

news letter



Ephesians 5:33 (ESV)

However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

When God gave the 10 Commandments it wasn't to take freedom out of life, but to free us from the things that will. God is all about protecting us from the shame we do to ourselves, and He's about preserving our dignity, self-esteem, and self-worth. The 10 Commandments do just that.

Commandment #7: "You shall not commit adultery." In other words, God was saying, "I don't want you to hurt where the pain is the greatest – in broken hearts." Some choices are so important that a wrong selection will leave a scar for the rest of our life. This commandment is not meant to limit our love life, but rather to extend and expand our life. Because when our memory strolls back into the intimate hallways of our personal history, opening private doors and the light is turned on in the secret closets, there is no shame to spoil or stain the sweetness of nostalgia.

So why did God sandwich this commandment right between murder and stealing? Maybe it's because when this one is broken it breaks the other 9 as well. #1 "You shall have no other god before me." Adultery is making a person, pleasure, sex, or materialism into another god. #2 "You shall not make for yourself an idol." Adultery will seriously flaw the reflection of God's image in your life. #3 "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God." Adultery is misusing God's name, because adultery betrays the relationship you're supposed to have with God. #4 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." Adultery makes a mockery out of your faith if you are unfaithful in your day-to-day relationships with your spouse. #5 "Honor your father and your mother." Adultery violates the family honor. The family name is shamed. #6 "You shall not murder." Adultery is like killing. It destroys trust, faith, and true love. A marriage is devastated in one foolish ill-fated decision. #8 "You shall not steal." Adultery is stealing because betrayal is thievery. Something precious and priceless is deceptively stolen from a relationship. #9 "You shall not give false testimony." Adultery is false testimony because it's deception, deceit, duplicity, and lying. #10 "You shall not covet." Adultery is coveting another person.

In a marriage, human dignity, self-esteem and self-worth are either boosted or busted. A solid commitment to your spouse boosts these to an extraordinary level. Because if nothing is held back and there is nothing to be ashamed of human dignity, self-esteem and self-worth soar. Adultery destroys all this. You may be thinking, "Will God forgive me if I have broken His commandments?" The answer is a definite YES! Any sin is forgiven if you ask God for forgiveness. This was all made possible for us through Jesus Christ and His death on the cross and His resurrection.

In His Grip,
Pastor Tim



Shalom

Randy Lind

Shalom

I am writing this article just after returning home from our Wednesday night Bible study at the home of Terry and Susie George. Tonight we watched some word study videos and one of the videos talked about the Hebrew word “shalom”, which is often translated as “peace” in our English Bibles. The study pointed out that there is more to the Hebrew word than what we English speakers think of when we hear the word “peace”. If you are like me, when you hear the word “peace” you think about the lack of war. It can also mean a lack of conflict within relationships or perhaps a slower pace of life with minimal changes. The Hebrew word “shalom” denotes wholeness or completeness. One example that was given was that of a broken, shattered wall that is restored to wholeness; shalom is used to indicate that this wall has been restored to wholeness and perfection.

During this time of year when we reflect upon the birth of Jesus the word “peace” (shalom) is used in the announcement of His birth. In Luke 2: 14, the angels are proclaiming to the shepherds the birth of the Savior. In that verse it states, “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace (shalom) among men with whom He is pleased.”

Take a moment to think about what sin has done to this world and to all that have lived and who are living. Think about all the wars and the horrors that they brought, all the hurtful things people have done to one another, all the broken relationships, all the hurting and hopeless people, all the disregard and hate that exists. We indeed live in a broken and sinful world crying out for wholeness and restoration.

Isaiah prophesied about the birth of Jesus hundreds of years before His actual birth. In Isaiah 9: 6 it states, “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” The verse ends with the “Prince of Peace” or Shalom. He is the one who will come and restore mankind, who will bring wholeness and completeness to a broken world. Over 2000 years ago, the Prince of Shalom came and He still lives today. We, His people, get a glimpse of the wholeness that He brings and look forward to experiencing the complete restoration of our bodies and souls when Jesus comes again, at the end of time, to put all things to right.

Make this Christmas a special time of focusing on and rejoicing in the shalom that Jesus brings and offers to each of us.

A very Merry Christmas to you all.



Let's Warm Up Christmas

Glenn Koster

I don't know how many people really know this, but I love Christmas. Perhaps a hint might have been that in years past, I wore a different Christmas hat every day from Thanksgiving through Christmas Day. I believe that at one time I had 38 different Christmas hats, a tradition now passed along to my youngest son. Perhaps a better hint might have been the lights that always adorned our house from the day after Thanksgiving until New Year's Day. At the zenith of my decorating, it took two full days to install the 7,500 lights that adorned the house. Those lights have now fizzled out, with bits and pieces spread to various homes. But the reality is that I still love Christmas.

What I really love is what happens at Christmas. While the most important part of Christmas is the birth of Christ and the salvation that has come because of it, what strikes me most at this season is the change that occurs in people. Folks who rarely have time for one another are suddenly alive in conversation and cheerful greetings. Even though calendars come alive with one activity after another, the complaints of busyness are rarely heard. Hearts that are cold burst with warmth and gladness. It brings about a greater joy to see these changes occur.

Yet as I ponder Christmas this year, I am once again reminded that sadness still fills many parts of our world. There was a song in "The Sound of Music" that reads, "the hills are alive with the sound of music..." Unfortunately, in the western United States, this year those hills are alive with the sounds and sights of fire. At a time when peace should rule our land, many areas of the country are more divided now than they have been since the arrival of the Civil War. While we live in a land of plenty, the streets of our cities – even here in Hutchinson – are clogged with the temporary shelters of those who are homeless, cold, and hungry.

My sincere prayer for this Christmas is that we, as Christians, can renew the joy of that first Christmas in the streets of our land and the hearts of our people. But how can we make that happen?

Let's start by slowing down. There are a million things to do this season, but the most important thing you can do is to give each other the most important gift we can give – our time. Take a moment and really talk to someone you don't know. Get to know them. Take a chance and really love them. Let's work to make sure that those we meet will not spend the Christmas season lonely!

At the start of school, we are bombarded to "Fill Up the Bus" with school supplies and many of us participate with little effort. This Christmas let's "Fill Up the Pantry" – not only that of the First Church of God, but throughout our community. We only touch a small portion of those in need. Other pantries in town are far more visible and touch so many more lives. Let's pitch in!

Most importantly, remember to look – and respond with warmth, whether that is a warm meal, a warm blanket, the comforts of a warm room, or simply a warm hug. The loneliness and cold are not always visible from the outside, but the pain is often visible in the eyes and actions of those we meet. See the need – and share the warmth!

And may your Christmas be merry and bright!



**Just
A
Thought**

Just Wait!

**By
Cindy
Hogan**

Just Wait!

I take a breath, a sigh of contentment as I reflect on another sweet Thanksgiving with our family, now “on the books”. The house is once again quiet with us two and Mom at her puzzle table. The floors-- once spattered with spilled apple cider, crumbs from the feast, and mud from boys’ feet full of hikes and adventures--now mopped and clean. The turkey bones are cooking in broth, the laundry cycling, leftovers already depleted. All are remnants of the crazy hustle and bustle; laughter and conversation; four-year-old girls holding kittens hostage with affection; baby girl giggles and big-eyed observations; and deep conversations about sports amongst the men-folk. The holiday season is officially in full swing, as Christmas peeks around the next corner. This is punctuated with the horizontal snow blowing and drifting outside...“it’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas.”

Time to pull off the Thanksgiving valences and put up the Christmas ones...that end up staying up the rest of the year. What the heck, they match my color scheme. I drag up the Christmas trees, decorations trailing behind me, realizing all need new lights to be strung. Which makes me think I should’ve coaxed the hubby to hang lights along the gutters yesterday when the weather was so temperate. I pause to watch people on the television going bat crazy with miles of lights to make their homes a light show, reminiscent of Clark Griswald’s on National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation. Heaven knows if Scott would let me, I’d go a bit bat-crazy myself...I dream of lit-up alpaca silhouettes in the yard...a star on the barn. You think I’m joking.

Every commercial entices me to buy... Makes perfect sense to surprise the spouse with matching brand-new pickup trucks. Or diamonds. Isn’t Christmas the best time to bejewel the wife or lover, because every kiss begins with Kay?? Feed your envy, people, everyone’s doing it. You haven’t lived until you’ve maxed out your Amex card. How is it that the birth of an innocent, God-man Savior, turned into truck purchases and one-upping the neighbors? How is it that the birthday of a child birthed in virtual poverty is now celebrated by ridiculous opulence?

An email from my friend, Glenn brings me back to reality. Time to prepare for Advent. Yes, yes, find the wreath, prepare the readings, a lovely tradition. It strikes me that I really don’t know what Advent means beyond that. So, I do what any shameless idiot does, “Hey, Google?”

The word “advent” in Greek (all us Google scholars always seek out Greek definitions) means “coming.” But advent is about “waiting.” Not the silent, sitting around looking about kind of waiting, but a longing for, an anticipation, a preparing for kind of waiting. Just as believers long ago waited for the Christ child, we celebrate Advent at Christmas to remind us that we wait not for the child, but for the risen Savior.

I really had no idea of the depth of this thing I’ve celebrated for years—this Advent. Christ has been born, but not only that, He’s died and resurrected and now He’s rapturously coming again!

Advent. What an excellent reminder that promises have been made and kept, and more are to come!

Just wait!



December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 1:00 L.I.F.E. Outreach 5:00 Bible Study	3 Ina Harper	4 Prayer Group 9:30 am.	5	6	7 Paul ♥ Ellen Mathias	8 5:30 Bethlehem Celebration Mary Lou Schmidt
9 1:00 L.I.F.E. Outreach 5:00 Bible Study 6:00 Christmas Singalong Union Valley Church	10	11 Prayer Group 9:30 am.	12	13 Council Meeting 6:30p.m.	14	15
16 1:00 L.I.F.E. Outreach 5:00 Bible Study	17	18 Prayer Group 9:30 am	19	20 Dakota Arpin Willa West	21 Scott Smith	22 Stacy Smith
23 Scott ♥ Cindy Hogan Russell ♥ Claudette Smith	24 5:30 pm. Christmas Eve Communion & Carols	25 	26 Carol Moore	27	28 Becca Kelly	29
30	31 Paul Mathias	 <p>CHRISTMAS IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND</p>				

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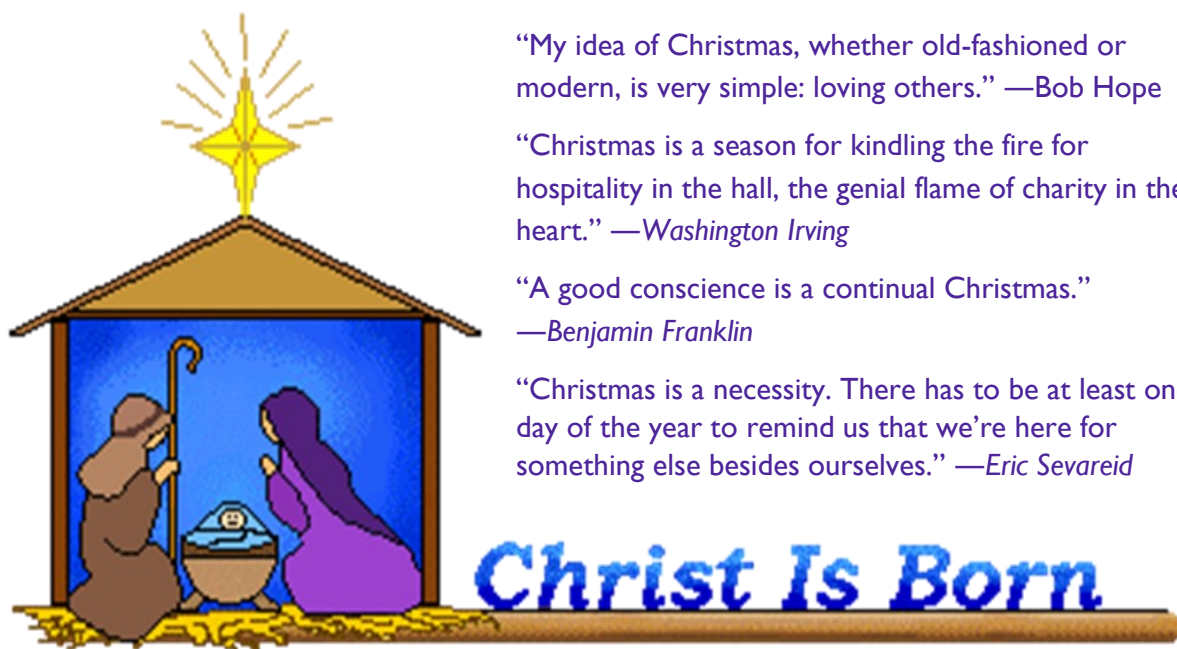
Tim Yates, Young Adult Pastor

Glenn Koster, Associate Pastor

Laine Alex Moore, Administrative Assistant

Charlcie Koster, Administrative Assistant

Tim Nisly, Custodian



“My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others.” —Bob Hope

“Christmas is a season for kindling the fire for hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart.” —*Washington Irving*

“A good conscience is a continual Christmas.”
—*Benjamin Franklin*

“Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we’re here for something else besides ourselves.” —*Eric Sevareid*