

Mt. Calvary Messenger

APRIL 2024

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Vastor, Tell Us What You Really Think.?

"I Just Thought You Should Know"

Those words are a good indicator that was or is about to be said shouldn't be said, heard, shared, or thought about. The 8th Commandment is among the top ten commandments of the Lord. It applies to all Christians *and unbelievers* at all times. Yes, the 8th commandment is just as forceful as the prohibitions against murder (5th Commandment) or adultery (6th Commandment). Sadly, we Christians often grant ourselves a pass in the use of our words, thinking they can do no harm.

"I Just Thought You Should Know." "Someone needs to hear this." "So-and-so didn't say I could share this, but..." "People are saying..." "I can't say who said this, but..." The list of creative pardons from and side steps around the eighth never ceases to grow. We'll explain ourselves out from under the accusation of God's Law as quick as a hopped-up 2JZ (ask your grandkids). These "little sins" are lower in our minds, more deserving of exception. It's not murder after all, right?

St. Paul gives us some great framing about the severity of individual sins in his epistle to the Galatian Christians. He includes sexual immorality, idolatry, jealousy, envy, and drunkenness into a single list with other sins. He's teaching that persistence in these seemingly big or little sins will separate us from the Kingdom of God, just the same. (Galatians 5:19-21)

To get our minds right in this discussion, let's hear the way the head of the household ought to teach his family in a simple way. "**The 8th commandment** You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. What does this mean? 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." (SC 1:8)

In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther explains the commandments in an expansive way like our Lord did. He taught the disciples concerning the 5th and 6th Commandments, expanding the limits to include anger and lust under murder and adultery (Matthew 5:21-30).

The first application for us is our own tongues. We should not say or

spread anything that *could* harm our neighbor. A simple way to think about it might be: am I authorized by the original source/subject of the information to speak? No or maybe not? Then, don't speak of, hint at, or allude to the thing you know.

In the second case, our ears are the problem. We should not listen to anything that may not be suitably spread. Again simply, is Abigail or Thom authorized by the original source/subject of the information to speak? No or maybe not? Then, don't listen, and step away.

Third, we can't let our minds gossip within us either. What does that even mean? Speculating on the thoughts, motivations, or unheard words of my neighbor is just like gossiping to myself. I'm not allowed to malign my neighbor that way either, even just in my own mind.

The fourth error in the eighth commandment falls in my desire to use a town crier in a positive way. We might think to ourselves, "I don't want to speak about this. So, I'll tell Bjørn. He's unable to keep his mouth shut. And, I won't have to say it myself." Encouraging Bjørn in his sin is still an evil thing for me to do. It can't be made righteous.

"Can't I ever rat out my neighbor in Christian way?" No, but there is a Christian way to confront sin. Are you directly confronting the one sinning against you? Yes? Then within the framing of Matthew 18, we find the right way to confront sin against us.

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." (Matthew 18:15-17)

When the sin is against you, then you should confront your neighbor and escalate in this way. The point here is not to expose our neighbor. The point is to turn then from their sin. As soon as they repent, forgiveness must follow. The discussion is also over. There is no room for, "Quentin apologized, but you need to know what he did to me..."

Curbing our wicked tongues is prob'ly among the most difficult of Christian disciplines. It is one we need to undertake to better serve and love our neighbor.



Things We Say

The first application for us is our own tongues. We should not say or spread anything that *could* harm our neighbor. The commandment isn't limited to speaking truth. Also, we are to put the best construction on everything, to protect and defend our neighbor's good name.

In the last article, I asked the simple question: am I authorized by the original source/subject of the information to speak? To that let's add: will sharing this information help my neighbor and improve their reputation? Usually, the answer is no. We are often aware of this.

"I'd like to tell you something. ... Please don't share this with anyone right now. ... I appreciate your prayers." That sort of framing around some personal information shared in common conversation reveals the sinful weakness within the house of Christianity. If we were any good at the eighth commandment, it would never need to be said this way. Furthermore, if we defaulted to silence rather than over-sharing, there would be no need.

Instead, we frame our sharing and request for brotherly Christian prayer with a restriction. "Don't share this," still, it gets out. Did you hear that concealment just now? Like a headline identifying an SUV as the cause of an accident or a handgun as the cause of a shooting, the culprit is excused. The SUV didn't plow into a crowd. It was driven by a human acting maliciously or negligently. The gun didn't go off on its own. A person acting negligently or maliciously pulled the trigger, firing the weapon. The same is true of the leak of a piece of private confidence.

"It gets out" means someone acting alone or with co-conspirators violated confidence. Worse, we violated God's eighth commandment. It got out because I said it. It got out because you said it. It got out because trust and God's Law weren't on our hearts and lips.

There is nothing that needs to be shared or said without clear permission to do so. The only information emergencies involve crimes and the police. Anything else is just evil gossip.

Things We Hear

In the second case, our ears are the problem. We should never hear anything that *could* harm our neighbor's reputation. The commandment isn't limited to hearing only the truth. We are also bound not to hear anything lacking the best construction, or leave uncharitable speaking uncontested. This requires of us a conscious response to the gossiper or concerning the gossip. A passive response isn't adequate.

Consider these questions: Are Ainsley or Thom authorized by the original source/subject of the information to speak? Were Thom or Ainsley given a letter, but not permission to share it? Most often the case is, no. Then, don't listen, and step away.

We aren't granted to just wait it out. I may resolutely change the subject, and stop it from coming back up. You may condemn the gossip or contradict the poor inference. "You should say this is gossip." Or, "they could easily be driven by [a positive motive]." We could also physically leave the conversation. "Sorry, I can't listen to this gossip."

These are not options for us in fleeing from sin: Hear Ainsley out, because someone needs to know what she's saying. Listen to what Thom says, so it can be reported back to the victim. Listen to them, but try not to pay attention. Avoid conflict by not reacting poorly to my neighbor's obvious sin.

Why is it that we grant the sinful gossip latitude that we would never grant to someone else in another sin? Why do we compound their sinful tongues with our sinful ears and the encouragement they bring? We're afraid of being unliked. We want to be thought of well, to the detriment of our neighbor's good name.

We would never stand by while someone murders, harms, or expresses genuine hatred toward someone else, would we? We would never watch our friend steal a car, would we? We shouldn't help a husband or wife create a lie to facilitate an adulterous tryst, should we? In the same way, we can't allow gossip to enter our ears. We can't allow it to hang in the air either.

What Will People Say?

Third, we can't let our minds gossip within us either. What does that even mean? Speculating on the thoughts, motivations, or unheard words of my neighbor is just like gossiping to myself. I'm not allowed to malign my neighbor that way either, even just in my own mind.

When we speculate about our neighbors' inward thoughts, we give in to the worst construction. Rather than interpreting everything in the kindest way, you choose to assume the worst reaction and respond to an unspoken, unknown deed. When I impugn my neighbors' thoughts, I harm his good name in my mind. The commandment requires that we protect the name and reputation of our neighbor, even from ourselves.

This inward talking, concern over what people might say or think, is also a kind of idolatry. Usually, this kind of crass idolatry doesn't even have an external god. It looks inward to the self. The imaginary opinion of our neighbor drives us in a desire to obtain or maintain respect or adoration. It's a reflexive worship of self.

The fourth error in the 8th commandment falls in my desire to use a town crier in a positive way. We might think to ourselves, "I don't want to speak about this. So, I'll tell Bjørn. He's unable to keep his mouth shut. And, I won't have to say it myself." Encouraging Bjørn in his sin is still an evil thing for me to do. It can't be made righteous.

We speak at great length about how we cannot bless our neighbor's sin into righteousness. Liberal sects calling themselves Christian publicly reject the Bible's clear teachings on divorce, adultery, homosexuality, God's gift of gender/sex, and the like. These attempts to bless sin reject God's Word. The same thing applies to my neighbor's 8th commandment sin. I can't use his weakness to this sin against him, separating him from the Lord. This is hatred of my neighbor.

In the Fifth case, there can be no anonymous complaints among Christians. Both Matthew 18 & the 8th Commandment forbid anonymity. "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." (Matthew 18:15-17) The sinner cannot be confronted by anyone, but the one who was maligned; just the two of you. Then, bring one or two others with you to confront your neighbor.

We don't get to skip step one by dropping an anonymous letter in the office. We don't get to skip step one and gossip to someone else, who will offer our anonymous complaint. Anonymity ignores Matthew 18 entirely. These sorts of discussions ought to die in the air. The letters are only fit for the rubbish heap or the fire.

How are we to speak? Can we say nothing? Let's hear Luther's Small Catechism again. "We should fear and love God so that we ... defend [our neighbor], speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way." Your neighbor's good name is yours to defend. And, your good name is theirs.

Our Lord died to purchase forgiveness for our evil, gossiping tongues. Rise each day in that forgiveness and sin no more. Jesus was crucified for our evil ears, and the things they hear. Remember your baptism, you're not a slave to your former sins.

Let our tongues only be used to praise God and uplift our neighbor.

Whose Is It Anyway?

If you have every bought or sold a house, you are acquainted with the concept of a "title search." Before you can sell your house, and before anyone else will feel comfortable putting down the money to buy it, you have to prove that you really own it. So a title company looks through the public records to ensure that you bought it from the person who really owned it, who bought it from the person who really owned it before that, all the way back to the earliest records of your state, including when your state was only a territory or colony of England.

Peek into a preschool classroom during playtime and you'll see a simplified version of this. A child starts playing with a ball, but another child says, "That's mine: I had it first."

You can't understand the Seventh Commandment without understanding this concept of owner-ship or title. As the Small Catechism puts it:

You shall not steal. What does this mean? 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.

Your neighbor's possessions are his: you don't have a right to take them. And likewise, your possessions are yours. Ownership and property rights are foundational to any functioning society.

But there is something deeper to know about ownership, and that is the question of who has the title and ownership to you? Paul says, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:19–20).

If you yourself are owned by God, then of course everything that you own, you really only possess by God's leave: all of it, at bottom, belongs to Him since you belong to Him. For you were bought with the blood of Christ.

This notion is the foundation of all Christian stewardship. It all belongs to God. It should all be used for things that bring honor to His name, blessings to our neighbors and the extension of His kingdom.



1 CORINTHIANS 12:27, NIV

For Your Information



In February 2024, the AMEN Food Pantry served 333 families (961 individuals). In February 2023, the Pantry served 234 families (571 individuals).

Mt. Calvary volunteers are scheduled to assist clients at the Food Pantry on Monday, April 8, 10:15am-12:15pm shift. Two volunteers are also scheduled to accept donations at the Pantry on Thursday, April 11, 10:00 am-12:00 noon.

Donations of shelf stable food items can be placed in the AMEN bin in the Narthex at any time. Please call Stell (979-966-2319) or Beverly (979-250-1718) if you have any questions.

The Happy Scrappers continue to work on their LWR Quilting projects at the Blue Fellowship House, meeting at 9:30 each Monday morning and ending at noon with a shared lunch. Visitors are always welcome! Our quilting group currently consists of Linda Herbrich, Beverly Newell, Jeanette Huelsebusch, Marilyn Spillane, Gladys Teinert and B. J. Ullrich along with **our work from home volunteers** consisting of Diana Mikulin, Martha Pietsch and Dorothy Weber. The meeting dates for April are Mondays, April 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29.

All donations of fabric along with gently used bed sheets and miscellaneous items to replenish our quilting supply/ stash are greatly appreciated. The support of ladies working from their homes sewing quilt tops and ironing sheets to facilitate quilt assembly is a blessing.

If you have quilting supplies to donate, you may call Jeanette Huelsebusch @ 979-968-3829 or Marilyn Spillane @ 281-581-2341 to make arrangements for delivery to the Blue Fellowship House.

Thanks for your generous donations of cash and supplies for the Personal Care Kits. We expect to assemble them in the next few weeks.

THE INGATHERING AND SHIPMENT OF ALL LWR PROJECTS IS SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND, 2024.

THE MARY MARTHA GUILD MINUTE

Monday, April 1st

Multipurpose Room

Fellowship Time—6:00 PM Business Meeting—6:30 PM

Welcome Beverly Albers
Devotion Janice Teinert
Pantry Item syrup OR jelly
Mite Prayer Sylvia Hebert

Hostesses: Beverly Albers & Sylvia Hebert

Business Meeting Call to Order: Minutes, Treasurer Report,

Standing Committee Reports

Project/Activity LWML District Convention, June 13-15, Corpus Christi

LWR Personal Care Kits

Mite Box out for congregation, May 5-Oct 6 Mother's Day Bake Sale, Friday May 10th

Cookies for Camp Lone Star Installation, June 2nd

BIRTHDAYS none ANNIVERSARIES none

Everyone is invited to attend the Guild Meetings in the Multipurpose Room at 5:30 PM the first Monday of the month (except July & December). All volunteers and the support of our projects are greatly appreciated. Contact our Member Development Committee Chairman, **Karen Fitch**, or any Guild member or feel free to call the church office at 968-3938 for more information.

Mary Martha Guild

MEN'S CLUB PIT STOP

Next Meeting: Monday, April 1, 6:00 PM at BBQ Pits

Meeting Minutes March 5, 2024

Opening:

The meeting was called to order by President Donald Roensch at 6:00 pm with twenty members in attendance. Randy Albers opened with devotion/prayer.

Minutes:

Minutes from the February 5, 2024 meeting were approved.

Treasures Report:

Randy Alberts presented the Treasurer's report. The balance as of 02/28/2024 was \$21,306.21. Income for February was \$102.80, and expenses were \$50.00.

Old Business:

The preschool will be having a pull pork bake potato dinner on Tuesday April 9, 2024. Men's Club members will be preparing the BBQ pork on Saturday April 6th and will bake the potatoes April 9th. The preschool parents will be helping with preparation. The details will be discussed at our next meeting.

New Business:

Camp Lonestar is requesting the use of the church's BBQ pits for their annual camp picnic in July. They will be using their own wood and will be seasoning the meat. After some discussion, a motion was made by James Lehmann and seconded by James Herbrich to allow Camp Lonestar to use the pits and to use our walk-in cooler. The motion passed.

The Church Picnic Committee is asking for donations for the raffle and an auction item. After some discussion a motion was made by Jason Lehmann and seconded by Daniel Fischer to donate \$500.00 for the raffle and another \$500.00 for an auction item. The motion passed. In the past, the Picnic Committee would borrow from the Men's Club any money needed to buy remaining raffle cards not donated and repay using proceeds from the sale of the raffle tickets.

Aaron Muniz was asked if the Men's Club would be willing to help setup tables and chairs for the Schuetzen Fest at Monument Hill on Friday May 17th. This shouldn't take more than 1 ½ hours. After some discussion a motion was made by James Herbrich and seconded by Randy Albers to volunteer our services. The motion passed.

Discussion was brought up about getting wood for BBQ. Daniel Fischer said he had about a cord of wood cut however we still need more especially with the upcoming preschool BBQ pork and bake potato dinner and the church picnic. Lee Teinert had said he has wood that we can have; we just need to get it. August Pietsch will talk to Lee about it.

Miscellaneous:

The next scheduled meeting is set for Monday April 1st at 6:00 pm. Team 6 will be responsible for the meal. Team 6 consists of Willie Ahlschlager, Glenn Polasek, Dennis Winkler, Clayton Wolf, Aaron Muniz, and Randy Pietsch.

Everyone is also asked to keep Harold Streicher in your prayers. Harold is now in Hospice care. Due to Harold's condition, Linda is asking for volunteers to help with the church picnic.

(3)

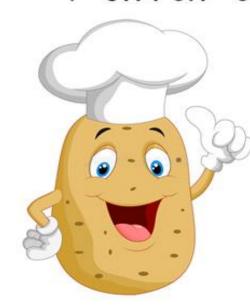
Adjournment:

A motion was made by Jason Lehmann and seconded by James Herbrich to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted.

Men's Club Secretary

Stuffed Potato Fundraiser Dinner



*Pulled pork

*Butter

*Sour Cream

*Cheese

April 9, 2024
BBQ Pits, 800 N Franklin
4:30-6:00
Supporting Mt. Calvary Preschool

Men's Club will be preparing bbq on Saturday, April 6th. Contact August Pietsch for more information.

Men's Club will be helping with meal prep on Tuesday, April 9th. Contact August Pietsch for more information.

To donate baked goods or help work the bake sale on Tuesday, April 9th, contact Lori Hollek.

To help work the to-go line on Tuesday, April 9th, contact Lori Hollek.

DECORATION DAY 2024

Decoration Day at the Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church Cemetery located on the Old Plum Highway west of La Grange will be observed at 2:30 PM on Sunday, April 21st. Everyone is invited to attend. Please bring a lawn chair for your comfort. The memorial service will be conducted by Pastor Jason Kaspar.

The graves of all veterans, resting in the cemetery who served in the U.S. Military, are marked with a U.S. flag, namely:

LEFT DOUBLE GATE ENTRANCE

Emil H. Boening August H. Behrens John H.C. Behrens John McClanahan Norman Mersiovsky Roy A. Huelsebusch Leonard P. Jatzlau John Alfred Huelsebusch Fred H. Koepke Otto H. Behrens E. C. Zuhn Dietrich Niemeyer Henry Niemeyer Herbert "Ck" Moerbe

RIGHT DOUBLE GATE ENTRANCE

Alfred C. Harbers
Clifton Behrens
Johnnie C. Oeltjendiers
Leslie Boening
George Boening
Wilbert Diers
William B. Walther
Danny L. Walther
John Hentschel
Garland Wiemken
Alfred P. Weber
Werner (Johnny) Koopmann

Erwin H. Nietsche Wesley Naumann Edward L. Fischer Paul P. Miertschin Fred Munke James Schultz Gilbert Boening Fred A. Loth John Cavanaugh Elvis Roensch John A. Bullard Marvin L. Moerbe Clinton G. Moerbe Leon Teinert Eugene Winkler Anton C. Pietsch





Faith Lutheran High School of Central Texas seeks to engage young adults in a Christ-centered environment where faith and knowledge grow as one.

HOME OF THE FALCONS!

Better Together—Romans 15:5-6

TAAPS State Music Competition

2 FLHS students, Tim and Kaydee, competed in the TAPPS state music competition on Friday, February 23 at CTX. Students performed vocal and instrumental solos from a selected piece of music. Kaydee received an Excellent rating, and Tim received a Superior rating. FLHS handbells will be competing at the TAPPS state competition the week of March 25th.

New Student Registration

Registration for the 2024-2025 school year is underway. Four new students have already enrolled. We would love to welcome you into our Falcon family as well. Call us (979) 242-2889 to schedule a shadow day or visit our website at www.flhstx.org for registration information.

Scholarship Program

Have you ever had this thought? "Faith Lutheran High School sounds great, but my family can't afford it." We firmly believe that EVERY family desiring a Christ-centered education for their children should have the opportunity to attend FLHS. We have a Tuition Scholarship Program with funds available, and EVERY family who applies (through TADS) will receive some assistance. We'll do everything in our power to make sure that money isn't the reason you don't choose FLHS.

Shadow Days

Shadow days are a great opportunity for prospective students to follow us for a day and experience what FLHS is all about. Parents, call us today at (979) 242-2889 today to set up a shadow day for your child.

Thank you, Thank you!

Thank you for all the support you have showered upon Faith Lutheran HS! We are so blessed! Whether you remembered us in your prayers, time, talents, or gifts, we are forever grateful and your gifts make a bigger impact than you know! THANK YOU!

Spring Raffle Success

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Spring Raffle. Congratulations to this year's winners!! This year's ticket sales totaled over \$27,000!! Thank you for your support!!

Scholarship Opportunities

Applications are now being accepeted for an academic-based scholarship from the Amanda (Zoch) Knox Memorial Scholarship Fund. This fund will pay for the full tuition for an incoming 9th grade student of Faith Lutheran beginning in the Fall of 2024. Applications are available from Mrs. Kueck or from Cyndy Zoch (cyndy.zoch@gmail.com) and are due May 1, 2024.





GEMS

(Girls Embracing Mission Service)

The Post Oak GEMS will not meet on Easter, March 31st. Please join us next month, April 28th, at 2:00 at Holy Cross Warda Fellowship Hall.

Grief Share Grief Support Group

GriefShare support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. At this 13-week group, you'll receive valuable guidance and tips, leading you to relief, comfort, and peach of mind.

Contact Us Today
Thursdays 6:00—8:00
January 18—April 18
Immanuel Lutheran Church
300 N. Grimes, Giddings
(512) 461—5442
griefshare.org

Help and encouragement after the death of a loved one.

Thoughts and Prayers

FLOWER CHART OPENINGS

Don't forget that we have a Flower Chart on the bulletin board in the narthex hallway. You can sign up to provide flowers for a special occasion or simply to the glory of God.

Call the church office if you would like more info.

BIRTHDAYS

ANNIVERSARIES

Rosalie Moerbe **Charlene Harbers** Roxanne Zahradnik Bill Trlica Jodie Adams Jordan Von Minden Shannon Herbrich Corbyn Blackwell **Bradley Synnott** Joe Johnson Landri Kadlecek Kayleigh Lehmann Glenn McKinley Wayne McKinley Glenn Altwein Morgan Gill **Audrey Pietsch** Caleb Rinald **Dorothy Weber** Kim Pietsch **Lummus Hannes** Justin Hollek **Robert Boening**



Remembering

Our prayers are with the family and friends of Sandra Horn who went to be with Jesus on March 12, 2024. A memorial service will be held on May 11 in Katy at Memorial Lutheran Church.

We pray for Kya Grace Marburger, great-granddaughter of Annie Cook.

We pray for Emily Jane Zahradnik, daughter of Roxanne and Zach Zahradnik.

NON-PROFIT ORG. STANDARD PERMIT #50 LA GRANGE TX

Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church & Preschool

800 N. Franklin St. La Grange, Texas 78945

Change Service Requested

"Committed to Reaching Out With The Love Of Jesus"

