

# ALT

## REFORMED CHURCH

### ARTICLES

#### Rules are Changing...Yet We Have our Only Rule for Life and Faith

By Pastor Kevin Van Wyk

You've probably noticed the rules in our nation are changing and changing fast. Boy's restrooms are no longer just for boys. Girl's sports teams are no longer just for girls. It seems the rules to enter the United States have nearly disappeared. The fundamental rule of marriage being between a man and a woman has been thrown out the window by our government and several denominations. The foundational right to life has been tossed out the window with the government supporting and funding the killing of the unborn. Even though the Covid vaccines are showing far less effectiveness than natural antibodies, the Biden administration wants rules to mandate it. These rules will certainly continue changing on a daily basis.



Some rules you probably like and some rules you probably hate. **As Christians we are to uphold rules that promote godliness and justice. We want rules to deter evil and encourage good. (Rom. 13, 1 Peter 2:13-14)**

Personally, I'm experiencing a bit of a conflict within as we set aside the RCA rulebook. You may have heard of the BCO, otherwise known as the Book of Church Order or the Orange Book. Years back we actually handed each consistory member a small orange binder with the BCO in

it. I still have mine. In recent years, we simply sent people to the RCA website to find the digital version. This 180 page book is revised every year as the RCA seeks to maintain rules for the church and denomination. I've mostly hated this book over the past 20 years of ministry. It's tedious, boring, and difficult to navigate. However, it does give some direction on how we are to do church.

As of January 1, 2022, we will no longer be held to using the little orange book. [To some degree we are done with it now as our release was approved on Nov. 2.] I mostly rejoice in this, but as we've been navigating all kinds of little decisions, I wonder what we will do without its guidance. What categories of membership will we now use? How shall we define the roles of elders, deacons, and ministers? What will we do with regard to liturgy for installation services and communion? What's our relationship with the other local churches?

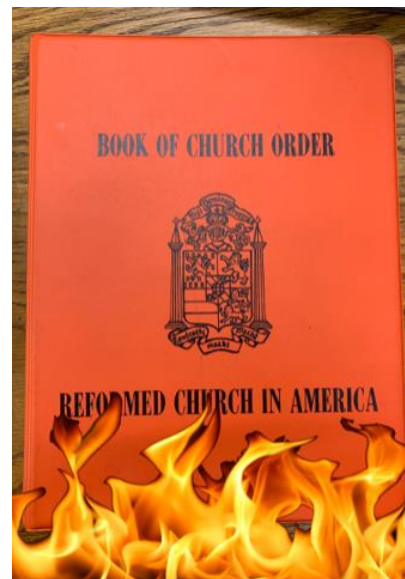
### **The rule book is gone.**

Now, we don't have to throw out the BCO altogether. We certainly can continue to use it. However, we are not required to use it as part of our new denomination, the Alliance of Reformed Churches.

ARC is working on some direction for how our churches can best work together, but in a recent zoom call, **the ARC leadership communicated their desire to reduce complexity, control, and cost.** They plan to give us best practices, but not to mandate and control how we do ministry in our local environment. This brings some excitement in being able to create something new, yet it also brings a great deal of uncertainty as we try to develop a new structure.

Personally, I'm excited to work with the area churches as we figure this out together. (Bethel Brandon, First Waupun, Emmanuel Waupun, and River Rock in Sheboygan will all be part of our local "Hub." I am hopeful that Trinity will be joining us before long. Others may follow.) **I believe all are ready to create a more unified network of churches that reaches this community together. That's exciting!**

**The best news is that we do still have a rulebook. All along those who are Reformed have said, "the Bible is our only rule for faith and life."** Too often it seemed that the BCO had become our only rule for faith and life. But, now, we must look to scripture alone for direction instead of continually fretting over what our



denomination requires. This is an exciting place to be as we now carry the full responsibility of reading, understanding, and applying God's Word in our church.

Join me in praying as we move forward together.

*Lord, help us move forward with peace and patience. Guide us as we seek to make decisions that honor you and uphold your Word. Guide us by your mighty right hand and breathe new life into our hearts. Bring unity among our churches and enable us to have a greater impact on our communities than ever before. Amen.*

## Thankful

By Jessa Ter Beest

A few things we're thankful for this season:

- "I'm thankful for the unity in our community." - Jack Lemmenes
- "My family" - Jensen Jahn
- "My friends" - Tehya VanLoo
- "Good health" - Hope Spreutels
- "I'm thankful for my parents" - Isaac Glewen
- "Hunting and the great community we have in Alto" - Ryan Lenz
- "The food we have to eat" - Takota VanLoo
- "I am thankful for a roof over my head." - Garret Glewen
- "Good grades" - Marli Laper
- "The athletic opportunities God is giving me." - Isabella Koch
- "That Rick Stelsel was back in church on Sunday. Also how there were so many people who attended the prayer for Jean Stelsel." - Lucas Bresser
- "Having a good time at work and fishing." - Nolan Lenz
- "I am thankful for loving and understanding friends and family." - Evie Ganske
- "I'm thankful for the opportunity to have an education." - Landen Frye
- "I'm really thankful to have grown up in a family that loves God. It makes it really easy on me to depend on them when I'm struggling with my faith. It also helps when I have questions or concerns." - Kennedy Tenpas
- "I'm thankful for my grandparents." - Chas Glewen
- "I'm thankful I have a family who will love me through anything." - Eden Schultz
- "That COVID is almost done." - Brayden Schultz
- "I am thankful that I have a great family and church family and that I'm able to express my faith without fear." - Stella Harmsen
- "I'm thankful for music...it's one of the things that's kept me going." - Kaylin DeMaa

- “My family” - Lily DeVries
- “Thankful for music and all the people involved with it at church” - Zack Van Wyk
- “I’m thankful for my family, including pets.” - Madisen Starker

## Operation Christmas Child

By Adrea Daane

Our annual Operation Christmas Child packing party was held on November 3rd. We spent the night enjoying some food together, connecting with other kids and families, and serving our world in a very hands-on way. It was so much fun watching the kids intentionally pack each of their boxes, keeping in mind the child that may be getting the box. We ended the night with 222 boxes packed and ready to go. We will have the opportunity to pray over the boxes in front of the sanctuary before delivering them to FDL to be picked up and sent to the next location.

Thank you to all who donated to this cause. It amazes me every year the amount of items needed to pack really well put together boxes. What looked like plenty was depleted before we knew it into a whole lot of blessings to others. I can only pray that each box packed will find its way to a child who will see the love of Jesus in it! I'm already excited for next year!



## MESSAGES

Thank you for your faithful support of REACH which allows us to continue making positive and lasting change in the lives of area youth!

-REACH Waupun

Our most sincere thanks for the many ways you were a part of our mom’s life over the years as well as the ways you helped our family through her recent passing. Reminded of all the people at ARC who my mom and our family have held so dear truly helped us celebrate the blessings she enjoyed through those relationships and the blessings she brought to others. Prayers, cards, calls, flowers, memorials, and visits, etc. were very much appreciated. A special thanks to those who contributed in various ways to her funeral service by offering the message, music, contributions of food and food preparation, to name a few. Thank you so much for your kindness and support.

-The Family of Gladys Kastein

We would like to thank the church for the Bible we received for our wedding. Our church family is very special to us and as we share daily in reading God's word and the devotions that go with it, we are reminded how very blessed we are to have an amazing church family walking along side of us.

-Jackie & Brian Tenpas

## EVENTS

**Alto Reformed Church**  
*November 2021*

**November 03** **OCC Packing Party**  
Join us as a family to pack boxes for Operation Christmas Child at 5:30-7:30pm.

**November 05** **Advent Craft Night**  
Grandmas, Moms, & Kids meet us in the church basement at 6:30pm to create a Jesse Tree Advent Calendar. Cost is \$10 per kit.

**November 12** **Intentional Parenting Workshop**  
Parents are invited to join Kevin & Stephanie Van Wyk at 7-9pm where you'll learn how to move from Quick-Fix Parenting to Intentional Parenting.

**November 14** **Congregational Meeting**  
All members are encouraged to attend the annual congregational meeting at 10:45am.

**November 24** **Thanksgiving Eve Service**  
Join us at 7pm for an evening of worship and celebrating God's faithfulness.

For detailed information:  
Call 920.346.5505 or email [office@altoreformedchurch.org](mailto:office@altoreformedchurch.org)

## NEWS

### Baptisms

10/17/21 - Demetrius DeShaun & Kyrie Lee, sons of DeQuincy & Amber Gordon

10/17/21 - Lucille Grace, daughter of Aaron & Brianna Legate

### New Members



10/17/21 - DeQuincy & Amber Gordon

10/17/21 - Faye Janey

### Important Updates:

#### **ARC UPDATE:**

The Alliance of Reformed Churches sent an official letter of acceptance on Nov. 2, 2021. So, we move forward in God's grace as we partner with several like-minded congregations.

#### **CLASSIS UPDATE:**

Alto Reformed Church was released from the RCA on 11/2 by our classis. This officially goes into effect on 12/31. The later date was simply to assure a smooth transition of health insurance and retirement funds for staff. The classis did require departing churches to pay assessments for 2022 which was just over \$36k for us. We asked the classis to be more generous as they sit on over \$600,000, but, unfortunately, manipulative behaviors from progressives undermined any sense of graceful or generous separation. Please pray for the conservatives that remain in the RCA.

#### **GENERAL SYNOD UPDATE:**

The General Synod came nowhere near affirming marriage as being between a man and a woman. While [RCA staff](#) touts a wonderful, unifying, Spirit-filled gathering, the reality was that the progressive group, Room For All, in the RCA had major wins in every way.

1. The approval of gracious separation allowed them to appear generous and kind as they taxed/assessed conservative congregations while sitting on millions of dollars.
2. Overture 2, which introduces the paper "Affirming and Celebrating" [same-sex marriage and LGBTQ ordination] for review in the RCA, was supported. The Commission on Theology will almost certainly make some recommendation for use in the RCA in the near future.
3. An overture to create 2 affinity regional synods around views on sexuality was defeated. This was the hope of moderates who lean conservative. A couple of commissions will study this and report to GS 2022. A restructuring team will report on restructuring in 2024.
4. Overture 11, which created a path for discipline to happen in the RCA, was defeated. This was apparently the last effort of conservatives to hold the RCA to traditional marriage.
5. On a positive note, president EJ de Waard stated bluntly the need for theological boundaries to define our unity. He called on the GS to reaffirm the RCA stance on marriage. However, no action was taken. In fact, the following report from the Commission on Christian Unity called for unity regardless of differing beliefs.

I could go on, but I trust this sufficiently shows the direction of the RCA and validates our decision to leave.

## **INTERN UPDATE:**

As was announced in the August newsletter, the consistory approved the creation of an internship program for high school seniors showing interests and potential for ministry leadership. Zack Van Wyk has been a great help in working with the 3rd-5th grade worship band where he's teaching Trase (drums), Brady (bass), Blake, Chael, & Lilly (guitar). He is also planning and leading worship practices for the Jr/Sr Praise Band, Wednesday nights with the high schoolers for youth group, and leading worship for Middle School youth group. Zack participated in answering questions for Q&A night in middle school youth group, will be teaching a lesson in November, and leads the 6th grade small group.

We are excited to see our students develop their interest in ministry and raise up the future leaders of our church here in Alto or send them out to work in whatever capacity God is preparing for them.