

PEW NEWS
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
OCTOBER 2023

The Currency of the Kingdom

Forgiveness is the currency of God's kingdom. The United States has the U.S. dollar and England has the pound. But in the kingdom of God the currency is forgiveness. As a member of the kingdom of God we *exchange* that currency every day. We receive forgiveness from God for all the sins we have committed and then we share forgiveness with the people who have sinned against us.

When the dollar became the currency of the United States it was based on the gold standard. The forgiveness that we exchange in the kingdom of God is based on the blood of Christ. In 1 Peter 1:18 Peter says that our sins were paid for "not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."

But like any economy this currency *must be exchanged. It must be received and given.* Jesus taught us that when he taught us how to pray in Matthew 6:12. We pray, "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." In Ephesians 4:32 the apostle Paul writes, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." In Colossians 3:12-13 he says, "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts . . . bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." The currency of forgiveness must be exchanged.

But each of these verses goes even further. Jesus and Paul tell us that we must forgive other *as we have been forgiven by God.* We're not allowed to short change our neighbor. No receiving a dollar from God and giving a quarter to our neighbor. So what does God's forgiveness look like? First, God will never bring up your sins again or use them against you because they no longer belong to you. Jesus took them and paid for them. (2 Cor. 5:21). Second, God won't dwell on what you did because He accounted it to Jesus. Third, God will never tell anyone what you did. Finally, God forgives you so that you can live everyday as His beloved son or daughter. Your relationship with Him is completely restored. (Luke 15:24). In the kingdom of God it is that forgiveness that we receive from God and give to our neighbor.

People often tell me that they can't forgive like that. They're right! That kind of forgiveness is a gift from God that we must first receive from God and then and only then are we equipped to share God's amazing forgiveness with our neighbors. The good news is that God showers His children with that forgiveness every day and we are only asked to share a fraction with those around us. But exchanging *that currency* brings the world around us to life!

Mission of the Month

This month our gifts and prayers will go to support Madeline's House. Madeline's House has been the only safe house in the area for abused women for many years. It closed about a year ago and STEPS has taken over ownership and is in the process of reopening it. The building is in need of many upgrades and needs to be furnished. The Men's Prayer Group is currently painting several of the rooms. Please keep this important ministry in your prayers. Any gifts you make this month will go to help upgrade and furnish the house and get this important ministry in central Virginia up and running again. If you would like to learn more there is information on the bulletin board.

Following Jesus

When I was confirmed I made a promise that I was going to follow Jesus. That I was going to be one of His present day disciples. Maybe you were also caught up on that special day in your life. It hasn't always been easy has it! Jesus warned His followers that following Him would not be easy. Look at Matthew 8:18-22.

But one of the helps that Jesus shared with His followers was **PRAYER!** St. Paul urged Timothy to be constant in prayer. (1 Timothy 2:1-4). How is your prayer life? If, like me, it leaves a lot to be desired, then I invite you to join me in an evening of prayer. It will be on Thursday evening, October 19th beginning at 7:00 p.m. Come and experience how prayer can help you in following Jesus.

Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty

Did you know that our church has a representative in Washington? The Center provides input, education, advice, advocacy, and resources in the areas of life, marriage and religious liberty. It seeks to engage in discussions in D.C., to establish partnerships and resources in our nation's capital for the sake of our churches, schools, universities, and seminaries. The Rev. Dr. Gregory Seltz heads up the center.

Check out the Center's Website – lcrifreedom.org

Service Project – Men's Prayer Breakfast

The Men's Prayer Breakfast left their breakfast and Bible Study to pick up paint brushes and rollers to help prepare Madeline House to reopen as a place of refuge for battered women. The men are refurbishing the front area of the building.

The group meets each month on the third Saturday at 8 a.m. in the church fellowship hall. They welcome all men and boys.

Treasurer's Report

August 2023

Summary Aug. 2023	
Total Giving Income:	\$16,504.3
Total Expenses:	\$15,988.39
Savings used:	NONE

Budget for 2024 to be presented at the congregational meeting on Oct 29th.

Join the FEEDING FARMVILLE PLANNING TEAM

You have been a part of a fantastic group of volunteers who, for the past seven years, have come together from across our community to deliver Thanksgiving meals to our neighbors. This year, Feeding Farmville will be delivering 1,000 meals to folks in our community. We hope you can join us this year and will consider being a part of the **2023 Feeding Farmville Planning Team**. If you are interested in being a part of the Planning Team, you may email secretary@stjohnsfarmville.org or go to our website at feedingfarmville.org to register as a volunteer.

Feeding Farmville is a *Community Project* made up of ALL Volunteers who together with local churches, businesses and organizations help their neighbors grow closer to God through an experience with His unconditional love by offering a caring heart and delivering meals on Thanksgiving Day.

May God's blessings shine in your life and may you be a blessing to those whose lives you touch today and every day.

Our next meeting is October 25th at 10am.