

Children, Youth and Family Ministry News

August/September 2012

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Dear Friends,

Last summer Mrs. Anderson and I went on a vacation and we had lots of free time to do whatever we chose. I was amazed at how many hours "we" chose to spend shopping for new women's clothes at various stores in a discount mall. Spending so much time as a husband in a retail store that sells only women's fashions did offer its epiphany however. I realized that there are two kinds of dress stores. First, the kind where it never occurs to the management that many women shop with a man in tow. There are no provisions for a second shopper to encourage their patience. If such a store offers any place to sit at all it is a little stool in the shoe department next to the lingerie. This left me physically uncomfortable, publicly awkward, and feeling most unwelcome. The downside for the store is this led me to say things like "can we go yet?" or "hurry up" or "no, I think it looks terrible, now let's leave."

A second kind of store is well prepared for the less than fully engaged husband/boyfriend/father. One such store had big leather chairs, flavored ice water, newspapers, and wi-fi. Here I was comfortable, relaxed and felt welcome. At this store I would say things like "if you like that one why don't you try on some more" or "I'm in no hurry, take your time" or "let's go back there next time." It was not any one thing that works to make someone feel welcome but just the recognition that you are there and a little effort for the store to say "we are glad you came along."

So, what about our congregations? Are we prepared to make everyone feel welcome? What about parents with babies? They need places to change and feed the little ones and lots of congregation members who like the ease and convenience of a

baby. What about toddlers? Are there safe toys, places to play, things to do and lots of adults who know that sometimes little kids fuss and that's ok? What about teens? Do youth see people their age in leadership roles during worship? Are their ideas and energy encouraged? Do they consider the church a safe place where they are nurtured? How about the senior adults? Are there physical needs accommodated? Are things printed big enough and can they hear? More importantly are they greeted warmly or looked over as being in the way? As we prepared for Rally Day what about asking the youth who they think may feel the most physically uncomfortable, publicly awkward, most unwelcome when they come to your congregation and (this is the important part) what can they do about it? I'd love to hear what you learned.

Keep in Touch,
Pastor Mark

Some things for you to consider:

Living Faith at Home:

The synod Home Life Network compiles a handout each month with lots of ministry ideas that you can use. You can access all of them [here](#).

UNI Middle School Lock-In:

The 13th Annual UNI Middle School Lock-In will be held on October 12th-13th at the UNI Wellness and Recreation Center. Registration information will be sent out soon and you can also find it all on the synod website very soon as well.

Teen Pregnancy:

Good News: The teen pregnancy rate is at a 40 year low in this county. In fact, from 1990-2008 the teen pregnancy rate has dropped 40% and the greatest drop has been among African Americans although black and Latina's still have a much higher rate than Anglos and Asians. The rate of teens who are sexually active has increased (now at 52.6%) while the pregnancy rate has decreased. Why has the pregnancy rate dropped? No one knows but there are some good guesses: 1) Health information is more available and more accurate; 2) contraception is more available; and 3) the popular MTV "reality" shows about teen parenting. Source: The Economist, July 28, 2012, pages 26-27

Our good friends at the "ELCA Youth Ministry Network" have developed a new website to help young people discover their vocation in Youth & Family Ministry. You will find it [here](#). The website is divided into easy sections. The "I'm a High School Student" offers a gifts inventory, a link to outdoor ministry, a link to youth ministry stuff links to colleges, seminaries, certification programs, and some nice text. The "I'm a College Student;" section is very similar with more age appropriate graphics; The "I'm a congregation staff member..." section has the same links but presents them in terms of talking with young people about entering into a ministry. You will find this a very helpful website for your youth and maybe even for yourself.

A chance to be supportive:

Lutheran Services in Tennessee (LST) has been chosen as one of 500 finalists to receive a new Toyota vehicle in the "Toyota 100 Cars for Good" Program. Each day for 100 days, members of Facebook will choose which of five non-profits will take home a new set of wheels. The organization that receives the most votes at the end of the day takes home a brand new Toyota. LST has a 1 in 5 chance of receiving a new car!

This will be a great addition to LST's BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES PROGRAM! Let's all support LST by voting Friday, August 17th on the Toyota 100 Cars for Good Facebook page. www.100carsforgood.com

Click on Vote, go to day 96, click on LST, then "Remind Me" to get an email to vote. Spread the word with your Facebook friends!!

100 Wells and Malaria Campaign Concert:



In Concert Agape AND Rachel Kurtz AND Lost & Found in the Northeastern Iowa Synod!!!!!!!!!!

October 27, 2012 a tour to raise money for the ELCA 100 Wells Initiative.

Details and Tickets can be found [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 27	Safeguarding God's Children Workshop Decorah Lutheran, Decorah
Sept 6	Youth Worker Meeting St John, Arlington
Oct 4	Youth Worker Meeting Zion St John, Sheffield
Oct 12-13	UNI Middle School Lock-In UNI, Cedar Falls
Oct 27	100 Wells and Malaria Campaign Concert Luther College, Decorah
Nov 8	Youth Worker Meeting Trinity, Mason City
Dec 6	Youth Worker Meeting Bethany, Iowa Falls
Jan 3	Youth Worker Meeting Synod office, Waverly
Jan 24-28, 2013	ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza Anaheim, CA
Feb 7	Youth Worker Meeting First Lutheran, Decorah
March 7	Youth Worker Meeting St Petri, Story City
April 4	Youth Worker Meeting Holy Trinity, Dubuque

St John, Charles City

June 6

Youth Worker Meeting
St John, Cedar Falls

Mark Anderson

Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA



**FREE
CD**

If you are the first congregation to turn in ALL registration materials for the UNI Lock-In, you will receive a signed Lost and Found CD. It is Speedwood Hymns and signed by both George and Michael.

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