

St. Peter Lutheran

September 2023 Newsletter

- Sept. 2nd - Men's Breakfast Bible Study, 8:00 a.m. Study leader is Pastor Czymbor, on 1st Thessalonians. Breakfast server is needed.
- Sept. 3rd – Communion Sunday, 9:00 a.m.
~ Free Will offering during fellowship for Rodney and Malinda Hinrichs' "Reaching the Unreached"
- Sept. 6th – Council Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 10th - Sunday Worship Service, 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Confirmation Begins, 10:00 a.m.
- Sept. 13th – WMF Bible Study and Business Meeting, 7:00 p.m. Study Leader is Donna Picek and Hostess is Dee Fink. Lesson # 4, "A Little Family of Bethany ... We Shall Rise Again!"
- Sept. 16 – WMF District Fall Rally at Christ the King Free Lutheran Church in Pipestone, MN.
- Sept. 17th – **Mission Festival Sunday, 10:00 a.m. Sunday School – 9:00 a.m.** The speakers this year are Kirk & Ruth Rautio from the AFLC Association Retreat Center (ARC) in Wisconsin. Mission Festival Offering will be directed to the ARC unless otherwise designated. A meal will follow the service. Please invite friends and neighbors to attend.
- Sept. 20th – FLY Bible Study and Business Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Sept. 23rd – The WMF will be helping Amazing Grace serve at the Salvation Army.
- Sept. 24th – Sunday Worship Service, 9:00 a.m. Sunday School, 10:00 a.m.
~ Muffin Sunday – Ladies A -J are asked to bring the Muffins

Usher's List: Sept. 3 – Robert Thies & Scott Olson

Communion Lay Assistant – Travis Fink

10 – Tim Engelland & Tim Goldammer

17 – Tom Heber & Travis Fink

24 – Trent Wright & Trevor Lau

Cleaning List: Aug. 28 – Sept. 3 Kendra Thies & Pat Kreth

Sept. 4 – 10 Nicole Whitney & Renee Engelland

11 – 17 Renee Olson & Sandy Lau

18 – 24 Sara Wright & Tami Fink

Sept. 25 – Oct. 1 Shelby Punt & Tammy Bamberg

Mission Festival Committee for September 17th is Audrey Fink, Beverly Jahn & Bonnie Villmow



Thou Shalt Not Steal!

Exodus 20:15 / Deuteronomy 5:19 *"You shall not steal"*

To steal is defined as to *"commit a theft, take and carry off clandestinely and without right or leave"*. Stealing is the taking of anything time, talent, or treasure that belongs to someone else and that which has not been intentionally given to you. A thief is anyone who takes without permission or authority.

Have you been gifted something? Then you can receive with a clear conscience. Have you worked for and earned something? Then you can joyfully receive the wages given to you by the one in authority. However, if the one in authority withholds the wages, they are not yours to take. You would need to proceed with seeking justice. A higher authority will then be tasked with holding your boss, who would be breaking this commandment, to make things right. Taking justice into your own hands breaks this commandment and sins against Almighty God. If you are the authority, the boss, and you withhold the wages earned by a worker, then you are breaking this commandment. Leviticus 19:13 *"You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning."*

Why does the commandment to steal matter? Romans 13:9 *"For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" These commandments matter because people matter. Our neighbors, all other humans, matter to God. They are created in His image, just as we are. And because they matter to God, they should matter to us as well. And even if someone partners with a thief: Proverbs 29:24 *"The partner of a thief hates his own life; he hears the curse, but discloses nothing."* Guilt by association, indeed.*

There is a steep cost for stealing: Exodus 22:1 *"If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he shall repay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep."* Exodus 21:16 *"Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death."* Luke 19:8-10 *"And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.'" And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*

A thief must provide compensation, not merely for that which was stolen but above and beyond is expected through Biblical, Godly Justice. Stealing goods costs more than just that which is stolen, sometimes additional lost profits, time, value, stress, etc. Therefore, for justice to be fulfilled the cost is higher than the theft. If a person is stolen, kidnapped, trafficked, enslaved then the penalty is death. It makes sense when you consider that a life was taken therefore a life and more is expected in order to make things right. These are the Godly expected consequences for all. Even in our present age, these costs would be reflected in a proper earthly carrying out of Justice. However, as in all of these commandments we fail, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all can be released from their penalty through repentance and declaration that Jesus is Lord.

Repentance also has a cost. We surrender ourselves for the sake of God and others. In the case above of Zacchaeus, he repents and is proclaimed saved by Jesus Christ. However, it is the response of Zacchaeus that proves out his repentance and salvation for having been a thief. He responds with the opposite of theft, giving. He responds with charity and abundant restoration towards those he has sinned against. Ephesians 4:28 *"Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need."*

The generous in heart, those who give of their time, talent, and treasures abundantly and without being forced to, these are the ones who are honoring God and upholding this commandment. I think back to the history I was taught regarding the founding decades of America and I see much of the spirit of this commandment in the many who sacrificed their lives, liberty, and homes for the sake of their neighbors in the colonies. They worked together for physical survival in the wilderness and years later for political survival leading unto the evolution from colonies to the American nation. I look around now and I see a culture that promotes me over thee. I weep for the many neighbors in the world who are lost and focused on themselves rather than their own neighbors. I weep for myself when I recognize my own personal struggle with selfishness.

May God grant us insight to discern where we are stealing from Him and others in our lives. May He bless us with much time, talent, and treasure with which we can bless and encourage our neighbors.

These newsletter articles are viewable and shareable through <https://czymbor.net/Blog/>