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# St. Paul's Epistle ~

April 2023



## Church Council Meeting—March 2, 2023

Those present: Tim Anderson, Leanna Hasbargen, John Hopkins, Steve Rutkowsky, Tony Lucek, Pastor Quast, George Aitchison, RaNae Whitbeck and Leonard Morrison

Chairman Tim Anderson called the meeting to order. Pastor Quast led a devotion on Genesis 2:8,15. The Minutes and Treasurer's reports were reviewed and approved.

Briefs: 1) The Elders finished studying the Third Article and discussed Bible Study attendance. 2) Pastor Quast explained his appointment to the Thunder Bay Circuit Council/Visitor position. 3) The roof was discussed. Lumber prices are down. 4) The shoe donation for Lutheran Island Camp is complete. 5) Easter Breakfast will take place at 9:30 a.m. before worship. Volunteers are needed. 6) Tim and George will do the review of the treasurer's books. 7) Lutheran World Relief hygiene kits will be packed on Wednesday, April 5th.

There were no membership changes. The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Acting Secretary, RaNae Whitbeck

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING WILL BE HELD THURSDAY, APRIL 13th due to Maundy Thursday.

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## Annual Voters Meeting Minutes—February 26, 2023

Chairman Tim Anderson called the meeting to order. Opening prayer was given by Pastor Quast.

The minutes were approved as read.

Briefs: 1) LWML reported they are meeting the second Sunday of each month at 9:30 a.m. from September through May. 2) Stuart Milette has expressed interest in buying the lot adjoining the parsonage garage. He has no plans to build on it or sell it. Tim will do more research. 3) Thank you to everyone who donated shoes and boots for the Lutheran Island Camp donation, and to Leanna for delivering them. 4) Our commitment of \$8400 to the MN North District was paid in full for 2022. 5) The 2023 Budget was approved. 6) Steve Rutkowsky has agreed to continue as Money Counter. 7) Joint Parish Council met on January 29th. 8) MN State Pastors Conference is in Brainerd on May 8-10, 2023. 9) The Haiti storage room in the basement has been cleaned and will be used by the Altar Guild. 10) There will be 3 Catechumens this spring. 11) Voting for LCMS President and Vice Presidents will be done this June.

Membership changes were printed. Current congregational officers are the same as in 2022.

The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Submitted by Acting Secretary, RaNae Whitbeck

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QUARTERLY MEETING & POTLUCK—April 16, 2023 following worship.

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## Confirmation

Congratulations to our 3 Confirmation students who will be confirmed on April 9 during our worship service! They include: Brenyn Swenson, Ally Koenig and Hadley Whitbeck.



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## LWML News

The LWML Spring Rally will be held on April 18, 2023 in Dorset, MN. We will be collecting in-gathering items to take. Items include: travel size shampoos, toothpaste and toothbrushes, body wash, Kleenex, band aids, hand lotion, hand wipes, hand sanitizer, shaving cream, razors and combs. In addition, detergent and house cleaning items are also needed. There will be a collection box at church available for any donations until April 14th.

Our next LWML meeting will be held on Sunday, April 16th at 9:30 a.m. in the conference room.

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## Sunday School News!

Our Sunday School kids will be having a special part in our Palm Sunday worship so their attendance will be appreciated! We are not having class on Easter Sunday, but will resume Sunday, April 16th. Our last day of class before summer break will be May 14th. We'll be singing for the congregation that day and having a special end of the year party. Thanks to the parents, grandparents and guardians for bringing your kids to Sunday School!



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## April Birthdays

*Happy birthday wishes are going out to these members celebrating this month!*

1st: Amalia Swenson

21st: Bev Beck

4th: Judy Germain

22nd: Sally Batdorf & Brenyn Swenson

7th: Lisa Bacon

27th: Jim Moorhead

8th: Ashley Hasbargen

29th: Byron Blake

13th: Lisa Averill

30th: RaNae Whitbeck

20th: Lois Averill & Rachel Hasser

*Happy Birthday*



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## An Article from Pastor Quast...

Greetings, People Loved by God, in the name of our Saviour, Jesus!

Dear friends, this month we are going to see how our Lord God gives us the gift of material possessions, and how He intends to protect them with this Word. The Seventh Commandment is simply stated in Exodus 20:15, "You shall not steal." As always, Luther asks that fundamental question, "What does this mean?" He then responds, "We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income." This seems to be pretty straightforward; nonetheless, let us explore this commandment with the Word of God.

First, we are to understand that God forbids every kind of robbery, theft, and dishonest way of getting things (even if it might technically be legal, it may still be morally wrong). We are commanded by God to work to provide for our own needs and the needs of others, whenever it is possible for us to do so. St. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:28, "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need." So, we work to provide for ourselves and others, as this is a God-pleasing thing to do. He created us for work, you will recall, in the Garden of Eden, even prior to the Fall wherein He made Adam and Eve stewards of His creation. That stewardship required work. Work is a good thing.

Therefore, we ought not try to get things from other people—to take what rightly belongs to them in any sort of manner, be it by force (robbery) or by trickery (stealing in a conniving manner). So, the person who mugs someone, or holds up a store or bank with threat of force is guilty of robbery. Just as those who may use unjust laws or measures to take things that don't belong to them are also guilty of theft, even though it may be legal (see 1 Kings 21:1-16 as a description of how King Ahaz stole Naboth's Vineyard through lies and trickery).

Another good Biblical example that speaks against theft is how Achan secretly stole by keeping for himself and his family those things that the Lord had devoted to destruction when the Israelites entered the Promised Land (Joshua 7:20-22). What God says you shouldn't take—do not take. And that means not just those physical things of your neighbor's, but also, in the age of the internet, those things that one may find online without paying for them: movies, music, information (when students steal information without giving credit, we call it plagiarism), etc. These are all ways in which we steal from our neighbor. And there are many more. God forbids them all.

So then, what is it that God does require of us in this commandment? Again, it is pretty straightforward, though not always easy to do. First, we should help our neighbor to improve and protect his/her income and possessions. As Paul writes in Philippians 2:4, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." This is all part of the Christian forcibly turning from being bent inward and selfish according to our sinful natures, to looking outside of ourselves and to the welfare and benefit of our neighbor by the power of the Spirit.

A great Biblical example of this is Abraham first giving his nephew Lot the choice of the land when they came to their new home to which God had brought them (Genesis 13:9). Though Abraham had priority as the elder relative, yet in kindness he allowed his younger nephew the privilege to choose whatever land he desired. This also means we ought not begrudge our neighbor if they happen to make more money than us, or have a nicer car or home (this is also connected to covetousness, which we will discuss in commandments 9 & 10). This can be very challenging for us as we often become jealous of what others may have that we do not. Yet God calls us to look after them and their needs too.

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Furthermore, we are called by God to look after our neighbor in every need, including their possessions. We are to help them. Jesus says in Matthew 5:42, "Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you." And St. John states (1 John 3:17), "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" So, our actions in which we exhibit pity and mercy on our neighbor in need are an outward expression of our faith in God and His love for us.

Again, Abraham's interactions with his nephew Lot are instructive. For Lot was inadvertently caught up in a local conflict between kings and was captured. Abraham, at great personal risk and cost, rescued Lot and delivered him and his possessions, expecting nothing in return (Genesis 14:12-16). Of course, the ultimate Biblical expression of this is the Parable of the Good Samaritan told by Jesus in Luke 10:29-37. Herein we learn how everyone is our neighbor, and we are to do all that we can to help and support them when they are in need, even sacrificing our own possessions and income to care for them. Also, if we see harm coming to our neighbor's property (fire, thief, vandals, etc.) we take action and do all we can to prevent it (calling the fire department, police, etc.).

So, we see in this commandment our own great sin and need for Jesus who gave up the Kingdom of Heaven so that you and I may receive the treasures contained therein: forgiveness, mercy, and eternal life. What joy it is then for us to lovingly care for and protect our neighbor's possessions and income as if they were our own. For all that they have has been gifted to them by God. Who are we to begrudge them their possessions when we ourselves have also been richly blessed by God in abundant ways?

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me (cell – 218.324.1948). I pray for you all, daily.

May God's grace be upon you, now and always.  
Yours In Christ, Rev. J. Quast

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## HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

April 2: Palm Sunday Worship 11 a.m.

April 6: Maundy Thursday Worship at 5 p.m.

April 7: Good Friday Worship 7 p.m.

April 9: EASTER SUNDAY

9:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast ( NO Sunday School)

11 a.m. Worship