



the word

Events

January 1

Happy New Year

January 5

LIFEGROUPS sign-up begins

January 6

School Resumes

January 10

Mattins / Muffins and Panara

January 19

Jesus Cares - 12:30 pm

January 20

Martin Luther King Day - NO SCHOOL

January 21 - 5:30 pm

PreK and Kindergarten Round-up

January 24

Grades 6-8 Spelling Bee

January 26 - 7pm WSP

Voters Meeting

January 31

Grades 3-5 Spelling Bee



Crown of Life Church

115 Crusader Ave, West St Paul, MN 55118

Organic Growth in the New Year

BY PASTOR ZAC PUDLO

It's time for another new year. What are your goals? In what ways do you hope and plan to grow as a person? As a Christian? The Bible has a lot to say about spiritual growth, and what it says is often counterintuitive to the way we think of growing.

Mechanical Growth

How do you grow the size of your house? You add onto it mechanically. You add more framing, more bricks, more insulation, more everything. It takes hard work and dedication to add onto it. Mechanical growth is exactly what it sounds like...it's mechanical. It's a process. It's one step after another. Even right now as I look out my office window, I am imagining the mechanical work involved in making the snow on the sidewalk go away, and all the while, making the pile of shoveled snow grow larger. Step one: grab a shovel. Step two: move the snow. Step three: pile the snow off the sidewalk. Step by step the snow pile grows.

As a pastor, I have had people ask me before, "How do you know your faith is strong?" Or, "How do I grow my faith?" Human instinct goes to mechanical growth. We think we can make our faith grow the same way we make a pile of snow grow... mechanically, step by step. "My faith will grow by reading the Bible, confessing my sins, going to church, making amends for the wrong things I've done." That's the way the thinking goes. But there's a danger in thinking that way. It makes my faith and my salvation dependant upon me! And that's a dangerous line of thought. When salvation is dependant upon me, that opens the door for lots of doubt. So how does our faith grow?

continued



LIFEGROUPS

a small group bible study

sign up begins Jan 5

go to www.crownoflifemn.org

Are you looking to start a new habit? Why not join a lifegroup? These small group studies will help you understand more about God through his word. (6-week session ends before lent).

Organic Growth in the New Year... continued

Organic Growth

The Bible speaks about spiritual growth not in a mechanical way, but in an organic way. Jesus tells many parables about faith being like a seed. Just consider one from Mark 4:26-28, **“This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.”** Notice that Jesus is comparing faith to that of a seed. It doesn’t grow by some mechanism on the outside working into it. It grows from the inside out. It grows organically. That’s how a plant grows, and that’s how faith grows.

Here’s the main point...we can’t do anything to ourselves to make our faith grow. As much as we would like it, there isn’t a step 1, step 2, step 3 to making our faith grow. There are plenty of places in the Bible where God makes this clear. Just take for example Romans 5:5, **“God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”** Notice that it doesn’t say that we can put love into our hearts through a step by step mechanical process. The only way for God’s love to come into our hearts is by the Holy Spirit given to us by God. Spiritual growth in faith isn’t something we can get for ourselves. It’s not a growth we can mechanically develop. It has to be organic.

Planted in Our Hearts

So how does the Holy Spirit come into our hearts? This goes back to God’s word. Romans 10:17 says, **“...faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”** The Holy Spirit is the one who grows faith in

our hearts, but the Holy Spirit always uses a tool, his word. And he specifically uses the message of Christ. The only way for our faith to grow is for it to grow organically, from the inside out. Should it be a surprise, then, that Jesus came from the outside into our world and lives? Jesus lived outside this world as the creator of the universe. But when he saw this world devastated by sin, he intervened. He came into this world and died for this world. He saved it from the inside out by coming into this world, taking the sin of the world, and laying down his life for the world. That’s what the Holy Spirit does for each of us when we come to faith. He comes into our heart and grows our faith organically from the inside out.

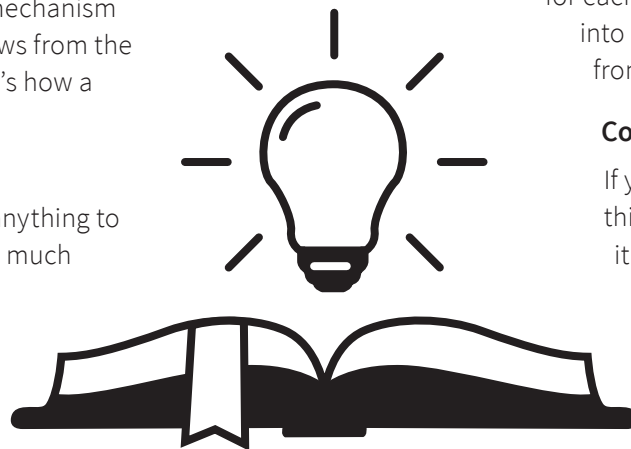
Conclusion

If you have a desire for you faith to grow this year, don’t look to yourself. Don’t think it depends on you and what you do.

I recently listened to a podcast about setting goals. The speaker encouraged listeners to not set goals. Instead, he encouraged listeners to develop habits. I would encourage the same thing. Don’t set a goal to read or study so

much of God’s word. Instead, develop a habit of connecting to God through his word. Develop a habit of spending time with God the Holy Spirit in his word.

The other habit I would encourage is the habit of repentance. Martin Luther wrote this as the first of the 95 Theses. “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent” (Matthew 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.” Every time you repent, you have to turn to God and his word for comfort. You have to turn to God alone for forgiveness. And with that comes growth in the Spirit. As you stay connected to God’s word this year, may the Holy Spirit continue to grow in you.



SCHOOL NEWS

For the Glory of the King

This school year brought a new change for preschool and kindergarten, a Christmas program of their very own! Six and half weeks the preschool and kindergarten had to prepare their hearts and minds to share the story of Jesus' birth. With each passing day the preschool and kindergarten students were eager to welcome the newborn King, Jesus! They became excited to tell the news of Jesus and who sent Him, just like the angels did, singing Gloria in excelsis deo or Glory be to God in the highest. They were ready to share their awe in this tiny baby, the Lamb of God born in a manger, born to live and die for us! Through these Christmas service practices the students learned that Emmanuel, the promise kept, this baby eagerly awaited is why we celebrate Christmas, He is God's gift to us, the greatest gift and our greatest treasure! This special message they will continue to share For the Glory of the King!



Tuesday, January 21 5:30 - 7pm

Preschool AND Kindergarten Round-Up

Come see what **CROWN OF LIFE** has to offer you & your child

Join us for pizza and treats during our "Eat & Greet", and be sure to catch the minnow races during the school tour.

- Meet the principal, teachers and new friends!
- Discover how we partner with you to develop the whole child.
- Ask about our Christ-centered, challenging curriculum.

Kindergartener
for a Morning
Wednesday, January 22
9-11 am



Sharing the Joy of Christmas with others!

What a turn out! About 75 people came and split into groups that sang at Southview, Lilydale and two of the Heart to Home locations. Everyone was very excited to see us and sing along with our groups.

Two new addition to our singing this year: 1) Books with music so we could sing 4 part harmony, 2) Children singing a song alone. After singing the groups returned to church and enjoyed treats and fellowship until 9 pm....no one wanted to go home.

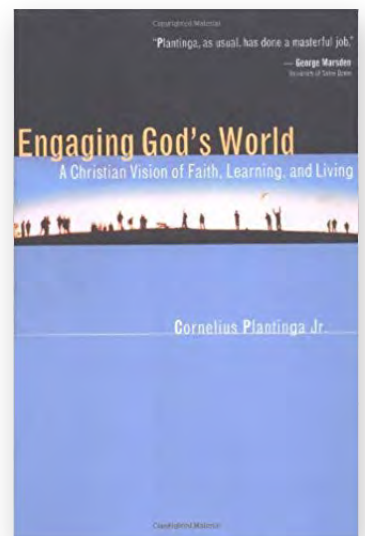
Engaging God's World

REVIEWED BY PASTOR ZACHARY PUDLO ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In 1643, the founders of Harvard College wrote out their mission statement: "Let every Student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed, to consider well the maine end of his life and studies is to *know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life*, Jn. 17:3, and therefore to lay Christ, in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and Learning."

Today Harvard operates far from their mission statement as does a majority of our culture while still claiming to be Christian. In *Engaging God's World*, Cornelius Plantinga Jr. recounts God's plan for the world. But he does so with the purpose of encouraging the reader to think about how the Christian worldview should affect his/her life.

I found this book to be compelling enough to set it down several times just to ponder my own engagement with the world in which we live. Reading Plantinga isn't the fastest, but it is extremely thought provoking and engaging.





READ THE WHOLE BIBLE IN 2 YEARS

This two-year plan will take you through the entire Bible in two years, reading Matthew, Mark and Romans twice. The Bible's Wisdom Literature will be spread out over the Saturdays. Readings range from one to four chapters each day balancing between Old and New Testaments. 620 reading days = 1200 chapters (870 Old, 330 New).

For a downloadable plan visit:

tinyurl.com/2020-21CoLBible

or scan this code. →



January Birthdays

1 Miles Graves Cian Pearson Nathaniel Pearson	2 Debbi Enter Dale Herold Quinn Hood	3 Jacob Bejblik Hailey Jensen	4 Charles Wiplinger Beverly Abel Bethany Brigham Jordan Johnson	5 Charlotte Kock Skyla Ohm Maliah Williams	6 Andrew Rolfes	7 John Johnson Marlys Kohnke Pamala Otterstatter Elizabeth Stokke	8 Matthew Lorenz	10 Paul Monson Sarah Roberts Dave Swanson	11 Kay Beebe Heidi Pudlo	12 Nicholas Berg	13 Ivy Lawrence Timothy Moe	14 Arthur Schroeder	15 Rebecca Kramer Angela Mulinix	16 Emily Davids Ruby Kutz	17 Jamie Berg Maggie Enter	17 Isabelle Kapanke Trinity Lorenz	18 Carrie Kruse	19 Peter Boehlke Matt Fries Joseph Werz	20 Maxwell Kutz	21 Bonnie Kurth Abigail Petermann	22 Kaity Saxon Nora Vitzthum-Brigham	23 Scott Pottorff	24 Scott Mulinix Kaylee Rall	25 Glen Friese	26 Nora Schletty	27 Abigail Kruse Jamison Ohm	29 Scott Portz	30 Adam Brigham Kevin Kowitz	31 Jan Mullins Vincent Rahn
---	--	----------------------------------	--	--	-----------------	--	------------------	---	-----------------------------	------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------	---	-----------------	--------------------------------------	---	-------------------	---------------------------------	----------------	------------------	---------------------------------	----------------	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

January Calendar

Wednesday, January 1, 2020

New Year's Day

Thursday, January 2

NO SCHOOL

2:30 pm Southview Service

6:30 pm PTN Meeting

Friday, January 3

NO SCHOOL

Saturday, January 4

NO SCHOOL

5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, January 5

NO SCHOOL

8:00 am Worship WSP

9:00 am Worship EGN

9:15 am Education Hour-WSP

NO-Sunday School

10:20 am Education Hour-EGN

10:30 am Worship WSP

Monday, January 6

School Resumes

6:30 pm Worship WSP

7:00 pm Mary/Martha - WSP

Tuesday, January 7

9:00 am Men's Coffee Group WSP

Wednesday, January 8

5:00 pm Confirmation Class - WSP

Thursday, January 9

2:30 pm Southview Service

6:30 pm Adult Craft Club

7:00 pm Elders

Friday, January 10

7:45 am Matins/Muffins and Panera

Saturday, January 11

5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, January 12

8:00 am Worship WSP

9:00 am Worship EGN

9:15 am Education Hour-WSP

10:20 am Education Hour-EGN

10:30 am Worship WSP

Monday, January 13

6:30 pm Worship WSP

Tuesday, January 14

9:00 am Men's Coffee Group WSP

6:30 pm Properties

Education

7:00 pm Evangelism-WSP

Fellowship Committee

Stewardship

Worship Committee

Youth & Adult Education

Wednesday, January 15

5:00 pm Confirmation Class - WSP

Thursday, January 16

2:30 pm Southview Service

7:00 pm Riverview Cemetery

Saturday, January 18

5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, January 19

8:00 am Worship WSP

9:00 am Worship EGN

9:15 am Education Hour-WSP

10:20 am Education Hour-EGN

10:30 am Worship WSP

12:30 pm Jesus Cares-WSP

Monday, January 20

ML King Day - NO SCHOOL

6:30 pm Worship WSP

Tuesday, January 21

No Bus Service

9:00 am Men's Coffee Group WSP

5:30 pm PreK & Kind. Open House

(Eat & Greet)

7:00 pm Council-EGN

8:00 pm Personnel Committee

Wednesday, January 22

5:00 pm Confirmation Class - WSP

Thursday, January 23

2:30 pm Southview Service

Friday, January 24

8:00 am Matins

8:30 am Gr. 6-8 Spelling Bee

Saturday, January 25

5:00 pm Worship EGN

Sunday, January 26

8:00 am Worship WSP

Choristers Sing WSP

9:00 am Worship EGN

9:15 am Education Hour-WSP

10:20 am Education Hour-EGN

10:30 am Worship WSP

7:00 pm Congregational Voters' Meeting-WSP

Monday, January 27

2:30 pm Lilydale Sr. Living Service

6:30 pm Worship WSP

Tuesday, January 28

9:00 am Men's Coffee Group WSP

Wednesday, January 29

5:00 pm Confirmation Class - WSP

7:00 pm Sr. Choir Practice - WSP

Thursday, January 30

2:30 pm Southview Service

Friday, January 31

8:00 am Matins

8:30 am Gr. 3-5 Spelling Bee

REPORTS

November 2019 Treasurers Report

Fiscal Year 6/19 – 5/20

	Actual	Budget	Difference
FYTD Total Income	\$792,455.87*	\$734,073.27	\$58,382.60*
Expenses	\$833,329.05	\$723,375.21	\$109,953.84
Net Operating	\$-40,873.18	\$10,698.06	\$-51,774.15

FYTD income includes \$58,597.93 of a special bequest.

Envelope Offerings	Actual	Borrowed	Balance
	\$449,136.93	\$491,147.99	\$-42,011.06
Special Funds	Actual	Borrowed	Balance
	\$112,306.15	\$30,000.00	\$82,306.15

A detailed treasurers' report is on the church bulletin board.

JUST FOR FUN

BRAIN TEASERS

1	LU CKY	2	AID ← AID AID
3	J YOU U ME S T	4	MILONELION

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTHS PUZZLES

BRAIN TEASERS – 1. Just around the corner 2. broken promise 3. tricycle
4. reading between the lines

Setting Goals - A Stewardship Thought

The new year brings with it new resolve, but so often that resolve fades before the first week is ended. The apostle Paul advised the Corinthians, “Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means” (2 Corinthians 8:10, 11). By ourselves, we grow tired or get bored or just plain lazy. Let us ask the Lord to give us the desire to give generously, to serve joyfully, and to expend our time eagerly in response to what God has given to us and done for us.

It is a common and helpful practice to use the start of a new year as motivation to set goals and make plans to attain those goals. As Christians, what is our ultimate goal? What did Jesus tell us in Matthew 6:33? “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Certainly this is a worthy and all-encompassing goal for us as Christians.

We’re also told that goals should be detailed and specific and measurable. How do we satisfy that criteria in light of our main goal to seek God’s kingdom?

Let us remember that all we say and do and are should strain toward seeking God’s kingdom. That means we’ll be busy in the study of His Word and in regular attendance in church where we can hear His Word and receive His Sacraments. It means that we’ll be busy about His work of seeking and saving the lost. How is that accomplished?

The Apostle Paul wrote, “You show that you are a letter from Christ . . . written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Corinthians 3:3). Jesus put it this way, “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven” (Matthew 5:16). This is what we are – God’s letters who reflect the light of Jesus to a world trying to find its way in darkness.

The psalmist commanded, “Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day. Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise” (Psalm 96:2-4). In all our words, this should be our goal: to proclaim the goodness, the glory, the greatness of our God.

Then our acts should follow up our attitudes and words. Again Paul’s words speak to us: “Bless those who persecute you; Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony . . . Do not repay anyone evil for evil . . . If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone . . .” (Romans 12:14ff.). Throughout his letters, Paul urges us to share with those in need, to support those who preach and teach the Word, and to give as we have received.

These are goals worthy of setting and ones we can carry out by . . . “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, [Who] though He was rich, yet for [our] sakes He became poor, so that [we] through His poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Source: 12 Months of Congregational Stewardship (vol. 1 & 2) by Ronald J. Chewing, Stewardship Advisors