

# ON Broadway

Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church Newsletter

January 2018

## Advent by Candlelight 2017

*Elaine Henke*



PEACE HAS COME was the theme for Advent by Candlelight. It was held on December 4th in our Fellowship Hall and 165 women attended. The room looked beautiful with candlelight on every table and lovely decorations through out.

We enjoyed delicious desserts and sweet fellowship around each table. We sang several Christmas carols and were treated to a clarinet solo and a vocal duet.

The meditation for the evening was given by Pei-Lin Lee. She was raised in Taiwan and came to the U.S. for an advanced degree. Her testimony of how God pursued her was such a blessing. She lives in Ann Arbor with her husband and four children. The evening closed with prayer and another vocal duet about God's peace. .

This was our 15th year to have Advent by Candlelight, and although it has always been a blessing for me, it is now time for me to step down. However, I don't want this evening to end, so I am trusting someone else will pick up the leadership. I have a record of what has been done each year and would be available to help someone with the task of organizing ABC. It could be totally different and that would be fine.

Thank you to every person who attended or helped with this evening over the years. The Lord Jesus has been present and spoken through many women. I just praise His Name!

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## What Does It Take to Be a Stephen Minister?

*Louise Gruppen*

Maybe you are thinking about becoming a Stephen Minister, and wonder what it involves. It is a big commitment, and has big rewards.

Becoming and being a Stephen Minister requires:

**Faith**—Having a close relationship to Christ, and depending on Him to be the healer

**Gifts**—Using gifts of faith, mercy, and encouragement to provide one-to-one care to someone going through a hard time

**Commitment**—Making a commitment to serve as a Stephen Minister for at least two years; committing to keeping confidentiality

**Time**—Attending 50 hours of initial training; after commissioning, meeting with a care receiver once per week for about an hour; attending supervision sessions twice per month

**Desire**—Wanting to serve others and to receive support and guidance

Please attend the adult Sunday School session on January 14 to hear many more details and to have the opportunity to ask questions! Please prayerfully consider whether God is calling you to become a Stephen Minister!

## Tethering Your Children

Parenting is challenging. Every generation of parents discover their own unique challenges. This generation of parents are facing one that won't go away - the lure of technology. A few months ago I read a book I've recommended other read entitled, "Irresistible." Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked Alter, Adam

Now, according to Scot McKnight, Jean Twenge has followed suit and written on the same subject. Twenge wrote an earlier book entitled "Generation Me". Now I'll have to read her latest. This is, as McKnight notes below, serious stuff. We do well to listen.

I've cut and pasted the following material from Scot McKnight's blog "Jesus Creed". May you find it worthwhile.

*Pastor John*

### **For All Parents and Grandparents: The Word is "Tether"**

December 19, 2017 by Scot McKnight

Parents and grandparents who ignore Jean Twenge's newest study, *iGens*, are not doing themselves or their children any good. The evidence is serious, folks, and the future joy of our children is what's at stake. This isn't alarmism but it is an alarm worth sounding.

Rachel Macy Stafford's the author of the letter below and the author of *Hands Free Mama* and her most recent book is called *Only Love Today*.

What are you doing to "tether" children to humans and relationships?

#### **From a mother to a daughter about social media and screens:**

*Dear one, it is natural to go through difficult periods where you don't feel like yourself ... when you question your worth ... when your purpose is not clear. During those times, I want to use this information to give yourself an unfiltered view of your beautiful worth and your extraordinary potential.*

*First, you need to know what is happening to your brain while on your device. Social media is known for creating algorithms to capture and manipulate our consumption. The goal is to achieve the highest amount of engagement possible. There is even a term for this in Silicon Valley: Brain Hacking. It is having a negative impact on our mental health—especially susceptible are teenagers. Here's why:*

*The teen brain isn't done forming and the part of the brain that manages impulse control, empathy, judgment, and the ability to plan ahead are not fully developed. This*

*means you're more likely to see disturbing online content or have troubling encounters; it means you're more likely to become distracted from the important tasks at hand; it means you're more likely to become addicted to your device than adults. When you are addicted, you will experience distraction, fatigue, or irritability when you're not on your phone. Teens who excessively use their phone are more prone to disrupted sleep, restlessness, stress and fatigue.(source)*

*So let's think about this in terms of your life:*

*Each time the phone notifies you, you stop what you are doing—whether it's homework or a job you have to do. What might take you one hour to do, will take you several, and it won't be completed as well. The inability to focus will reflect in your grades and impact the job opportunities you have as you grow. Spending quality time with friends and family will be impacted by the need to check the phone, making you believe what is most important is on your phone when it is really the person in front of you.*

*Each time you scroll, you are being influenced by what you see on the screen. Your thoughts and beliefs about what your body should look like or what your life should look like are being shaped. The hidden influence of the internet can create a poor self-image, unrealistic comparisons, and harmful judgements – and you won't even know it is happening.*

*But here's how you take back control:*

**Awareness** ... *you see, awareness changes everything. Awareness is your weapon against the hidden influences and damaging behaviors. While you are online, your mind, your thoughts, your core values are drifting to wherever tech companies want you to go. The remedy is to limit the time you spend drifting in the online world and tether yourself to real life.*

#### **Tether yourself**

*To real people, real conversations, and real scenery.*

#### **Tether yourself**

*To furry animals, interesting books, good music, the great outdoors.*

#### **Tether yourself**

*To spatulas, hammers, cameras, paintbrushes, and yoga mats.*

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*When your worth is in question ... when you feel lost and alone ... when you feel sad and can't explain why, tether yourself to real life. Tether yourself to real people. Tether yourself to real love. And I will help you set limits because I know teens feel pressure to be available 24/7. But you need and deserve time to be alone with your thoughts, doing things you enjoy, without constant pressure and interruptions from the outside world.*

*As you practice these self-regulation skills that will benefit you for life, I vow to do the same. I am here to set an example of a well-rounded life and to help you navigate this challenging territory. You can always hold on to me.*

*I love you, Mom*

Once the talk ended, I had a few suggestions that would help her create a healthy relationship with technology. Much to my surprise, there was no pushback from my daughter when I suggested we order a proper alarm clock rather than use her phone as her alarm clock. There was no pushback when we talked about limiting phone use to a little time after school and then a little after nightly swim team practice. There was no pushback when I asked her to start charging her phone in a separate area of the house until morning and letting her friends know not to expect text responses after 9 pm.

Almost instantly, I saw a difference. I noticed she was more present in main areas of the house, accepting our invitations to participate in games, cooking, and conversation. Her disposition was cheerful, more relaxed and fun-loving. She began taking walks outside with her music, often inviting me to go along. She was getting homework and household chores completed more efficiently.

I wondered if this motivation to limit phone usage would wear off, but it's stayed consistent.

In fact, six weeks after our talk, there was a rare snowstorm in our area. As big, fluffy flakes began to accumulate on the ground, my daughter's best friend came over and they built a snowman, a fort, and played outside for hours. After making a pizza and watching a movie, they went back out to play some more. In a rare moment of sisterly love, my older daughter invited her little sister and her friends to a snowy mound. On the count of three, she directed them to all throw snow up into the air.

Read more at <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/2017/12/19/parents-grandparents-word-tether/#VMYSGGsyX2cVS09o.99>

## **Help Change a Life: Circles Washtenaw County!**

*Suzanne Van Dam*

For many years AACRC has been an ardent supporter of Friends In Deed. Although they will continue to do all they have done for 34 years to help those in need, now that they have launched their newest program Circles, there are even more reasons for congregation members to get connected!

Circles is an ambitious poverty-reduction program whose aim is to reduce poverty permanently. With relationships at its core, Circles matches a person in poverty with at least two middle income partners (called Allies) to form a support system and provide social capital that many living in poverty simply would not have on their own. Allies work with Circle participants for 18 months to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency and milestones, whether that be completing a short course to become a licensed phlebotomist in the healthcare field or reducing debt so that a mom can afford to go back to school. Programs around the country have shown that Circles works, but it is a volunteer-driven program that needs your time, talent and enthusiasm!

### **Circles Needs Volunteers to:**

- Prepare and Serve Meals (perfect for small groups)
- Conduct workshops & participate on teams to work on behalf of low-income participants
- Serve in the children's program as teachers, assistants and tutors

On Wednesday, January 10th at 1:30 pm our seniors group, Gray Matters, will host a Circles presentation. This will be an opportunity to hear about these amazing individuals—volunteers and program participants alike—and learn about ways you can put your own faith in action, helping families thrive.

Others, wanting more information about Circles can visit: <http://www.friendsindeedmi.org/circles/> email the Circles Program Coordinator, Suzanne Van Dam at: [Suzanne@friendsindeedmi.org](mailto:Suzanne@friendsindeedmi.org) or call: (734) 340-9042.