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ARTICLES

Wow! Does She Have an Attitude!

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

December is a season of joy... or at least it is supposed to be. Unfortunately, circumstances often hijack our hearts and minds. One of our youth recently found the family's deceased cat after it had been missing for weeks. Others are battling cancer. Many are weary of online schooling. More are sick of COVID conversations and political posturing. Our circumstances are ripe for a joyless Christmas.

You've probably noticed the lack of joy in others lately. Have you heard someone say, "Wow! Does she have an attitude!"? Have you ever said that about your child or maybe someone else's child? Or maybe you thought it of your spouse. It's not hard to spot a bad attitude in others even when they come in many shapes and sizes.

The Screamer will cry profusely, yelling "life's not fair."

The Pouter will force a frown and fold their

arms.

The Critic will repeatedly point out your shortcomings.

The Pessimist will ooze skepticism and suspicion.

The Attacker will release a barrage of past hurts.

The Retreater will stuff all emotion and disengage.

We can see the bad attitude come out with harsh words or not-so-subtle silence. We can see it in crossed arms, rolling eyes, and the wagging of a finger. Their bad attitude quickly crushes any joy in the room, and it's easy for us to blame them for our own bad attitude.

However, you have a choice. Your attitude is a choice. Paul repeatedly tells us to rejoice as in 1 Thessalonians 6:16 where he says, "Rejoice always". In 1 Peter 1:6, Peter commends the church for rejoicing in the midst of suffering.

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, made this choice amidst the difficulties of rejection and shame. Her infamous song is recorded in Luke 1:46-48...

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the

humble state of his servant.

We have a choice to focus our attention on Jesus Christ or to let our circumstances hijack the joy of Christmas. So, I urge you to make time each day for Jesus. Here are some great options...

Read short sections of Luke 1 and 2 with your family each day,

Read Paul's letter to the Philippians,

Crank up some Christmas music,

Keep studying the Discipleship Essentials workbook, and as you sense God's joy in your heart, share it. Don't keep it to yourself. Rejoice! And soon people will be saying, "Wow! Does he/she have a GREAT attitude!"

The Good News

By Pastor Doug Shotsky

Isaiah 52:7 - *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

We're coming to the time of year that we celebrate the birth of Christ coming into the world, which was God's plan to provide an opportunity for those who believe in Him to be saved from the consequences of sin.

The bad news is that sin separates us from God. The Greek word used most often in the New Testament for sin is **hamartánō**. The definition for this word reveals to us the true nature of sin.

hamartánō (from [1](#) /A "not" and [3313](#) /méros, "a part, share") – properly, having no share in; to *sin*, which always brings *forfeiture* – i.e. eternal *loss* due to *missing God's mark...* (*hamartánō*) is regularly used in ancient times of an archer missing the target.

So sin, as defined by the Word of God, by nature declares that we are not a part of, have no share in, have forfeited, have eternally lost, our relationship with God.

As if that's not bad enough, there's more bad news. Not only does sin separate humanity from God, but Romans 3:23 says that "all have sinned". What a hopeless state for humanity: sin separates us from God, and all have sinned, so we are all separated from God.

But, because man left to himself had no hope of being reunited with God; God had to come to earth Himself, in the form of a man, to redeem our hope of spending eternity with Him.

That's the Gospel! That's the **Good News!**

It's not only good news, there's never been better news in all of the history of humanity. That's why we take time each year to celebrate the birth of the one God sent to save us. When we understand the gravity of what eternal life without God would be like, we will have more gratitude than we know what to do with, and we will be compelled to tell others what God has done for us, and for them.

So as you take time this Christmas season to celebrate the birth of our Savior, remember that the greatest gift you could ever give anyone is to share the Good News with them that God sent His one and only Son to this earth to die as a payment for our sins, and because He's done this, we can spend eternity with our Creator. I hope you all have a Merry Christmas, knowing that we have hope in Christ for eternal life!

Operation Christmas Child

By Adrea Daane

November 4th, during our usual night of Bible Class the 1st through 8th graders had the opportunity to put together boxes for our annual Operation Christmas Child packing party. Although it looked different than in past years and we couldn't make it the family night that we like, it was still a great night of service and fellowship with our kiddos.

I had so much fun watching the kids choose their items specifically for the gender and aged child they had selected. They also spent some time filling out papers to put into some of the boxes, with personal information, coloring, etc as a way for the child to connect with who packed the box for them. The opportunity for the kids to serve missionally in this small way is always a great reminder and lesson for them as we move into the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Each class also had a pizza party in their classrooms and just some downtime to chat and spend time with their classmates and teacher. As a church we packed 108 boxes. This total is down quite a bit from years past, but what a blessing we get to be to those 108 kids! A big thank you to all who donated, helped with the evening, and packed your own boxes. I know God's love will shine through those gifts to the hands they fall into.

Equipping Youth Calendar

When	What	Time	Who	Where
January 3	Among Us IRL	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Church Basement
January 4	Bible Study	7-8pm	8th & HS	Youth Room
January 6	Among Us IRL	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Church Basement
January 10	Lesson Night: The Messiah	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
January 11	Bible Study	7-8pm	8th & HS	Youth Room
January 13	Lesson Night: The Messiah	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
January 17	Lesson Night: The Temptation	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
January 18	Sunburst Tubing Day	TBD	Everyone	Sunburst
January 20	Lesson Night: The Temptation	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
January 24	Question and Answer Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
January 25	Bible Study	7-8pm	8th & HS	Youth Room
January 27	Question and Answer Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
January 31	Lesson Night: The Sacrifice	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
February 1	Bible Study	7-8pm	8th & HS	Youth Room
February 3	Lesson Night: The Sacrifice	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
February 7	Lesson Night: The Holy Spirit	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
February 8	Bible Study	7-8pm	8th & HS	Youth Room
February 10	Service Project (Food Pantry Valentines)	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Church Basement
February 12-13	Overnighter	8pm-8am	MS Ministry	Youth Room
February 14	Service Project (Free Babysitting)	6-8:30	MS Ministry	Church Basement
February 15	Bible Study	7-8pm	8th & HS	Youth Room
February 17	Ash Wednesday	7-8pm	Everyone	Sanctuary
February 21	Question and Answer Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
February 22	Bible Study	7-8pm	8th & HS	Youth Room
February 24	Lesson Night: The Holy Spirit	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
February 28-29	Silver Birch Retreat	TBD	HS Ministry	Silver Birch Ranch
February 28	Girls/Guys Fun Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room/Alto CC
March 3	Girls/Guys Fun Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room/Alto CC
March 7	Bridge Dinner???	6:30-7:30	MS Ministry	Church Basement
March 10	Question and Answer Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
March 14	Lesson Night: The Church	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
March 17	Lesson Night: The Church	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
March 21	Lesson Night: The End	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
March 24	Lesson Night: The End	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
March 28	Fun Night (donations for Easter meals?)	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
March 31	Fun Night (donations for Easter meals?)	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
April 4	Easter - No Meeting	---	---	---
April 5	Bible Study	7-8pm	8th & HS	Youth Room
April 7	Question and Answer Night	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
April 11	Question and Answer Night	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room
April 12	Bible Study	7-8pm	8th & HS	Youth Room
April 14	Lesson Night: The Story	7:30-9pm	HS Ministry	Youth Room
April 18	Lesson Night: The Story	6:30-8pm	MS Ministry	Youth Room

Women's Ministry Update

By Amber Vande Berg

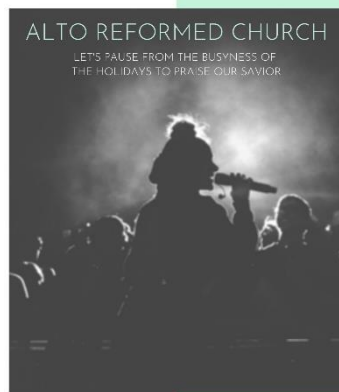
The Women's Ministry team continues to look for ways to keep the women of our church and surroundings areas involved and growing in their faith. We had a few Bible studies available this fall and there was so much positive feedback about the topics covered and discussions that were had during these studies. We will again be offering additional Bible studies this winter so please watch for upcoming announcements.

We are also having a worship night on December 21st at 7pm at church. We

know this is a busy time of year but if you could use a little time away from the everyday hustle and bustle to reflect on what's really important and spend some extra time in worship please join us!

After we met earlier this month the whole team walked away feeling excited about what God

has planned for us this year!



ALTO REFORMED CHURCH
LET'S PAUSE FROM THE BUSYNESS OF
THE HOLIDAYS TO PRAISE OUR SAVIOR
Women's Worship Night
7PM
MONDAY
DECEMBER 21ST

Golden Lifer's Update

By Roxy Schouten

As more and more evil in this world is being revealed one can't help but remember another time in history where the great wickedness of the world brought dire consequences. Gen 6:5-7 tells of God's evaluation of the situation. God's heart was deeply troubled/grieved. The perfect world, creatures and humans were being destroyed by grievous sin.

We may ask ourselves:

1. Has our world reached that point today?

2. Do we grieve along with God over the sin that is affecting all aspects of our lives, families, friends, nation and world?

In Luke 7 is the account of Jesus being anointed by a woman and the Pharisees criticism. Jesus later asked them who would love the most – those that were forgiven little or forgiven much. The rightful answer was that those who were forgiven most. Do we not grieve because we do not count our sins as grievous to a Holy God? Do we really think our sins are trivial compared to others?

3. Do we appreciate and realize how much we have been forgiven?

Unlike what Scripture teaches the New Age false religion teaches that there is no such thing as sin. All people need to do is accept that we are all "Gods". Sadly that thought has crept into the church and completely opposite of what I John 1:8 says, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us".

Evidence of this settling into the church is graphically spelled out in the annual updated Barna Survey. (For those unfamiliar with this survey it is conducted annually and compares answers that reveal if the one surveyed has a Biblical Worldview or Secular Worldview.) A

decline is evident and the pace seems to be picking up in recent years. Some striking percentages follow which will be confined to Main Line Protestants (MLP).

- 81% of MLP **reject** this statement – “The Bible is the primary source of moral guidance”

- 71% of MLP **reject** this statement – “The bible is the word of God, is trustworthy and reliable”

- 63% of MLP **reject** this statement – “People cannot earn a place in Heaven by being good or by doing good works”

- There are more discouraging stats but these are just a few to note.

-Overall, MLP “had the most secular views with 60% expressing beliefs directly conflicting with Biblical teaching” that is reflected in the entire survey. Three overall concepts describing the Secular Worldviews of MLP include:

1. “Truth and morality are determined by the individual, not by God or the bible.”
2. “Life has no inherent value on purpose but we can make the most of it by doing things that produce happiness or satisfaction.”
3. “Traditional religious practices are neither considered to be central or essential to their Christian

Faith.” Some things include Daily Bible

Reading (13%); Praying Every Day (49%); Confessing and Asking Forgiveness Everyday ((33%)

Not a pleasant picture. But the big question is what are we willing to do to change that for ourselves and the bigger picture of overall church stance? We cannot fully walk in the image of God that we were created to be unless we grieve with God in what He sees. Lord God, have Mercy and help us to be salt and light while there is still time and opportunity. Amen

MESSAGES

A huge “thank you” to the many people who have been so faithful in remembering me the past several months. It has been difficult trying to remain isolated for health reasons but people have been so wonderful lifting me and Barb to God in our time of need. The beautiful prayer quilt was a huge blessing as I seemed to feel the prayers being offered when I covered myself with the quilt. The phone calls really helped me feel I was still connected to people even though I couldn’t see them; and our wonderful Shepherds have been extremely faithful in

calling often. So many meaningful cards and especially the several that were made/colored and sent from two special young children gave me something to look forward to when the mail came. Regaining strength has been a slow, but steady improvement for which we are both thankful.

-Rollie & Barb Schroeder

Some time ago I gave my son's address to the church. He, recently, received a card from Mark & Marilyn Zeatlow, thanking him for his service. The timing was perfect as he received it near Veterans Day.

-Dan & Mercy Hopp

On behalf of the Women's Ministries Prayer Shawl and Quilt team, I would like to give a BIG Thank You to all the ladies that responded to our need of Prayer Shawls and Quilts. You are all amazing and talented and have blessed our ministry greatly with your beautiful handiwork. We appreciate you all so much and our need has been met as of now. We will let you know when we will need more shawls or quilts. Many people will be blessed by your willingness to share your gifts/talents in this way.

-Ardyce Tenpas, Prayer Shawl and Quilt Ministry

We just wanted to express our gratitude over the past few months. Thank you so

much for the calls, texts, cards, gift cards, meals and money.. your thoughts and prayers have lifted our spirits. Bryan continues to get stronger every week. Hard work and patience will pay off. We have gone through a lot over the past few months and we are thankful to have a congregation and community with such giving hearts.

Many blessings,

Love - The TerBeest family

Thank you to all those who used the power of prayer, sent cards, called or had words of encouragement. All were much appreciated.

-Keith Bruins

Thank you Lord for the people of this wonderful church family. For family and friends who have upheld me through this surgery and recovery by praying for me, for delicious food, cards, visits, and phone calls. During this crazy time that we live in right now, it is good to know that we can depend on the presence of God in our lives. Help us to live with FAITH over Fear.

-Colleen Bille

"Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God." Philippians 1:3

Today and every day I am so thankful to be on mission with all of you as we work together to reach college students with the

good news of Jesus. Thank you for your partnership and happy Thanksgiving!

-Mandy Kimes

EVENTS



NEWS

Births

10/30/20 - Harlee Kay, daughter of Micah & Laura Douma

11/26/20 - Lucille Grace, daughter of Aaron & Brianna Legate

Baptisms

11/1/20 - Ellis Shay, son of Tom & Lindsey

Bruins

11/1/20 - Joellee Kay, daughter of Colton & Courtney Loomans

New Members

11/1/20 - Colton Loomans