



Assigned Seats? You Bet!

The morning started with anxiety. Apprehension. Unknown. And cinnamon rolls.

On Monday, January 20th, Valley Lutheran opened its doors to over 250 people at the 9th annual Lutheran Educator Conference. Initiated in 2012, the Lutheran Educator Conference was created by principals of Lutheran schools in Bay City, Midland and Saginaw. The conference was designed to strengthen the community of Lutheran teachers within the Great Lakes Bay Region, while also providing a high-quality professional development opportunity for its attendees. Participants from twenty-four area schools, early childhood centers, and Lutheran organizations joined together to hear **Ted Neitzke**, CEO of CESA6 (Cooperative Educational Service Agency 6) from Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

So why the apprehension? Why the anxiety? Because Valley did something they have not done before at a conference. Valley followed the request of keynote speaker Ted Neitzke and assigned seats. That's right. Valley did exactly what many teachers do to their students – assigned seats. Graciously, attendees were notified of the assigned seat plan before the conference began.

When the morning of the 20th dawned, educators arrived to search for name tags, finding the table number they had been assigned to.

Among the cinnamon rolls and coffee were conversations filled with "who are you with?" and "know anyone at your table?"

Now, this article is not meant to tell teachers they should not assign seats. Nor is it meant to tell our readers all about the conference.

This article is to inform you, our congregation members and supporters, that your beloved teachers and educators were pushed out of their comfort zone.



Valley's gymnasium was filled with over 250 Lutheran educators on Monday, January 20th for the 9th annual Lutheran Educator Conference.

Just like they push their students outside their comfort zones.

Just like they encourage their students to work with someone new.

Just like they challenge their students to succeed.

And, on Monday, January 20th, it worked. Lutheran educators were forced to meet someone new, forced into small group sharing outside of their normal staff, and forced to listen to the speaker in a new way.

Principal **Levi Bringold** from Trinity

Lutheran in Reese shared, "Coming into the VLHS conference there was excitement, yet a little hesitation. The faculty heard there was going to be a speaker coming, a great speaker, but there were no sectionals. They were skeptical about this assigned seating. But after the speaker started the teachers learned so much! While we initially sat by strangers, we soon became acquaintances and fast friends."

Neitzke shared many thoughts on leadership, encouraging educators

to find ways to continue being a leader in their classroom, life, and challenges placed before them. So, we thank you, educators, for your service to God's calling in leading young children in a Godly manner. And we thank you,

congregations, for your continued support of Lutheran education.

It was our pleasure to host a conference that brought together twenty-four schools within our Great Lakes Bay Region. Valley Lutheran looks forward to 2021, when we will host another opportunity for educators to learn and grow together (cinnamon rolls not guaranteed).

In the meantime, enjoy the second half of the school year, being the leader God has created you to be, the educator your congregation and students know and love!



CELEBRATING DR. JOHN BRANDT'S 40 YEARS OF MINISTRY

Whether you know him as Coach Brandt, Mr. Brandt, or Dr. Brandt, you are invited to celebrate his 40+ years of service to Valley Lutheran High School!



Saturday, May 16, 2020

Horizons Conference Center

\$50/ticket
(includes dinner and scholarship donation)

For tickets and more information, visit:
www.vlhs.com/brandtretirement



Lenten Tour Concert

Featuring 90 musicians in Valley Lutheran's

Golden
Voice Choir
& Symphonic Band



Sunday, March 22

@ 3 pm
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
808 Weiss St. Saginaw

Is Suffering a Sin?

In a recent Ethics class, students were given the challenge of reading the blog of a suffering individual and contemplate whether or not the suffering was because of a "sin." Erin Ettline's response to the blog was used to write this month's devotion. Erin is a senior at VLHS and graduated from Zion, Auburn.

The Bible says that God doesn't want people to suffer through life, but rather, that we have an abundant life and to live our lives in Him. We know God loves us and that the only way to heaven is through believing in Him. Yet, why are we afflicted? Why is there suffering? And why does God allow us to experience such pain?

It's easy for us to look at situations within our own lives and say "it's not a sin, it's just a weakness" but that's a wishy washy statement. A sin is a sin - the Bible is clear on that. We all sin, whether we recognize it or not, and we all have a constant need for a Savior and rescuer. That doesn't mean that those who appear "afflicted" are more sinful, while those with less observable, outward sufferings are less sinful.

David, when writing the book of Psalms, noted that "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19). Note, though, that he does not tell us when we will be afflicted, nor does he reveal when

such affliction will end. Suffering can last a lifetime, but we are also instructed to "...consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

Regardless of our present state of suffering, the fact is that we all sin and we all need a Savior. We all need to be prayed for, respected, and cared for (and we need to be willing to reciprocate these things for others).

When God says we are forgiven, often through the words of a Pastor at confession and absolution, we are. In fact, Christ's death on the cross took an entire multitude of sins, sufferings, shame, and wrath so that, in our place, He could face the Father's punishment instead of us.

As we enter this Lenten season, may we find comfort in the knowledge that while we suffer here on earth, our Heavenly Father sees us through the righteousness of His Son, who paid the ultimate price for our sins.

VLHS Receives Thrivent Choice Dollars

Thank you to all the Valley Lutheran supporters who designated Thrivent Choice Dollars to support the VLHS ministry. **A total of \$9,126.00 was received in 2019!** For more information on how you can support VLHS with Choice Dollars contact your Thrivent representative.

Hard Hat Tours 2020

(Enjoy a Student-Led Tour of Valley's Addition, and Worship with Us if You're Available)

March 11 @ 11 am * March 25 @ 9 am

April 8 @ 11 am * April 22 @ 9 am

April 28 @ 10 am

* Come early on 3.11 or 4.8 for chapel at 10:15 am
RSVP to hbehnke@vlhs.com or call 989.790.1676