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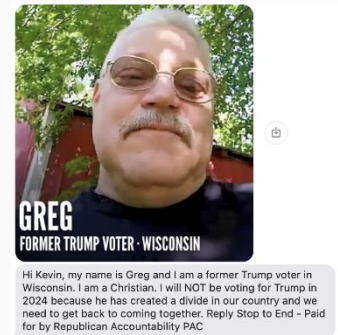
REFORMED CHURCH

ARTICLES

What to Say About Elections?

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

What to say about elections? The Elders asked me to say something in the AMEN about our need to vote wisely as Christians. It's one thing to spout off at this Greg dude that keeps sending me texts about his being a Christian and not voting for Trump, but it's entirely different to share the biblical call/commands with regard to politics in a church newsletter.



Some of you will be steamed over this, others will be frustrated I missed a key point or 10, and, hopefully, many of you will find this clarifying as you head to the polls. Know that I am happy to talk with you privately about your thoughts, concerns, and questions. Politics can and should be a grace filled discussion among believers. Let's look at two key truths and two key questions.

KEY TRUTHS REGARDING VOTING

1. Politics and religion are not separate. If your faith/beliefs don't impact your voting, it's pretty pointless to vote. Your beliefs should influence who you support, what you communicate to political leaders, and who you vote for. We have been given the responsibility in this nation to elect leaders that will stand for what is just and right. Christians should honor the laws and vote. Along these same lines, the church and

pastors are called to speak out on moral issues. True, the IRS can revoke a church's 501(c)3 for endorsing a candidate, but that does not negate a church's non-profit status. I've never seen either done, and I've seen some churches invite candidates to speak from the pulpit. Regardless of tax status, I believe God calls the church to speak out against sin and to call the community to act rightly.

2. As a Christian, Jesus is your King. Above being an elephant or a donkey, you are a lamb of the Good Shepherd. You don't need to fear how evil our president, governor, or mayor may be. You are here as an ambassador from another kingdom and your King will bring you to be with Him some day.

KEY QUESTIONS REGARDING VOTING

The first question we must address is which issues matter more to God. Some issues are more important than others. Now, some say they are "one issue voters," and I agree one issue below does bring clarity to all the other issues and could determine your decision. But let me address this from a bigger picture. What are God's priorities...

Love God (honor Him, obey His Word, resist sin and evil)

Love your neighbor (protect the helpless and help the hurting)

With God's great commandments in mind (Mat. 22:37-40), we can list some core **issues** that should guide our voting...

1. Does the party/candidate love God and follow Jesus?
2. Does their character show this love by obeying the Bible?
3. Do they stand for protecting the life of unborn children? (If you support abortion, I urge you to see the resources below.)
4. Do they stand for protecting our children from immorality?
5. Do they stand for marriage being between a man and a woman?

There are a host of other issues we should be concerned about, but none rise to the importance of those listed above. The economy, border, and foreign affairs are major concerns for me. They simply can't trump the issues above for Christians.

The voter guides linked below and found on many other websites compare candidates on many issues and give varying orders of importance. These are valuable to evaluate and give different language and insight to these issues. **The key for believers is to understand what God's priorities are.**

The second question we must address is which party or candidate best aligns with God's will. No one is perfect. Jesus is not on the ballot, so we must choose the lesser of two evils in some cases.

To lower the bar on **issue one**... let's just ask which candidate is less antagonistic toward Jesus and Christianity as neither has clearly professed love for Jesus?

The answer to this was made very clear with VP Harris's recent response to individuals chanting "Jesus is Lord" at a rally. Telling them that they are at the wrong rally and should go down the street should sadden and terrify even those Christians on the left.

Issue two is tough to judge as we are sheltered from most of the candidates' personal lives. We know both candidates have had significant moral failures in the past. We can only judge their character on what we know they stand for and against. Thus, if issues one and two are not sufficiently clear, we must look at issues 3-5.

Issues 3-5 give us a clear picture of where each candidate and their party lies. Their stance on these key issues reveals their willingness to submit to Jesus as King and their willingness to give the Bible moral authority in our nation. We simply cannot affirm a party or candidate that • supports taxpayer-funded killing of the unborn; • promotes transgender education, non-gendered bathrooms and sports, and medical transitioning of minors; and • wants to redefine marriage. (See resources below for the specific stance of each candidate and party.)

While I wish issue two showed candidates with godly character, that's not an option. I've looked at third parties and maybe they are much stronger in this area, but that's impossible for most of us to discern. **The unfortunate reality is that we have two viable options for president, and we must do our part to discern God's best for our nation.** You are responsible for knowing Biblical priorities and political positions. We should not sit back and hope for the best when handed a ballot.

Regardless of your vote, we, as believers, must join together in prayer for this nation. God can use evil leaders, and He can change their hearts in one short moment. May He do just that.

PRAYER: Oh Lord our King, move in the hearts of your children to look to You for direction and peace during these days of division. Help us to trust you with the

outcome and to continue in your mission to make disciples regardless of government and social opposition. Gives us courage and grace to speak truth and lead others to follow Jesus.

RESOURCES: (ARC does not necessarily support all that these organizations stand for.)

On Abortion: Jeremiah 1:5, Galatians 1:15, Psalm 127:3, Psalm 139:15-16
www.focusonthefamily.com/pro-life/expressing-pro-life-in-winsome-ways-video-series/ (Video series on abortion.)

<https://catholicvote.org/former-abortion-doctor-urges-americans-to-vote-against-all-10-state-abortion-amendments/>

On Politics: Acts 9:15; Acts 26:1-15; Romans 13:1-4; 1 Peter 2:13-17; 1 Timothy 2:1-2

<https://christiansengaged.org/wisconsin> (This link has a comprehensive “Roadmap to the Party Platforms” that covers many issues and where the parties stand. It also has links for Wisconsin voters.)

frcaction.org (The Family Research Council provides a much more succinct Party Platform comparison, voter guides and other resources.)

firstliberty.org/elections (Information on legal rights of churches, voter guide and more.)

Equipping Young Adults & Children

By Tim Fennell

NOTE: This paper is in response to my assignment at Western Theological Seminary. The question presented to the class was, “What is the Church’s role in racial reconciliation and political division in the United States?” We were required to use our texts from the semester. This topic needs a full vetting and this paper should only be taken as an intro to many of the unfinished thoughts that need to be researched further. Please feel free to critique these thoughts. Ultimately, the Church needs to work better to come together in unity as the body of Christ.

The polarization of societies is not new to human history nor a new challenge for the Church. Historically, the Protestant Reformation could be considered the most polarizing moment resulting in the rupture of the Latin Church irrevocably in the 14th century. The Church today is not completely at an impasse momentarily;

however, it may feel like it in the West, especially in the United States of America. Churches, ministries, and nonprofits are continuing to work toward building bridges between racial and polarized groups. Since the formation of the United States, the American Church has incorporated social and political movements into its communication of the gospel. Some noteworthy and profound movements were women's suffrage, the abolition of slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and the movement to protest the war in Vietnam. These movements were rooted in the knowledge of God's deliverance and justice, freedom in Christ, and the Church's calling to be one body of Christ. Today we face an ever-polarizing culture that has crept into the Church with residual sins that continue to separate us from God and our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. "America's current political system separates love from truth, compassion from conviction, and social justice from the moral order as if they're somehow at odds with one another."^[1] The American Church reflects the ideas of Americanism thus placing Christians into two camps, conservative and progressive, which neither fully speaks to who we are as the body of Christ. The Church has bought the lie about identity from the culture thus polarizing ourselves into categories. As Fujimura states, "We have no meaningful engagement with or understanding of the human being across the divide."^[2] All believers are called to find our identity in Christ alone. Instead, influenced by political and cultural trends, we define ourselves by political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, race, and economic class. As the Church, we are rarely known for our love today. We should crave reconciliation because as Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians we are reconciled by Christ to the Father. The Gospel is one of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a legal, financial, and diplomatic term. But it also has a spiritual dimension. Christ paid our debt of sin reconciling us to the Father, but reconciliation takes an aspect of self-awareness through listening, understanding, and confessing injustices. Then those who have experienced injustice must choose the difficult action to forgive. Reconciliation requires the act of moving toward another in a posture of humility. It involves a response to the call to love one another. When talking about cultural, political, and racial reconciliation all parties involved must undertake the action of reconciliation, not just talk about it. Therefore, the role of the Church is to lead this action, however, it will not be possible until the Church turns back to its identity in Christ. Failing to actively engage in reconciliation will perpetuate the sins of racism and division.

Every aspect of polarization, racism, and injustice is a result of sin. Sin has been allowed to fester in the Church as an appeal to the culture to present the Church as relevant. It must be acknowledged that the Church can never be complacent with

sin. "...we have settled for an Americanized version of the Church that mirrors whatever culture says, and there is no collective sense of loss, no sense of remorse. We have sinned deeply."^[3] The Church lacks concern for the extent of sin that has crept into its teachings and culture. We are disjointed in our understanding of each other actions and words. This is due to different linguist understandings, lack of historical knowledge or listening to individual experiences, paradigm choices, and falling short of the posture of compassion and forgiveness. We need to show the counterbalance offered by the Biblical imperative of reconciliation.

Issues of Language

With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.^[4]

Language has become problematic in its meanings of words today. Thomas Sowell, a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, and social philosopher, points out that in the realm of social justice, those who use the same words do not always present the same meaning and the first step toward finding common ground is to clarify those meanings.^[5] A single word spoken may trigger a person to have contempt for their peer, friend, or family member.

The language of both liberalism and conservatism has been truncated and distorted, and this dysfunction is dismantling the language of culture. We need mediation in culture to help bridge the divide... about what we believe and to communicate beyond our differences.^[6]

For example, the word "system" in "systemic racism" causes the largest divide preventing both sides from coming to the same understanding of racism. Racism exists. Both progressives and conservatives agree on this. However, the term systematic racism or institutional racism is a relatively new term originating in 1977 by David Wellman, to define how racism is integrated into a society. Unless a person lacks complete historical knowledge of the world, each side can see the value of this term. The problem arises with the understanding of "system". For many a system is a defined set of rules, laws, and processes that determine a set outcome. There is a tangible aspect to a system where things can be traced or followed. On the other side, in this case, the word means traditions, actions, internalized feelings, and events in culture and society. This can also be traced and followed, however is still less concrete because culture shifts more often than law or governmental process.

Both sides are correct in their context. In many areas of the US, both understandings can be true at once. But there are areas where one understanding is more prevalent than the other. For example, laws may be devoid of racism, however, the society, based on its history, may still reflect racist tendencies if the work of reconciliation has not been done. This is the same issue with the words “social justice” and “injustice” that have been tainted for many in the Church, while for others it has been a rallying call to fight sin. This directly reflects what Sowell and Fujimura are saying. For Christians, these words should have a unified common understanding. Defining a common understanding is the key to having an effective dialogue. Although believers may disagree on the approach, all believers should recognize the sin of injustices and desire healing and reconciliation. There are numerous lines in Scripture calling for justice and forgiveness. The Exodus from Egypt gives a clear example that we know God hates injustice. “Christians clearly should not support solutions that undermine human dignity by, for example unfairly discriminating, creating excessive criminal punishments, eroding religious liberty, undervaluing the lives of the unborn, and so on.”^[7] The Book of James attests to our short falling with our tongues. The Church is the place where the hard conversations need to occur so that we can discern with God together through listening to, lamenting with, and loving one another. We need to be cognizant of the words we use and define the context of the usage for us to engage with cool heads.

How we present our words matters greatly to the outcome of a discussion on a polarizing topic. A person’s intent might be good or justified, however, if presented poorly it could fall on deaf ears or aggravate the issue. We need to present our arguments with humility and understanding. This does not take away from the fact that we need to have honest conversations about race and injustice. Through careful approach and linguistic understating, we can begin to create what Fujimura calls culture care. This idea establishes itself in the positive form of stewarding culture and using words and postures that build others up to create a generational form of culture that contains the harmonious aspects of beauty. This contrasts with the postures of “culture war”.^[8]

In the formation of culture care, injustices, issues, and concerns need to be presented. Through laments, we can fully express our heart pains with a kind of beauty that is unseen in other forms of confrontation. Villodas expresses many aspects of deep concern for racial reconciliation in the form of lament. In his book *The Deeply Formed Life*, gives a wonderful take on the importance of lament. “Lament...is a fueling of action motivated by compassion rather than catharsis. It

requires us to take seriously the pain we see and feel and to open ourselves to how God might have us respond.”[\[9\]](#) We need God to hear our pain and struggles. This opens us up to allow God to guide us deeper in our relationship with him, which will better affect our relationships with others. The catharsis still happens, but compassion drives us to do everything with grace and love. When a church laments together they can grow together furthering the goals of the Kingdom and growing closer to the Father.

Whether it be a lament, prayer, petition, or sermon our posturing toward our audience can determine the effectiveness of the message. Later in the same chapter on lament, his presentation causes his earlier generative words to fall flat when he begins to criticize his audience politely.

I attempted to make a distinction between White people and Whiteness. The former speaks to human beings made in the image of God; the latter speaks to a destructive ideology that normalizes and absolutizes so-called White values, experiences, and history. My failed attempt at this distinction brought about anger from people in my congregation. Some had difficulty separating the two, accusing me of reverse racism. But a deeply formed reconciliation requires us to do the hard work of clarifying and distinguishing between these two ideas.[\[10\]](#)

In the work of reconciliation, posture, and presentation make a difference in people’s desire to want change and participate in this work, racial or any type of polarized subjects. In this case, whether a person believes this concept of race or not makes no difference. In his argument, he has lost people's trust due to his lack of humility and, although possibly not his intent, attacks his audience who are willing to listen and do the hard work he talks about. He then sees no error in his arrogance when he says, “When it comes to conversations on race, our level of offendability often reveals the level of our maturity.”[\[11\]](#) Villodas misses the mark here. His posture toward his audience is that of arrogance. When making a sweeping generalization of a race and associating negative traits one runs the risk of discriminating against that race. One’s skin color does not determine their culture, character, or upbringing. What he is saying is if he attacks traits that he has associated with the color of your skin, and you don’t bend to his understanding and instead get offended, then you are not capable of understanding. This does a disservice to all the work of reconciliation. What good does it do a person to attack the people they are trying to win over? This solely sows distrust in one's argument for reconciliation. Historically or in the contemporary sense, no human has the moral high ground. This is not

generative speech either. In our work with reconciliation, we need to approach the conversation, in the same way, Paul tells us, “Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.”^[12] We need to build each other up as believers in Christ working toward the same goal as one body. This does not come naturally. We desire to be right and prove it so. If being right is our only motive, we will find a way to belittle those who think differently. In making this error, we hurt the process of reconciliation.

Lack of Historical Knowledge

It is astonishing to realize that many in the US either didn't pay attention to US history or that they were never taught it. Winston Churchill is quoted saying “History is written by the victors”, while Napoleon called it a “fable agreed upon”. History is riddled with bias. That alone makes it a worthy study in search of the truth. Omissions and bias are not merely American or contemporary issues. Peter Read's book *A Rape of the Soul so Profound* delves deeply into the intent to forget the stealing of Aboriginal children by the Australian government in hopes to make them act “more White”.^[13] Martin Luther King Jr. remarks about knowing history prevents complacency in his sermon *A Knock at Midnight*.^[14] History has its flaws, however, knowing national and individual histories is a huge part of our remembering to not recreate the same problems and atrocities from the past. Knowing history also allows us to better understand the issues of the social construct of race and why the US is so polarized. Race has not always been a category to group people until the Enlightenment period. The Church simply accepted it as the formation of political and social theory. It was like a Trojan horse; “We don't see the wickedness of profiling God's people that He has created to be one and that He has created in His image...The problem is that society is being lied to. Racism is based on a lie. God created one race, one blood. That is the human race.”^[15] Now we have grouped numerous personalities, stories, and cultures into one generalization by skin color. Your character only reflects what color your skin is. Inside and outside the Church this is a fallacy. For those in American society, we should know key historical events that occurred, even if one doesn't know all the nuances of the history. We fought a war over race. Brother killed brother. The American Civil War killed more Americans than either the Great War or World War II. The importance of knowing the history of slavery will help us understand generational backgrounds and help prevent the same mistakes. “When we lack historical understanding, we lose part of our identity. We don't know where we came from and don't know what there is to celebrate or lament.”^[16] History is what shapes us. If we get rid of or forget it, we will lose our

sense of cultural direction and morality. Chaos will become the standard.

To have reconciliation either on the racial or political spectrum, we need to listen. Everyone has posteriori knowledge; more commonly known as experiential knowledge. Each person's story is unique. Even siblings with the same parents will tell you a different story about their upbringing. What matters is listening with the intent of understanding the story. When we do this, we can leave our ideological bubbles and proceed in a relationship with compassion. Jesus does this with the bleeding woman in three of the gospels. Instead of rushing away to Jairus's house or being annoyed that she touched him, he stopped everything and listened to her story. Reconciliation comes from listening and building relationships with the intent of loving that person as the Father loves us.

A Symptom of a Larger Problem

What if racism and injustices are a symptom of a larger systematic problem that has taken many names or forms and then crept into the Church? This harkens back to Perkins's statement that racism is based on a lie. Race places people into groups. It separates people based on skin color. Our society has aspects that do this as well like rich/poor, Sex and gender, able/unable, etc. Whatever "ism" you put on the word they all separate people into categories and sub-categories further splitting people. These discrepancies do exist in society, but they all come from two mindsets: Us vs. Them and Oppressor vs. Oppressed. These sociological/political observations and analyses are valid applicational studies of society and culture. Historically this theory originated with Karl Marx, who believed that all life and history is based on this conflict.^[17] However, this is a Catch-22 for the modern Church. These applications can be true in some contexts; however, they could be a self-fulfilling prophecy. As we continue to divide ourselves into categories of identities, we begin to forget that as a Church we have our one identity in Christ. The discriminatory "-isms" are clearly sin. Very hateful sin. When dwelling on those two analyses of society in all aspects of life we begin to become guilty of what we are trying to avoid. We further dehumanize people, forgetting the story of the individual. Further creating the Us vs. Them and creating more Oppressor vs. Oppressed. It's a vicious cycle. Paul tells us, "He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it."^[18]

If we want reconciliation for all the Church, we cannot choose to only use the Marxist

paradigm for our brothers and sisters or every action in society. Acknowledging these aspects is helpful. They are things to lament and confess over, but we can't stay in that posture forever. We have hope in Christ for this reconciliation and we can't do the reconciling without Christ. Perkins exclaims about his hope for this reconciliation, but it will take time. Fujimura points out, "Generative thinking requires generational thinking. Culture formation is generational, not birthed overnight. Generational thinking can inspire us to work within a vision for culture that is expressed in centuries and millennia rather than seasons, or fashions."[\[19\]](#) A great example is MLK Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* speech. If we don't have generative thinking, then we are likely to fall into a victim mentality which breeds more hate according to Perkins. Racism in the US federal law code only ended in 1964 with the Civil Rights Act. From Richard Allen to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., it took 100 years for two well-read Black men to say the same thing and for our churches to even begin to accept it. It's frustrating the amount of time it takes but unfortunately, 1964 was not long ago. Pen and paper are easier to change than people. We cannot afford to have the victim or Marxist mindset when we have hope in Christ for racial and political reconciliation.

Forgiveness Takes Doing

In our hope for social justice and racial reconciliation, we must remind ourselves that it might not come naturally due to our sinful nature. We need Jesus to teach and guide us through the process. That takes prayer, repentance, and forgiveness. Villodas presents the point that "There can be no true reconciliation without justice".[\[20\]](#) This ultimatum may be true from the perspective outside of the Church. However, if we are to approach reconciliation with grace and love like Christ then without sacrifice there can be no true reconciliation. Christ condemning us in our sin would have been the just decision, however, he chose sacrifice and forgiveness. We must do the same. "Forgiveness is a decision of the will. Not a feeling."[\[21\]](#) Complacency and inaction accomplish nothing. We need to pray and invite people who think and look differently to fellowship with us in our spaces. In contrast, the Church needs to be in uncomfortable spaces and serve the people of our community. A church should reflect the population of its community. Forgiveness takes humility and sacrificing our comfort to give hospitality and love to all image-bearers of God. When we cultivate sacrifice and forgiveness, we can change the paradigm of society. Fujimura's explanation that Christ's sacrifice inherently draws out beauty which creates inspiration.[\[22\]](#) This beauty in Christ connects all believers and intrigues those outside of the Church. Beauty is seen in all colors and actions of all people. Our repentance is a key aspect of the beauty we find in a relationship

with Christ. We do this through our understanding that we do not deserve the forgiveness. If two opposing sides never make the sacrifice to lay down their weapons because they believe themselves to be more just than the other, we will never be able to reconcile differences. But even if one side makes the sacrifice the other may give in to the chance to trust and come to an understanding. With the Spirit's guidance, we need to continue to find areas in our paradigms to sacrifice and give all control to the Father in our continued hope for reconciliation. We cannot do it without the Lord for he is the only one who is sinless, just, and righteous. He is the only one that can lead us to reconciliation in our polarized society.

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[1] Justin Giboney, Michael Wear, and Chris Butler, *Compassion & Conviction* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 39.

[2] Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 39.

[3] John M. Perkins, *One Blood* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2017), 75.

[4] Harold W. Attridge, *The Harper Collins Study Bible* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006), James 3:9-10.

[5] Thomas Sowell, *Social Justice Fallacies* (New York: Basic Books, 2023).

[6] Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 40.

[7] Justin Giboney, Michael Wear, and Chris Butler, *Compassion & Conviction* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 37.

[8] Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 22.

- [9] Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2020), 82.
- [10] Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2020), 83-84.
- [11] Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2020), 72.
- [12] Harold W. Attridge, *The Harper Collins Study Bible* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006), Ephesians 4:29.
- [13] Peter Read, *A Rape of the Soul so Profound* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1999).
- [14] Martin Luther King Jr. *Strength to Love* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2010).
- [15] John M. Perkins, *One Blood* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2017), 75.
- [16] Latasha Morrison, *One Blood* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2019), 2.
- [17] Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Milton Keynes: Penguin Random House, 2014), 321.
- [18] Harold W. Attridge, *The Harper Collins Study Bible* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006), Ephesians 2:15-16.
- [19] Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 20.
- [20] Rich Villodas, *The Deeply Formed Life* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook, 2020), 60.
- [21] John M. Perkins, *One Blood* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2017), 105.
- [22] Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 54.

Equipping Youth Update

By Randy McDaniel

“Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes”. And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” – Matthew 13:51-52 (ESV)

We are continuing to study the parables of Jesus. The teens have learned what Jesus said about kingdom growth in the parables of the mustard seed and leaven, they learned how the Old Testament prophesied Jesus would speak in parables (Matthew 13:34-35; Psalm 78:2), and they learned the value of the kingdom and Jesus emphasis on the end of the age in the parables of the Hidden Treasure, the Pearl of Great Value, and the Parable of the Net.

After Jesus teaches seven parables, He has the interaction I recorded above with His disciples. They said they understood, and I believe to a certain point they did. They saw the need to be reborn which always produces a yield of good fruit, and that the consummation of the Kingdom of God was going to fully happen at the end of the age. We know from the rest of the gospels they did not fully grasp the depth of all this and continued to learn, grow, and submit.

Jesus tells them this knowledge has a great responsibility. Knowing what He is saying is like a master of a house who brings out all His treasure. The new and the old. What the teens have been learning through this is that what Jesus was teaching wasn't brand new information, but the true meaning of the old teachings and how important the two are.

On the second weekend of October, the Middle Schoolers went to Silver Birch for the annual fall retreat. What a blessing! 39 teens from Alto went (this included friends that don't come to youth group). Luke Schouten taught great lessons on 1 Timothy 4:13 that seemed to catch the teens attention, and I was able to present the gospel to them all. Pray they heard and will believe. They had a lot of fun doing the activities, and hanging out with each other and the other churches that attended. Total attendance at the retreat was around 340 kids!

On October 16th High School participated in the annual Alto Chase. We had 100 teens come! Some from other churches. I presented the gospel to them by means of an overview of the Bible from start to finish, while showing them the persecution of God's people and the current global statistics bringing home the reality of persecution today. They all enjoyed a bonfire, food, and fellowship afterward.

We have been continually blessed to see an average of 15 teens at Bible Club on Friday mornings in the Waupun High School. Pray that more will come, and we will be allowed to do this for years to come.

The youth groups will be collecting a special offering for an Alliance Church in Zellwood, Florida that suffered from the hurricanes. I spoke with the pastor who said they were blessed that they did not have any building damage and that many in the area were ok, but they had a lot of storm damage resulting in a few thousand dollars' worth of unexpected expenses. He told me they are a low budget church and was thankful and grateful for any assistance. We will hold this offering October 27th and 30th, and we will be doing this with the other youth groups as a corroborative effort.

We want to show the teens that when obvious needs like this occur, we don't merely have sympathy and keep going on with our lives, but we show the love of Christ in tangible ways however we can with whatever God has blessed us with.

Continue to pray that God brings teens to saving faith, increases the faith of those who are His, and equips us all to lead them and walk with them.

Equipping Children & Families Update

By Lynnae Loomans

Praises & Prayer Requests:

- On average attendance:
 - Sunday morning: 82 children
 - Wednesday night: 85 children
- Upcoming News:
 - Family Night - November 6th 5:30pm
 - No Sunday School - Nov 10th
 - No Bible Class - Nov 27nd
- Praise for all 21 of the Sunday School teachers/helpers who volunteer each week/month
- Praise for all 11 Bible Class teachers who volunteer each each
- Praise for all 5 volunteers willing to help sub
- Praise to the children talking about their church to their friends and having them join on Wednesday night.
- Pray for the children in this church to be a light to everyone they come in contact with.
- Pray for a successful family night coming up.

MESSAGES

A special thank you and shout out to Alto Reformed Church for the playground equipment donation. The ball carts are loaded with new equipment for the

students at Rock River Intermediate School thanks to a generous donation from the Alto Reformed Church. This summer their VBS kids brought in a daily donation and all the money raised was divided among our area elementary schools for recess equipment. We are so blessed for their generosity! Another great community connection!



Thanks for prayers lifted for Betty Guenther, Jean and Pat VZ's sister. The heart procedure went well, and she is feeling much better. Praise God.

The family of Don VZ wishes to thank each and every one for the prayers, visits, and support shown during Don's struggle with Alzheimers. It is great to be a part of The Family of God.

A note from Rick, Jenny & the Men's Chorus--We have decided as a group to discontinue wearing our customary white shirts & ties! We trust that we will still look our Sunday best for you as we sing praises to Our King of King!

Thank you for organizing and serving the luncheon at Mom's funeral.
- The Cora Hemp Family

On September 30, I had surgery on a mass in my colon - no cancer! After surgery they couldn't get me to wake up, so they had to use 3 doses of narcan. I am praising God for your prayers because I had a miracle.
-Joyce Van Buren

Thank you to our church family for all the prayers and kindness shown to us following Scott's surgery. We are so thankful fo rour many blessings.
-Love, Scott & Jill Van De List

EVENTS

November Events

Nov
02

Saturday, 8:00am

All Church Cleaning

Funeral Serving Group #4 will meet for the annual deep-cleaning of the church.

Nov
06

Wednesday, 5:30pm

Mission Backpack Family Night

Join us for pizza and packing bags for Mission Backpack, a local organization that provides food for children in need in the Waupun Area School District.

Nov
08

Friday, 6:30pm

Women's Prayer Activity Night

You'll have the option to make a prayer basket, prayer board, or prayer wheel. We'll have kid-friendly activities for the kids to help assemble the baskets and boards. \$10/prayer basket or board, wheel is free. Signup at the Information Center by November 6th.

Nov
10

Sunday, 10:45am

Annual Congregational Meeting

All Covenant Partners are asked to attend the annual congregational meeting. Voting for Elder & Deacon will take place during this meeting.

Nov
15

Friday, 6:30pm

Young Adult Friendsgiving

Young adults, let's celebrate Thanksgiving together with a potluck dinner! Bring your favorite Thanksgiving food and get ready for a Pie Tasting Competition.

Nov
27

Wednesday, 7:00pm

Thanksgiving Eve Service

Join us for an evening of worship and thanksgiving. The speaker will be Joel Buwalda.



NEWS

Consistory Notes:

- Pastor Kevin gave an Alliance update. Pastor Kevin and Randy McDaniel will be attending the Midwest Network meeting Sioux Falls, South Dakota on November 8-9, 2024. The Alliance Gathering will be held on January 30-February 1, 2025 in Glendale, Arizona.
- A motion was made and supported to approve a new process for staff reviews. The Executive committee meets with staff members twice per year to review job performance and receive feedback.
- A motion was made and supported to not add a missionary at this time to replace the Potratz family. The Potratz's made a career change and are no longer missionaries.

Online Directory:

Did you know that you can access our member directory online through our church database, Breeze? Contact Megan to find out how (yes, it's safe and secure and only accessible to members of our congregation).