



Children, Youth and Family Ministry News

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Dear Friends,

"Epiphany" is a perfectly good work which means "a sudden, intuitive perception of or insight into the reality or essential meaning of something, usually initiated by some simple, homely, or commonplace occurrence or experience." The celebration of Epiphany is January 6 when we remember the Magi bringing gifts to child Jesus and gaining a sudden insight that the small child in a common family will become a King (Matt 2:1-23). The next several Sundays the Gospel lessons will be about others who suddenly understand the kingship of Jesus including the Baptism of our Lord when God's voice announces Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 1:10-11); the call of the Apostle Nathanael who says Rabbi, You are the Son of God" (John 1:49); The call of Simon and Andrew and the promise to make the "fishers of men" (Mark 1:17); and the cure of the demoniac (Mark 1:21-28).

Christmas, the celebration of the birth of a baby in the manger, is great but without the Epiphany, the sudden perception that the baby is the Savior, it is just another baby shower. How do you put aside the time and energy to have an epiphany? What simple, homely, or commonplace experiences reveal Christ to you? These are, I think, good questions to ask our youth, and ourselves.

Keep in touch,
Pastor Mark

High School Offerings for Summer

What if your High School youth group is not going to the ELCA Youth Gathering, are there any other options for individual or groups of youth? What if the Gathering is simply not enough and a youth or groups of youth want to attend two or more events this summer? Here are just a few of the options:

What: Beyond Belief
When: June 16-30
Where: Chicago & Mexico
Cost: \$500+

Book Review

Kinnaman, David with Aly Hawkins. *You Lost me: why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011.

Kinnaman was one of the co-authors of the important book *Un-Christian* which examined the faith of Christian youth. This related work studies the faith and attitudes of young adults who have left the faith community. Based on his own extensive research and a review of the work of others he comes to the conclusion that "A generation of young Christians believes that the church in which they were raised are not safe and hospitable places to express doubts. Many feel that they have been offered slick or half-baked answers to their thorny, honest questions, and they are rejecting the "talking heads" and "talking points"..." Why has this happened? Kinnaman explains that "Many of the assumptions on which we have built our work with young people are rooted in modern, mechanistic, and mass production paradigms." That is to say, we concentrate too much on getting the largest number of kids possible through our programs and not enough on making disciples. The book does call to our

Sponsor: Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
Details: Participants spend more than a week at the seminary in Chicago and travel to Mexico. More details at www.lstc.edu

What: Wartburg Youth Leadership School

When: June 20-26

Where: Dubuque

Cost: \$850

Sponsor: Wartburg Theological Seminary

Details: Participants attend classes, use High Ropes, and worship.

More details at www.wartburgseminary.edu

What: TeenServe

When: June 24-30

Where: Waterloo, IA

Cost: \$399 but congregations in our synod may get a \$100.00 scholarship per youth.

Sponsor: Nazareth Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls & TeenServe

Details: Participants rehab houses during the day (like habitat for humanity) and attend Bible study, concerts, and other events in the evening. More details at www.teenserve.org

What: WIYLDE

When: July 27 - August 1

Where: Luther College

Cost: \$325 - \$100 scholarship = only \$225 before June 15; \$350.00 after

Sponsors: The 3 ELCA Synod in Iowa & Luther College

Details: Participants will learn specific leadership skills; participate/lead Bible study, worship, and lots of fun. More details at <https://www.luther.edu/ministries/congregations/wiylde/>

Plus, don't forget the many programs offered by our Outdoor Ministries:

Riverside offers Senior High camp for \$385 before Feb 15 which includes chapel, Bible studies, tons of games, Nuke 'Em, disc golf, swimming, canoeing, carpetball, and much more. More details at www.riversidelbc.org.

EWLAU offers a Houseboating program (\$439); an Islanders program (\$439); and a Boundary Waters program (\$479 early bird). More details at www.ewalu.org.

Upcoming Events

Feb 9-12	ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza New Orleans, LA
Feb 18	High School LYO Event Decorah Lutheran Church, Decorah, Iowa
Feb 26	High School LaVida Lutheran Student Center, Cedar Falls

attention that 1) youth are some of the most religiously active Americans and 2) American twentysomethings are the least religiously active. A full 59% of teens active in church drop out of regular attendance after high school. So what happens to our Christian youth that they leave the faith as young adults? Kinnaman suggests that one factor is that "most young Christians are struggling less with their faith in Christ than with their experience of church."

Kinnaman divides the "de-churched" young adults into:
*Nomads-youth who have not disavowed Christianity but see Christian community as optional
*Prodigals - Those who leave their teen faith entirely
*Exiles - Those who feel their professional calling disconnects them from Christian life
The research further suggests that the disconnection between young adults and the faith community are caused not by one "smoking gun" but by several equally important factors which Kinnaman lists as when the church seems to young people as :

* Overprotective - the attempt to keep youth away from the culture
*Shallow - Christianity with easy answers and no sense of calling
*Antiscience - when faith battles science
*Repressive - when the teaching on sexuality seem stifling or out of touch
*Exclusive - when the church does not model acceptance
*Doubtless- when doubts are not tolerated

March 9-11	Dirty Feet Retreat Ewalu Lutheran Bible Camp
March 18	Safeguarding God's Children Workshop Zion, West Union
March 31	High School LYO Event Cedar Falls, Iowa
March 31	Spring Blast! event (grades 3-6) Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp
April 14	Spring Blast! event (grades 7-12) Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp
July 18-22	ELCA Youth Gathering New Orleans, LA
July 27-Aug 1	WIYLDE Luther College, Decorah, Iowa
2013 Jan 24-28	ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza Anaheim, CA

But the real value of this book is not how it demonstrates that there is a problem, we already knew that. The section of the book that is worth the price is where the author gets down to business and offers real guidance. Specifically, Kinnaman states that we need to 1) reconsider how we make disciples; 2) rediscover Christian calling and vocation; and 3) reprioritize wisdom over information. Better yet, he lists 50 specific suggestions for everyone, families and congregations. This is an excellent book for adults who are professionals in the church. It is a much better book for youth ministry committees and church councils to read together.

Full Time Position Opening

Saint John Lutheran Church in Charles City, IA is currently seeking a full-time Youth & Family Ministry Team Leader to be responsible for developing, leading, and overseeing a congregational ministry of nurturing faith in Jesus Christ in the lives of children, youth, and their families. For more information including a job description contact Pastor Dennis Niezwaag.

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Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA | PO Box 804 | 201 20th Street SW | Waverly | IA | 50677