

Discovering that I am a Christ-like Servant Leader

I had a friend tell me last month that he wasn't ready to be a leader in our church because he did not have enough gray hair. Does hair color really determine our ability to lead?

Like most churches, the leaders in our congregation tend to be middle to upper age. Therefore, I need to have a process where others emerge and help me lead or take the ministry from me. If I do not pass the baton of leadership off to the next generation, then Bethany Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, or any other church, will decline or even fade away.



Randi coaching two of her servant leader cluster apprentices.

Just like in business or politics, leadership is vital for a congregation. Conventional wisdom is that organizations have to have a process to move or raise up people. There needs to be an intentional way of identifying and inviting others to lead. That is why I have spent the last two years learning about Christ-like servant leadership through the Karpenko Institute for Nurturing and Developing Leadership Excellence (KINDLE), which focuses on training church workers to foster and multiply Christ-like leaders in the church, home, workplace, and community.

As I started exploring the process of leadership, it dawned on me that I am a leader, or person of influence, whether it is simply of myself or possibly in my family, at work, or even in my community. Everyone is a leader of something or someone.

Since we can learn to be leaders, these skills and attitudes need to be, figuratively speaking, cultivated, watered, protected from storms, and placed out in the sun to grow and bear fruit.

So what does it mean for a church leader to be cultivated or watered? One of the core ideas is that a leader needs to care for herself before she can give to others. It's like being in a plane emergency -- you put your oxygen mask on first before helping others. In the church, that would translate into taking good care of oneself physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. In particular, this also means being in God's Word and dwelling in all the forgiveness, mercy, and grace that He offers. So a Christ-like servant leader will be motivated to lead and serve others because of what Christ first did. The motivation for a Christ-like servant leader is not money, power, or praise, but thankfulness for the grace and blessings God gives each and every day.

As a leader, I also want to get others rooted deeply in God's Word. Going back to the nurturing example, I cannot just plant the seed and watch it grow. I must water it, prune it when necessary, and care for it.

(continued on Page 2)

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

May 15, 2016

Installation of Michelle Pavasars as Operations Director Christ Lutheran Brea, CA

May 16, 2016

Application Deadline for Classic KINDLE, KINDLE: Finishing Well, KINDLE: Recent Graduates

May 19-21, 2016

KINDLE Exhibit at Heartland DCE Conference Concordia University Seward, NE

June 7-9, 2016

Board of Directors Meeting Mundelein, IL

June 15, 2016

Last Opportunity in 2015-16 Fiscal Year to Contribute to KINDLE's Annual Fund

July 16-20, 2016

KINDLE Exhibit at LCMS National Youth Gathering New Orleans, LA

(continued from Page 1)

More concretely, I cannot call someone on Saturday to teach Sunday School and expect the person to lead in a satisfying manner. More helpful would be an apprenticing process. In this case the approach would be:

- I teach the class. The new teacher watches. We talk.
- I teach. The new teacher helps. We talk.
- The new teacher leads the class. I help. We talk.
- The teacher teaches. I watch. I coach.
- The teacher is trained and I find a new apprentice!

I cannot Google my way through this process. I have to offer intentional, face-to-face modeling, guiding, encouraging, and evaluating during the entire leadership development process.

In the last two years I have reflected on my own actions as a Christ-like servant leader. I have been working on being rooted in Christ and regularly being in the Scripture. I have also spent time reading leadership books like *Leading From the Second Chair* and *Joining Jesus on His Mission*. In addition, I have been offering two-hour sessions on how to be a Christ-like leader in your home, at your workplace, and in your community.

Perhaps the most meaningful experience relates to my launching a series of Servant Leader Journeys. These eight-week experiences help people study God's Word as it relates to leadership practices like praying unceasingly, witnessing willingly, and serving others. During these eight weeks, I also apprentice a person in the group so s/he can lead another small group journey.

I think we can talk about leadership development until we are blue in the face, but raising up others is more than just a conversation. Current leaders must not go it alone, but be prepared to identify, invite, and apprentice others. Leadership development is leaders moving alongside of future leaders in an intentional, here-and-now process of nurturing that person for leadership roles in-and-out of the congregation. It is a privilege to challenge people to discover that they are Christ-like servant leaders. This experience enables my friend without gray hair to realize he is already on the path of being a leader at Bethany and beyond.



Randi Petrik, a 2014-2016 Classic KINDLE Associate, is the Youth Minister at Bethany Lutheran in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She recently shared some of this information as a guest columnist in her local newspaper.

Details for KINDLE: Couples are Announced

This Learning Event for couples is KINDLE's newest initiative to foster Christ-like servant leadership in one's home, congregation, community, and world! Couples, comprised of a KINDLE Associate and his/her spouse, will gather in the beauty of the Rocky Mountains on April 23-26, 2017, at **Destinations West at Beaver Village** in Winter Park, Colorado for a three-night, four-day event to explore the grace-filled marks of obedience and well-being through the cultivation of one's faith and health — all with the purpose of growing together as Christ-like servant leaders.

Registration begins August 1 and, if you register by January 15, 2017, the cost is \$450 per couple. After that date the cost rises to \$525. Registration deadline is March 15, 2017. Watch for more information at kindleservantleaders.org.

Register Online for Upcoming KINDLE Initiatives

2016-2018 Classic KINDLE
2016-2018 KINDLE: Finishing Well
2016 KINDLE: Recent Graduates

All three events begin on September 26-29, 2016
 University of St. Mary of the Lake Conference Center, Mundelein, Illinois

To register, or for more information, go to kindleservantleaders.org
Registration deadline: May 16, 2016

Board of Director Winter Meeting Highlights

Amidst falling snowflakes, the KINDLE Board met February 17-18, 2016, at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois. Here are some highlights:

- Celebrated the presence of Operations Director-Elect Michelle Pavasars, as she attended her first Board meeting.
- Continued the Founder Transition discussion with Bill Karpenko.
- Passed resolutions addressing the use of KINDLE's, and other organizations', intellectual property.
- Refined the Board's "Indicators of Success," which relate to its four strategic goals.
- Rejoiced over the strong donor response in December and January, particularly to the Annual Fund.
- Renewed Board member Christ-like Servant Leader Growth Plans.
- Received with gratitude KINDLE's 2010-2019 Financial Forecast.



Front Row: Dave Rahberg, Vice President; Leah Anderson; Carsten Falkenberg; Audrey Duensing-Werner; Kim Deterding, Treasurer; Diane Schuessler, Operations Coordinator; **Back Row:** Sandy Jett; Elvin Harms, President; Rick Herman; Michelle Pavasars, Operations Director-Elect; Bill Karpenko, Operations Director; Michele Karpenko, Secretary; Les Stroh, Executive Director.

Ways You Can Financially Support KINDLE

Consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution

IRA owners who must take a required minimum distribution (RMD) in 2016 can avoid some or all of the resulting income tax liability by donating a portion of the IRA to a preferred charitable organizations like KINDLE. Besides helping to reduce income taxes, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) may help minimize estate taxes, and can fulfill your philanthropic desires. You can make tax-free transfers of up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to qualified charities. Please consider KINDLE for your QCD. For more information, please contact Les Stroh, Executive Director, at les@kindleservantleaders.org. Even if you are not a person who has an IRA requiring an RMD, chances are you know someone who does. Please pass this information on to them.

AmazonSmile is a program through which Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. Please sign up for **AmazonSmile** at smile.amazon.com and choose KINDLE as the beneficiary of this donation program.

1. After you log in, go to "pick your own charitable organization."
2. Type "Karpenko" and search. There you will see KINDLE, with the acronym spelled out.
3. Click on the select button, and you will return to the Amazon shopping page.
4. KINDLE will now be associated with your account.

Other gifts to KINDLE may be sent to KINDLE, 8608 Poplar Bridge Curve, Bloomington, MN 55437 or visit kindleservantleaders.org (at the Donate tab) for instructions on how to:

- Designate or renew Thrivent Choice Dollars to KINDLE by going to Thrivent.com or by calling 1-800-847-4836.
- Sign up for an automatic monthly donation.
- Make an immediate and secure online donation, using your credit or debit card, to KINDLE's Annual Fund, one of its 13 Living Legacy Funds, its General Endowment Fund, or its Maintaining Excellence Fund.



Fostering & Multiplying
Christ-like Servant Leaders

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MISSION
**KINDLE fosters and multiplies
Christ-like servant leaders
to enhance the ministry
of congregations, in their
communities and the world.**



Please Pray For:

- Marilyn Shults, Dean-Elect of KINDLE: Servant Leader Workshops, as she assembles a design team for the fourth cycle of workshops.
- KINDLE's Recruitment teams, as they invite people to participate in 2016-2018 Classic KINDLE, 2016-2018 KINDLE: Finishing Well, and 2016 Recent Graduates.
- Those who are still considering applying to one of KINDLE's three September initiatives.
- Michelle Pavasars, KINDLE's Operations Director-Elect, as she continues to apprentice with Bill Karpenko.
- The Leadership Design Group, who continue to evaluate and refine various elements of KINDLE's training materials and processes.
- That KINDLE's presence is a blessing at the Heartland Conference, May 19-21, Seward, NE, and the National Youth Gathering, July 16-20, New Orleans, LA.

Please Give Thanks For:

- The work of the KINDLE: Couples Training Team, led by Dean Sandy Wendelin, as it develops this timely initiative.
- KINDLE's Board of Directors, as it continues to lay a foundation for KINDLE's Executive Leadership Succession process.
- The ongoing impact of the Thrivent Financial Choice Dollars on KINDLE's program initiatives.
- The marvelous generosity of donors who continue to support KINDLE's ministry.
- Congregations who underwrite expenses of Associates as they attend KINDLE events.
- The individuals, deceased and alive, who have been honored with a Living Legacy in their name.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Leah Anderson, Audrey Duensing-Werner, Carsten Falkenberg, Elvin Harms, Jr. (President), Rick Herman, Sandy Jett, Michele Karpenko (Secretary), David Rahberg (Vice President)

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