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Youth Supports

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

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- New Year's Resolutions?
- **Web sources of ideas for youth ministry**

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New Year's Resolutions?

January is a perfect time to evaluate your life and to make changes that will benefit you through the next year. Although the New Year's Day has past, once again I have made a decision to be healthy and to slow down a little. The humorous thing is that these were my resolutions I made last year as well. What about you? Do your resolutions sound the same year after year? Why not try something new? How about making our spiritual life healthy. I have to admit after many years of serving in ministry, my spiritual walk has been vibrant at times, but has also seen lean times. What can we do this year to ensure that through the low times of ministry we don't loose sight of our spiritual walk and spiritual responsibility to the family? Some may be saying, "I have been in a battle with my congregation, and have gone through some tough times for such a long time, I don't know how or where to begin strengthening my spiritual walk."

Let's read Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord... Remember this is a letter to the children of Israel who are in exile. What does it mean to be in exile? Exile means being in a place that you don't want to be for a period of time. Sometimes it's a long, long time, and sometimes it's a shorter time. What is the cause of the exile? It can be as simple as our own sinful choices: poor choices, other people's sinful choices, adverse circumstances, or standing up for the Lord. We must remember that during the exile Jesus is always there with us. He will always win. The question is how do we live in this exile and please God. Jeremiah 29:11 is the promise from God.

This is what the Lord says you are to do while awaiting His promises (Jeremiah 29:1-9) First we need to "build" meaning let go of our own hope and dreams, relinquish, surrender, guide, guard, arrange and rearrange. Next we need to "plant" (verses 5) meaning to be responsible, participate, and contribute. Don't let us be

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fruitless and bring down the number of Christians. Thirdly, we need to pray. Psalm 137, tells us to pray for peace and prosperity. We need to understand what the Lord promises to those who actively wait on Him (Jeremiah 29:10-14). We need to be certain of these things: **character** (from God), **intervention** (there is an end in sight -Psalm 31:15 and 2 Cor 4:17), **grace** -(He will come to us to bring us back), **purpose** (He is deliberate), **propriety, security** (the assurance - there are little and big things to hope for), and **Himself** (being in exile drives us to Him)

Going through these difficult times is not easy, but knowing God is in control gives us hope. While in exile if we build, plant and pray, our spiritual life will be healthy and vibrant influencing our congregations to be lights to those we serve. The New Year is a time of resolutions. Let us make a resolution not only to ourselves but to our families, churches and to God. Hold on to God's promises He gave to His people many years ago in exile, and let us hold on to those promises when life does not seem to go our way.

— John Wengel, Director of Christian Education at Trinity Lutheran Church, Oregon City, OR (jwengel@bctonline.com)

Find past issues of Youth Supports at:

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

Want Some Ideas for Your Youth Ministry?

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.youthsource.com/> The web page is not just for adults, but for youth too with a number of links to other great web sites.

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.

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