

First United Methodist Church Commerce

Volume 15, Issue 1

January 2017



*Candlelight
Christmas Eve
Service
Saturday, Dec. 24
@ 7:00pm
in the Sanctuary*



**One Service
December 25 @ 10am**

Come as you are and bring friends to sing carols and share the Christmas story!



**One Service
January 1st @ 10am**



Holiday Office Schedule

The church office will be closed Monday, Dec. 26 through Friday, Dec. 30 for Christmas and New Year's.



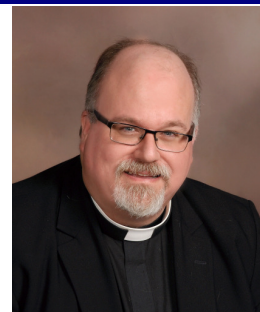
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Gossip and the “Seven Deadly Sins”

By: Dr. Gregory S. Neal

None of us likes to hear about how we are sinners. Indeed, in the Church these days it is quite common to find that the subject of “sin” is avoided as much as possible. We don’t want to talk about our sins – but can be very eloquent about the sins of others – because, I’m convinced, we don’t want to face the fact that we truly are sinners.



At first glance, some sins don’t look like sins. Sometimes we open our mouths in a conversation without the intention of sinning, but the next thing we know we’re in the middle of a gossip-fest. And Gossip is a sin – a sin that afflicts clergy and laity alike.

Scripture against gossiping abounds. Among my favorite Biblical references are:

- A gossip goes about telling secrets, but one who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a confidence. (Proverbs 11:13)
- A gossip reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a babbler. (Proverbs 20:19)

We all know the hurt, damage, fear, and pain that gossiping can cause. Who has not been hurt by gossip or had relationships destroyed when confidences have been betrayed? Who has not had falsehoods and misinformation spread about them by people whom they once trusted? Gossip has a powerful yet destructive influence on relationships; it can destroy families, friendships, and even the community of faith. When we break apart into groups and talk about each other, or when we speak aloud about topics, individuals, or conversations that were private, we damage not only those about whom we speak, but the whole community and, indeed, ourselves.

This is the power of sin. It infects and destroys not only the sinner, but also the whole community of faith – even the innocent can be hurt by the sins of others! Even those unintentional sins – those sins we commit almost without knowing we’re doing it, like idle gossip – can deeply hurt and frighten those caught in the fray.

We hear so much about the extravagant sins of this age that we often fail to realize that many, far subtler sins are just as atrocious in the eyes of God. One of my favorite lists of sins is also found in the book of the Proverbs, and has been sometimes called “The Other Seven Deadly Sins.” Unfortunately, so few of us have read this list that we are more apt to think that there are some real heavy sins here. Certainly, the “heavy sins” should be contained in any list of “Deadly Sins,” right?

I invite you to a moment of raw honesty as you examine this list. How many of these are familiar to you from your own life?

There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that hurry to run to evil, a lying witness who testifies falsely, and one who sows discord in a family. (Proverbs 6:16-19)

Each and every one of us can probably identify times in our lives when we have done at least six of these! Who hasn’t been “haughty” (that is, shown great pride in ourselves)? Who hasn’t lied? Ever? About anything? Who hasn’t, at some time in their lives, “devised wicked plans,” or schemes, to achieve their desires? Heck, I’ve done that just to get into a shorter line at the grocery store! Who hasn’t had feet which hurry them into evil? When I was a little kid they didn’t need any encouragement ... they did it on their own! Who hasn’t testified falsely? (The fish was how large?) And, what about sowing discord in the family – specifically, the family of faith? Have you ever told someone something knowing it would make them upset just so that they would, in turn, get upset at some other member of the church? I would say that, in our moments of total honesty, we know where the fingers point. Right? Yes ... I see you trying to duck over there, behind that sofa. And, yes, I know that I’m talking about myself as well.

We should notice two things about this list of “Seven Deadly Sins.” Firstly, they all have a direct and powerful impact upon the Body of Christ; they speak, for the most part, about sins which can and do take place within the community of faith. Secondly, certainly five of these sins can be understood, to one degree or another, as having something to do with gossip. And, as the Scripture makes plain, they are an “abomination” to God.

How do we overcome the power of sin in our lives? I wish I had an easy answer for us, but I don’t. There is no simple 1-2-3-step procedure for overcoming sin. Indeed, if we take the scriptures seriously, we really must face the fact that we cannot overcome sin on our own.

I don't like that answer any more than you do. Certainly there is something that we can do! No ... not us. If sin is going to be overcome, it's going to have to be overcome by the only one who can overcome it: God. Sin can be overcome through the powerful grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who works within us to empower us to love. Concerning the fulfilling of the Law, Jesus said:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

Please notice, according to Jesus we are to begin by loving God. We love God with all that we are, and then we love our neighbors as ourselves. This order is very important for, fundamentally speaking, if we don't love God first we may well find it impossible to love our neighbors. To put that another way: loving God enables us to love our neighbors. And, conversely, if we discover that we are continually refusing to love our neighbors, close introspection may show that we really don't love God.

Along another train of thought, we are told to love our neighbors “as we love ourselves.” Contrary to the way that many people tend to think, this actually implies that we are supposed to love ourselves! If you don't love yourself, how can you love your neighbor *as yourself*? Now, this is not some kind of perverse call to narcissism. Quite the contrary, we are called to love ourselves because – as we learn in John 3:16 – God first loved us enough to send Jesus into the world to die for us. If God loves us that much, then we really should love ourselves as God loves us.

Love is how God defeats the sinful power of gossip in our lives. We respond to God's grace with love for God, and with love for our neighbors. When we love someone, and are intentional about loving and serving God, we are less likely to gossip. And, over time, if we live in God's love and respond to the presence of Jesus Christ in ourselves and in our neighbors by faith, we will discover that a desire to gossip will, slowly, fade away.

Worship

Saturday, December 24
Christmas Eve Service
@ 7:00pm

Sunday, December 25
One Service @ 10:00am

Sunday, January 1
Epiphany Sunday
One Service @ 10:00am

Sunday, January 8
Baptism of the Lord
8:45am ~ Chapel
10:50am ~ Sanctuary

Committee Chairs

Ad Council Chair:

Mike Roberts (903) 886-2142

Lay Leader:

Carole Walker (903) 886-4450

SPPRC Chair:

Jim Patton (903) 886-4612

Trustees Chair:

TBD

Finance Chair:

Gil Naizer (903) 886-1961

FUMC Foundation President:

Anne Mills (903) 217-2615

Connect Team Chair:

Susan Patton (903) 886-4612

Grow Team Chair:

Craig Jensen (903) 886-8713

Serve Team Chair:

Amy Stark (903) 246-3177

Lay Member:

Gene Lockhart (903) 886-3498

UMW President:

Mary Lou Heatherly

(903) 886-8381

FIRST THURSDAY

First Thursday
Potluck Luncheon
January 5 @ 12pm

COMMERCE CARES

RECYCLE

Sat., Jan. 7 @ 9-11am

At the intersection of
Walnut and Campbell Streets

To watch or listen to Dr. Neal's sermons online, go to:

www.revneal.org
www.youtube.com/revneal
www.facebook.com/RevNealVideo



The First United Methodist Newsletter is the official publication of FUMC Commerce. The newsletter is published at the end of the month. Inputs may be submitted to the Church office to Bonnie Smith, Communications Specialist, at communications@fumccommerce.org, or call the office at 903-886-3220. Questions may be addressed to the Church office.

****The next deadline is Monday, January 16 by 9:00am****



Marketplace & Lunch Raised \$7,400 & Counting

Though the weather outside was cold and wet on December 3rd, the mood was cheery and bright inside the Family Ministry Center at the Merry Marketplace and Lunch for Missions! The market offered a wide array of homemade sweets and treats, hand-stitched blankets and accessories, gifts, Christmas decorations, and alternative gifts. Piping hot stew was available for lunch, and the Children's Choir shared the sounds of the season.

Thanks to the generous givers, dedicated volunteers, and merry shoppers, the event raised \$7,400 for general missions, the Prayer Shawl Ministry, the Wesleyan Campus Ministry, and designated missions through alternative gift-giving. The tally will continue to inch up as Ann Underhill consigns or sells on eBay a few select items not sold at the market. Other unsold items were donated to the Bargain Box.

Mark your 2017 calendar now for Saturday, December 2, for the 5th annual Merry Marketplace & Lunch for Missions!



City of Commerce employees fluffed and strung lights on trees as part of a service morning organized by new city manager, Darrek Ferrell.



Wesleyan Campus Ministry members helped Jim and Susan Patton prep ingredients



The Merry Marketplace offered a wide array of items all donated by members and friends of FUMC-C.

Harriet Williams and Ann Underhill



The Children's Choir under the direction of Jelisa Baker performed during lunch.



Hunt County Gives 2016

On the Saturday before Christmas Eve, volunteers from our church family, the community, the Wesleyan Campus Ministry, and Smile Corner distributed food baskets to 125 local families on behalf of Hunt County Shared Ministries - FISH and provided a hearty breakfast and hospitality for our guests. Special thanks also goes to Texas A&M University - Commerce, which provided a forklift and operator to unload pallets of food, and to Fix & Feed, which loaned us a pallet jack to move the pallets.



Gary Coe from Texas A&M University – Commerce unloaded pallets of food from FISH lickety-split.



This crew moved multiple pallets of food from the Family Ministry Center up the hill to Methodist Drive so we could easily load cars.



Wally Jeffers (right), executive director of FISH, stopped by and enjoyed some pancakes flipped by Gene Lockhart and Jim Patton.



Employees from Smile Corner Dentistry provided smiles and helping hands.



Working together to care for those in need.

Distribution and breakfast volunteers





Worship Committee

Worship Committee Re-Start

In late January we will have a re-start of our Worship Committee.

If you are contacted about being part of this group, please consider saying "yes."

We need everybody's participation as we seek to make our worship life together even better!



Luigi's Italian Cafe has offered to support our community by donating 10% of dining receipts on the third Sunday of each month to our church. If you take your bulletin after church on January 15, Luigi's will staple it to your ticket. They will tally our receipts and send a check directly to our church. Help support our church by eating some good food!

TACKLE



HUNGER

Save the Date – February 5th
Details coming soon.



Adult Confirmation

Congregation-Wide Confirmation Class

Once a month during the Sunday School Hour on the dates listed below. EVERYBODY is invited to join us.

Class dates: Jan. 22, Feb. 26, *Mar. 26, *Apr. 30, *May 21 (*tentative/open to adjustment).



"If telemarketers call, invite them to church."





UMW will meet **Tuesday, January 17** at 10:00am. Our January project is: Nursing Home Bingo Prizes, sugar free cookies, 6 oz drinks, peanut butter crackers, lotions, shampoos (small). **All women are invited to join us!**

UMW is still collecting Box Tops for Education and Labels for Education.



In memory of...

Sherie Kao

By: Carolyn Burt



Attendance

	<u>Early</u>	<u>Late</u>	<u>SS</u>
Dec 4	29	93	51
Dec 11	28	82	53
Dec 18	23	134	59



**Financial Information
General Operating Fund**

as of November 30, 2014 Year-to-Date

Income:	\$ 26,883	\$322,921
Expenses:	<u>\$ 28,366</u>	<u>\$335,921</u>
	-\$ 1,483	-\$ 13,000

Reading the Bible Daily



As you seek to grow closer to God through daily prayer and Bible study, you may have your own favorite daily readings. If not, you will find Scriptures for each day listed below. We hope you'll read daily and ask yourself: "How will I be different today because of what I just read?" Some other questions you might ask are: What does this text say about who God is?" "What does this text say about who I am/who we are as human beings?" "What does this text say about our relationship with God?" You may want to reflect on paper with a journal or note pad. We hope this will become a part of your daily prayer time.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Sunday, Jan 1	Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Monday, Jan 2	Isaiah 42:1-9
Tuesday, Jan 3	Psalm 29
Wednesday, Jan 4	Acts 10:34-43
Thursday, Jan 5	Ephesians 3:1-12
Friday, Jan 6	Isaiah 60:1-6
Saturday, Jan 7	Psalm 29
Sunday, Jan 8	Matthew 3:13-17
Monday, Jan 9	Isaiah 49:1-4
Tuesday, Jan 10	Isaiah 49:5-7
Wednesday, Jan 11	Psalm 40:1-5
Thursday, Jan 12	Psalm 40:6-11
Friday, Jan 13	1 Corinthians 1:1-9
Saturday, Jan 14	John 1:29-34
Sunday, Jan 15	John 1:35-42
Monday, Jan 16	Psalm 27:1, 4-6
Tuesday, Jan 17	Psalm 27:1, 4-9
Wednesday, Jan 18	Matthew 4:18-22
Thursday, Jan 19	1 Corinthians 1:17-18
Friday, Jan 20	Matthew 4:12-23
Saturday, Jan 21	1 Corinthians 1:10-16
Sunday, Jan 22	Isaiah 9:1-4
Monday, Jan 23	1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Tuesday, Jan 24	Micah 6:1-5
Wednesday, Jan 25	Micah 6:6-8
Thursday, Jan 26	Psalm 15
Friday, Jan 27	1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Saturday, Jan 28	Matthew 5:1-2, Micah 6:4
Sunday, Jan 29	Matthew 5:1-12
Monday, Jan 30	Isaiah 58:1-9a
Tuesday, Jan 31	Psalm 112



Prayer Lists

Newly Added

Rev. Tom Dudley

Jason Matthew Smith (Lavonne Wells's grandson)
Briana Routt (Sally Grove's sister-in-law)

Continued Prayers

Healing and peace for our hurting country and world, Gayle Shumate, Carol Peek, Allen Martin, Jean Andrews, Margaret Floyd, Helen Cole, Jim Pinney (Janet Skauge's brother), Zachary Madden, Pete Smith, Sally Grove, Gladys and Jack Gray, John Walker (Nancy Doughty's brother), Cheyanne Gambrell (Ladonna & Chris Patterson's granddaughter), Jessica Lauren Coe (Diane McDowell and Susan Lampe's friend), Brad Standlee (Gene and Betty Casselberry's friend), Hugh Hanby, Charlene Stewart, Susan Andresen, Loretta Kibler, Harry Icenhower, Preston Helton (Jan & Jeff Helton's grandson), Pete Chamberlain, Jennifer Oats (Jessica Morgan's sister), Mike Coker (Harold Coker's brother), Carolyn Hofer (Becky Coker's sister), Carter James McLeroy, Gene Casselberry, Doris Kerbow, Rev. Clay Yeager, Garrett Cramer, Harold McFarland (Julia Robinson's father), Lois Cranford, Betty Morton, Robert Seay

Draughn's/Country Home Estate:

Ahtrell Dalton, Barbara Gish, Joe and Mary Louise McMahan, Edna O'Quinn, Euple Walker, and Ruth Ann White

The Haven (San Antonio): Faye Jackson

River Point (Kerrville, TX): Lucy Potts

Austin: Ruby Vander Velde

"The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."

James 5:16

Help us hold each other in prayer by contacting the church office with new prayer concerns and updates on existing prayer requests.

If you have someone you would like to add or remove from the prayer list, please let the church office know (903-886-3220).



Remembering those serving in our military...

2nd Marine Division Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith
Col. Peter Bailey Garrett Johnson
Nathan Grove Lt. Col. Keith Williams
Lt. Dan Barton
Josh Ham-Nadine and Clay Yeager's grandson-in-law
Lt. Col. Jeremy Quatacker-Mark and Frances Sartwell's son-in-law
Tyler Craig (Afghanistan)-Brad and Vickie Boynton's son-in-law
Chief Robert Starkey-Wanda Beane's brother and Tom Starkey's son
Lt. JG. Terry Starkey-Wanda Beane's brother and Tom Starkey's son
Jim Hunsicker (Afghanistan)-Carolyn Miller's brother
Alex Dech (Afghanistan)-Pastor Ron Dech's son
Captain Daniel Robnett-Clyde and Wanda Robnett's grandson
Kris Yoder-John & Rebecca Sneed's son-in-law
Staff Sgt. Geoff Abbe & Sgt. Eric Abbe-Ladonna & Chris Patterson's cousins



Phone: 903-886-3220

Fax: 903-886-3240

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office@fumcccommerce.org

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE
NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
Articles for the next newsletter are due
Monday, January 16 by 9:00am**

First United Methodist Church
1709 Highway 24
Commerce, TX 75428
Senior Pastor - Dr. Gregory S. Neal