



TRINITY TIDINGS



*“Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.”
Psalms:17:8 (ESV)*

SEPTEMBER 2016

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God's Good Gifts

“God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27).

Marriage is such a precious gift and blessing from God; and with the creation of Adam and Eve, the Lord established marriage to be the basic building block of all society. So what is it that has corrupted it?; the simple answer is sin, but we really must also include consideration of Satan and the tools he uses (the world, culture, and our own sinful flesh) to lead people in to great and great sin. Of late we have seen Satan use the Supreme Court of the United States to issue rulings which undermine God's clear and unchanging Word of truth. He has also used the world and our culture to increase pressure upon Christians and Christian Churches to embrace his lies which will further weaken marriage.

I recently had a discussion with someone who said that the Church really doesn't "have a leg to stand on" when it comes to denying homosexual marriage. When I asked them why that was, they responded "Because the Church hasn't continued speaking against unbiblical divorce, those living together, and those having sexual relations before marriage." There might be some mainline denominations which have abandoned God's clear Word regarding such sins, but we certainly have not.

We still believe, teach, and confess what the Lord inspired the author of Hebrews to write: *“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral”* (Heb. 13:4). From Luther's *Small Catechism* we learned that the 6th Commandment includes all sexual sin, including adultery, are violations of God's divine command to not commit adultery. *So how do we lead a sexually pure and decent life?*

We lead a sexually pure and decent life when we:

- A. consider sexuality to be a good gift from God;
- B. honor marriage as God's institution, the lifelong union of one man and one woman;
- C. reserve sexual intercourse for the marriage partner alone;
- D. control sexual urges in a God-pleasing way.

Thus God prohibits:

- A. divorce except for marital unfaithfulness (adultery or desertion);
- B. sexual intercourse between unmarried persons;
- C. sexual sins such as rape, homosexual activity, incest, sexual child abuse, obscenity, and the use of pornographic materials;
- D. sexually impure thoughts and desires.

What does God [lovingly] require of us in the 6th Commandment?

- A. God requires us to avoid all temptation to sexual sin.
- B. God requires us to be clean in what we think and say.
- C. God requires us to use our sexuality in ways pleasing to Him.

So why is it wrong for a couple to live together without marriage or have sexual relations before they are married? Simply stated, a couple that has sexual relations or lives together before marriage as man and wife without being married is sinning. This applies to those who might be in their teens as

well as those who are in the 70's and 80's – God's Word is clear: *"You must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ...Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more"* (Eph. 4:17-19). So it is in the name of love, God's love in Christ, that we warn those who are living in such sin. It is not loving to redefine what is clearly immoral and contrary to God's Word as something which is now moral, to declare what even natural man knows to be wrong, right. We are to call what God has said is sin, sin. God has lovingly determined what are to be the boundaries of our lives and relating one to another. He has lovingly determined that marriage is between one man and one woman. He has lovingly determined that sexual relations are to be reserved for the marital bed alone.

Our refusal to succumb to the world's pressures may have consequences and they might even be serious. But when the laws of men conflict with the laws of God, it is God who must be obeyed. God in Christ will stand by His Word and He stands by those who faithfully and steadfastly stand on it. God's love for us has not stopped or diminished. Referencing how God delivered Lot from the sinfully debauched communities of Sodom and Gomorrah, St. Peter was inspired by God to comfortingly assure those early Christians: *"The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment"* (2 Pt. 2:9). We must admonish and encourage one another to live according to God's holy will as revealed in His Holy and unchanging Word of truth. We must remain grounded in the one true faith in Jesus Christ, our heavenly bridegroom who rescues, redeems, and reconciles us as His bride, the Church and promises to be with us always, knowing that our heavenly Father will protect and preserve us as His dear children whom He has adopted in the Blessed Sacrament of Holy Baptism. We must continue faithfully gathering at His invitation to hear Him speak to us through His Word and serve and nurture us by His Word and Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We must return to a healthy observance of personal and family devotions and prayerfully consider what God says. We must also faithfully and steadfastly live and follow the Lord's instruction regardless of how the World, our culture, or our own sinful flesh think about it. Thanks be to God, the Lord's Christ has conquered sin, death, and the devil by His Holy life, suffering, death, and resurrection. That also is Good News for those who have committed any of the sins I have mentioned. His life, death, and resurrection means there is forgiveness and strength to flee from the sins which separate us from God the Father. Being freed from sin means that we have been freed to be faithful in Him as we live in this sin-filled fallen world. God's blessings!

+ The Lord be with you +

With Christ's Peace,
Pastor



What About . . . *Living Together Without Marriage*

Increasingly, men and women choose to live as husband and wife without being married. The following article will answer some questions asked about living together.

What is marriage?

We learn from the Word of God that marriage is the lifelong, exclusive union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife. Marriage is a part of God's creation. Thus, we read in God's Word: *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh"* (Gen. 2:24; cf. Matt. 19:5–6; Eph. 5:31).

Elsewhere we read, *"Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband"* (1 Cor. 7:2). And, *"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral"* (Heb. 13:4). Marriage is such a precious blessing that God inspired the Apostle Paul to describe marriage as a picture of Christ's relationship with His bride, the church (Eph. 5:22–33).

Why is it wrong for a couple to live together without marriage?

Simply stated, a couple that lives together as man and wife without being married is sinning. God's Word is clear: *"You must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ...Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more"* (Eph. 4:17-19).

Our Lord Jesus Christ once helped a woman living with a man who was not her husband to recognize that what she was doing was wrong (John 4:16–18).

Lutheran Christians believe that the sixth commandment, *"You shall not commit adultery,"* means, *"We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do; and husband and wife love and honor each other"* (*Luther's Small Catechism* [CPH: 1986],p.10).

All of this is another way of stating the obvious: Men and women are not to live together as husband and wife, unless they actually are husband and wife. This is as true for 80-year olds as it is for 18-year-olds.

Why does the church care about what two consenting adults do?

The church cares because God cares. The Lord's Word is very clear in its condemnation of sexual activity outside of marriage. Consider these passages:

"Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers. . . will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

"Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people" (Eph. 5:3).

"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery. ... I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19–21).

Why is living together such a serious problem?

Because God's Word clearly shows that it is sinful for couples to live together without marriage, people who persist in behavior that God rejects and condemns as sin are choosing a course that may lead to eternal punishment. God's Word is clear: "*If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left*" (Heb. 10:26).

And again, we read: "*It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God...The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life*" (1 Thess. 4:3-7).

Isn't the church being 'judgmental'?

The church is declaring the truth of God's Word. On behalf of Christ and His people, pastors have the responsibility to speak clearly to couples living together and to proclaim the Word of God to them, both Law and Gospel. It is never easy for a pastor, or a congregation, to deal with couples who are living together without marriage. It is important for both pastors and congregations to deal with these situations pastorally and faithfully, in a caring manner. Couples, and their parents, are tempted to say, "So what? Everyone else is doing it; and besides, we live in changing times." In proclaiming the truth of God's Word about these situations, the church is being faithful, not judgmental.

Shouldn't a couple find out if they are compatible?

Secular research has demonstrated that living together without marriage results in a relationship that is less stable and less fulfilling than marriage. Furthermore, couples who live together have a much higher risk of divorce when they finally do marry. Living together is a bad idea, even from a purely human perspective.

One study notes, "Those who cohabit before marriage have substantially higher divorce rates than those who do not; the recorded differentials range from 50 percent to 100 percent higher" ("The Relationship Between Cohabitation and Divorce" [1992], *Demography*, 29:357-374).

Studies conducted at Yale and Columbia Universities found that "the dissolution rate for women who cohabit premaritally with their future spouse is, on average, nearly 80 percent higher than the rates of those who do not" ("Commitment and the Modern Union," *American Sociological Review*, [1988], 53:127-138).

How does the church deal with these situations?

The church, and the church's pastors, will inform couples living together without marriage that what they are doing is sinful. These conversations will take place in a loving manner; but in faithfulness to the Word of God, such conversations need to take place. These situations cannot be ignored or overlooked.

It may be necessary to place unmarried couples living together under church discipline in order to help them realize the seriousness of the situation. This response may offend people. They may become angry at the church, or the church's pastor. Sometimes an entire family is upset when a situation they have ignored is finally dealt with. The Word of God has a way of cutting through all issues and exposing our sinfulness. That is the work of the Law of God, which shows us our sin.

Offending people is certainly not the church's goal, nor is it the church's desire only to have people recognize their sin. The church wants people to see their sin, so that they may see their Savior. The proclamation of the Gospel is the church's highest priority. The church proclaims the Law of God so that people are able to hear and believe the good news that "*The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us*

from all sin” (1 John 1:7). The church wants people to hear and believe the Gospel, for only the Gospel has the power to change lives and behavior for the better.

How can a couple living together resolve the situation?

A couple living together without marriage needs to take concrete steps to end the situation. They may choose to separate, with no plans for marriage. They may choose to separate until they are married—hopefully soon.

It is important that they make a commitment to marriage counseling before their wedding, and perhaps also after their wedding. Some couples may choose to be married by an officer of the court. This is a completely valid marriage in the view of the church.

Couples choosing this option are encouraged to have their marriage publicly recognized by the church as well. No matter what the decision, they will want to seek their pastor’s counsel.

What is the ultimate solution to this problem?

There are many solutions we can identify. Christian families need to understand what is right and wrong. Early on, parents need to speak with their children about God’s expectations in regard to marriage.

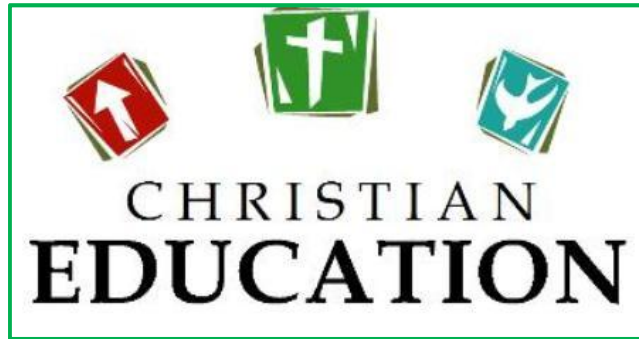
Pastors and congregations will want to work patiently and lovingly with couples caught up in this sin. Concerned

Christian congregations need to pray that the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts and lives of those involved in this lifestyle in order to break down their resistance to God’s Word. Christian congregations must not ignore the problem, but must deal with it faithfully. Congregations need to speak about this matter.

Couples that recognize their sin need to hear God’s comforting word of promise: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). If they choose to be married, they should do so with joyful confidence in God’s forgiveness and His blessing on their marriage.

Scripture taken from the *The Holy Bible :New International Version*.© 1973, 1978, 1984, by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

— Dr. A. L. Barry
President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Where did the summer go? Children have started the new school year. Please pray for the children and their school teachers.

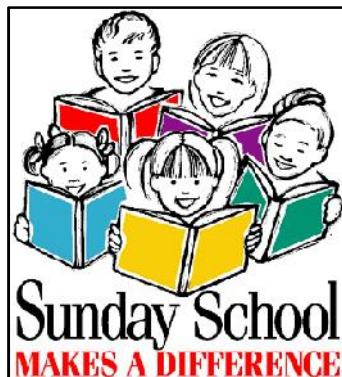
Our school year for Sunday School starts on Sunday September 4th. Thanks again to Jennifer Hygrell for teaching ages K-2 and Lisa Benjamin for teaching 7-12. I will be teaching Grades 3-6.

Jennifer and I will be teaching from the Cross Explorations program. The children will be learning about 12 spies in Canaan, entering the Promised land, Fall of Jericho and Deborah. If your children do not attend Sunday School, please consider bringing them to a class. We try to have fun and usually doing a craft with the story. Please ask your children who do attend what they learned in class. Learning about God and Jesus in Sunday School is very important in the Christian development for your child.

Lisa will again be using handouts from Pastor to discuss Christian themes and issues our teens face today. Thank you, Emily Coleman for helping out with the teens this summer.

Remember Pastor has a great Adult bible study and all are welcome.

Jennifer Loftis





The devil, though defeated by the death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, remains a very capable and clever foe. He is smarter than we are. He's been watching us and taking notes for a very long time. He knows what we want, and he knows how to lure us away. And he does this by telling us what we want to hear. That's what makes it so difficult.

To us who are greedy, he says: "You are not greedy. You are prudent. You are frugal. You are a good steward with your money. God doesn't want you not to have all the things you want. He wants you to be happy. He wants you to have the latest and greatest toys for both young and old." So if you consider yourself to be wise in the way of money and finances, beware of who just might be telling you these things.

Satan is a liar. He tells us what we want to hear. He lures us away from repentance and confession and faith, so that we harden our consciences and place our souls in peril. We must not underestimate the enemy. We have all taken his bait. We have all failed in this. None of us can say that we have fought this temptation to hold back with everything we have and won.

And we must repent. Yes, God wants us to be happy. But this happiness is never at the expense of faithfulness. We have a calling. We are a member of His family, the church. That relationship places a duty upon us: to give a generous proportion of the first fruits of the income He provides.

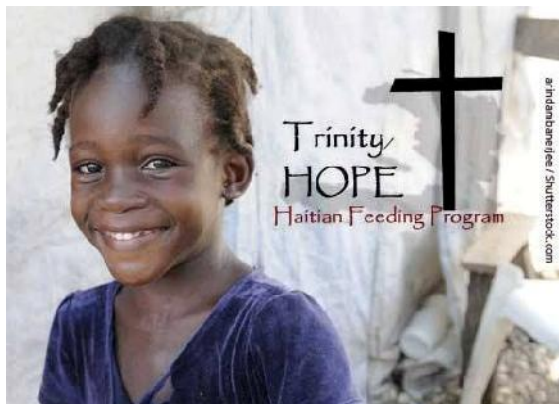
Only God is true to His Word. Only God is true to His promises. His promises never fail. His Word endures forever. His mercies are new every morning. He is faithful. He provides everything that we need. He provides food and clothes, house and home, everything that we pray for in the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer.

There are a whole host of things that we have that we do not need. The question that we need to ask ourselves is whether these have come at the expense of our faithful, generous proportion of the first fruits of our income. If they have, then we must repent, turning away from our selfishness to Him who is faithful by giving His Son into death so that we are reconciled to Him and justified in His sight.

The devil will always tell you what you want to hear. But God tells us and gives us what we need to hear. With law and gospel, he cuts us to the heart, so that we will repent and believe His Word and promises. He is faithful. He is good. He will not forsake you, or leave you destitute. So believe and trust in Him. And you will not only be happy. You will be blessed.

The Stewardship Newsletter is provided by LCMS Stewardship Ministry.

News from Trinity/HOPE



This is one of a series of articles which we make available each month to keep congregations informed about our activities. Trinity/HOPE, a not-for profit charitable organization, raises funds and administers feeding programs that provide a noon meal for the hungry children who attend our schools in Haiti where the Good News of Jesus is daily shared. It is blessed to have numerous supporters in this church.

2024 Hunters Place, Mt. Juliet, TN 37122 ● trinityhope.dg@gmail.com ● Web Page:
Trinityhope.org Facebook: trinityhopehaiti

How do you measure success?

By John Hall

Some people's measure of success is how much stuff they have, others it's the salary they make, the promotions they have gotten or the sum of their investments. I can tell you that at times in my life I certainly used some of those as measuring tools. However, they were never as important as my family's relationship with the Lord, their spiritual health and how well they were cared and provided for physically and emotionally. These are still of primary importance and another has been a major portion of my success gauge since 1999. That is how many hungry Haitian children can we as Trinity/HOPE provide a noon meal and the opportunity to hear the Good News of the love and grace of Jesus each day.

God has abundantly blessed me in all of these areas. Every member of my family is a believer, we have more than enough to meet our financial needs and Trinity/HOPE is providing noon meals and the opportunity to hear and share the love of Jesus with over 20,600 daily.

While I always tried to be kind, it was not one of my measures of success. However, in today's climate of divisions, polarizations and distrust, perhaps kindness should be a measure we should all consider as one of our gauges of success. To show kindness, we do not have to be less principled, forsake our beliefs or compromise our stances. We just need to respond in a loving, caring way. Sometimes kindness costs nothing but the sharing of ourselves.

This has all been brought home to me in a very graphic way especially since I was diagnosed with esophageal cancer, had chemo, radiation and exploratory surgery, which showed further surgery was not an option.

My family and friends have shown me such great kindnesses in such a variety of ways. (Some of which had costs attached.) But, none have been more special than a lady at church who when I have been too tired to do anything but sit, comes by, hugs me, gives me a kiss on the cheek and says, "I pray for you every day."

Whether it is sharing some of our financial blessings so a Haiti child has a meal, sharing a smile or ignoring road rage, let's be kind to one another and view our acts of kindness as one way to measure the success of our daily living.





Trinity's Own Annual

"Thanksgiving Night in the Hunger Fight"

is scheduled for Saturday, November 19

A traditional Thanksgiving Dinner will be served.

There will be a silent auction.

Our Speaker will be a member of Trinity/HOPE

All proceeds go to Trinity/HOPE's 'feed the children' program.

Mark your calendars!



ALTAR FLOWER CALENDAR OPENINGS



We have three Sundays open on our Altar Flower Calendar - September 18th and 25th, and October 30. If you would like to purchase the flowers for our Altar for these Sundays, please sign up on the Altar Flower Calendar on the bulletin board in the hall. The cost for the two arrangements is \$35 and you may take the flowers home following the morning worship service. Please indicate on the calendar if you are purchasing the flowers to honor someone or in memory of someone or for a birthday or anniversary.



HAVE YOU MOVED, CHANGED YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER?

If you have made any changes to your home address, e-mail address or your phone number, please let the church office know so we will be able to contact you if necessary and so we can list the correct information in our church directory.

Thank You!



OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you need a box of offering envelopes, please contact the church office.

A new box will be placed in your box at Trinity.

Don't know your box number? There's a list on the side of the mailboxes.

HENRIETTA CHURCH MOUSE'S PAGE!



"The sky is falling!" said the little church mouse. Oh, it was just a leaf! Fall is almost here. This year is just "scooting" along. I love this time of year. Leaves will soon display their joyous colors and a nip will be in the air. Oh, that means



Labor Day is upon us! I know a lot of hard workers who look forward to a day of relaxation. A day off! I know I do. It's hard work eating cheese and patrolling the church daily. Whew!

Of course, I do have some very important work to do for my grandparents before I can think of relaxing. Grandparents Day is almost here. (It's Sunday, September 11.) Our grandparents are so very important to our families. This is a wonderful day to honor them (or the memory of them). I better get going. Crafts to make, BBQs to plan.

I'll leave you with a few words in honor of our grandparents, because they are, well, GRAND!

Until next month...

Henrietta Church Mouse in Residence



GRANDPARENTS

Few can bring the warmth
We can find in their embrace,
And little more is needed to bring love
Than the smile on their face.

They've a supply of precious stories,
Yet they've time to wipe a tear,
Or give us reasons to make us laugh,
They grow more precious through the years.

I believe that God sent us Grandparents
As our legacy from above,
To share the moments of our life,
As extra measures of His love.

Author: Unknown



WE ARE HAVING A
CHURCH BAZAAR ON
SATURDAY
OCTOBER 14
FROM 8 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

We have eight spaces available to Vendors who would like to rent a booth to participate.

Booth Rental is \$20.00.

Please contact Debbie Scott at
615-642-3400 for more information.

WE THANK GOD FOR THESE CELEBRATIONS IN SEPTEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Icelyn Ferguson
- 4 David Bush
- 4 Edna Wolf
- 9 Briley Gramse
- 9 Lori Kissinger
- 9 Tom Riesterer
- 11 William Bush
- 12 Corey Gramse
- 12 Addie Riley
- 14 Steven King
- 14 John Simon
- 14 Ethan Smith
- 15 Carol Kraemer
- 17 Jennifer Smith
- 18 Joe Wall
- 19 Drew Gibson
- 20 Shirley Johnson
- 25 Aubrey Henning



ANNIVERSARIES

- 17 Tom & Linda Riesterer (1993)
- 30 Gene & Karin Lehmann (1968)



SERVANT SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER 2016

PASTOR

Kenneth B. Shaw

ELDER

Tim Hartley

OFFERING COUNTERS

Loren Replogle & Tim Hartley

ALTAR STEWARD

Stacy Shaw

GREETERS

Clyde & Carolyn Schroeder

USHERS

**Jer Geiger & Tom Riesterer- Center Aisle
James Hygrell & Loren Replogle - Side Aisles**

ACOLYTES

**September 4 - Christina Levan
September 11 - Elena Alvarado
September 18 - Isadora Hygrell
September 25 - Brandon Levan**

VOLUNTEER CLEANING SCHEDULE

**August 28 – September 3 – Hygrell
September 4 – 10
September 11 – 17
September 18 – 24
September 25 – October 1**

VOLUNTEER MOWING SCHEDULE

**August 28 – September 3 –
September 4 – 10
September 11 – 17
September 18 – 24
September 25 – October 1**