

THE CONTACT

aflc youth worker's newsletter

fall 2009



How do you know when to stick with it and when it's the right time to get going?

tc

S'mores

by JoyAnn Dahl

Have you ever made (and eaten too many) s'mores with youth at a bon fire? How about traveling on a bus to the FLY Convention full of energetic youth, or watching the elderly in your church get teary eyed as they listen to the youth sing a favorite hymn? If you have, you know how God can stretch you out of your comfort zone into being willing to serve Him with everything.

Back up three years. It was at this time that I was first asked to be a volunteer youth advisor in our church. My husband, Steve, had been involved with youth for many years, so it was not a new idea for him. However, in my life, as a mom of four kids, having been involved in VBS, Sunday School, and various other activities relating to children under 10, I had not had any prior experience working with youth. Switch to being a youth advisor, and life is changed 360 degrees. The world of youth is completely different from the world of children, so when I agreed to this position, one word describes it best: CLUELESS. I was completely unprepared as to what it would involve; my time, my energy, my emotions, and my commitment to Christ. I had no idea what types of responsibilities it would involve, from monthly newsletters, to serving along with others at fund raisers, planning events, making connections, leading Bible Studies (or arranging for others to lead), leading youth music ministry, being a representative of the youth group to the church board, etc. Was I surprised? Absolutely. But I quickly realized how it made me more accountable to God.

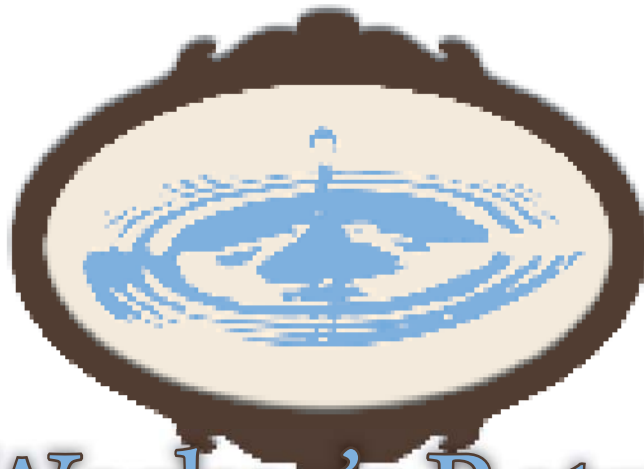
This has been a growing experience for me. Is my life a Godly example to others? When I am tired of trying to juggle work, home, and volunteer work, does my attitude show one of servitude and concern for others? When my own concerns include my work or family, do I listen to a teen who tells me they are worried about an upcoming test at school or the next football game? Have I encouraged others to be part of His plan?

What has God promised to me as a willing participant in His plan? God has promised His strength for what I need; "The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation." Exodus 15: 2a NIV. He has promised me His presence, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you," Hebrew 13:5b NIV. When I am unsure of God's promises to me, I need to remember that it is not about me, but all about Him. Step out of your comfort zone and be willing to be used. Get involved.

If you are already on the edge of sanity (just kidding), and thinking about getting involved in youth group advising/leadership, I would recommend that you work to gain a circle of support, including several other couples or adult individuals committed to working together as a group. Other suggestions that have been valuable in our church include, having the deacons lead youth Bible Study once a month to get involved in the teens' lives, youth prayer partners, service projects, and gaining the helping hands of other parents. Once a month, we designate older youth in pairs to lead Bible Studies, helping them step out as leaders, which God promises to us when we read His word, "I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Hebrew 10:16b NIV Included in all of this is our youth leadership board, which is involved in making decisions, connections, and praying for one another.

It is our privilege to pray for one another and God is able to do more than we realize. "The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." Zephaniah 3:17 NIV We do not need to be perfect; only willing to go and do. He will do the rest. ☐

Dahl is the FLY Youth Advisor/Leader at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls, MN



Youth Worker's Retreat 2010

January 22-24th



With Dave and Rennie Garda

Disciplemaking is Relationships



\$79 early-bird rate when you register by January 7, 2010.

\$99 after January 8, 2010. \$79 partial attendance rate.

youth.afc.org



Should I Stay or Should I Go?

It is a BIG question. This one is not just for paid youth staff, but for everyone investing in the lives of teenagers by sharing the Gospel and by giving their time. Am I doing what He wants me to do? How can I best serve Him? Where can I best serve Him?

We asked Kirk and Kurt to chime in on the topic. Kirk Militzer is the 19 year veteran in the same church as Pastor to Youth and their Families at Triumph Lutheran Brethren (Moorhead, MN). Kurt Osweiler just stepped down this summer after two years as Youth Director, but over a decade of volunteer youth work, at Emmaus Lutheran (Bloomington, MN).

The question is not about whether things are going OK or not. It cannot be the reactive result to tough times. The answer to the question brings us to intentionality. It is about our hearts being sensitive to the direction the Lord has for our ministry.

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The Contact – What has surprised you about your time in this process of going or staying?

Kurt Osweiler – I think how difficult it was to walk through. In “going”, you tend to have more time to sit and think once you leave. Idle hands leads to nothing good and sometimes your thought process can lead you into doubts. In my case, stepping down was my decision. I chose it. Instead, I know of many situations where the church decides it for a leader. I am not done battling with the doubts that enter in, but having good, strong Christian friends to give you wisdom and reassurance aids to defeat the doubt as they pray along with you.

Kirk Militzer – Julie and I never imagined we would have stayed almost 20 years. We did pray in seminary though that God would go ahead of us and bless elders, parents of teenagers, teenagers in our youth ministry and an army of volunteers who would love teenagers in Jesus’ name. We also prayed that God would allow us to plant roots that would have an impact in our congregation and the community as well.

TC – How has the Lord drawn you close to Him through the staying/going?

KM – I believe the Lord has consistently challenged me personally to stay close to him and to remain creative in leading our ministry. One specific example is that early on in our ministry our summer trips were done with a strong street evangelism tool, a mime, developed by Teen Mania Ministries. Now, our ministry is marked by missions. Our vision is to help student follow Jesus and show his love and concern across the street and around the world. That alone has been a delightful challenge of making missions “normal” for teenagers.

KO – I think He has drawn me closer to him through my wife. Both of us have needed to draw together to lean on him in this process. The leaning on him brought us to look at where he wants us to go next as a family in serving him. The devotional we picked up as a family in this season was amazing. For those two or three months, there was something each day that touched our lives. God had a plan in it. He kept bringing “Fear not!” to our attention. It was a reminder that he knew what he was doing and we should listen! It was explained to my wife like this: When a friend of hers is driving, she needs only the next turn. She can go off words like “go straight” and “turn left”. When my wife is driving, she wants the atlas. She struggles to go forward without seeing the big picture. God sees the big picture, but he doesn’t tell us. He gives only the turns. His Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

TC – Why do you think the Lord has you where you are today?

KM – I am firmly convinced that my wife and I have stayed as long as we have because of “the fit” of the congregation and how they have cared for us. While in seminary, I had several options regarding churches, but after interviewing, seeking godly counsel from peers, and doing homework on the congregation, and tons of grace on the congregation’s part and our Lord’s, we are still here. We are humbly grateful for the congregation’s goodness to our family.

KO – The only thing I can come up with is to learn from him. To learn to trust in him more has been the main thing. I have been humbled through this process. I have needed to surrender 110% of my life and not attempt to control areas that I cannot. It's the cliché Bible school verse, but it's true that God does have a plan for your life. Surrender does not simply mean to give over, but rather it is entrusting your life to God and that he is going to take care of you.

TC – What one thought of encouragement would you offer to someone wrestling with this question?

KO – Whether I am paid or volunteer or working at some job, there are always places to do ministry. Ministry does not have an end. I have seen that especially the last few months. It leads me to think that whether we stay or go our lives are reflective of God in all that we say or do. No matter where you are at you have an opportunity to impact others for Christ.

KM – The grass isn't always greener on the other side of the parsonage. Think hard about leaving. God may have some character lessons and leadership lessons He wants to teach you. And yes, some difficult people may not follow you to the next church, but you take your self with you wherever you go. ☐



30 DAYS ADDRESSING SIN

YouthWalk's October theme is SIN.

[http://www.walkthru.org/site/
PageServer?pagename=YWpastors](http://www.walkthru.org/site/PageServer?pagename=YWpastors)

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30
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30 WAYS ADULTS CAN SPIRITUALLY IMPACT SCHOOLS

Ideas to invest parents and caring adults.

<http://www.youthworkers.net/index.cfm/fuseaction/blog.view/BlogID/92>

30 HOUR FAMINE

International youth movement to fight hunger in Jesus' Name.

<http://www.30hourfamine.org/>

30 STEPS (OK, 3 STEPS)

How NOT to get a position in Youth Ministry.

[http://www.simplyyouthministry.com/
from-the-field-224.html](http://www.simplyyouthministry.com/from-the-field-224.html)

30 SECONDS ON YOUTH CULTURE

e-Update provides a quick glance to understand the world of teens.

<https://www.cpyu.org/page.aspx?id=77215>

Waking Up In The Wilderness

by Pastor Jason Holt

“What about you, Jason?”

“Where is the Lord leading you right now?”

The question came in a sharing time with other youth workers that I respect about sixteen months before the Lord led to my current position.

“Does the term ‘wilderness’ make sense?” came my stilted reply.

Through the polite laughter of friends, I wondered if I should have been so transparent. I had been drawn during that season to passages in God’s Word about surrender and God’s call. I was willing to go where the Lord was going to lead. But there was only one problem; He didn’t seem to want me to GO anywhere. Why would the Lord want me to be ready to go, if there was no where to go?

I was content with my context – serving a caring church that made sharing Jesus with teenagers a real priority – so I was not looking for a reason to head for the door. Just the opposite, my family and I had the perspective that the call in front of me was one that could remain until I retired.

In the months that followed my ‘wilderness’ comment, the Lord allowed me to see more clearly through the eyes of Scripture how He was at work. I was waking up in what seemed like wilderness only to find that it was the necessary training ground for me. My season of surrender was molding me to be ready to step forward in obedience when God would open a door. Knowing my selfish, rotten, old nature, I would have clung to what was comfortable over what was God’s call, if He had not been working on me.

One Scripture that ministered to me both in those days as well as in first responding to a call to ministry was II Corinthians 3:4-6. **“Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”**

The Lord is the One who both calls and equips for ministry. He makes us complete in Christ to serve by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our life-giving God is still meeting His children in ‘wilderness’ moments and guiding us along to the place where He wants us to be.

Sometimes that place is right where we are at. The ‘wilderness’ allows the Lord to do some pruning in our lives. This painful process prepares us for further ministry without God desiring us to move anywhere. At other times, such a season is preparation for a different context. The Head of the Church knows what He is doing. We can trust Jesus to lead.

Are you wondering if you are in the right place? Do you ponder if should you be serving teens here or there? Reflect on the priesthood of all believers and become a student of the call of God. Wrestle with Jeremiah. Sit in awe with Isaiah. Peer into the life of Paul. Seek the Lord’s direction through prayer and godly counsel, but do not mistake the wilderness as a guarantee to stay or to go. Keep your eyes on the Shepherd who will lead you through it all! ☩

urgent care



The Contact

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The Contact is published twice a year to encourage and engage youth workers of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The AFLC is a growing fellowship of 270 churches whose members believe that the Bible is true and that everyone needs Jesus. AFLC Youth Ministries exists for three goals: to win; to build, and to equip youth for Jesus Christ. We are here to assist in making disciples!

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<i>Upcoming Events</i>	
January 22-24, 2010	Youth Worker's Retreat ARC, Osceola, WI youth.afcl.org
July 5-9, 2010	FLY Boot Camp ARC, Osceola, WI (763) 545-5631
July 11- 25, 2010	Student Missions Trip L'viv, Ukraine student.missions@afcl.org
July 25 - August 20, 2010	Student Missions Trip Southeastern India student.missions@afcl.org

<i>Table of Contents</i>	
Coffee Shop	
S'mores	2
Youth Worker's Retreat	3
Reference Room	
Should I Stay or Should I Go?	4-5
Convenience Store	6
Urgent Care	7
Upcoming Events	8