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APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER



Church Council

Council

Church Council Meeting Highlights: Church Council met for its regular meeting on Monday, April 5th, 2021 at 7:00 PM with 10 of 12 members present. Financial Report as of March 31st: General Fund \$35,241.96; Building Fund \$9,894.51; Memorial Fund \$13,580.25. A Day Care Steering Committee has been formed and will begin meeting in May. Updated organist job description and fee per service approved. Gift of new freezer for WASP meals, youth fundraisers, and pre-packaged freezer meals accepted. Council President Denny Pederson has asked individuals to serve on a strategic planning group. Plans to expand Coffee Fellowship to the Narthex were discussed. Bus maintenance and long-term replacement discussed. Complete minutes of the meeting are available in the church office.

First Communion - 13 3rd - 5th graders attended First Communion classes and have begun receiving their first communion. We will formally acknowledge them on Pentecost Sunday, May 23rd.



Sunday School: Pre-K - 5th grade Sunday School is back in full swing with normal classes on Sundays at 10:00 AM until Sunday, May 23rd. Sunday School will then resume in September.

Projector: Our new sanctuary projector is up and running! The much improved quality will allow us to add colorful devotional images for worship and have better clarity for photographs. Thanks to Jim Schoolmeesters and Marlen Holmberg for assisting in the installation.



Freezer: Thanks to an anonymous donor and a Thrivent Action Team Grant, we have already begun to make use of a new deep freezer and expect to make even greater use of it in the future. Right now it holds excess pre-packaged meals from Meals on Wheels (Do you know of anyone who could use them? Contact us!), but it will come in handy for youth fundraisers and the Wednesday Family Meal Night when it resumes in the fall. And, of course, it will complement our currently limited freezer space in the kitchen. What a wonderful addition to our hospitality ministry!

On the Way Together: Did you know that our congregation belongs to the Saint Paul Area Synod? *Synod* is a biblical word that means "on the way together." Our synod is one of 65 synods in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Made up of 110 congregations and new starts, the Saint Paul Area Synod works to build mutually transformative partnerships, embolden public witness for justice, and renew ourselves in the possibilities of being church in a new day. Our common work includes domestic partnerships and renewal as well as being a part of the global church by walking with companions in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) and the Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala (ILAG). To learn more visit spas-elca.org



Prayer at the Cross: Worshippers on Good Friday this year were invited to name and write a prayer for persons in the midst of suffering. In addition to those individually named, persons prayed for included police officers killed at our nation's capital, medical staff, family members of mass shooting victims, and those within and outside the Hennepin County Courthouse. A recent addition from a Confirmation student unable to attend worship asks for prayers for those involved with Black Lives Matter, Asian Lives Matter, and the LGBTQ community.

Baptism & Membership: God's grace is a gift that is freely given to us. We don't earn a thing when it comes to God's love, and we only try to live in response to that gift. Please speak to Pastor Nathan if you interested in baptism or becoming a member of the congregation.



In the Family: We're happy to share births, baptisms, marriages and deaths for members and others connected to our church family. Keep in touch and let us know who we may have missed.

Death - Shirley Kathryn Shoberg (June 10, 1933 - March 13, 2021)

Compassionate God, give courage and faith to all who mourn, that they may have strength to meet the days ahead with steadfastness and patience; not as those who are without hope, but in thankful remembrance of your great goodness, and in the joyful expectation of eternal life in your presence, with those they love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Baptisms - Kennedy Irene Stavig and Addison Virginia Stavig were baptized March 14th, 2021.

Gracious God, we thank you for the new life you give us through holy baptism. Continue to strengthen us with the Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Lutheran Foundations: Acts and Attitudes

by Pastor Nathan



Our series for this year focuses on the Small Catechism. Since the beginning of the church, many Christians have developed a “catechism” (*a word that means “to resound in the ear”*) as a basic summary of the Christian faith. Our catechism, developed by Martin Luther, is famous for its brevity (*it fits easily in your pocket!*) Luther intended for his catechism to be learned by heart, a life-long habit of grounding our lives in God’s commands and promises.

The second half or “second table” of the commandments deal with our relationship with our neighbor, especially the fourth (*honoring your parents*), fifth (*do not murder*) and sixth (*do not commit adultery*) which we discussed last month. The final four commandments move both outwardly and inwardly. The seventh and eighth commandments move outwardly to our neighbor’s possessions (*do not steal*) and reputation (*do not bear false witness*) while the ninth and tenth commandments move inwardly to attitudes toward our neighbor (*do not covet your neighbor’s house or possessions*).

For a Christian, the seventh commandment, “You shall not steal” is not simply about not breaking the law and whisking away merchandise without paying. Not stealing is only the first step. More to the point, Luther says, is to help our neighbor “improve and protect their property and income.” Failing to help our neighbor is the worst kind of stealing. But when we help our neighbor, we fulfill God’s purpose for our lives and gain a godly perspective on possessions: all is a gift from God, meant to be shared with others.

Protecting our neighbor’s reputation is at the heart of the eighth commandment: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” This is not simply about telling the truth in court, but taking the opportunity in our daily lives to be “quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger” when relating to our neighbors (*James 1:9*). Luther famously challenges us “to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.” This doesn’t mean, of course, excusing or ignoring our neighbor’s bad actions. But it does mean having the humility to acknowledge that whatever sin they may have committed, we too are capable of such sin, but never beyond correction and forgiveness.

Outward actions are only one side of the coin in relating to our neighbors. The other side of the coin is our inner attitudes. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house...or anything that belongs to your neighbor” are the ninth and tenth commandments in a nutshell. One dictionary defines covet as “yearn to possess or have something” and the word itself originates from the Latin *cupiditas* which is all about intense desire (think of Cupid on Valentine’s Day). We all have had moments when we intensely desire someone or something that belongs to another. In such moments, we must hold before us a fundamental fact: such a person or thing belongs to someone, and that someone is not you! Even those with whom we share life - parents, spouse or children - even they do not ultimately belong to us. They ultimately belong to God. “I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,” is the reason God gives for these commandments (*Exodus 20:5*). Every human being is wonderfully and uniquely created by God. Respecting their personal dignity and God-given callings begins in our stance and attitudes toward them. They are to be treasured as God’s child first and foremost.

Questions for reflection:

1. One preacher recently said, “The giver needs to give, because that’s how their relationship with God grows.” How has your giving led you to feel closer to God?
2. Reflecting on her son’s death at the hands police, Duante Wright’s mother said, “He may not have been an angel, but he was our angel.” How does this relate the eighth commandment?
3. How do you celebrate a person’s eternal worth and dignity?