



A service of the
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Missouri Synod

Youth Supports

A resource to encourage and empower youth
leaders for the expansion of the Lord's kingdom.

January 2006 - Volume 7, Issue 1

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How's the Marriage?

On March 21, 1982, I entered into a beautiful marriage with an incredible person. My groom loved me beyond anything I ever deserved and has shown me a love I could never imagine. But sadly, over the years, I allowed my marriage to look like those that are so prevalent in our society today – times of turbulence, periods of separation. I've even walked away from it all on more than one occasion. As a bride, I never felt like a divorce was in order, though I'm certain I gave my groom PLENTY of reasons to want to divorce me and wash His hands clean of the whole relationship. Yes, there were many wonderful years where my life was completely in sync with that of my groom. My marriage, which began nearly 24 years ago, was marked by the promises made and gift given at my Baptism. Barely a month old, I became a bride; and Christ, my bridegroom.

Perhaps the description of my marriage to Christ resonates a bit too loudly in your own heart; perhaps it describes *your* marriage to Christ as well. In ministry, it is so easy to get caught up in life that we forget to nurture our own relationship with our Loving Savior. We earnestly strive to lead others to Christ and encourage them to spend time with Him while we fail to spend time with Him ourselves. We become so preoccupied with the circumstances that surround our lives, that we don't occupy our thoughts with the One who gives us life.

As church workers, particularly those who work with youth, we focus so much energy on building relationships with others through our ministry, but has that ministry ever caused you to neglect your relationship with Christ? Think back to when you first entered professional ministry. For some of us, that time is more recent than for others. Can you recall your first few months in ministry, when you were committed to personal devotion time? God's words to Israel as recorded in Jeremiah 2:2 remind me of my own devotion to Christ early in my ministry: "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown" (NIV).

We have been baptized and "married" into a family more amazing than any we could imagine here on earth. Through this baptism – this marriage – we are

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E-Newsletter
from Synod

Servant Event
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Youth
Program?

challenged to love our Groom with all our heart, our soul, our mind, and our strength. In that, I struggle, because my heart is divided, my soul is weary, my mind is scattered, and my strength is weak. But I take heart in knowing that my Groom showed me no greater love than through Him laying His life down for me – His bride. My Groom gives rest for the weary soul, so that I can delight in my Lord. My Groom can renew my mind and my strength, because His foolishness is wiser than my wisdom, and His weakness is stronger than my strength. And he does the same for you! Allow your marriage to Christ to renew you as well, so that you can love your Groom with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

I challenge you and myself to return to our Groom for renewal, rather than to the things of this world. In doing so, we can then share the same love we have for our groom with those around – our youth, their parents, our congregations, fellow church workers, the lost around us. In a society where divorce, separation, and abuse are becoming more common in marriage, consider whether you want your marriage to Christ to reflect those same traits. Return to you wedding day, when you were filled with the Spirit, and taken into the arms of the One who loves you without reservation and without regret.

—Sarah Hames, Director of Education Education, Christ Community Lutheran Church, Vancouver, WA <FaithDCESarah@hotmail.com>

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

http://www.nowlcms.org/educational_services/YouthSupports.aspx

E-Newsletter from Synod Board of Youth Ministry

The Board of Youth Ministry for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has a monthly e-bulletin with youth ministry information. To subscribe to it, go to <http://www.lcms.org/enews/> and follow the directions.

Check Out Servant Event Possibilities

The Board of Youth ministry coordinates and helps to publicize Servant Events hosted by LC—MS congregations and groups. The new list for summer 2006 events is now available. Find out what possibilities there are for your group at <<http://www.lcms.org/ca/dcs/SERVEevents/2005ExtSS.asp>>.

Want Some Ideas for Your Youth Program?

The Board of Youth Ministry for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod with a grant from Thrivent started a new electronic youth ministry resource available for free on the internet. Check out <www.youthesource.com/> The web page is not just for adults, but for youth too with a number of links to other great web sites. Pass it on to your own youth!

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