

# THE CONTACT

AFLC YM Newsletter for those in contact with youth

Winter 2020

*Building Bridges: Today's Leaders With Today's Teens*







Coffee  
Shop

## Bridges Can Be Scary

There is a bridge on Hwy 82, just outside of Bigfork, MT that I hate to cross. It's narrow and when two cars are going in opposite directions on it, I hold my breath, pray, and try to keep going as straight in my lane as I can. It is terrifying. Especially when a semi is coming in the other lane. The Flathead River is below the bridge and is absolutely gorgeous. The river is surrounded by trees and mountains and while crossing the bridge I wish I could forget about safe driving and just watch the water flow; but I know better. I say in my head, "Focus. Stay in your lane. Lord help me. Get to the other side. Ok, now you can breathe. You made it!"

Honestly, youth ministry can feel this way sometimes. Like a scary bridge we would rather not cross. There are so many unknowns when working with teens, that with every interaction, we are going to have a different experience. One thing I have learned about teens (and people in general) is that we all want to belong. We were created to belong to God, to be His and to worship

Him. If we focus on helping teens know they have a place to belong - in our own lives, in our church, and in the Kingdom of God - that is one step leaders can take to help teens cross the bridge to having a relationship with Jesus. We can pray, "Focus. Help me stay in the lane You want me to go, Lord. Help us get to the other side. We made it!"

Another thing about that scary bridge on Hwy 82 is that there is a massive cross on the hillside that says, "Christ died for you. Will you live for Him?" From now on, this is going to be a reminder to me that helping kids know Jesus can be filled with some "Lord help me" times, but it is worth it to guide them to the cross.

*Emily Herset is the Minister of Discipleship and Youth at Faith Free Lutheran Church, Kalispell, MT*



# YOUTH WORKERS WEEKENDS

January 15-17, 2021

## An Annual Retreat for Those Who Serve Teens

With Guest Trainer Jim Bjork



[www.aflc.org/youth](http://www.aflc.org/youth)

Registration Options:

Saturday Seminar \$60

One Night \$120

Full Weekend \$150

**Buy One, Get One Half Off!**

*(from the same congregation)*

Best Rate by January 4, 2021



### Video Connection

60-minute offerings for volunteer and vocational youth leaders

Tuesday, Dec 15 at 3PM (Central)

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/306350773>

Thursday, Dec 17 at 8PM (Central)

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/437575669>







# Reference Room

By: Pr Jason Holt

## Building Bridges: Today's Leaders With Today's Teens

I recently gave a midterm for second-year FLBC students that are in a class focused on Jesus' life and ministry. From the truths in the Gospels, we align ideas for healthy youth and family ministry in the local congregation. During one class this semester, we explored the ways in which the Lord has granted for His people to be "With Jesus." The discussion was lively as we started with the foundation of God's Word and God's Spirit as primary, and then branched out into connections that our Triune God has granted to us in prayer, worship, fellowship, creation, the arts, and many more.

Because of how useful the discussion was in class, I admit to you that I was a bit surprised to find that on the midterm the students found it difficult to find the words to write on a related question. It got me thinking...as much as we value the concept of connection, do we supernaturally struggle with it?

I suspect that we do.

Whether it is "With Jesus" in a direct expression of loving the Lord or "With Others" in a parallel way of loving our neighbor, it does not come natu-

rally to us. The reality of brokenness experienced from our sinful soul, the soul-stealing enemy, and the soul-numbing world buffers us from true connection. We may crave it, but it doesn't make it easy for us to engage in.

### "With" as Bridge-Building

So when it comes to caring, believing adults involved in serving teenagers, we need to remind one another of the core reality to connect. Whatever your God-given role as a youth worker, paid youth director, congregational pastor, parent, or a combination of these, we link with teens demonstrating truth, grace, and heart. We share not only from a place of purpose, but with an eye that sees teens as valuable people.

In 1 Peter 5:1-5, the epistle pauses in the last chapter to address spiritual leaders. The balance of the book has focused on all believers that are the elect in Jesus Christ by His foreknowledge (1:1-2). But in just a few verses, Peter reminds us of three layers to effective bridge-building, which all tie into the idea of "with."

# Building Bridges: Today's Leaders With Today's Teens

**“With” means being among.** This wording is not to be confused with the wildly popular *Among Us* online game, which is styled like the common youth group Mafia activity. I Peter 5:2 directs leaders to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you.” The shepherding language links the leader to those being led. The responsibility of oversight is expressed with the understanding that the ones leading are they themselves with the flock. Every leader has both a shepherding approach and a sheep’s posture. We lead to Jesus and we follow Jesus just as fellow teens do. Since we are fully leaning on the Lord as we lead, we can see ourselves as among those we lead.

In 13 years of traveling among our AFLC family in this role, I appreciate our commitment to the local congregation. Many times the physical posture of the youth leader and/or pastor is evident from interaction before and after the youth group time or worship service. It does not take long to see if the leader is really among those being led. Actions and attitudes speak volumes. The distinction of leadership roles is for order, but it is not intended to create separation.

**“With” means being willing.** This description begins with willing to serve, and builds off willing to join. I Peter 5:2 continues with “not under compulsion, but willingly.” If our calling to be with teens is hard for us to swallow, then the truths that we are seeking to communicate may be hard for teens to swallow. It is striking to me that compulsion comes through as a warning to leaders. When the calling received from Christ degenerates into a “have-to” set of tasks to carry out, everyone loses.

Although the relationship of a caring, believing adult with teens in the local church does often parallel a spiritual parent, the attitude demonstrated should not reflect impatience. In my own life and in friends’ lives, I have seen and heard that we often are unwilling to be kind or compassionate with our family. Too many times our family members get the worst from us. Lord, please forgive us! Make us willing members of our family and refresh a willingness in our hearts and heads for serving teens.

**“With” means being humble.** In contrast to ministry being “To” teens or “For” teens (see page 6, *Convenience Store* on “3 Prepositions of Mission”), biblical ministry reflecting Jesus’ ministry is seen by being with teens. This approach takes humility. I Peter 5:3 points out that Savior-like shepherding is not domineering. I Peter 5:5 underscores for younger people the need for humility. The next verse expands back to all believers to be humble before the Lord God Almighty.

If we are appealing to teens to live a life of faith with humility from Jesus, then where are they going to observe that example? The mirror comes in front of our faces and we are left staring at ourselves with the question. Are we readily showing the humility of Christ? Are we willing to ask teens forgiveness or are we “above” that? Do we want humility for them, but not for ourselves?

At a youth retreat I was speaking at last month, a teen asked me what she should call me. She started listing potential titles, “Mister Jason? Pastor Jason? Reverend Jason? Doctor Jason?” I thought for a moment and by God’s grace replied, “Just Jason.” However long the Lord leads you and me to be “with teens,” let’s build bridges with them as fellow people clinging to the grace of God in Jesus.



*Pastor Jason Holt  
AFLC Director  
of Youth Ministries*

## Questions to Consider:

- 1) Which layer of “with” do you struggle with the most?
- 2) How does Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection address that area?
- 3) What is the next step that the Lord is calling you to take to be “with teens”?

# Convenience Store



## **3 COVID Changes Among Young People**

[fulleryouthinstitute.org/blog/3-changes-you-need-to-know-about-young-people-as-you-minister](http://fulleryouthinstitute.org/blog/3-changes-you-need-to-know-about-young-people-as-you-minister)



## **3D Media Review: “Lonely” by Justin Bieber and Benny Blanco (Reader Discretion Advised)**

[cpyu.org/resource/3d-review-lonely-by-justin-bieber-and-benny-blanco/](http://cpyu.org/resource/3d-review-lonely-by-justin-bieber-and-benny-blanco/)



## **3 Prepositions of Mission**

[interlinc-online.com/blog/index.php/2020/06/30/the-prepositions-of-mission-2/](http://interlinc-online.com/blog/index.php/2020/06/30/the-prepositions-of-mission-2/)



## **3 + 3 Types of Teens that We Connect With in YM**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=39MUD5BXJSI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39MUD5BXJSI)



# Features

*click a pic to see the link*



Youth  
Workers  
Weekends



Video  
Connection



Apprenticeship  
Program  
Youth  
Ministry  
Apprentices



FLY 2021



See You  
At The Pole



Dare2Share  
Live



AFLC Youth  
Ministries

## AFLC Youth Ministries Opportunities

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**Jan. 15-17, 2021  
YW Weekends**  
Annual event for those  
who serve teens

**Dec. 15 & 17, 2020  
Video Connection**  
Third Tues & Thurs in  
Dec, Feb, Apr

**May 31, 2021  
Apprenticeship  
Program**  
Plan now for application  
deadline

**Jul. 5-10, 2021  
FLY Convention**  
National Youth Gathering

**Sep. 22, 2021  
See You At The Pole**  
National Youth Prayer Day

**Nov. 13, 2021  
Dare2Share Live**  
National Youth Equipping  
Event

**AFLC Youth Ministries**  
Download our  
AFLC Youth App!  
[www.aflc.org/youth](http://www.aflc.org/youth)

**We're here to serve you!**



# AFLC Youth Ministries



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*Director of Youth Ministries*



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## FOR YOUTH WORKERS

**The Contact** is issued twice a year to encourage and engage youth workers of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC).

## FOR CONGREGATIONS

The AFLC is a fellowship of 250+ congregations whose members believe that the Bible is true and that everyone needs Jesus.

## FOR TEENAGERS

AFLC Youth Ministries exists to win teens to Christ, to build them in God's Word and God's love, to equip them to live and share their faith, and to multiply maturing teen disciples of Jesus.

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