



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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The Ten Commandments (Part 1)

² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³ you shall have no other gods before me. Exodus 20:2-3 NRSV

The Bible is not primarily a book of rules or directions for how to live our lives. Much of the material contained in scripture can certainly be used that way but, as any graduate of Disciple Bible Study can tell you, the primary purpose of scripture is to teach us about God, teach us about ourselves and teach us about our relationship to God. Much of the bible is made up of stories about people who were far from ideal in either character or behavior, stories about the life and teachings of Jesus and the writings of the earliest Christians who explored what it meant to be Christian.

Nevertheless, there are many passages of scripture that contain guidelines for living our lives. These include the Ten Commandments, portions of Deuteronomy and Leviticus, Proverbs and the Wisdom Literature, portions of the Gospels such as the Sermons on the Mount and the Plain, the parables of Jesus and the Epistles.

The Ten Commandments are often in the news in one way or another. I thought it might be useful to look closely at these commandments and try to determine why these commandments, above all other possibilities, are central to Christian living.

The Top Four Commandments

There is a hierarchy of the Commandments. The first four deal with our relationship to God. Unless we have lives that are centered on God, we are bound to go astray.

² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³ you shall have no other gods before me. Exodus 20:2-3 NRSV.

The **Shema** (shuh-mah'; Heb., 'Hear you...')¹ is the declaration of faith of Israel. *Hear O Israel, Yahweh is God, Yahweh alone.* In the understanding of the faith of Israel, Exodus 20:3 is a bit misleading. One could not have other gods because there are no other gods. There is only God, who created all that we can know and perceive and all that is hidden. Our understanding of God begins with the affirmation that there is only God. Over the centuries the people of Israel, and Christians as well, have fallen into the trap of apostasy; worshipping other "gods."

Classic apostasy, worshipping the gods of other cultures, is not much of a problem in our society. But apostasy, ‘worshipping’ other gods remains a problem. To worship something is to place your trust and confidence in something. That which you cherish above everything else is what you worship. The two most common substitutes for God in our culture are money and ourselves.

It is very easy in our culture to become so fixated on the power of money, of wealth, to protect us and insure our happiness that it does become our god. We are also a somewhat narcissistic society. We are very focused on pleasing ourselves and often take the view that we are ‘in control.’ So long as we are ‘in control,’ we assure ourselves, all will be well. God’s commandment is to acknowledge that ultimate control belongs to God and only God can be trusted. Only God is worthy of our worship.

⁴ You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Exodus 20:4 NRSV.

Making representations of God is an activity that seems to be ubiquitous across societies. All cultures, it seems, desired to put a face on God or at least have something upon which to focus their attention. Sometimes these idols were distinctly human, as were many of the gods of Greece and Rome. The Canaanites represented Astarte, a goddess of fertility, as a woman with exaggerated feminine features about to give birth. Other times, gods were represented as idols in animal form. Then there were the representations of gods who were part human and part animal as well as representations of fantastic creatures who were ‘god.’ The people of Israel even tried to make an image of God who had delivered them from slavery in Egypt. See Exodus 32. They produced a Golden Calf.

The problem with idols is that they place limits on God. Making an image of God is an attempt to bring God under our control; to contain God. Instead, we worship God who can never be fully comprehended by the human mind and therefore can never be represented by anything we make or conceive. God defines our limits, we do not define God’s limits. Therefore, we must not attempt to make idols representing God.

⁷ You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. Exodus 20:7 NRSV.

The classic understanding of this passage is based upon the King James translation of using the Lord’s name in vain. However, that translation has led to treating this commandment as merely a prohibition against cussing that uses God’s name. The NRSV and other modern translations refer to the wrongful use of God’s name which expands our understanding. For instance, Jim Bakker of PTL Club fame violated this commandment when he misused God’s name to raise money that he then embezzled from his followers. Politicians misuse God’s name when they proclaim that it is contrary to scripture, and therefore God’s will, to help the poor. [Note: I acknowledge that some would accuse me of misusing God’s name for a political agenda supporting help for the poor. However, I’d be glad to discuss the biblical support for helping the poor as opposed to the biblical support for abandoning or ignoring the needs of the poor.] Without question, cussing is also misusing the name of God.

⁸ *“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Exodus 20:8*

There is an old Jewish proverb that explains that God gave us the story of creation in the first chapter of Genesis to remind us to keep the Sabbath. God worked six days and rested on the seventh, and so should we. The easiest way to understand this passage is to ask yourself, “What is Holy?” The answer from scripture is that only God and those things that serve the purposes of God are Holy. The Sabbath day is Holy because it is meant to be a day that serves the purposes of God. It is a day upon which we contemplate our relationship to God and all that God has done in the world. It is easy to become so involved in our work and everyday lives that we forget God. The Sabbath is a day to stop and contemplate God’s claim on our lives.

The next article in this series will consider the rest of the Ten Commandments. The primary focus of these commandments is upon those things that tend to interfere with our relationships with others.

Note on the Administrative Council Meeting From Donnie Hartsock, Chairman

The ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL is a body that is made up of all our Church Members. Its function is to oversee the business and programs of the Church. We try to meet quarterly to discuss and review our status on the various issues under our charge. Sometimes, if an important issue needs immediate attention, we will meet briefly after services on Sunday. If you are a member of the Church, you are a member of the Administrative Council. On the bulletin board at the side entrance to the Church is a list that names the various Committees and those who currently serve on them.

On Saturday April 9th, the Administrative Council met in Fellowship Hall. What follows are not the official minutes of the meeting. They are simply some of the highlights taken from my notes which I pass on for your information.

- Meeting was called to order at 9am.
- Pastor Meaker opened meeting with a prayer.
- Last Meetings Minutes were reviewed and approved.
- Committee Reports:
- Finance- Chair Jason Aldred reported that our finances are in order. However, we recently moved our accounts to another bank where we expect to get much better service.

Jason is also looking into insurance requirements regarding our playground.

(Fence around playground will be installed soon, Men's Group will provide labor to install mulch after fence is in)

Trustees- Chair Sam Richardson reported that an exterminator had set a "Bug Bomb" in the ceiling of the sanctuary to combat the wasp community.

SANCTUARY CARPET- Last summer a Memorial Donation was made to Trinity on behalf of a former Member. Since those funds were not designated for a specific purpose, a family member may come forward with suggestions.

- Tommy Cotton is a cousin. He and Jo, on behalf of the family, would like to designate said funds for replacement of the carpet in the Sanctuary. Any leftover funds would be earmarked for replacement of our HVAC when that need arises.

- A VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE headed by Cheryl Wilson will be formed to investigate cost,color,installation etc. and report back to the Administrative Council with a bid for final vote and approval. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ON THAT COMMITTEE contact Cheryl.

Staff Parish Relations- Chair Nancy Conway reported that her committee had been busy with the annual business of review and evaluation of our Pastor. She didn't let it slip here, but the next day during Church, she announced that the Conference had reassigned Dennis to Trinity for the coming year. There was much rejoicing!

Program Council- It was noted that the Chair of this committee is vacant. Dennis informed us that the Nominations Committee is to make that recommendation.

- Family Ministry- Renita Hartsock reported on the Adult and Kids Sunday School classes. The Adults are helping to fund meals at 61st Ave.
- Please continue to bring food items EVERY SUNDAY for Graceworks.
- VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL- Dawn Stevens has embraced the leadership for this summer! Mark your calendars for July 18-21(M-TH) and listen for opportunities to participate!
- Mission/Outreach- Charles Wilson informed us of what's happening with the school in Africa we support with a portion of our Fish Fry proceeds.
- He also reminded us that we were feeding the needy at 61st Ave that day.
- Worship- Brooks Crowell gave us insight on the work and preparation that goes into coordinating what we do in Sunday morning worship. Thanks to Dennis, Lynn,Brooks,Laura,Judy and all who contribute to making our Sunday Worship meaningful and special.
- Congregational Care- Cheryl Wilson reported on this committee. They coordinate flowers and food on behalf of the Church when the need arises. They also send cards. We really appreciate the work they do.
- Special Events- There are no large scale events(ie:Fish Fry, BBQ) scheduled for this year. At least not at this point. Jason suggested we come up with a signature event that will continue to allow us to fund missions and attract new members. All agreed.

We will be celebrating Trinity's 151st Anniversary later this summer with a cake. Probably at a First Sunday Lunch.

-New Business- Dawn Stevens has agreed to be our Church Web Master! That will allow us to keep our site up to date with the hope of informing others about what's happening at Trinity.

- Brooks informed us of the meeting he is having after church April 10th re: Mother's Day Out Program he has been researching for us. This is very exciting and we can all pledge our prayers and support.
- Dennis moved that, when completed, the new playground be Dedicated in Memory of Sarah Jordan. All were in favor. -Meeting Adjourned

Submitted by: Donnie Hartsock
Administrative Council Chair

Rev. Meaker is Re-Appointed as Pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church

Wesley appointed his pastors to serve circuits of several societies. Each year he would move his pastors around. So began the practice of Itinerancy in the United Methodist Church. Pastors are appointed by the Bishop, with the advice of his Cabinet, a year at a time. The reality of life as a United Methodist pastor is that, in the Winter and Spring of each year, the pastor waits to see where he will be appointed for the next

Conference year (July to June). I have been fortunate in that I have had longer pastorates than many of my colleagues. I served my first appointment, a four church Charge in Maury County, for three years. I was then at West Nashville UMC for nine years and in July I will begin my seventh year here at Trinity UMC. In contrast, a classmate of mine has served in eight separate appointments over the same period.

The Staff Parish Relations Committee asked that I be reappointed and Jeanne and I asked that I be reappointed. I am very pleased to remain as your pastor. It is an exciting time to be here at Trinity as we continue to grow in size and ministry here in Eastern Williamson County.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

Our Thursday morning Bible Study meets between 10:00 and 11:30. Everyone is welcome to attend. It has been my practice to allow the group to decide what parts of the bible they wish to study. We have completed our study of the Gospels, including the Book of Acts and are beginning a study of Paul's Epistles. We will begin with 1st Corinthians.

Prayer Ministry

The following persons are part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

Elva Beard	Mac McAfee	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Rachel Newman	Patricia Stevens	Charles Wilson
Leslie Eastwood		Sam Richardson	

The members of the prayer ministry of Trinity United Methodist church covenant with one another to pray daily for:

- Those concerns on the prayer list of the Church and for healing of body and spirit for all persons listed;
- For each ministry of the church that each ministry would work to bring the Gospel to those within our community and most especially to bring the Gospel to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- For all the members of the Trinity UMC community that they be led and enabled to live as the Body of Christ;
- For our local community and all its needs, especially for those who are struggling with the burden of poverty;
- For our nation and our world that God help lead the people of the world to live in peace with God's Kingdom.

If you would like to be a part of this ministry (or if you have already spoken to me about it and were inadvertently left off the list) please let me know and I will see that you are added.

Up-Coming Sermons

May 1st: Sermon: The Plain Meaning of Scripture. Don't make it complicated. Obviously the bible means just what it says. How could there ever be a dispute about the plain meaning of scripture? My texts are Acts 16:9–15 and John 14:23–29.

May 8th: Sermon: Watch Where You Are Going. Good advice, often given by parents to children. What does it mean as we live as the Body of Christ? My texts are Luke 24:44–53 and Acts 1:1–11.

Worship Leader's Schedule

May 1

_____, **Liturgist**

Mike and Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

Tommy Cotton and Larry Eastwood, **Ushers**

May 8

Ken Strait, **Liturgist**

Dawn and Richard Stevens, **Greeters**

Maurice and Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**

Announcements

Trustee Meeting: The trustees will meet next Sunday, **May 8** immediately after church for a brief discussion about church heating/cooling. Please plan to attend.

Church Carpet: A committee is being formed to initiate a process for replacing the sanctuary carpet. Cheryl Wilson has volunteered to lead this committee. The Administrative Council has determined that any member wishing to serve on the Committee may do so. If you have an interest in being a part of this process, please make Cheryl aware.

The **Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School class** is both learning and enjoying a series of videos, narrated by Ray Vanderlann. The videos as well as the narration take place in ancient lands described in the Old Testament. We enjoy discussion about what we are learning and the application of the lessons to our lives.

We enjoy fellowship beginning at 9:45 with our study beginning at 10:00. All are welcome to join us as we pursue Biblical truths and the application for our lives.

Birthdays in May

Tommy Cotton, Sam Richardson, Jim Winton

Happy Birthday to each of you!