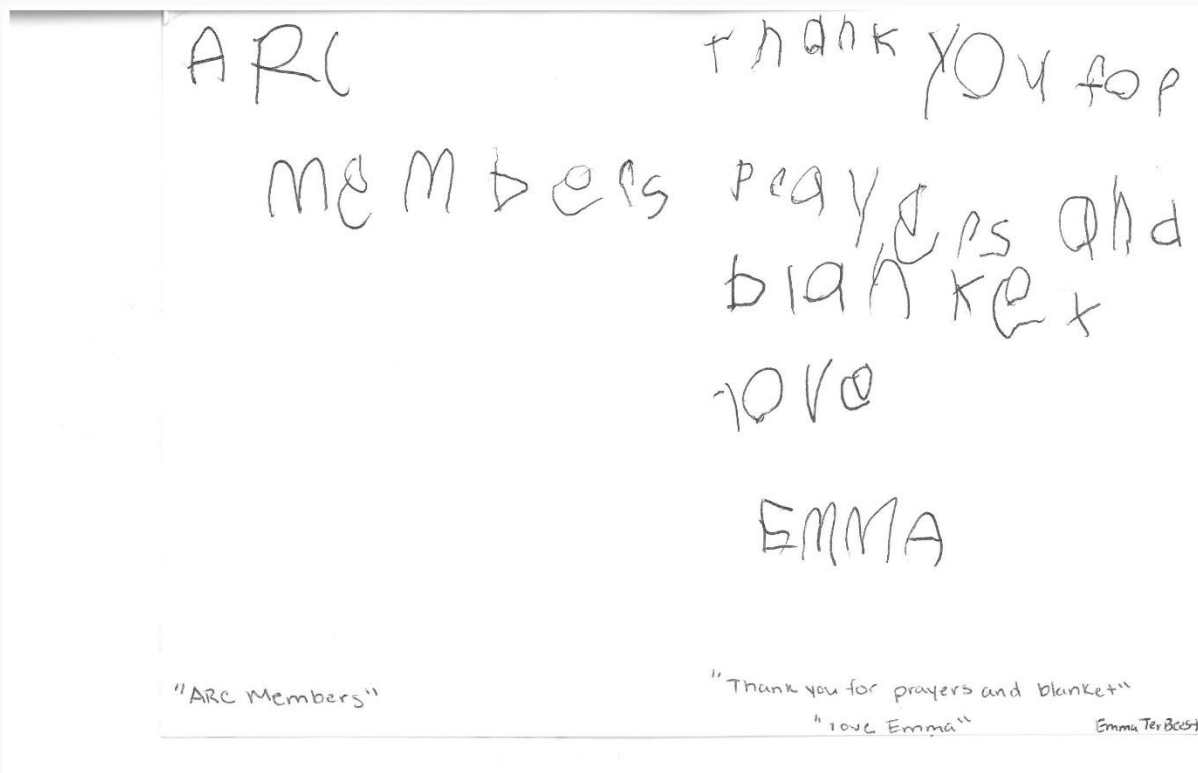
By Lynnae Loomans

April is here which means Bible Class is coming to an end. Thank you to every teacher/helper who volunteered every week to help these children grow close to Jesus. I could not have done it without you!

Reminders:

- Pinewood Derby April 17th @ 5:30 (Alto Community Center)
- No Sunday School April 21st - All Church Retreat. Hope to see you there for a fun time with your family :)
- Last day of Sunday School is May 5th

MESSAGES



Thank you for all the prayers and words of encouragement. Thank you for all of the cards and food we have received. It is wonderful to know that so many people are loving and caring for me. We are seeing God's love from all of you.

-Betty Daane

Thank you very much for the many ways in which you have been a blessing during

the recovery process after my health issues this past year. The cards, phone calls, visits, transportation, gifts of food, and especially your prayers were very appreciated. The prayer shawl is also appreciated and a beautiful reminder of the power of prayer and the joy of community.

-Lillian Schouten

EVENTS

April Events

Apr
09

Tuesday, 6:00pm

Mission Circle Guest Night

The Mission Circle invites you to join them for a potluck and guest speaker, Maylee Kok from Youth for Christ. Bring a dish to pass. Everything else will be provided.

Apr
10

Wednesday, 6:45pm

Bible Class Sundaes Night

1st - 8th graders will celebrate the last night of Bible Class for the school year with ice cream sundaes!

Apr
12

Friday, 6:00pm

Chili Supper & Bible Trivia

Join us in supporting our youth group with a chili cookoff and Bible trivia. Chili cookoff starts at 6pm, Bible trivia starts at 7pm.

Apr
17

Wednesday, 5:30pm

Pinewood Derby

Join us at the Alto Community Center for a fun, free night. We'll have a meal at 5:30pm and races will start at 6pm. Sign-up and grab a car kit with instructions at the Children & Families Resource Center by April 10th.

Apr
19

Friday-Sunday

All Church Retreat

Join us for the All Church Retreat at Silver Birch Ranch on April 19-21. Register by March 31st or contact Megan to get help with registration. Any questions, reach out to Lynnae.

Apr
28

Sunday, 7:00pm

Men's Chorus Program

Join us for the Men's Chorus Program!



NEWS

Church Staff Update

Alto Reformed Church is excited to announce that Randy McDaniel has accepted our Youth Director Position. Randy has been actively involved at Alto in youth ministry, Bible Class, Outreach Team, and became an elder in January. He has been working through the Alliance Ordination Pathway with me (Kevin) for the past year. This has involved courses with Christian Leaders Institute and other ministry experiences. He will start on June 1st as Jessa completes her time here. Pray for them as they navigate these transitions.

Thank you to the Search Team for their hard work.

Alliance Update

The Alliance Board released an update to the Core Convictions, now Unifying Beliefs. It seems all good clarification of who the Alliance is... <https://arc21.org/unifying-beliefs>

Alliance Ordination Pathway 2.0 is in development as the Ordination Team appointed a sub team to this task. This is an exciting time to pursue ministry and the Alliance created a whole new way to be ordained. Instead of having to spend 7 years in school, we've developed a way to train and evaluate candidates for 36 core competencies. I've been writing about the 12 areas in the AMEN for months. Pathways 2.0 will flesh out the training and evaluation of the other 144 competencies. Much of this aligns with seminary education, but it adds heart and hand competencies to the head competencies. Randy McDaniel and Ian Van Wyk are well on their way.

The Midwest Network Admin Team discussed the hiring process for the network communication position, staff compensation resources, the pastor's retreat, and the makeup of the Network Admin Team and whether we should add another elder representative or redo the structure completely.