



## **The Measure of Our Generosity**

If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8–11)

Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16). Or as St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the Small Catechism's explanation to the Third Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of that law concerning tithing to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel."

The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere. So you tell me: Can we really undertake the work of the ministry if our giving doesn't even measure up to Old Testament levels of generosity?

## MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF BIBLE TIMES

### Washing:

At some time during the day, people needed to wash. If Bathsheba was typical, this too took place at the end of the day (2Samuel 11:2). The normal small house seldom had bathing facilities; only in the homes of the wealthy could a room be provided with a bathtub. More common was a shallow earthenware bowl with a ridge in the middle for the feet. A full bath had to be taken in a spring or at the river. Even Pharaoh's daughter bathed in the river (Exodus 2:5). An Elisha seems to have referred to this practice when he told Naaman to go and take a bath in the river Jordan (2Kings 5:10).

Once the meal was over and darkness came, people would go to bed early, so as to be up with the sun the following morning.

### Evening Meal:

Following the midday rest there were a number of important activities. The evening meal had to be prepared on fire for the men when they returned from work. This normally consisted of vegetables or a lentil stew (Genesis 5:29,34; Daniel 1:12), which was scooped out of the common pot with a piece of thin bread.

On special occasions, such as a festival or when a sacrifice had been made, meat was added to the stew; at Passover the meat was roasted. Blood had to be drained from the meat, and in later times meat could not be served with Dairy products (Leviticus 7:26). There were also strict food laws about what meat might and might not be eaten (Leviticus 11). The meal would be finished with fresh or dried fruit.

## CHURCH HAPPENINGS

The week of Thanksgiving Darrell Bittle went back to Georgia with his daughter Jessica.

11/11 Lance and Flo Hofman's son Malachi married McKinna Moore. Mr and Mrs Malachi Hofman will be residing in Niceville.

Thanksgiving meals were distributed to 7 families feeding 17 adults and 28 children.



Angels are available in the Narthex.

We have 11 families and 35 children in need this Christmas. Help make a difference for these families during this Holiday season.

**12/18 Jim and Sandee Baughman**



**12/1 Willa Sharpe**

**12/2 Evelyn Bollinger**

**12/4 Judy Koepsell**

**12/5 Cheryl Neumann**

**12/6 Andrew Bier**

**12/7 Corey Gabel**

**12/8 Dave Lienemann**

**12/9 David Chandler**

**12/9 Allen Parker**



**12/13 Audrey Grey**

**12/18 Larry Hill**

**12/20 Bobbie Ehlert**

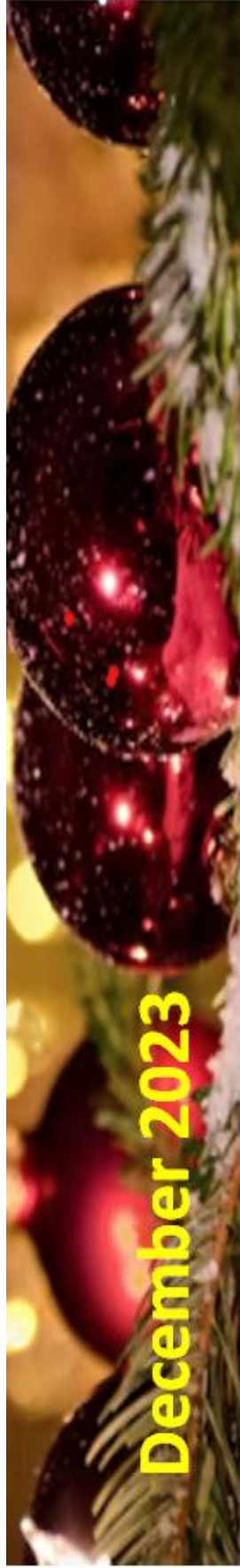
**12/21 Charles Schwartz**

**12/27 Kelly Binkley**

**12/28 Sandy Boole**

**12/30 Annabel Wood**

**12/31 Isaiah McElroy**



# December 2023

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3	Early Communion Mite Collection Both Services 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Contemporary 11:45 AM Voter's Assembly 2:00 PM Confirmation 6:00 PM Youth Group	5	6 9:30 AM Quilting 10:00 AM Bible Study 5:30 PM Advent Meal 6:30 PM Advent Service	7 5:00 PM American Heritage Girls	8	9 8:00 AM Praise Band 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study
10	Late Communion 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Christmas Breakfast 9:30 AM Cookie Walk 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Contemporary Noon Puppet Practice 2:00 PM Confirmation 6:00 PM Youth Group	12	13 9:30 AM Quilting 10:00 AM Bible Study 5:30 PM Advent Meal 6:30 PM Advent Service	14	15	16 8:00 AM Praise Band 9:00 AM Life Team
17	Early Communion 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Puppet Show 10:45 AM Contemporary 6:00 PM Youth Christmas Party	19	20 9:30 AM Quilting 10:00 AM Bible Study 5:30 PM Advent Meal 6:30 PM Advent Service	21 5:00 PM American Heritage Girls	22	23 8:00 AM Praise Band
24	Late Communion 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Contemporary 6:30 PM Evening Service	26 10:00 AM Service	27 9:30 AM Quilting 10:00 AM Bible Study	28	29	30 8:00 AM Praise Band
31	Both Communion 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Contemporary 6:30 PM Evening Service					