

THE VIEW

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Note from Pastor

More Than What We Say

When is the last time you gave someone the benefit of the doubt? It used to be standard practice to assume that people are honest and forthright until they prove otherwise, but I have found that I am less trusting these days. Have you grown just as cynical and cold as I have that instead of hearing someone out and then testing the veracity of their claims, it is just presumed an angle is being worked?

The Eighth Commandment says: “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.” Outwardly we keep this statute by guarding our language that no slander, gossip, or hateful speech would exit our lips. Whether intentionally or inadvertently, the damage we cause to someone’s reputation is not easily repaired. Therefore, we should go above and beyond to ensure that we do not harm how others think of our neighbor. We are not to lie about them, betray their secrets, or even to share our gripes about them.

In the case that we have personal knowledge of someone being underhanded, we should warn another person if they could be potentially taken advantage of or abused, but that does not give us license to bad-mouth someone who has wronged us. We don’t excuse sin, but neither do we exacerbate tensions by attacking someone’s reputation. But, oh, how my sinful nature wants to tell the world how

dastardly a person is when I feel wronged or slighted. Yet, even your most bitter enemy is deserving of your love and respect. Not for his sake, but for the sake of Jesus Christ, who shed his blood and died for that person too, whether we want to acknowledge Jesus' love for them or not. Besides, who are we to know whether or not someone has had a change of heart and repented of a previous wrong that person may have done to us? Who are we to have authority to tarnish how another person is viewed?

Like most Commandments, this one is also not limited to our external actions. It also speaks to our hearts. Harmful words do not need to exit our mouths for us to break this Commandment; we break it every time we refuse to forgive our neighbor and harbor grudges toward them. It is to our own hearts that we give false testimony against our neighbor when we work to convince ourselves that he or she is outside of our ability to forgive. With potent venom we speak to our own hearts, saying, "Don't you remember what they did last time? How can you trust someone like that?"

"Peter came up and said to [Jesus], 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" When we forgive, it is unlikely that we can forget the sin that afflicted us, but we are called to no longer hold those sins against our neighbor. We have not truly forgiven if we allow resentment or bitterness to persist in our hearts. Past events help us to exercise proper caution that we may not be taken advantage of or abused, but once the offense has been forgiven, we also need to open our hearts to some degree of reconciliation. Will we suddenly become best friends with an abuser? In this mortal life, winning the lottery is more likely, but neither should we treat them like the scum of the earth. And the path toward actually forgiving as God has forgiven us, starts with silencing the internal accusations we make against them.

Martin Luther gives this explanation for the Eighth Commandment: "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." This is more than looking to the bright side of things. It stems from our love and respect for God, who has redeemed and reconciled us sinners. No longer counting our sins against us because our crucified and risen Lord has washed them away and separated them from us as far as the East is from the West. Does God's remembering of trespasses no more mean that he has self-imposed amnesia?

Of course not! His omniscience cannot be invalidated. But it does mean that He has so thoroughly redeemed our natures that not a speck of our bad reputations mar the righteousness of Christ that covers us.

If God treats our reputations in this way, then we have no justification to besmirch the reputation of one who is made new in Christ. Rather, we fear and love God every time we confess mankind's reconciliation by defending our neighbor when others speak badly about them, by bringing to the forefront their good qualities and actions, and by seeking to give our neighbor the benefit of the doubt instead of automatically assuming that their deeds are malicious.

Keeping the Eighth Commandment certainly regulates what we say about our neighbor, but it also applies to how we regard them in our own hearts. May God help us to love and forgive others the way that He loves and forgives them—and us too.

Thank you

The staff of Mt. Pisgah wants to thank everyone for the Christmas bonus. It is truly a blessing to work for a giving and thoughtful congregation.

Thank you

A **large thank you** to everyone who helped with the water break and clean up. The company that came said it truly minimized damage of the carpeted area before they could get here.

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who donated their handmade items for the craft and bake sale! There were so many nice gifts to choose from. We appreciate everyone who shopped and supported Mt Pisgah. The amount from these sales was \$806.00, which goes toward the budget.

Thank you

I'd like to thank the Mt Pisgah family for their prayers. What a powerful thing that is. I have signs of improvement in strength, even if they're only baby steps at time. I'd also like thank:

Pastor Jon for his words of comfort and encouragement, The Carol group for brightening my day (a nurse told me your carols for the larger group was much enjoyed) Finally , Leah, Nona, Ruth and Karen, for goodies and especially friendship . I can't express how much you all mean to me and how much I appreciate you all. Sue Oetting

Prayer List

Long Term Illness

Adrienne Paris (Paris)
Michael Terzian
(Keeney)
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

Sue Oetting
Pastor Phil McLain
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

Homero Gonzalez
Karen Ude
Nancy Stang
Nancy Hinshaw
Joann Kapugi
Kaufman Family
Debbie Leger

Sandi Rivers (Ryel)
Wayne & Karen Mathis
(Steen)
John Characky (Steen)
Melissa Shipman-Bates &
sons Will & Cooper
(Amato)

Teresa Fisher & children
Colby & Audrey
(Kaufman)

Homebound

Sue Oetting
Betty Ude
Sue Smith
Kathleen Fox
Dianne Luecke

Jan Nelson
Louise Bauer
Warna Berryman
Judy Fuchs
Joann Kapugi

Suzie Karnatz
Nancy Stang
Albert & Marianne Bugner

Compassion and Sympathy

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)

Mission of the Month

Outreach & Community Concerns Hendersonville Rescue Mission

Our Mission Today:

The general purpose of the Hendersonville Rescue Mission shall be to minister to needy persons by way of presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them and helping to provide for their spiritual and physical needs. Through prayer and generous donations from the community, HRM no longer just serves delicious hot, balanced meals to the public, but also provides shelter, guidance, education, support and hope to those looking to better their lives.

The food services at the Mission are quite unique in that the food is *delicious* and the entire public is welcome to join us for a meal, not just those staying in our living quarters. Our

Good Samaritan Medical Clinic consists of volunteer physicians who provide basic medical services to those who do not have healthcare or could otherwise not afford it. By providing these services, clients and others in need are able to maintain better health and continue working or searching for employment and remain productive citizens.

Christmas Dinner

On December 11th, we had our wonderful Christmas dinner for our church. It was well attended with 55 people signing up. The food was delicious and the decorations fabulous! The cute game on the table helped spark some interesting conversations. Thanks to the dedicated Parish Life group for putting this event together. We are truly blessed to be surrounded by friends and church family during this Holy Season.



Birthday Blessings



01/01 Carol Walters

01/08 Mary Kaufman

01/12 Jim Wing

01/16 Adell Keeney

01/19 Rick Sanborn

01/20 Bill Weege

01/21 James Stoltenberg

01/24 Mary Mckinney

01/25 Michele Maloney

01/26 Sarah Christensen

01/26 Eleanor Claycomb

01/28 Nona Schmook

01/29 Joann Kapugi

Sunday School and Preschool Christmas Program



Proclaiming Jesus' Birth

Early in December, the children of Mt. Pisgah from the Sunday School and the Preschool joined together to herald the good news of great joy that a Savior has been born to us. Their presentation of the Christmas Story was derived from the children's

book “B is for Bethlehem.” As the older children from the Sunday School did the heavy lifting of skillfully retelling the biblical narrative, the younger children from the Preschool and two of the youngest Sunday Schoolers added emphasis to the telling of Jesus’ birth by guiding us along alphabetically. From “A is for Augustus” that set the story in motion with the command for Joseph and Mary to journey to Bethlehem, all the way to how God shares the Gospel hope with all people through the evangelism of His people with “Z is for Zeeland and Zurich, and Zanzibar,” those gathered to hear the children’s message were blessed to receive God’s gracious gift of hope and love through youthful voices. Thank you to the children and everyone who assisted them to tell the story of our Savior’s birth.

Thank you to all who sponsored poinsettia plants

Sylvia & Homero Gonzalez-In honor of Mother-Rosie McKinney
Sylvia & Homero Gonzalez-In memory of brother-Andy McKinney
Robert & Judy Morin
Lyn Heiple-In memory of Wesley, Ann & Vaughn Heiple
Rappley Family-In memory of loved ones
Bill Kruse
White Family
Rose Steen
Barbara Volk-In memory of Jim Volk
Elise Cavicchio-In memory of Charlie Cavicchio
Keeney Family
Carol Heaphy
Leah Ryel-In memory of Don Ryel
Kurt Dellutri

January 2023

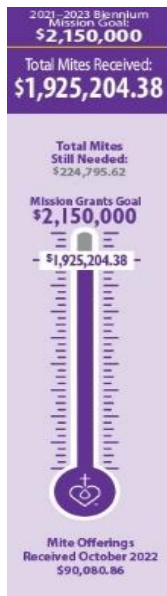


Ladies Guild Christmas Luncheon in December

Welcome to a new year! Our group hopes that you can join us this year at our meetings on the second Monday of every month at 1 pm or as a Mailbox Member (see Kathy Kirchoefer to find out more about the LWML Mailbox Member Program).

Our first meeting this year will be held on Monday, January 9. We'll be enjoying a devotion and dessert provided by Debby Zagone and talking about our plans for the coming year.

Keep collecting those mites! The giving has been tremendous, but we (LWML) have committed to funding over 2 MILLION dollars for mission projects around the world, so keep on giving. Thank you!



Healthy Body, Healthy Spirit

It used to be that many people would decide that their New Year Resolution would be to improve their health. They would decide to lose weight, exercise more, or eat a healthier diet to accomplish this goal. Inevitably, they would find themselves falling back into their old habits.

Change is hard! Many have noticed the changes with the Kirchoefer family as Dan, Steve, and I all lost weight. I have always been battling the pounds after being

obese as a child. Steve's weight crept up gradually over the years and Dan had always been thin until he was put on a medication that helped him with his anxiety issues but resulted in tremendous weight gain. One by one, the three of us decided to find a way to lose weight and keep it off.

Overeating is something that seems to be running rampant in today's society. Being overweight as a child resulted in much humiliation for me and a poor sense of self-worth. Today, being overweight is very much accepted and could even be called "the norm" as over 70 percent of adults over the age of 20 in the United States are considered overweight by government standards. Although I am thankful that children are not burdened with the stigma of being abused for being fat like I was, I feel that we've swung way too far the other direction. People no longer see their obesity as a problem--in their minds it's just something that happens to everyone as they age.

I won't go into all the statistics about the health effects of being even a little overweight but will share the experiences my family had. I feel much more able to move around, my elevated blood pressure is now normal, and I sleep better than I ever have in my adult life. Steve was experiencing eye issues, elevated blood pressure, and struggling to sing, all symptoms that disappeared once he lost weight. Dan has discovered a sense of pride in his appearance and moves lightning quick now that he is at his healthy weight.

I praise God for all of this and also the support I have received over the years through a non-profit weight loss support group called TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly). I first joined TOPS in 1979 at 222.5 pounds. With the support of the TOPS members, I was able to get to my goal weight of 125 pounds in a little over a year's time. My weight has gone up and down over the years, but for the last 20 years TOPS has helped me keep my weight in the healthy range. Steve joined last year to keep off the weight he has lost. TOPS is not a diet, it's a weekly weigh-in and a meeting that informs and supports a healthy lifestyle.

If you find this interesting, the local TOPS group is holding a couple of open houses in January. One is on January 11 at 9 am, the other on January 12 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Both Open Houses will be at Grace Lutheran Church. Steve and I will be there.

The title of this section is “healthy body, healthy spirit” and I haven’t forgotten the “healthy spirit” piece! I would like to encourage all our congregational members to make a resolution this year to spend more time in God’s word, from which we will receive strength and support for all life’s challenges, whether trying to lose weight or be a better servant for Him.

One approach to being in God’s word is to commit to read the entire Bible in 2023. There are many plans for this out there. LCMS.org (the website for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod) has resources for this as does the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML.org). I recently received an email from Donna Snow who runs a non-profit called Artesian Ministries. Donna has been very active with the LWML and many of us have been fortunate enough to attend one of her Bible-based presentations. She has put together several Bible reading plans that you can print out and use at [Artesian Ministries.org](http://ArtesianMinistries.org).

Another way to grow in God’s word is by attending one of the Bible studies offered here at Mt. Pisgah. On Sunday mornings, during the Sunday School hour, the study will be focusing on the book of Luke. The Women’s Bible Study on Wednesday mornings will be studying the book of Acts, and the Wednesday evening Bible Study will be examining the book of Ecclesiastes.

One of my fondest memories of my parents is watching them share a nightly devotion. They used the Portals of Prayer, but there are many other resources out there to support regular devotions, many are in our church’s library and available for free. Please consider making a daily devotion a part of your schedule. The same websites mentioned above all include devotions for you to use.

My prayer is that you will seek to improve body and spirit in 2023 to continue to serve the Lord with gladness.

--Kathy Kirchoefer

TOPS Open Houses: January 11 at 9-10:30 am and January 12 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Grace Lutheran Church

Bible Study Resources: lcms.org, lwml.org, artesianministries.org, our church library, and church Bible studies

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>

Financial News:

On Dec 25th, we received \$5,606 in general offerings. For Dec, we received \$20,833. Total Offerings for 2022 were \$273,052. The budget for 2022 was \$276,016. The amount per week was \$5,308. We are short by \$2,964 compared to budget.

The Craft and Bake sales contributed \$806 towards our 2022 Budget which reduces our shortage to \$2,158 compared to budget.

Donation/Offering receipts will be printed and/or emailed to you in January.

Thank you for your continued support of our church.