 **Brainstorming Summary**

**Words to Live By: The Ten Commandments for Today**

Mon., May 15, 2023 at Baranowski’s home

June 4 (transition Sunday), June 11 – August 13, 2023 (10 weeks)

**Members present:** David Booth, Sue Baranowski, Vicki Zuker, Ron Zuker, Jim Post, Ed Baranowski, Paul Powers, Betty Kinney, Jean Kelly, Pastor Mary Ivanov, Karen Booth

*“The worship we hope to develop will be rooted in Scripture, centered on Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It will be relevant to local and emerging culture, while addressing the needs of believers and unbelievers alike. Above all, it will intentionally engage people physically, emotionally, intellectually, and soulfully.”*

Felt needs: What physical, emotional, intellectual, or spiritual need are we addressing in this service so that worship is engaging and a means of making disciples? What question needs to be posed/answered so that we are making disciples?

**2023 Theme:**  Jesus is Our Past, Present, and Future Hope

**Key verse:** 38For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 8: 38-39 (NIV)*

**2023 theme connection:** The Ten Commandments are one of the foundations of our faith and were the fundamental legal code of Western Civilization and our country. How do they guide today and in the future? Do they still offer hope for a broken world?

**Major spoken/unspoken needs:**

* It is so easy to not attend church when I can watch it online. Worship is for God, not us. Convenience vs. sacrifice. Logistics vs. routine.
* Pastoral care, especially around losses: Grief. Family. Division. Addiction. Unrealized dreams. Financial woes. Abortion. Open marriages.
* Relationships. Reconciliation.
* Fear and regret

**Social justice issue for June 2023:** Human Sexuality - LGBT rights

**Social justice issue for July 2023:** Gun Violence Prevention

**Social justice issue for August 2023:** Racism

**Synopsis:** Nearly everyone has heard of the Ten Commandments, the list of “thou-shalt-nots” found in the Bible. Jesus saw these commandments not as onerous burdens, but as guideposts to help us experience a good and beautiful life. These ancient “words” were given to us by a loving God who longed to set safe boundaries, create order out of chaos, help communities live peacefully, and protect us – often from ourselves.

**Notes:**The Ten Commandments (actually called Ten Words) are first recorded in Exodus 20, but then are also referenced in Deuteronomy 5 and Leviticus 19.

* The Ten Commandments offer a basis for law codes and ethics. In our faith life, this list reminds us of two important values - **covenant and community.**
* How does this collection build from beginning to end? We’ll use the Exodus 20 reading each week - adding a new commandment each week.
* How does it transform us when we follow it?

**Theme verse:** Matthew 22: 36-40 (NIV)

36“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38This is the first and greatest commandment. 39And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

**Resources:**

* [*Words Of Life: Jesus and the Promise of the Ten Commandments Today*](https://www.adamhamilton.com/books/item/9781524760540/) by Adam Hamilton (2:06). Hamilton brings modern eyes to the most famous set of rules in history, recovering the Ten Commandments as more than just a set of onerous prohibitions. He considers the commandments in their historical context, unpacking the meaning of each commandment in Hebrew, how Jesus reinterpreted them, and how Jews and Christians have understood them over the millennia. He also explores how the latest research in science and psychology illuminates these commandments, rightly understood as a way of ordering one's life beautifully in the present day. In a culture marked by workaholism, materialism, and social media-driven envy, God has given us a time-tested path that leads to gratitude, confidence, and peace. **Comments:** Use this video to introduce the series.
* Use prayers and ***What Jesus Might Say to You*** from each chapter
* [The Ten Commandments for Today | Keep Believing](https://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon_series/the-ten-commandments-for-today-exodus-20/)
* [Chuck Knows Church video](https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/chuck-knows-church-episode-78-ten-commandments) Length: 3:57.
* Invite Rabbi Alpert to share for a one-time class.
* [“The Ten Commandments”](https://skitguys.com/videos/the-ten-commandments) by the Skit Guys. Length: 18:45. Cost: Free. Humorous background video. The Skit Guys take an in-depth look at each of the 10 Commandments and how they apply to our lives today…and to the lives of velociraptors.
* [“The Ten Suggestions.”](https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/53248/the-ten-suggestions) Length: 9:05. Cost: $20.00. This is a satirical sketch demonstrating the absurdity of how “Christians” can stray so far from the truth. Let’s get back to the basics . . . The Ten Commandments.
* [“Parashat Yitro: Right and Wrong”](https://www.jpost.com/judaism/torah-portion/article-694076) by David Wolpe, Jan. 20, 2022, *The Jerusalem Post*. Without analyzing each of the commandments separately, we can understand something profound tracing the motion from God to neighbor.
* “[The Ten Commandments and Me](file:///Users/karenbooth/Desktop/Summer%202023%20Ten%20Commandments/Commandments%20website%20publicity%20pearl/qrcode.jpeg)” by Glenn Wagner, Michigan Conference UMC

**Anchor image:** Anchor (Ten Commandments are the foundation of faith - love God and love neighbor)

**Visuals:** <https://lakeharborumc.org/2023/05/may-15-2023-worship-brainstorming-ten-commandments/>

* TEN or 10
* Tablets
* Love God. Love neighbor.
* [Lynne’s Present Day Ten Commandment Pinterest board](https://www.pinterest.com/lynandlid/present-day-10-commandments/)
* Note from Lynne: i would imagine today that God would forego tablets, and communicate the commandments via email, text, or some other social media!
* [Traffic signs](https://churchstagedesignideas.com/tin-commandments/): The church that used this design moved the commandment of the week to a sign post near the pastor. FYI: We have nine 42” squares of ¾” thick paper-coated foam sheets with 3” rounded corners.



**Hands-on item:** photo card

**Music:**

* *Come, Thou Almighty King* (UMH 61)
* *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah* (UMH 127)

## *Holy, Holy, Holy!  Lord God Almighty* (UMH 64)

* *He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought* (UMH 128)
* *Lead Me, Guide Me* (FWS 2214)
* *Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us* (UMH 381)
* *Be Thou My Vision* (UMH 451)
* *How Firm a Foundation* (UMH 529)

Scan this code for more worship brainstorming information

* *Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness* (FWS 2120)
* *Cry of My Heart* (FWS 2165)
* *Trust and Obey* (UMH 467)
* *El Shaddai* (UMH 123)

**Children’s Time:** **What are the 10 Commandments in simple terms?**

1. Put God first
2. No fake gods
3. Respect God’s name
4. Respect God’s day of rest
5. Respect your parents
6. Do not kill people
7. Respect marriage
8. Do not steal
9. Do not lie
10. Do not be jealous

**Ten Commandments**

1. Worship only God
2. Pray only to God
3. Respect God and God’s name
4. Work 6, Rest 1
5. Love your parents (and those who care for you)
6. Respect life
7. Be faithful to your partner
8. Respect others property
9. Tell the truth
10. Be content with what you have

Hang your list somewhere so everyone can see it and remember ways that we can love, respect, and live well together.

**Activity:** Show Cecil B. DeMille’s 1956 classic, “The Ten Commandments.” Movie length: 2 hours 19 minutes. Related video clip: [Moses presents the Ten Commandments](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Id6oS3L-D9A). Length: 2:38. Cost: Free. Web license: No. **Comments:** This film is quite scary, not the best example of a loving God. It is also quite long.

**Introductory videos:** We did not watch any of these as a group.

* [“The Ten Commandments”](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/39766/the-ten-commandments) by Hyper Pixels Media. Length: 1:14. Cost: Free with subscription. Web license: Yes.
* [“Ten Commandments”](https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/118416/ten-commandments) by Worship Media Girl. Length: 0:42. Cost: $19.00. Web license: Probably not.
* [“The Ten Commandments Today”](https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/38824/the-10-commandments-today) by CalMarc. Length: 2:42. Cost: $19.00. Web license: Probably not.
* [“The Ten Commandments”](https://skitguys.com/videos/the-ten-commandments1) by Dan Stevers. Length: 1:16. Cost: $20.00. Web license: Maybe.

**General discussion points:**

* *Short history:* God gives ten commandments. Jewish scholars “clarify” the details creating 613 laws. Jesus boils it down to two laws: Love God. Love neighbor. *Question:* Why do we parse the details, by asking what God really meant?
* *Adam Hamilton* explains that the commandments:
	+ Are simplistic, not simple to follow.
	+ Were given by God to the Israelites to create a holy nation. Context matters.
	+ Are loaded. They mean different things to different people.
	+ Are broken by everyone, including our ancestors in faith.
	+ Are better understood in some translations than others. Example: 7*Do not use the Lord your God’s name as if it were of no significance…*(CEB) has a different intent/feeling than *7 “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God…* (NIV).
* Like the Fruit of the Spirit and Lord’s Prayer, we may find ourselves with more questions than answers at the end of this series.
* [UMC’s Social Principles](https://www.umc.org/en/who-we-are/what-we-believe/our-social-positions) may help guide us.
* Virtually all legal code, government systems, and our constitution are based on the Ten Commandments.
* Order matters. They build on each other. The first four are about our covenant with God (love God). The last six are about creating community (love neighbor).
* The Gospel of Matthew was written to the Jewish community.
* Fear vs. Fear of the Lord: Most of us have the impression that many churches preached a gospel of fear rather than love up until the 1960s. George Carlin had a routine based on the Ten Commandments saying how they were meant to induce fear and obedience, and oh, by the way, “God loves you.” “Fear of the Lord,” aka “awe,” would be a good thing.
* Exodus: 40-year exile for as many at one million people. It was long enough for a generation to die off and they could enter the Promised Land anew.
* *It’s better to beg forgiveness than ask for permission.*
* Example of stealing: Not declaring all income on tax forms
* Texas’ legislature is proposing that the Ten Commandments should be displayed in all public schools.

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**June 4, 2023:** **“Songs to Live By”** - Trinity Sunday

**NOTE: Pastor Mary is at Annual Conference.** She will invite 4-6 people to offer a short reflection (in-person or recorded) on a favorite hymn or song, and then will add a Scripture. This will be a “lessons and carols” format.

**Scripture:** Psalm 100 (NLT) **A psalm of thanksgiving**

1Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth!
2    Worship the Lord with gladness.
    Come before him, singing with joy.
3Acknowledge that the Lord is God!
    He made us, and we are his.
    We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
4Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
    go into his courts with praise.
    Give thanks to him and praise his name.
5For the Lord is good.
    His unfailing love continues forever,
    and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

**Scripture:** Psalm 100 (MSG)

1-2On your feet now—applaud God!
    Bring a gift of laughter,
    sing yourselves into his presence.

3Know this: God is God, and God, God.
    He made us; we didn’t make him.
    We’re his people, his well-tended sheep.

4Enter with the password: “Thank you!”
    Make yourselves at home, talking praise.
    Thank him. Worship him.

5For God is sheer beauty,
    all-generous in love,
    loyal always and ever.

**Synopsis:** Scripture is the foundation of our faith in Jesus Christ, but we understand Scripture more fully through music. Whether it’s a hymn written long ago or a more modern worship song, faith is nurtured and strengthened by singing God’s promises.

**Felt need:** To share the impact of music on our lives and faith

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:** Holy Communion?

**Media possibilities:**

**Music:**

**Children’s time:**

**Social media:**

**NOTE:** Peace with Justice Sunday - special offering

**Discussion points:** Deanna Medendorp cried when Piper Sroka played “Jesus Loves Me” on Children’s Sunday. When her husband died, the only thing she could do to calm her grief was to tell herself, “Jesus loves me.”

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**June 11, 2023:** **“God First”** - Pentecost 2

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-3 (NIV)

20And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3**“You shall have no other gods before me.**

**Scripture:** Exodus 3: 11-17 (NIV) - We could use a dramatic reading.

11But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

12And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

13Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

14God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”

15God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’

“This is my name forever,
    the name you shall call me
    from generation to generation.

16“Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. 17And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—a land flowing with milk and honey.’

**Synopsis:** God invites the Hebrew people into relationship - reminding them of the covenant made with their ancestors and asking for their faithfulness. Still, we’re invited into relationship with God - Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer - and called to put God at the center of our lives. How do we do it?

**Felt need:** To put God first in our lives and understand that if we do, the rest will fall into place

**Visuals:** EGO (edging God out)

**Hands-on item:** Photo card of the Ten Commandments

**Activity:** Holy Communion?

**Media possibilities:**

* [“Words of Life Promo.”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fX-ECPKb6Ak) Length: 1:00. Cost: Free.
* “Words of Life – Week 1.”
	+ Illustration 1. Length: 0:22. Footage of Mount Sinai.
	+ Illustration 2. Length: 0:18. A little boys talks about God.
* [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #1.”](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8845/steelehouse-10-commandments-1) Length: 0:52. Cost: Free. 21st century people grapple with the timeless laws of God’s universe known as the Ten Commandments. Number 1: You shall have no other God’s before Me.

**Music:** *Seek Ye First* (UMH 405)

**Children’s time:** Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments. <https://www.futureflyingsaucers.com/the-ten-commandments-exodus-20-motions/>

1. I AM the LORD your God… (Hold up one finger, like a big #1 and a giant capital “I.”)
2. You shall have no other gods before Me. (Now shake your finger, as if saying, “No, no, no!”)
3. This is the first commandment for a reason. If we can obey this commandment out of love for the Father, then we will obey the other nine. Noting else is as important as God.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* What is biblical meaning of covenant? A covenant in the ancient world was similar to what we in the modern world would call **a contract, treaty, or a will**. Each covenant established the basis of a relationship, conditions for that relationship, promises and conditions of the relationship and consequences if those conditions were unmet.
* God invites us into a covenant relationship. How do we keep God at the center?
	+ Make time; Mother Teresa suggested committing one hour a day.
	+ Let his will inform all of our decisions.
* EGO – edging God out.
* *Context:* Egyptians has numerous gods. Pharoah was an intermediary between the gods and people. Our God asks for an exclusive relationship. He is not far removed. Unlike the Egyptians, the idea of one god is ingrained in us.
* What do we do to nurture other important relationships? Spend time together. Adjust our attitude. Show interest. Reach out (call, texts). Build trust. Show respect. Make time even when we feel we don’t have time. Important relationships are not an afterthought.
* *False gods:* Money, success, stuff, passions, hobbies. False gods appear to offer hope. What has the greatest influence on our thoughts and actions?
* *Hamilton’s message title:* At the Center of It All

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**June 18, 2023:** **“Check Your Worship”** - Pentecost 3, Father’s Day

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-4 (NIV)

20And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3“You shall have no other gods before me.

**4 “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.**

**Scripture:** Exodus 32: 1-7 (NIV) - We could use a dramatic reading.

32When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

2Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” 3So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. 4He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

5When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” 6So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

7Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. 8They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, ‘These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’

**Synopsis:** Worshiping idols is ultimately about trying to create something we can see rather than trusting in God who we cannot see or fully understand on our own terms. Idolatry is when we worship what’s created rather than worshiping our Creator. Though we may not go about this like our ancestors in faith, we struggle when it comes to true worship of God alone.

**Felt need:** To understand what idolatry is and work to avoid it by focusing on Jesus as the recipient of our worship

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:** Chocolates for the men

**Activity:** Special prayers for all experiences of fathering/being fathered

**Media possibilities:** [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #2.”](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8846/steelehouse-10-commandments-2) Length: 0:52. Cost: Free.

**Music:**

**Children’s time:** Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments.

1. You shall not make any idols to bow down and worship. (Hold up two fingers together, and make them “bow” up and down.)
2. Idols used to be made of wood or stone and people would literally bow down and worship these idols. Today idol come in many forms. Cars, jobs, people, toys computer, phones, ANYTHING that can distract you from God.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* Idolatry might be the most difficult commandment today. Golden calves have been replaced by the many things that advertising and social media push.
* FOMO – fear of missing out.
* Living idols: NBA and NFL players with multimillion dollar contracts, cult leaders.
* Super hero movies.
* Idolatry starts when we are young.
* *Exodus: 32: 1b:* Who doesn’t like being able to see the object of our faith? Jesus is/was the image of an invisible God. We only feel, not see, the Holy Spirit. God is unknowable. People say, “Seeing is believing.” God says, “Believing is seeing.”
* Spaces, like our church building, and both the bible and faith itself can become an object of worship (Hamilton, p. 49). The bible is meant to be read, studied, and lived, not worshiped.
* Idols vs. Icons: Icons, like a cross, help us worship and enter into the presence of God. Greek Orthodox Church: Icons are **representations of the Heavenly**. They are expressions of Orthodox Faith, teaching, and worship.
* *Hamilton’s message title:* The Idols We Keep

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**June 25, 2023:** **“Promise Keeping and Truth Telling”** - Pentecost 4

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-7 (NIV)

20And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3“You shall have no other gods before me.

4“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

**7 “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.**

Another translation:

7*Do not use the Lord your God’s name as if it were of no significance…*(CEB)

**Scripture:** Matthew 5: 33-37 (CEB)

33“Again you have heard that it was said to those who lived long ago: *Don’t make a false solemn pledge, but you should follow through on what you have pledged to the Lord.* 34But I say to you that you must not pledge at all. You must not pledge by heaven, because it’s God’s throne. 35You must not pledge by the earth, because it’s God’s footstool. You must not pledge by Jerusalem, because it’s the city of the great king. 36And you must not pledge by your head, because you can’t turn one hair white or black. 37Let your *yes* mean yes, and your *no* mean no. Anything more than this comes from the evil one.

**Scripture:** Matthew 6: 9-13 (NIV)

9“This, then, is how you should pray:

“‘Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
10your kingdom come,
your will be done,
    on earth as it is in heaven.
11Give us today our daily bread.
12And forgive us our debts,
    as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13And lead us not into temptation,
    but deliver us from the evil one.’

**Synopsis:** “Taking God’s name in vain” has long been associated with specific language, but there’s more to this command than using bad language. It’s about reflecting God’s nature and representing God’s character in our daily lives.

**Felt need:** To reclaim the holiness of God in our speech and actions

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

* [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #3.”](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8847/steelehouse-10-commandments-3) Length: 0:52. Cost: Free.
* [“Oh My Larry.”](https://skitguys.com/videos/oh-my-larry) Length: 1:04. Cost: $16.99. Web license: Maybe. The name of God is tossed around so loosely these days, it's hard to know whether He's truly respected. If you've ever wondered about the holiness of His name, take a look at this movie.

**Music:**

**Children’s time:** VBS Kick-off. Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments.

1. You shall not take the Name of the LORD in vain. (Hold three fingers to your lips and say, “SHHH.”)
2. Saying, “Oh my God!” and even OMG while texting, or saying the Lord’s name in an empty or careless way is taking the Lord’s name in vain. Pretending to pray or worship when your heart isn’t in it and you are thinking about something else is taking the Lord’s name in vain. Stating that you are a Christian and then not living a holy and sanctified life is taking on the name of the Lord and using it in vain.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* The “seven words you can’t use on TV” ([George Carlin, 1972](https://www.biography.com/legal-figures/george-carlin-seven-words-supreme-court)) are not forbidden in the bible, but the way we use them and many other words, is disrespectful to other people. And because people are made in the image of God, we are disrespecting God too. Words are significant (Matthew 5:37).
* Times we have used or heard foul language: Streaming television (Ted Lasso and more), during sports games, at school, when we drop stuff, when we are stressed, from the mouths of very young kids (and their parents)
* Biblical context: Communication was strictly face-to-face when Moses received the Ten Commandments. Much of ours is not now.
* Loving neighbors:
	+ Does the language that we use show that use show love for our neighbors? Would we say the same things face-to-face that we say behind their backs or in a text?
	+ We reflect God’s nature and represent God’s character when we love neighbor.
	+ How does our speech honor God?
	+ Honoring God by our actions: Demonstrations of kindness, selfless love, justness, mercy
* Specific examples: Saying “hell” has a whole different feel than telling someone to “go to hell.” The same thing can be said about using “damn.”
* *Hamilton’s message title:* “I Swear to God!”

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**July 2, 2023:** **“Rest and Remember”** - Pentecost 5

**One service at 10:00 a.m.**

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-11 (NIV)

20And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3“You shall have no other gods before me.

4“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

**8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.**

**Scripture:** Genesis 2: 1-3 (MSG)

Heaven and Earth were finished,
    down to the last detail.

2-4By the seventh day
    God had finished his work.
On the seventh day
    he rested from all his work.
God blessed the seventh day.
    He made it a Holy Day
Because on that day he rested from his work,
    all the creating God had done.

This is the story of how it all started,
    of Heaven and Earth when they were created.

**Synopsis:** The word *Sabbath* is rooted in the word “stop.” In a world where busyness and productivity are valued so highly, God’s word to remember to rest isn’t always welcome or observed. And yet, this command is literally the pivotal word between loving God and loving neighbor. Will we listen?

**Felt need:** To hear clearly God’s directive to rest, be renewed, and be restored -remembering that we belong to God

**Visuals:** Hamster wheel

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:** Holy Communion

**Media possibilities:**

* “Words of Life – Week 4.”
	+ Illustration 1. Length: 2:04. A rabbi explains what Sabbath rest means to him.
	+ Illustration 2. Length: 0:13. A hamster running on a wheel.
* [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #4.”](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8848/steelehouse-10-commandments-4) Length: 0:52. Cost: Free.
* [“Work, Rest, Worship.”](https://skitguys.com/videos/work-rest-worship) Length: 1:39. Cost: $19.98. Web license: Yes. The Lord commands us to take one day each week and set it aside for both rest and worship.

**Music:**

**Children’s time:** VBS Wrap-up. Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments.

1. Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy. (Hold up two fingers on each hand, joined together like a steeple.)
2. We are to have a day of rest, when we rest with God and spend time with Him. For most Christians this is Sunday, but there are some who choose to worship and rest on other days because of work schedules or other reasons.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* Historical context: In Egypt, the Israelites slaved seven days a week. God now commands them to rest one day a week. The same applied to family members, servants, guests, and slaves.
* Busyness and productivity can become idols.
* Jim remembered Rev. Susan saying that time off could be a different day of the week; just take the time.
* Jean remembers most businesses being closed on Sunday when she was young. She had to finish business on Fridays by 1:30 pm if she was working with people on the east coast, especially in New York City’s garment district as the Jewish sabbath is from sundown on Friday through sundown on Saturday.
* It was a big deal when stores actually shut down completely on Thanksgiving.
* Ed and Sue’s family stayed at a Hampton Inn in Chicago for Thanksgiving weekend pre-Covid. Because everything was closed, there was time for family activities, i.e., watching the Lions play/lose, taking a walk, family pictures, maybe going to a movie. That family time dwindled as things opened up.
* What can Sabbath look like? Families doing things together – dinner, relaxing.
* *Hamilton’s message title:* Rediscovering the Joy of Sabbath

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**July 9, 2023:** **“A Question of Honor”** - Pentecost 6

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-12 (NIV)

20And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3“You shall have no other gods before me.

4“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

**12“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.**

See Betty’s comment, p. 16

**Scripture:** Mark 7: 9-13 (NIV)

9And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! 10For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ 11But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

**Synopsis:** This commandment is the first directive about loving others, and it starts with the closest relationship for most of us - our parents. To honor means to take seriously, and our response to this commandment is both highly affected by circumstances and changes with age, and yet there’s a call to care for older adults that runs through Scripture. How do we understand this call from God today?

**Felt need:** To reclaim our commitment to care for older adults

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:** Write cards to an older adult in our congregation, highlight Congregational Care and community organizations that support older adults (Senior Resources, etc.)

**Media possibilities:**

* “Words of Life – Week 5.”
	+ Illustration 1. Length: 1:24. How teenagers can honor parents.
	+ Illustration 2. Length: 2:26. One woman’s testimony on how she learned to honor abusive parents and broke the cycle of violence.
* [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #5.](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8849/steelehouse-10-commandments-5)” Length: 0:52. Cost: Free.

**Music:**

**Children’s time:** Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments.

1. Honor your father and mother. (Hold up five fingers. Have child salute.)
2. Children are to respect and value their parents. It is a parent’s job to protect, teach, and provide for their kids. Not every child lives with both of his or her parents, but she can honor them anyway. Some children are adopted. Whoever the acting parents are deserve to be honored.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* Historical context:
	+ People’s life spans were shorter and mortality rates higher than they are now. Families probably did not look the same.
	+ Old Testament promises: Prosperity, progeny (kids), protection. Related comment: Betty thinks the comma in Exodus 20: 12 should be replaced with a period. She doesn’t have an OT brain telling her that she will live long by honoring parents, which is a different mindset than the Israelites had.
	+ Mark 7: Jesus calls out the religious leaders on breaking the commandment honoring parents.
* Order: The first commandment telling us how to love neighbor starts with our closest relatives/relationship, parents.
* Honoring parents is not the same as loving them. Hamilton suggests speaking their love language is a good place to start. Honoring them is a serious responsibility and role that changes over time as roles are reversed and children become caregivers for parents and older vulnerable adults. Challenges include planning (power of attorney, what to do with property), consent/stubbornness (Karen Booth’s mom unwillingness to get a handicap parking tag and Mary’s mom still living in a big two-story farm house), cost, and availability of care.
* Bad example on Netflix: “I Care a Lot (2021).” A court-appointed legal guardian defrauds her older clients and traps them under her care. But her latest mark comes with some unexpected baggage.
* Good examples: 1. Pastor Mary’s dad was a certified nursing assistant for 15 years after he retired from farming. He was wonderful with his patients. 2. Jesus ensures that his mother will be cared for by John.
* Loosely related: Rev. Tim Dibble warning his kids of parking lot danger.
* *Hamilton’s message title:* A Question of Honor

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**July 16, 2023:** **“How Will We Live?”** - Pentecost 7

**NOTE: Pastor Mary is on vacation this week.** She will secure a preacher.

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-13 (NIV)

20And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3“You shall have no other gods before me.

4“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

**13 “You shall not murder.**

**Scripture:** Matthew 5: 21-24, 38-48 (NIV)

21“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ 22But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

38“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ 39But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

43“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**Synopsis:** God’s will is that every person experiences abundant life. Even still, discussion around this commandment is loaded for many reasons. In a time when gun violence and death is nightly news, how do we live out this call to value one another as beloved children of God? How do we understand this commandment on Jesus’ terms and in light of the many moral and ethical questions we face?

**Felt need:** To overcome our tendency to violence and commit to loving in Jesus’ name, including in how we speak and act

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

* “Words of Life – Week 6.”
	+ Illustration 1. Length: 0:47. Rabbi Nemitoff explains why the commandment is better translated as “do not murder.”
	+ \*Illustration 2. Length: 2:46. A mother’s testimony about her gay son who committed suicide.
* [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #6.”](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8850/steelehouse-10-commandments-6) Length: 0:52. Cost: Free.
* **Music:**

**Children’s time:** Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments.

1. You shall not murder. (Hold up six fingers, pointing one finger like a gun into the palm of the other five.)
2. Life is precious. No one has permission from God to create life or take it away. People like to be arrogant and think they can do both, but it is God who creates life and God who decides when a person should die.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* People are created in God’s image. Murder is murdering God’s image and devalues life. Related topic: Abortion.
* Historical context:
	+ Moses heard this after he himself had killed a man.
	+ Life and blood are strongly linked in Jewish theology. Related story: Cain “spilling” Abel’s blood.
* Kill vs. murder: There are times when killing is justified, ex., self-defense and war (Hamilton p. 121-122).

In the field of ethics, there are moral obligations and responsibilities that humans are meant to follow. AT times, there will be a conflict between competing duties. As we have just learned, one primary moral obligation is not to kill. But what if we see someone preparing to harm or kill another? Do we have a moral obligation to stop a killing if we can? Even if doing so require the use of force? A verse that seems to speak to this, at least as it is translated in the CEB, is Leviticus 19: 16b: “Do not stand by while your neighbor’s blood is shed; I am Yahweh.” The verse implies an obligation to intervene to rescue one who is being attacked.

* \*Words can hurt.
* *Hamilton’s message title:* The Tragedy of Violence, the Beauty of Mercy

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**July 23, 2023:** **“Faithfully”** - Pentecost 8

**NOTE: Pastor Mary is on vacation this week.** Pastor Kim Bos will preach.

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-14 (NIV)

20And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3“You shall have no other gods before me.

4“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

13“You shall not murder.

**14 “You shall not commit adultery.**

**Scripture:** Matthew 5: 27-32 (NIV)

27“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

31“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

**Synopsis:** Examples of infidelity aren’t hard to find - in our relationships and even in the stories of our faith ancestors. Jesus takes this commandment even farther to remind us of the importance of faithfulness in our relationships.

**Felt need:** To be people who can be trusted and be able to trust one another, especially in our most intimate relationships

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

* [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #7.”](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8851/steelehouse-10-commandments-7) Length: 0:52. Cost: Free.
* [“Mercy: Husband and Wife.”](https://skitguys.com/videos/mercy-husband-and-wife) Length: 4:35. Cost: $16.99. Web license: Yes. A husband and wife discover the pain of giving and receiving mercy after an affair.

**Music:**

**Children’s time:** Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments.

1. You shall not commit adultery. (Hold up seven fingers. One hand is flat and the other two fingers “walk” down the aisle.)
2. Marriage is extremely important to God. Marriage is an earthly picture of Jesus’ relationship with the church. Children will all grow up one day and most probably will get married. It is important for children to begin praying for their future spouses. Prayer is a powerful thing! And more importantly, children should pray that God will make themselves into good spouses.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* Adam Hamilton points out the effects of porn on marriage and relationship.
* Historical context: Some men had lots of wives and/or partners.
* Biblical marriage: There are lots of examples of bad. Be careful of what you wish for.
* *Hamilton’s message title:* Faithfulness in an Age of Porn

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**July 30, 2023:** **“Taking What’s Not Ours”** - Pentecost 9

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-15 (NIV)

20And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3“You shall have no other gods before me.

4“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

13“You shall not murder.

14“You shall not commit adultery.

**15 “You shall not steal.**

**Scripture:** Luke 18: 18-30 (NIV)

18A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

19“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. 20You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’”

21“All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.

22When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

23When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. 24Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

26Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”

27Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

28Peter said to him, “We have left all we had to follow you!”

29“Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.”

**Synopsis:** Whether we admit or not, we struggle to follow this commandment. Even in small ways that we think don’t really count, we take what isn’t ours. Following Jesus, we hear a call to generosity, which helps us to understand the blessing of giving.

**Felt need:** To strive to be generous - giving when it’s not expected and finding the blessing in generosity

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:**

* [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #8.”](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8844/steelehouse-10-commandments-8) Length: 0:52. Cost: Free.
* [“Stealing – Pray about It First.”](https://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/47419/stealing--pray-about-it-first) Length: 1:16. Cost: $15.00. Web license: Probably not. A great funny way to open a sermon about the commandment: Thou shalt not steal.

**Music:**

**Children’s time:** Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments.

1. You shall not steal.(Hold up five fingers on one hand and three on the other. The five hand “steals” the three fingers.)
2. Most people don’t go into a store and steal off the shelves. But have you ever borrowed anything and not returned it? What about cheating? Have you stolen someone’s answers? Or stolen someone’s words or ideas? This is all stealing.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* Twist on the Golden Rule: Don’t do unto others as you would not want them to do unto you.
* Examples of stealing: Cheating on taxes. Filing inflated insurance claims. Taking intellectual property (claiming other’s writing, design, etc. as your own). Borrowing stuff and not returning it. Copying test answers off someone else. Not letting your waitress know that she didn’t charge you for an item.
* We want to feel cared for, safe, and valued. Stealing undermines trust. Example: Jean’s brother entering her home when she was not there. Items came up missing.
* *Hamilton’s message title:* We’re All Thieves. Yes. Even You.

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**August 6, 2023:** **“Tell the Truth”** - Pentecost 10

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-16 (NIV)

20And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3“You shall have no other gods before me.

4“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

13“You shall not murder.

14“You shall not commit adultery.

15“You shall not steal.

**16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**

**Scripture:** Matthew 7: 1-6 (NIV)

7“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

6“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

**Scripture:** James 3: 1-10 (NIV)

3Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

3When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

7All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. 10Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

**Synopsis:** It seems more difficult to know what is true. Sources that were once trusted -whether individuals or groups - are suspect. Gossip runs rampant and has real consequences. This commandment concerns giving false testimony in a court setting, but it still calls us to speak what is true about God and each other.

**Felt need:** To live with honesty and integrity as a part of the larger community

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:** Holy Communion, HS Mission Trip reflections?

**Media possibilities:**

* “Words of Life – Week 9.”
	+ Illustration 1. Length: 2:06. A former prisoner testifies to the impact of false testimony. He now pastors alongside Hamilton.
* [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #9.”](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8852/steelehouse-10-commandments-9) Length: 0:52. Cost: Free.
* [“Just Mercy – False Testimony Scene.”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XsMQn7p_Fk) Length: 3:52. Cost: Free. Web license: No. After graduating from Harvard, Bryan Stevenson heads to Alabama to defend those wrongly condemned or those not afforded proper representation. One of his first cases is that of Walter McMillian, who is sentenced to die in 1987 for the murder of an 18-year-old girl, despite evidence proving his innocence. In the years that follow, Stevenson encounters racism and legal and political maneuverings as he tirelessly fights for McMillian's life.

**Music:**

**Children’s time:** Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments.

1. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Hold up nine fingers. Use each hand to cover the mouth for “You shall not lie.”)
2. Sometimes it is easy to tell when someone tells a lie. Other times it isn’t so easy. Sometimes we like to manipulated and stretch the truth a little so we will get our own way. Other times gossip is used. We like to make ourselves look better by exaggerating the truth.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* Context: Testifying in court. Our focus will be on what is actually true about God and others. What sources can we trust? Gossip and social media undermine trust. How do we talk politics?
* Is it ever okay to lie? Yes, if saving or honoring life wins. Example from Hamilton: Saving Jews in the Holocaust.
* Saying too much can be worse that saying everything, i.e., “the whole truth.”
* How do our words affect our integrity?
* *Hamilton’s message title:* Sticks, Stones, and the Power of Words

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**August 13, 2023:** **“More than Jealousy”** - Pentecost 11

**Scripture:** Exodus 20: 1-17 (NIV)

20 And God spoke all these words:

2“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3“You shall have no other gods before me.

4“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7“You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

13“You shall not murder.

14“You shall not commit adultery.

15“You shall not steal.

16“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

**17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”**

**Scripture:** Romans 13: 8-14(NIV)

8Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. 9The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 10Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

11And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

**Synopsis:** In our humanness, we wrestle with the desire to get more and have more - especially when we look around and see what others have. Greed can take over, and we forget that abundant life isn’t about getting more and having more, but in knowing God’s love and grace, letting it shape our lives, and living with grateful hearts.

**Felt need:** To live within our means and be content

**Visuals:**

**Hands-on item:**

**Activity:**

**Media possibilities:** [“Steelhouse 10 Commandments #10.](https://www.playbackmedia.com/mini-movies/8853/steelehouse-10-commandments-10) Length: 0:52. Cost: Free.

**Music:**

**Children’s time:** Use hand motions to teach the 10 Commandments.

1. You shall not covet. (Hold up ten fingers and pretend to “grab” in front of you as if saying, “Gimmie-gimmie! I want it!)
2. There are times when we want an item and we do not have the money for it, but we desire it anyway. Other times we want something that belongs to someone else. There are times when we are not content with what we have.

**Social media:**

**Discussion points:**

* Historical context: Egyptian tombs are full of stuff for use in the afterlife (Hamilton p. 196).
* Covet: The CEB translates it as “desire and try to take” instead of “covet.”
	+ The Hebrew word translated "covet" is chamad (חמד) which is commonly translated into English as "covet", **"lust", and "strong desire**." The Hebrew Bible contains a number of warnings and examples of negative consequences for lusting or coveting.
	+ Means that we want stuff so badly that we don’t want them to have it either. See Romans 13:10.
	+ Wanting more and more displace God and bring us back to commandment #1.
* Barriers to contentment:
	+ Seeing social media posts of everyone else’s perfect lives.
	+ Advertisements selling happiness – stuff, perfect people (TV dad – it’s not a competition)
	+ Believing life is, or at least should be, fair.
	+ Comparing ourselves to others, especially people who make lots of money, such as sports figures today and in the past. Example: Babe Ruth, widely regarded as one of the greatest baseball players ever, earned an estimated **$856,850** ($17,356,541 inflation-adjusted from 1934 dollars) over his entire playing career.
* Hamilton offers several examples of people whose lives are joyful because they live to serve others.
* *Hamilton’s message title:* Keeping Up with the Joneses