

THE VIEW

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Note from Pastor

Stop!!! Thief!!!

As we progress each month through the Commandments, we now come to the Seventh: “You shall not steal.” Our Small Catechism teaches that this means: “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.” All things belong to God, but He entrusts them to us that we may enjoy them, as well as, to use them for our good and the good of our neighbor. He specifically gives to each person according to His will for them. To sin against our neighbor by taking or depriving them of what God has given them, is also to sin against God who gave the gift. Instead, we are to rejoice in God’s generosity to us and to our neighbor, and to respect His will.

Whenever the Seventh Commandment comes up during a Bible study or church or in personal devotions, my conscience always sends my thoughts to one precise moment in my history. I remember being a young boy—around the age my son currently is—going to the local Ben Franklin store. There wasn’t much in the craft store that interested me, but I knew that there was a big bin of loose tootsie rolls that was positioned at the perfect height for me to casually sample one as we walked by. I told myself that there is no harm with swiping just one. I had seen my sister “sample” the grapes in the grocery store; so what’s the difference if I “sample” a piece of candy? Isn’t it amazing how easily our sinful natures justify things we know are wrong?

No one ever caught my thievery, but my conscience did. When my Sunday School teacher taught about the seventh commandment on the next Sunday, she used stealing a piece of candy as her example. It was as though God arranged that message just for me. Shame and guilt hit me like a ton of bricks. I tried to comfort myself by saying that it was just a tootsie roll; surely that couldn’t be so bad. Maybe God didn’t notice? But I knew that wasn’t true. He knew what I had done. I prayed that God would forgive me, and I believed he did, but I still felt ashamed. So, the next time we went to the Ben Franklin store, I stayed out of the candy aisle. There was no way that I was brave enough to confess my crime to the clerk, but I silently placed a penny on the counter to pay for what I took as we left the store.

My conscience keeps bringing me back to that day, not because I still bear the weight of that sin; it was forgiven the moment I repented. My conscience keeps bringing me back so that I never forget God's grace. That sin was forgiven before I made amends by paying for what I took. It was forgiven, not because of my actions, but because Jesus already paid for that tootsie roll by dying on the cross for me. That may seem like a steep price, but penalty was for more than a one-cent piece of candy: it was for my breaking of the seventh commandment by not honoring that God had given that item to someone else, it was for breaking the fourth commandment by inconsiderately dismissing the shame my action would bring to my parents, it was for breaking the first commandment by not loving God as I should since I weaseled my way around what I knew was right. Whenever the topic of the seventh commandment comes up, I remember that penny's worth of candy because it reminds me that my sinful heart will always try to make sin appear as though it is not a big deal, but even that tootsie roll is a sin for which Christ shed his blood for me.

Does understanding the gravity of even what would be considered barely a blip on most people radar cause me to tremble? Absolutely! Being dismissive of sins also minimizes the sacrifice of Jesus. But knowing that Jesus died for the sin of stealing a tootsie roll also makes me rejoice all the more in my Savior. Jesus was not dismissive of any sin, regardless of how miniscule they may appear. He died for them all. He kept the law perfectly on my behalf because even the slightest infraction separated me from God. He washed away every spot and stain of my sin and clothed me with his righteousness so that not a trace of that impurity would remain. If Jesus loved me enough to die for that tootsie roll, how could he not also atone for the "bigger" sins?

The Seventh Commandment is one of those sins that we always try to justify when we break it. There is always some mitigating factor that we attempt to apply in hopes to get us off the hook. We tell ourselves that no one was hurt by it or no one will even notice that we took it. We convince ourselves that it was something owed to us or that the rightful owner doesn't deserve it. We make all kinds of excuses to deceive ourselves, but let's be honest here: even our desire to take something that belongs to another is proof of the Old Adam's corruption in us. This too is something for which our Lord suffered and died.

Therefore, let's stop making excuses, own up to our offenses, and repent that we may receive the forgiveness of Christ. As the Apostle John said: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected." (1 John 1:8-2:5a)

Keeping God's word is not just adherence to the Law of the Commandments; it is also living by faith as we trust in the Gospel. As God's redeemed children in Christ, we boldly confess all our sins, whether great or small, known or unknown, and then even more boldly look to Christ who loved us and died for every one of those sins by his grace alone. Is there a sin that keeps coming back to your recollection, even though you know that it was repented of and forgiven in Christ? Then let it stand as a reminder of God's grace to us in Christ Jesus, who gave his life for that sin to be forgiven. Repent and believe for God "is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Parish Life

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Please join us for a Christmas luncheon on **December 11,2022** in the fellowship hall after second service. A signup sheet will be in the narthex. A free will offering will be collected to cover the cost of the food.

Prayer List

Long Term Illness

George Fuchs
Sue Oetting
Sally Hardy
Pastor Dale Kaster
(Kugler)
Brian Keeney

Joyce (Kruse)
Stacy Olson (Ryel)
Brenda Ridgeway (Amato)
Gretchen Sweetser
(Mincer)
Mary Coffman (Coffman)

Kathleen Fox
Mike & Suzie Characky
(Steen)
Annette & Jim Bodden
(Heaphy)
Judy Fuchs

Surgeries and Illness

Homero Gonzalez
Juana Maria Vela
(Homero's sister)
Jan Tharp
Mary Hill
Wally Rose Mincer

Joe Gabriel (Amato)
Jostine McGlynn
(Luecke's)
Grant (McLellan)
Agapia Dragan (Luecke B)

Joanne Blanchard (Clancy)
David Hawthorne
Vicki Fisher
Louise Bauer
Betty Ude

Personal and Family Concerns

Karen Ude
Nancy Stang
Nancy Hinshaw
Don Steen
Joann Kapugi
Kaufman Family
Debbie Leger

Sandi Rivers (Ryel)
Wayne & Karen Mathis
(Steen)
John Characky (Steen)
Mark & Julie Rorie
(Armstrong)

Melissa Shipman-Bates &
sons Will & Cooper
(Amato)
Teresa Fisher & children
Colby & Audrey
(Kaufman)

Homebound

Sue Smith

Ann Cheadle

Kathleen Fox

Dianne Luecke
Jan Nelson
Louise Bauer
Warna Berryman

Judy Fuchs
Joann Kapugi
Suzie Karnatz
Nancy Stang

George Fuchs
Albert & Marianne Bugner

Compassion and Sympathy

Prayers and Comfort for the Marquardt family at the passing of Lee (Leorna) Marquardt

Ministry Concerns

Our Preschool staff, children & families
Evangelical Lutheran Church & School in Laotchikit, Haiti
Pastor Dale Kaster (Missionary, Czech Republic)
Pastor Daniel Jastram (Missionary, Japan)
Pastor Daniel Conrad (Missionary, Mexico)
Pastor Delwyn Campbell (Missionary, Indiana)
Jacob and Marie Sipes (Seminarian)
Scott and Veronica Missling (Seminarian)
Erik and Katie Saunders (Seminarian)

Craft Sale Update

The Craft and Bake sales have contributed \$709 towards our 2022 Budget. Craft sale items will continue to be available located in the Narthex. There will be another Bake Sale on **December 18th too.**



December News from the Mt. Pisgah Ladies Guild

Collection for Safelight

At our November meeting, we decided to collect items for the annual Christmas brunch for the clients at Safelight. **Safelight** is a non-profit organization providing immediate short-term help and long-term solutions to women, men, and children in crisis. We will also be sending them a check for \$200 along with the items we have gathered.

November Project

At our November meeting, we assembled items for the Poke Bags to be given out to our homebound congregational members in December.



Here's a picture of one of the items made. The reindeer ornaments are attached to a box that includes a small jar of jam.

Thank you to our LWML Mailbox members who put together some of the deer for us.

Mite Box Mission Update

Every month we collect mite offerings in the large mite box placed in the entrance to the sanctuary. Below is the story about one of the missions your mite money has gone to support.



The story of "Phil's Friends" 2021-2023 LWML Mission Grant #6, "Hope of Christ for Cancer Patients — Phil's Friends" is a testament to the power of prayer. In 2010, Phil's Friends received a grant from LWML, and women from all over the country began praying for the ministry. Today, with the help of the LWML, they have distributed 45,000 Bibles and delivered over 1,000,000 Cards of Hope containing Scripture and prayer. They have prayed for thousands of people at hospital bedsides, in homes, over the phone, and in support group meetings.

Mission of the Month

Outreach & Community Concerns

The mission of the month for December is Habitat for Humanity of Henderson County. This organization partners with low income residents to build homes with affordable mortgages. By providing stable, safe housing they are helping the homeowner and their family to achieve the independence needed to build a better life. Please consider donating to this worthy organization so they can continue to provide homes for families in Henderson County. Here are some facts about the housing crisis taken directly from their website:

The affordable housing crisis in Hendersonville...

- Substandard housing is prevalent in every part of Henderson County. (Henderson County Tax Assessor)
- 50% of the workforce in Hendersonville cannot afford to live in Henderson County.
- The total housing gap in Henderson County is 2,000. (2015 Bowen National Research study)
- Henderson County has the worst demographic of Buncombe, Transylvania & Madison for families living in substandard housing including: no plumbing, leaded paint, unsafe structures, and homes that need to be condemned. (Bowen National Research)

- Affordable housing is the 3rd most pressing need in Hendersonville. (joint survey by United Way & WCCA)
- In 2017, fair market value for a 3BR rental in Hendersonville was \$1,194 (This is closer to \$1800 in 2022). Affording a 3BR requires a minimum wage of more than \$22.96. A worker earning minimum wage must work 137 hours to afford. There are only 168 hours in a week. (H.U.D.)
- 49.7% of renters, 5,964 renters, in Hendersonville are cost burdened – paying more than 30% of their income towards rent. (NC Housing Finance Agency)
- Safe and affordable housing has been identified as one of the four key health issues to address in Hendersonville by the Community Health Assessment Committee (CHNAC).
- 12.9% of the population in Henderson County has income below the poverty level. (2014 U.S. Census Bureau)
- Most people believe that Habitat for Humanity International provides the funding to your local Habitat. Contrary to this belief, Henderson County Habitat for Humanity is responsible for raising funds locally to support our work in Henderson County. We rely on the generosity of the local community to help us continue our mission. Your donations to Habitat for Humanity International do not support work in your local community. If you wish to support your local Habitat, please send your contributions to Henderson County Habitat for Humanity.

<https://www.habitat-hvl.org/about/>

THANK
YOU

Thanks to all who participated in the Thanksgiving Dinner in Fellowship Hall. We had 26 people and lots and lots of food! Thanks to all who brought food, helped set up and helped clean up. It was a wonderful event, and the meal was enjoyed by all. It was just like family! Here are some pictures.





Birthday Blessings



12/05 Larry McKinley
12/06 Elise Cavicchio
12/06 Wendy Maloney
12/08 Jananne Nelson
12/11 Troy Mckinney

12/14 George Fuchs
12/15 David White
12/16 Laura Reinhold
12/21 Jonathan
Christensen

12/22 Mikki Reinicker
12/22 Hardy Feige
12/26 Remy Christensen

Prague Mission

Greetings in the name of Christ Jesus!

A lot of things have been happening with us since our last newsletter to you. This summer has been filled with chemotherapy treatments. And with those, there have been many days of exhaustion. The good news we have heard in the past has been consistent throughout: the chemo is working. We were blessed this September to take a short trip to Prague in order to visit our church. We were there for two Sundays, allowing Dale a chance both to preach and to celebrate the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood. After our second Sunday, a fellowship luncheon was organized. It was great to reconnect with old members as well as meet the new faces that we saw. In October, Dale had the last chemotherapy injection at M.D. Anderson. It was a happy day for us. The nurse who tended to Dale was so happy for us and went out of her way to make it a celebration. At the clinic, when it is your last time for chemotherapy, you get to ring a celebratory bell that also encourages all the other patients that they, too, can make their goal. The

end of our visits at M.D. Anderson has brought us to the next step in Dale's treatment—a stem cell transplant. We are so fortunate to have a Mayo Clinic here in Jacksonville, Florida. And stem cell transplants are one of many treatment programs there. We are now going through the seemingly endless tests and procedures that are required for the actual transplant. The transplant procedure will begin as an inpatient on November 21 with a strong chemotherapy that will wipe out Dale's immune system. That will make way for the transplant itself on November 23. This transplant, we pray, will take over in the bones; and Dale's cells will begin to produce proper blood cells. He will need to stay in the hospital up to 14 days as they keep an eye on how well the transplant took hold. Following that, we will need to stay for 100 more days to see how well his immune system is recovering. Afterward, we will head back to Prague and to the wonderful people at St Michael. It has been a long process, but we thank God for all the wonderful doctors and nurses whom we have met. Of course, we ask for your prayers as we go through this time of treatment and healing. We long to hear that great word "remission." But we know that whatever God's will is, it will be for our good. We pray that God grants you health, both in your body as well as your soul.

Rev. Dale and Suzanne Kaster

FINANCIAL NEWS

On Nov 27th, we received \$2,974 in general offerings. For Nov, we received \$16,809. Year to date, we have received \$252,219. The budget YTD would be \$254,784. The amount per week is \$5,308.

The Craft and Bake sales have contributed \$709 towards our 2022 Budget. Craft sale items will continue to be available located in the Narthex. There will be another Bake Sale on **December 18th too.**

Thank you for your continued support of our church.

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF LAOTCHIKIT



Matthieu 28:19-20

(FELCLA)

Headquarter: 99, Laotchikit, Hinche, Haiti

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Peace to you from He Who overcame death and the grave and bestows that victory to us!

I thank God for the privilege He gives me today to write to you. Words are not sufficient to express my gratitude and thankfulness for all you are doing for Haiti. I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about the country.

A. SITUATION OF THE COUNTRY

I. Insecurity

Today, our country continues to face many difficulties. Haiti ranks 170th of 189 countries on the 2020 Human Development Index. With a population of more than 11 million, more than 1,5 million people are highly food insecure and around 4,5 million people did not have enough to eat last year. More than half of the population do not have enough to eat now; and more than 25 percent of children are chronically malnourished. Food security has also continued to deteriorate in rural areas, with several going from crisis to emergency phase. Hunger has reached Catastrophic levels. Catastrophic hunger levels were recorded for the first time in Haiti in the month of October 2022. Haiti is not like it was last year. And the situation has become worse and worse now because gangsters take control of many parts of the country, many streets are literally blocked. No physical connection between departments (regions).

Politically, Haiti is facing many crises. In fact, after the assassination of the last President, the situation continues to become worse. There are more than 200 Gangs operating in Haiti now. Some reports say that there are around a half of them operating in Port-au-Prince. They have grown so fast in the last 5 years. I think that gangsters are just 13 to 35 years old. They burn and kill people; they kidnap people, and they rape many girls. People cannot cross from North to the South of Haiti, from East to the West by private Car. With public cars, the drivers must pay the gangsters like toll posts. Most of these gangsters (controlling the highways) are not from Port-au-Prince. They are from other departments (regions). Usually, there are children in the other departments (regions) who are not going to school who come to Port-au-Prince and become gangsters.

II. Economic situation

The economy of this country is down. People from the rural areas cannot send their product to Sell in Port-au-Prince. There aren't many Jobs. The Inflation is 35 per cent. Most of the universities and schools terminate their contracts with the employees. Some enterprises are closed and send the employees at home (layoffs). They cannot pay them. Most of the children in Port-au-Prince cannot go to school. Today, November 22nd, just 2 percent of children go to school in Port-au-Prince and 98 percent of children in Port-au-Prince stay home. [These are statistics from different suburbs of Port-au-Prince (Delmas, 15 per cent go to school), (Petion-Ville, 14 per cent), (Carrefour, 0.74 per cent).] Probably, for many reasons: insecurity, riots, protestations (street protests or riots), the price of the gas is more than double because the government says that it cannot continue to sponsor it. The gas is like a transversal product. So, when its price is up, the price of all is more than double. And the salary of the employees in the country stays the same. People like teachers cannot eat in Haiti and become so poor. In this situation, the youth, including many professionals, continue to leave the country. They go to the USA, Canada, France, Brazil, Chili, or the Dominican Republic. When they arrive in the Dominican Republic, they are usually victims of racism and violation of human rights because they are sometimes illegal. On the way to the USA through Mexico, sometimes they fall into rivers, and animals eat them. Last week a pregnant woman tried to cross to arrive in the USA through Mexico. She is dead. With hunger, riots, misery, insecurity and cholera, Haitians say that they cannot anymore!

III. Cholera

With the cholera, Haiti becomes more in a precarious situation. Sometimes, Armed gangs and violent protests and barricades are hindering the delivery of supplies to the families. The cholera outbreak has exposed children and families in Haiti to yet another crisis. The ministry of Health in Haiti reports more than 12000 suspected and more than 200 registered deaths. The people who are not registered are probably more than registered. People have problems of water, soaps, and toilets.

IV. Actual International political

Most of the politicians and Leaders in the country do not really care about the Haitian people. The people vote for them. After the election, they forget the people and see just their pocket and their family. Most of the politicians continue to become rich and buy houses in the USA, Canada, France, and Dominican Republic. Now, the USA and Canada decide to punish some Haitians politicians. They revoke their visa. Canada just came to impose additional sanctions to the Haitian political elites who provide illicit financial and operational support to armed gangs. Canada with these sanctions arrives to target 3 additional individuals and impose a dealings prohibition on them, effectively freezing any assets they may hold in Canada. Many Haitians applaud these decisions. I think that most of our Haitian leaders have problems of ethics, morals, and civility. That's why Haiti arrives in this chaotic situation.

V. Hope

There is hope in Haiti. Haiti has a very good past. Haiti is the first free black Republic in the world. The mother of freedom. Our present is so sad. But there are many Haitians who love Haiti and are working so hard to see how they could contribute to change the country or to make a difference in the life of many Haitians. There are many Haitians who are so educated. Many Haitians are Christians. Many political leaders are trying to see what to do. There are many children who are growing with faith, ethics, morals, and civility. I believe that the Gospel and education can contribute to change this country for a better future. We must continue to preach the Gospel and educate the children. They will become good citizens for Haiti. They will contribute to change Haiti. They will contribute to bring peace in the world.

B. SITUATION IN CENTRAL-PLATEAU

Even though people in Central-Plateau are facing these economic problems too, they don't have the same insecurity. Praise God, our Children in Central-Plateau can go safely to school. Our children will not go to Port-au-Prince to become gangsters or modern slaves anymore. They will become professionals, pastors, teachers, engineers, nurses...Our Children receive formation (lessons) in moral, ethical and civility. We continue to preach the Gospel and educate the children. Today, I am working in 12 Lutheran Churches/Schools and 8 preaching stations or affiliated churches in Central-Plateau. Today, as members, we are around 7000 Lutherans: 2000 adults and 5000 students. So, we are praying for more than 12 000 Lutherans in our churches and schools in the Central Plateau. For that, we plan to have at least 20 Lutheran ordained pastors for 12 churches and preaching stations. We are working for more scholarships for our students.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, with your help, we are educating more than 5 thousand children in Central-Plateau. "Trinity Hope"* is doing a great job by providing meals monthly in Haiti to our students. Many of these children receive just the meal of Trinity Hope in their School and do not receive any food home because their parents are not working.

You in Mt Pisgah make a difference in the life of hundreds of families by helping these children. You are building the future of Haiti. After the Gospel, I believe that education is the key to development. When a boy is going to school, that reduces his chance to become gangsters. When a girl is going to school, that reduces her chance to become pregnant early at 14, 15 or 16 years old. So, we are so blessed, so thankful to you and will continue to pray for you all.

Like you, our values are Truth, Grace, Unity, Vocation, Sanctity of Life, Trust, and Relationships.

Again, thank you for your past and continuing blessings.

May God continue to bless you!

In Christ,

Laotchikit Voice Project Radio

*Trinity Hope is a non-profit charity of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod which feeds thousands of children each day in Christian schools in Haiti.

Haiti News

During the annual Voters' Meeting, I was asked what is the situation in Haiti?

I asked that same question to our mission partner. 'What is the real situation in Haiti?'

Below is his heartfelt response. It is obvious he is proud of his country and heartbroken over its current state of chaos.

However, he has great hope for the future of Haiti based on the power of God being preached through Christian Education. This mission work is supported by dedicated donations from member and friends of Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church.

For more information on mission work sponsored by Mt. Pisgah, join us on the first Friday of each month for the Mission Committee meeting at 1 PM in the church library.

The Haiti Mission Fund supports the elementary school, the children's shelters, and the medical clinic at the Lutheran Church of Laotchikit. Funding for this school year is underbudget by \$7,500.

If you are able, would you consider a donation to the Haiti Mission fund?

The Lutheran School in Laotchikit has been able to remain open, even in the chaos of gang violence, because of their remote location, increased security, and God's protection. Please help us continue to pay the teachers and staff through your donations to the Haiti Mission fund.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us – Ephesians 3:20

Blessings beyond measure,

Wendy White

Mission Committee of Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church

NO NEED TO MISS CHURCH SERVICES OR EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Information for accessing church service or evening Bible Study

Online: Video will be found on the home page at <http://www.mtpisgahlutheran.com>

The service bulletin will also be available on the homepage.

Phone: Service will begin at 10:45 am, dial in direct with no access code to (508) 924-5662 or call toll-free (844) 802-6666 and enter access code 889956

YouTube: Recording link will be published on the home page once it is available.

A DVD is available outside church door in the red box on the wall.

For complete information on church events, please visit the website:

<https://mtpisgahlutheran.360unite.com/calendar>