

FRIEDENS REFORMED CHURCH

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Winter 2023



A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR ANDY

In the coming several weeks, in our sermon series on the doctrines of the Heidelberg Catechism, we are going to be focusing on its exposition of the Ten Commandments. So, we are going to look long and hard at the Law of God.

Many people find this unpleasant. The saints in Scripture do not find it unpleasant. David says in Psalm 119:97, "O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day."

One of the most astounding things about the God of the Bible and the Bible...is how unstrict He is. The Garden of Eden? Only one prohibition. Almost limitless opportunity and joy. The greatest law table of all time? Ten. That is all. The entire Law summarized, says Jesus? Two commandments. With blessing compared to burdens of 1000 to 1, people will complain about how "stringent and puritanical" the Bible is.

Sinners always portray the Law of God as restrictive and oppressive. You can see it in the terminology we use to defend behavior that runs afoul of God's Law. We use terms like, "liberated," "emancipated," and "free," to describe actions and ideologies which run in opposition to Scripture and to the culture of our own nation in earlier days.

People happily submit to ten thousand rules and regulations from the false gods of their age... hundreds of pages of rules for their work or company... hundreds of rules in the video games or sports leagues they are involved with. But a small set of laws that history shows to be the wisest and best ever written? No thanks. Give me the ten thousand arbitrary laws of man rather than the ten good laws of God! Truly, it is better to be ruled by God than by man! We can demonstrate this briefly with the first four Commandments of the Decalogue.

Commandment 1 – Once upon a time, if you traveled to any town in America, the first building that would get your attention was a church building. This was because the worship of God was central to the life of our society.

Has our society improved? Is life better now? Are our cities safer now that 75 floor corporate offices dominate the skyline instead of houses of worship? Travel on the Interstate and tell me what billboards greet you miles before you enter a city. They are ads for strip clubs; "adult" superstores; houses of ill-repute. Has "freedom" from the Christian religion improved our lives? No person in their right mind would answer "Yes." And yet, far too many people who go by the name of "Christian," parrot the language of the God-hating world and talk about "Separation of Church and State."

Separation of church and state is a myth. It is like saying "triangular circle." Not everyone who is a citizen of the state is a member of the church, but every member of the church is a citizen of the state. Church and State cannot be separated without denying the authority of Christ. Unless the Church is

relegated to the realm of favorite baseball teams, YouTubers, or Tiktok celebrities, there can be no separation between Church and state. Saying, "Keep your religion in the church," is as ridiculous as saying, "Keep your politics in the house chambers." The purpose of both is to influence the outside world.

Commandment 2 – Once upon a time, you would not have found mosques, Hindu, Swami, or Buddhist temples in America. You would not have found them in Europe, either. Why? Because we were Christian nations, and Christian nations do not tolerate false worship. But hand in glove with the myth of separation of Church and state, comes the myth that freedom of religion means tolerating evil and false religions. That's is a notion that would've sounded like Swahili to our Founding Fathers.

When they enshrined religious liberty into our Constitution, the only religion they had in mind was Christianity. There had been religious persecution in Europe between different forms of the Christianity. They were interested in making America a safe haven for Christianity, not for Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism, or Satanism.

In the Colonial Era, every State had a state church. That is something that most of us are unaware of. Every single one of the original 13 states had a state church – supported by state funds.

There was a church in Danbury, Connecticut which opposed having their taxes collected and used to support ministers from a different denomination. They were concerned that the newly formed United States would adopt a National State Church, which would be funded by state monies. Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to this church – and in this letter we find the infamous words, "Wall of separation between church and state." That line is not in the Constitution. Anyone who says it is in the Constitution, you can safely ignore. They are just parroting the talking heads on TV.

That line about a wall of separation between church and state is not a statement of political policy; it is a campaign promise to curry votes. Jefferson was promising these folks that he'd make sure that State Church of each state in the Union would not be superseded by a National State Church.

It is important to know the origin of this expression, because it comes from the pen of an unbeliever. Jefferson was no friend to the Kingdom of God. His statement was a fraudulent campaign promise, which had nothing to do with the Constitution and which, if carried out, would destroy the interests of the Kingdom of God on earth – pretty much what has happened by adopting "Separation of Church and State" as some kind of Conservative motto.

Is life better now? Has removing the interests of God's Church from the center of the public sphere and placing it in the realm of hobby made our nation better? Safer? Churches all over the country are mourning their dwindling numbers. This is the reason why. The Christian faith has been relegated to the realm of hobby. It does not dominate lives. It is not the hub around which the rest of their life revolves.

Commandment 3 – Once upon a time, there was the notion that some topics were not fit for "mixed company." Even men who cussed like sailors would instinctively clean up their language in the presence of women and children.

The British paper, "The Times" published an article in 2016, entitled, "The Swearer Sex" in which they produced evidence that in the UK, at least, women swore far more egregiously than men. Once upon a time, women were the guardians of public morality.

Now I cannot take my kids anywhere in public without having them exposed to sewer language. I can walk up and down any street in America – from the darkest alleys of Chicago to the gravel streets of 50-population towns in rural America and I will be accosted with language unfit for swine. Are you gonna argue that this is better? Is our society better, healthier now that 13 year-olds cuss like sailors, now that mothers and fathers use the profanest of profanity in the presence of their children, now that pop songs on the radio are foul enough to make maggots blush? That is better? That is preferable?

Commandment 4 – When I was a kid in Aurora, IL, there was one or two businesses open on the Lord’s Day – gas stations. And even though one might argue the legitimacy of a gas station being available on Sunday, most people in town, even non-church people, were not happy that these businesses were open. No one was shopping; no one was hanging out at the mall; no one going out to eat. Why would you need gas? But, at bottom, people felt that it was disrespectful to the Church of the Lord to be open on His Day.

Nowadays, very few businesses are closed on Sunday. In fact, there are probably more open forms of entertainment and recreation on Sunday than on weekdays. Has this made things on our nation better? Ask church boards if it is better? Removing God from the central position in the life of the community can only have negative effects.

We may weary of hearing the Law of God read week after week, but we should realize the intent and purpose of such a practice. Psalm 119:11 reads, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” This is why it has always been the practice of Reformed churches to read the Law in public worship. Week after week, we are exposed to God’s holy standard. We are reminded of what He requires of us. His righteous character is presented to us for us to worship and wonder and love. The more we worship, wonder at, and love the holiness of God, the more we will hate sin. But if the Lord’s Day is routinely and habitually neglected, we are not exposed to God’s holiness. Nothing good can come from that.

It is my sincere desire that we will all come to see the beauty of God’s moral character, which is revealed to us in His Moral Law. Our Reformed forefathers were correct to place the God’s Law before us the way that they did. It reminds us of our sinfulness; it reminds us of God’s grace in Christ; and it fills our hearts with gratitude that He has rescued us from sin and its destructive effects. Pastor Andy



WELCOME DUANE VAHL

On December 6th, Duane Vahl joined our church family. Please give him a warm welcome!

CONSISTORY HOSTS MOVIE

On November 19, the consistory presented the movie, “God Bless the Broken Road.” It was an enjoyable afternoon with people from area communities in attendance. Plans are to show another movie this spring.



UNITED IN MARRIAGE



Congratulations to Tanner and Shelby Nuss! They were joined in marriage on September 2, 2023.



BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bennett Charles, son of Laura (Huether) and Brandon Lee, born September 2, 2023

Amelia Marie, daughter of Becca (Brown) and Dudley Schroeder, born November 3, 2023

Karsyn Johanna, daughter of Morgan (Ziegler) and Damon Macleary, born November 22, 2023

Amelia Rose, daughter of Trisha (Fischer) and Wade Weber, born December 8, 2023



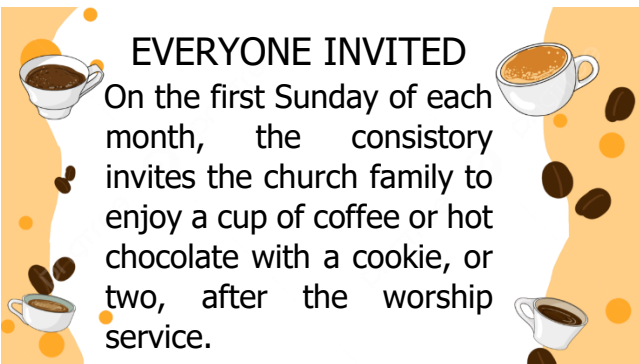
MOWING BIDS FOR CHURCH CEMETERIES

Friedens has seven cemeteries that we maintain. The Friedens Foundation was formed with a monetary donation given by Roy Hieb to maintain these cemeteries. We are always looking for people to mow these cemeteries. If you are interested in mowing this summer, please contact the Foundation committee. Bids will be accepted in April.



EVERYONE INVITED

On the first Sunday of each month, the consistory invites the church family to enjoy a cup of coffee or hot chocolate with a cookie, or two, after the worship service.



REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Karl Kuper went to be with our Lord and Savior on November 5, 2023. Memorial services were November 11th.

Judith Brown gained her angel wings on November 25, 2023. Memorial services were December 2nd.

Sharon Hauck went to her heavenly home on December 18, 2023. Funeral services were December 22nd.

Friedens' Nursing Home/Assisted Living Residents (With Addresses and Birthdays)

1. Betty Wormsbecher – Avera Assisted Living; 400 West Fir St; Parkston, SD 57366 Birthday: Feb. 1
2. Curtis Huether – Avera Assisted Living; 400 West Fir St; Parkston, SD 57366 Birthday: Sept. 24
3. Mary Fischer – Borman Manor, 501 N. 4th St, Parkston, SD 57366 Birthday: July 20
4. Dennis Fisher, Sr - Borman Manor, 501 N. 4th St, Parkston, SD 57366 Birthday: Feb. 9
5. Pauline Finck – Good Samaritan Center, 2304 Laurel St, Tyndall, SD 57066 Birthday: Nov. 13
6. Elton Stoebner – Good Samaritan Center, 130 6th St, Scotland, SD 57059 Birthday: Mar. 30
7. Ruby Reiner – Countryside Living, 2100 N. Wisconsin St, Apt #242 E. Complex, Mitchell, SD 57301 Birthday: Mar. 18

SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR:

- ♥ Glen and Marilyn Hartman’s son and both daughters-in-law for strength as they battle health issues.
- ♥ Pat Stoebner for strength and courage.

POINSETTIAS GIVEN IN MEMORY

- ✿ Elaine and Helmuth Stoebner & Irwin and Irene VandeGriend from Jerry and Brenda Stoebner
- ✿ Gall & Plihal families from Mervin and Eileen Gall and family
- ✿ Eugene and Vesta Nuss & Wayne Nuss from Geri Saenz and family
- ✿ Reno Stoebner from Sandra Stoebner family
- ✿ Alvin, Eileen, Sandra and Glen Reiner, Dean, Loris & Doug Doorn from Leon and Pat Reiner
- ✿ Eldon and Peggy Schneider from Doris Schneider
- ✿ Karl Kuper, & Nathanael, Delores, and Larry Schultz from Diane Kuper
- ✿ Aaron and Elverna Stoebner from Mark Stoebner
- ✿ Aaron and Alverna Stoebner, Russell Wirt, Anthony Kollman, Julie Stoebner, and Brock Stratman from Gary and Robin Stoebner
- ✿ Gail Huether from Curtis Huether Family
- ✿ Maydean Dewald from Arlo Dewald Family
- ✿ Brian, Lothar and Juanita Maag from Terry and Hope Maag
- ✿ Ardina Huether & Carol Prien from Melvin Huether Family
- ✿ Ray O. and Evelyn Stoebner & Lawrence and Agnes Williams from Keith and Lynn Stoebner
- ✿ Reno, Mildred, and Richard Schnabel & Phyllis Moir from Gary and Jody Schnabel
- ✿ Bryan, Quinn, Hope, Eugene and Leontine Mehlhaff, William J. and Rita Hoff, Jan Weber, Leslie Mehlhaff, Lester, Mark and Gary Konechne, & Joanne Tieman from Lennis and Judy Mehlhaff
- ✿ Judith Brown and Stoebner loved ones near and far from Dale and Amy Brown
- ✿ Moto – Underhile family from Andy and Nhora Underhile
- ✿ Loved ones from Diane Stoebner
- ✿ Loved ones from Larry Miller



BORN TO BRING US JOY

Members of Friedens Sunday School performed a live nativity as the high school youth read the story as found in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

SANTEL CHANNEL 915

If you have Santel Communications as your television provider, you have the capability to watch our church services. We are in the process of working out all the bugs so please be patient. Watch the bulletin, Facebook page, and the next newsletter with updates.

JVC

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Annual Meeting – January 17 @ 7:30 pm

Memorial/Appreciation Sunday with Potluck – February 11

Ash Wednesday Service – February 14

Lenten Services – February 21, 28, March 6, 13, and 20

Palm Sunday – March 24

Maundy Thursday Service – March 28

Easter Sunday Service – March 31 @ 8:00 am