



ARTICLES

How Now Shall We Vote?

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

I'm disgusted with our political parties, candidates, media, and virtually everyone else speaking into politics at this point. I opened my mailbox today to find four political items. All four were identical and addressed to each voter in our home. I could only cringe at the deceptive way my preferred candidate was treated. It's just wrong. I imagine people on both sides feel this way as we read the opposition's attacks. It's really out of hand, but not likely to change.

So, what do we as Christians do?

1. Avoid Deception. The deceptive ads come from every direction. Sometimes the attacks are humorous, in that they only confirm my vote for the candidate. Other times, they're just slanderous and mean.

Paul never would have made it as a politician, but his words are helpful to us... *"Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God."* (2 Cor. 4:2)

As Christians, we must cut through the deception and find the truth. That is very difficult these days. I hope the following two points are helpful.

2. Identify Biblical Principles that Should Guide Us. Our world is asking, “What issues are important to you?” That’s the basic question behind much of the polling going on right now. However, we must ask, what does God consider important in a political leader.

The Bible teaches that they must be ones who punish evil and promote good. Peter said, *“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.”* (1 Peter 2:13-14, See also Rom. 13). Our nation is very divided on what qualifies as right and wrong.

With that said, I see two major issues that God does care about and is very clear about his views. The first was not mentioned in any of the polls I looked at. The very definition of family, marriage, and gender (Gen. 1-2; Mat. 5:31-32, 19:1-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7) are under attack, and it apparently was not relevant to the pollsters at all. If a candidate can’t or won’t define what a woman is, how can he be trusted to make wise decisions?

The second issue is hotly debated in our nation, but crystal clear in Scripture. Abortion is murder. It is breaking the sixth commandment (Exod. 20:13). The idea that a fetus is part of the mother and not a life in itself has long ago been disproved. There is grace and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. If you had an abortion or helped a girlfriend get one, you know the heartache and guilt from such an action. Charis Pregnancy Center in Fond du Lac (charisfdl.com) is there to help you and any mothers navigating pregnancy.

When it comes to us electing government officials to promote good, we must remember life is good. For a far better and more thorough defense of voting pro-life read... www.focusonthefamily.com/pro-life/pro-life-arguments-explained-part-1/

Once we have clarity on key Biblical principles that should guide us, we must look at where the candidates stand.

3. Identify and Vote for Godly Candidates. As I stated above, mailers and TV ads are a terrible place to find out where candidates stand. Fortunately, some people have done a lot of work to give you some hard evidence of where the

candidates stand. Check this out... www.ivoterguide.com

4. Pray for the Elected Leaders. Paul pushed Timothy to call on God to work in the leaders to allow peaceful, godly living.

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (1 Tim. 2:1-2) We need not fret and worry when our candidate loses. God is able to use the most evil leaders as they are or change their hearts. We are called to submit to and pray for the leaders.

PRAYER:

Almighty Ruler of all creation, you have been faithful and good. Give us wisdom to understand the truth and to select the leaders you want in office. Give us courage to speak the truth with love and grace. Bless our officials with Godly wisdom to restrain evil and promote good. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Small Group Update

By Doug Shotsky

Colossians 1:28-29 - 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. **29** For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Not only as an Equipping Adults Pastor of Alto Reformed Church, but simply as a disciple of Jesus Christ, I want so badly to present others mature in Christ. As Paul says here, I feel the same way; I toil and struggle with the energy the Holy Spirit provides to work towards this end. With that being said, there is much work to do, but I want to take a moment to celebrate work that the Lord is doing in Alto, and to recognize those who have stepped up to the call to lead the way.

Prior to this fall, our congregation had 8 active small groups. Many of these groups have been together for years and have built rich relationships of love and support. We recognize that a church our size needs these small groups to foster these deeper relationships, so this fall the Equipping Adults Team prayed, planned, and worked hard to intentionally initiate new small groups in

our congregation, so that many others can connect and grow deeper in relationships with the Lord and others, and the result is that we have begun 12 new groups! That is a total of 20 small groups now meeting from our congregation!

There is much work to be done, and this is in no way tooting our own horn, but discipleship is certainly a responsibility we take seriously and this is a great step in the right direction. With that being said, if you are not yet in a small group, we do encourage you to join one; so if you're interested contact me, Pastor Doug, via email (jesusbuild@yahoo.com) or phone (740-604-0476) and I'll help get you connected.

Finally, I want to recognize the Equipping Adults Team for all of their hard work and commitment to make this happen: Dave & Stephanie Lenz, Katie Derksen, Carl VanderKooi, Tom Bruins, and Bill Bruins.

Equipping Children & Families Update

By Lynnae Loomans

WOW! I am continually so blessed by our church in the way everyone comes together to help in so many ways. Thank you to everyone who has donated items, money, and offered to help in some sort of way to help make a successful Operation Christmas Party.

I am so thankful for each family and child in this church, coming to Sunday School and Bible class each week. Families who bring friends, how awesome to see this church filled with children ready and eager to learn and grow.

Remember to check your calendars each week for different things happening whether it's no bible class, Christmas program practice or sonshine singers.

Thirteen Reasons to Be Thankful in Youth Ministry

By Jessa TerBeest

1. We're averaging 50+ kids per week in high school and middle school youth group.
2. 3 of our young adults - Wyatt Guell, Libbi Campbell and Ian VanWyk are working through Experiencing God each Sunday night with Jessa.

3. We've got new coaches this year! We're so excited to welcome Joslyn Ware, Ian VanWyk and Randy McDaniel as our new freshmen coaches.
4. We've got so many returning coaches and young adults/high schoolers that are new members who are now leading their own small groups.
Senior Coaches: Libbi Campbell, Nolan Lenz, Keith Loomans, Jessa TerBeest. Junior Coaches: Brant and Taylor McDowell, Marlaina Shotsky. Sophomore Coaches: Joel and Pamela Ruis. Middle School coaches: Caleb Glewen, Carissa Harmsen, Keith Loomans, Libbi Campbell, Ryan Lenz, Nolan Lenz, Wyatt Guell, Elyssa VanWyk. Pray for all of us that we would connect with the kids and lead them well.
5. We're reaching students from 6 different schools: Waupun, CWC, Laconia, Fond du Lac, Ripon, and Home School.
6. Ian Van Wyk, Wyatt Guell, and Libbi Campbell are all going to teach lessons in youth group this semester. So cool!
7. Randy McDaniel shared his testimony with our high school students.
8. We had over 100 kids at the Alto Chase!
9. We had 30 middle schoolers attend Silver Birch Retreat.
10. Middle Schoolers (Blake Bruins, Brady Buwalda, Owen Kloosterboer, William Shotsky plus Elyssa and Wyatt) are now leading live worship for middle school youth group almost every Sunday night.
11. Middle and High Schoolers asked SUCH good questions for their Q&A nights:
 - a. Why do we sin sometimes even when we know what we are doing is wrong?
 - b. Why is there heaven and hell?
 - c. What are some other religions and what do they believe in?
 - d. Is swearing a sin?
 - e. How did different races happen?
 - f. Did the prophets of Ashera help slaughter the prophets of Baal after Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18?
 - g. How does the Trinity work?
 - h. Why does God give some people harder problems?
 - i. How does time work for God?
 - j. Can God hear your thoughts?
 - k. What does God look like?
 - l. Why am I depressed?
 - m. How did God and Jesus get their names?
 - n. Will God forgive me if I'm not sorry?

- o. Are there animals in heaven?
 - p. How can I reach a friend that's an unbeliever if I've tried bringing up Christ and he doesn't want to hear it?
12. Our Intern, Wyatt Guell, is helping so much with youth and worship and is also taking time to disciple younger students through time spent hunting with them, hanging out, and giving guitar lessons while encouraging them in their walk with Jesus. We're seeing fruit from this in our middle school students already and it's all the work of God's faithfulness!
13. We are seeing genuine faith in our students, passion for prayer, excitement in leading others in their faith, and continued desire to grow deeper. What a blessing it is!

Library News

By Jean Stelsel

November/December always seems to be the best time to start that book you've been promising yourself to read! It's always cozy to snuggle up in your chair under your favorite blanket. And, if you're too busy with upcoming holiday preparations, your friend (your book) will be waiting for you when you have time!

There have been some changes going on in the library if you haven't checked it out lately. We added some new bookcases and rearranged some of our books. We now have our adult non-fiction books separated by topics. All are labeled for easy access. We also moved our fiction/non-fiction books for young people along with our DVD's. As always, there is a librarian there on Sunday mornings to answer any & all of your questions.

We have quite a few devotionals as well! Typically you check out a book for two weeks and return it shortly before or after. With the devotionals we expect you to keep it as long as needed to read through it all, 30 days or 365! All we ask is that you put your name on the card whenever you check anything out and leave it in the basket so we know who has them if anyone else is looking for it.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the library committee for stepping up and filling in for me while I take some time off. Renee Bruins, Debbie Bruins, Sharon DeMotts, Dorie Harmsen, Deb Navis, Weeg Peters and Mary

Vander Kooi.

MESSAGES

Thank you for all the cards and phone calls I received on my 90th birthday. It made my day so special.

God bless you-

Marilyn Westerveld

Thank you to everyone who sent cards, thoughts, and prayers to us during Dad's death.

-Jeff & Mary Medema & Family

Thank you for the cards and food.

-Faye Janey

Dear ARC,

Thank you for my 1st grade Bible. I love to read it. I am learning a lot. My favorite story is Ruth.

Love,

Hadley Mueller

We so appreciate the luncheon that you organized and served. It was delicious and abundant. It was a wonderful gift of love to us.

-The Loomans and Pluim Families

EVENTS

Alto Reformed Church
November 2022

November 02 **OCC Packing Party**
Join us as a family to pack boxes for Operation Christmas Child at 5:30-7:30pm.

November 13 **Congregational Meeting**
All Covenant Partners are encouraged to attend the annual congregational meeting at 10:45am.

November 23 **Thanksgiving Eve Service**
Join us at 7pm for an evening of worship and celebrating God's faithfulness as Jean Stelsel shares her story.

For detailed information:
Call 920.346.5505 or email office@altoreformedchurch.org

NEWS

Birth

9/29/22 - Bodhi Murray, son of Tom & Lindsey Bruins

Congregational Meeting

The annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, November 13th immediately following the service. All Covenant Partners are asked to attend the meeting. Activities will be available for children in the basement. Teens are asked to help with the younger children.

The following people will be on the ballot for Elder and Deacon:

Elder: Bill Bruins, Mike Dobbratz, Al Kamphuis, Darryl Navis, Joel Ruis, and Mark Vossekuil

Deacon: Dan Bresser, Jason De Jager, Eli Glewen, Brant McDowell, Ryan

Vande Zande, and Marcus Vossekuil

Covenant Partners are asked to vote for 3 in each category. Please prayerfully consider who you will vote for.

Absentee ballots are available at the Information Center and may be placed in the absentee ballot box, signed and in an envelope prior to the meeting. Absentee ballots are not to be used simply as a matter of convenience