

St. Paul's Epistle ~ May 2023



Church Council Minutes—April 13, 2023

Those present: Pastor Quast, Tim Anderson, George Aitchison, Dave Wright, Richard Christie, Tony Lucek, Leanna Hasbargen, John Hopkins, Steve Rutkowsky and Sally Batdorf

Chairman Tim Anderson called the meeting to order. The opening devotion was by Pastor Quast on the topic, "Workaholism: The Acceptable Addiction".

The Minutes and Treasurer's reports were reviewed and approved.

Briefs: 1) George Aitchison is looking into the purchase of a pump, wet vac and hose to address the water seepage in the church basement. A future project will be the replacement of drain tiles. 2) Roof repair will begin the week of May 1. Security and safety measures were discussed. The back parking lot will be barricaded. The neighbors will be notified by letter. 3) 50 Hygiene kits were packed and shipped to Lutheran World Relief. 4) A refresher course on the use of our AED will take place at the next Council meeting. 5) Tim Anderson is looking into new church insurance.

There were no membership changes.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Submitted by ~ Sally Batdorf, Secretary

Quarterly Meeting Minutes—April 16, 2023

Chairman Tim Anderson called the meeting to order. The opening prayer was given by Pastor Quast. Roll call was per signage. The Minutes were read and approved.

The Treasurer's and Financial Secretary's reports were reviewed and approved.

Briefs: 1) Congratulations to our 3 confirmands Brenyn, Hadley and Ally who were confirmed April 9th. 2) Pastor will try other options for Bible Study this fall. 3) There was discussion on the roof project which is slated to begin in May. The parking lot will be fenced off as it will be a construction zone. Thanks to everyone for the generous donations that continue to come in. 4) Last day of Sunday School till fall. 5) We will be collecting socks and underwear for the Orphan Grain Train. The donations will be taken to the MN LCMS Pastor's Conference in May. 6) Thanks to everyone for your donations and help with the Lutheran World Relief Hygiene Kits. 7) The new Altar Guild storage room was discussed, and the Trustee's will clear out any unwanted items.

There were no membership changes.

Leonard Morrison motioned to adjourn, seconded by Richard Christie. The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer.

Submitted by ~ Sally Batdorf, Secretary



Orphan Grain Train Collection

All congregations in the MN North District are invited to collect new socks & undies for men, women and children (especially for children age 3 thru 6th grade) for the Orphan Grain Train. These items will be sent to help meet the needs of children in Haiti, Texas missions and other countries including Ukraine where new items are allowed. Mexican children are not allowed to go to school without socks and shoes. The collection runs through May 7th and the donations will be taken to the MN State Pastors Conference. Monetary donations will go to shipping costs.

Ladies Friendship Night

All ladies and friends of our congregation of any age, are invited to join together on Thursday, May 11th at 6 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran for our annual Friendship Night. The LWML group will be providing our meal. We'll be enjoying games, a skit and great food! Invite a friend to join us!

Please sign up on the bulletin board by Sunday, May 7th.



Graduate Sunday

Congratulations to Destry Whitbeck, our high school graduate! We will be recognizing her and presenting her with a special gift on Sunday, May 21st during our worship service. Recognition also goes out to all college and vo-tech students who are obtaining their degrees this spring. We are all proud of you and your accomplishments and wish you God's richest blessings in the days ahead!

May Birthdays

May 1: Mae Arveson and Rowen Quast

2nd: Heidi Swenson

3rd: Luke Wright

4th: Bryant Koenig

5th: Tony Lucek

12th: Adam Lucek

15th: Richard Vance

22nd: Jon Hasser & Jeremy Toth

24th: Joe Christie

25th: Doris Schattschneider

29th: Luke Leerssen



“Seeking life in Christ”

“And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen” Luke 24:5

Where do you seek life? Contentment? Joy? Peace? Rest? The joy of Easter is that as Christ is risen from the dead, we too walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me (Galatians 2:20). We are a new creation, the old is gone and new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is in Christ that we have new life, life abundantly (John 10:10). He gives us rest (Matthew 10:28-30) and He gives us peace as our Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6; Philippians 4:7-9) He freely gives us the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation on account of His cross and the empty tomb. The answer to all of these questions are answered in Christ, as St. Paul says “all the promises of God are YES on account of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20).”

Are you seeking Christ for all these things? When the angels addressed the women who were ready to prepare the body of Christ, they had heard the promises of Christ (Luke 9:44; 18:31-33), yet, like us they were “distracted” by other realities of life instead of trusting Jesus’ words. I admit my own faults when I seek life. Jesus tells me to trust in Him, but I trust in my own abilities to figure out issues. Jesus tells me to find peace in His promises, but I try to find peace in my own work. Jesus tells me that I am fully forgiven, but I beat myself up over my past sins or even worse, remember other people’s sins when they were forgiven long ago. I attempt to find hope in things that will never lead to the full life of salvation in Christ instead of the living hope in Him. I need a similar message from the angels, “Why do you seek living among the dead?”

This Easter season seek life in Christ: Receive the gifts of Christ in worship, dig into the Scriptures, bring all requests to the Lord in prayer. We fulfill our daily vocations in the sure and certain hope of Christ’s resurrection.

“Lord help us to drop our idols, which will never bring life, and fix our eyes on Christ who gives us full life, contentment, joy, peace, and rest. Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy. Amen”

In Christ (Luke 24:5)

Rev. Brady Finnern
President
MN North District - LCMS

Sunday School

May 14th is our last day of Sunday School classes till September. We’ll be having an end of the year party and singing during worship that day. THANK YOU to all the parent and grandparents for bringing your children on Sunday mornings, we had a great turn out of students each Sunday.

Watch your calendars for a meeting in August to plan our curriculum. Teachers and helpers are always needed and appreciated!





A Message From Pastor Quast

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

Beloved, in recent months we have examined how our Lord desires to preserve and protect His gifts of family (authority), life, marriage, and possessions. We now move on to a more intangible gift of God, but one which, nonetheless, is vital for human flourishing: the gift of a good reputation. The Eighth Commandment of our Lord states (Exodus 20:16), "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Again, Luther's explanation examines both sides of the issue when he writes, "We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way."

We have a tendency to reduce this commandment to "don't lie." While that is one major component, yet God's Word shows how there are many facets to preserving and protecting the good reputation of those around us.

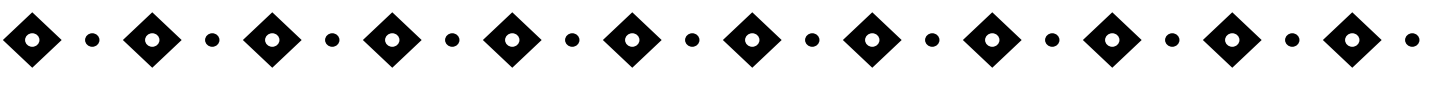
Firstly, we do clearly see how God forbids us from telling lies about our neighbor, either in a court of law (official testimony as a witness) or elsewhere (among family and friends). Therefore, we ought not to lie about, lie to, or withhold the truth (lie of omission) from our neighbor. You will recall how false witnesses testified against Jesus before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:59-61) in order to put Him to death. Yet Scripture clearly declares in Proverbs 19:5, "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free."

Secondly, God also forbids us to betray our neighbor by revealing his secrets. Again, the Proverbs are instructive when Proverbs 11:13 states, "A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret." So, we are not permitted to share the secrets divulged to us in confidence (unless such secrets would be kept for our neighbor's harm or that of another. For example, one confiding to us that they are thinking of harming themselves or another. Then such secrets must be divulged to the proper authorities in the service of goodness and life). However, this largely means that we ought not spread what our neighbor shares with us, but rather should develop a reputation of being close-mouthed about things that we talk about.

Finally, God also forbids us from slandering our neighbor or seeking to hurt his/her reputation. The Scriptures are filled with prohibitions against misuse of the tongue/mouth, particularly in terms of how we speak about our neighbor. James 4:11 summarizes these by simply saying, "Brothers, do not slander one another." Let us be clear, beloved, that this includes "venting" about our neighbor to someone else. We have no call to degrade or deride our neighbor in any way to anyone else. If we actually have a problem with our neighbor then Scripture is also clear that we are to approach them privately to deal with the matter. As Jesus says in Matthew 18:15, "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you."

Can you imagine the great heartache and sorrow that could be avoided if we Christians simply followed this command of our Lord? How many times have we taken offense, or been offended, by what turned out later to be a simple misunderstanding or miscommunication? Particularly in the area of social media, we have a tendency to attack in a harsh manner, rather than genuinely communicate with each other. Vicious memes are easily shared, hurtful rhetoric recklessly tossed about in ways that we would be hesitant (maybe even ashamed?) to say to someone in person. But when it is a "faceless" entity over the internet, then it is so easy to belittle and attack one another.

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Furthermore, we are living in a "cancel culture" society, meaning that when someone shares or says something we deem unworthy, then we instantly attempt to "cancel" them by publicly shaming and humiliating them, refusing to actually interact with their arguments, instead silencing them with personal attacks. Let it not be so among us, dear friends. As Jesus declares in Luke 6:37, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned." While we do speak the truth in love, no matter the situation, yet we do not spread rumors and lies, or seek to silence someone for holding an opinion different than our own. As always, the Truth of God's Word is to be our guiding light in all situations, rather than our own personal opinions.

Therefore, this commandment teaches us that we should speak up for and protect our neighbor from false accusations (rumors, lies, slander). Once more, the Proverbs provide us with great insight (31:8-9), "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." So, when we are in a group of people (either in person or online) and someone is falsely accused, we ought to provide a counter-balance by speaking up for them. We do not speak rudely to, or about, anyone else, but rather speak to them and about them as we would want others speaking to or about us.

One way that we can do this is to speak well of our neighbor by praising our neighbor's good actions and qualities. Even when it might be difficult. You will recall how King Saul's son, Jonathan, spoke well of and defended his friend, David, when Saul sought to hurt him. At great personal risk, Jonathan stood up for David against his father, the king (1 Samuel 19:4). May we pray for boldness and courage to do the same.

Lastly, we should always try to put the best construction/meaning on everything. This means that we explain our neighbor's actions in the best way possible, rather than ascribing to them the worst motivations behind their deeds. We do this because as St. Peter reminds us (1 Peter 4:8), "Love covers over a multitude of sins." We Christians are to love our neighbor no matter what. That means, out of love for them, we try to explain their actions in the kindest way possible. So, rather than shaking our fist in anger at someone who cuts us off in traffic, assuming they are simply a terrible and inconsiderate driver, we might rather think that there is some pressing emergency or issue that is motivating them to drive in such a manner.

This takes time and practice, beloved. For our first instinct is often to condemn and respond in anger and frustration when people say or do things we do not like. But as Christians we have the joyful freedom of realizing that all things are in our Lord's gracious hands and, even if we are wronged, we do not need to take action for retribution. God will deal with it on our behalf. Rather, we may respond in love and mercy toward them, as God so richly and mercifully deals with us.

Perhaps no other commandment of the Second Table of the Law causes so much havoc in the world today, even within the Christian church. We often let our lips run wild with unfounded accusations against our neighbor, ascribing to them the worst possible motives without any actual knowledge. For these sins and so many more we are called upon to repent and seek the forgiveness we need from the hands of Jesus. He who speaks only Truth, speaks to you words of absolution, often through the mouth of His unworthy pastors. Yet know that Jesus' forgiveness is real and true and certain. For by faith your reckless and sinful words are washed away by the redeeming tide of Christ's blood shed on the cross. For this and so much more we give thanks and praise to God, for His mercy—His Words of love and peace—truly do last forever. Thanks be to God in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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