

May 2024



Trinity Lutheran Church

Villa Park, IL

Always Growing in Christ

The Lion's Roar

Amos 3:8

"The lion has roared; who will not fear?"

The Lord GOD has spoken; who can but prophesy?"

"For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20

Gazing into the Funhouse Mirror

Did you ever go into the funhouse at carnivals when you were a kid. Remember the mirrors? They were intentionally warped to reflect a humorous version of the person standing in front of them. One made you look 3 feet tall and 4 feet wide. One made you look 9 feet tall and as big around as a twig. Another made your head look huge and your body tiny. We laughed at how they made us look because we knew it was not real.

We talk about three uses of God's Law. The first is "curb" because one of the functions of God's Law is to keep us from blatant sin. It is not okay to kill our neighbor because his music is too loud or his grass is uncut, for instance. The third use is "guide" because it guides us in how to live a life that makes God happy. The second use is mirror. If you ever think that you are not really all that sinful, look in the mirror. If you ever think that you do not really need God, look in the mirror. The mirror protects us from ourselves. It helps dissuade us from believing that we are really almost okay and only need a little help. When you look in the mirror of the Law of God you should see a poor miserable sinner who is completely lost and damned without God's intervention. Satan has a fix for that however.

Satan holds up a funhouse mirror into which we may gaze. Satan's mirror shows us that whatever we are doing is okay as long as we're not really hurting anyone. Whose business is it anyway? We should be able to live our lives however we like. If whatever we think is working for us, the Church and "churchy people" have no right to tell us otherwise. Satan's funhouse mirror also encourages us to believe that everyone discovers truth for themselves and my truth may be different from your truth. His mirror distorts truth so that there is not one truth but many truths the way we see many duplicates of the same object when we look through a prism. So, if I'm looking into Satan's mirror, I would never suggest that my truth is the only truth because I can clearly see many truths. Likewise, I would never "brainwash?" my children but rather encourage them to choose "their truth." If you look into God's mirror, you see one truth and everything else is damnable. God's mirror shows one way to heaven and everything else leads to Hell. Jesus said "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." That's it. There is one way to the Father. Knowing that, does it seem like a good idea to send people, especially children, into the funhouse and hope they find the right path? Yet that is exactly what many people do by saying that they don't want to ram religion down someone's throat. Or, they say that people need to buy into religion on their own.

All that says is that you don't really believe in what God says. You think God is a liar and you got that idea from Satan's mirror. That is the bottom line in all his mirrors. God is a liar. Satan does not want us to trust

God, but rather than come out and say it, he is a coward and hides behind platitudes, nonsensical sayings, and moralistic mush.

Anytime you see something that contradicts the Word of God (He was kind enough to write it down in black and white so we could check everything we hear and see against it), understand that you are looking in Satan's funhouse mirror. Of course it is going to agree with you and disagree with God! That's what Satan wants. Let's take a peek into some of Satan's funhouse mirrors.

Do you think people should not be held accountable for their actions because they have had a hard life? 2 Thessalonians 3:10 says, "For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living." It seems God intends for people to be held accountable for their choices regardless of what hardships they have endured. Just because you were oppressed does not mean you should get a free ride now. Just because you were treated violently does not give you license to be violent.

Do you think that homosexuality should be accepted as a normal and natural expression of love between consenting human beings? Romans 1:26-28 says, "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error." It seems God makes no provision for any kind of sexual union besides heterosexual marriage. It does not matter to God how pious you are or how woke you are. Sexual union is ONLY given to a man and a woman who join together for life. Any other use of sex is a perversion of God's will and you're looking into Satan's funhouse.

Do you think that churches should ordain women into the Holy Ministry and that it is sexist and misogynistic not to do so? 1 Timothy 2:12 says, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet." The fact that our society so radically objects to this scripture should indicate that it is the Lord's will. Anytime the Lord gives Law, some people rebel like children who cannot be told "no." Man is the head. Woman is the helper. Christ is a man. Pastor's stand in His stead. There is no getting around it unless one decides that this particular part of the Bible does not apply. And if this part does not apply, what other parts do not apply: the resurrection from the dead, eternal life, paradise? I know some very fine female theologians and I know even more extremely faithful women, but the Office of the Holy Ministry has not been given to them.

These and many more societal challenges to the Holy Scriptures are Satan's mirrors reflecting his twisted evil will. Check every notion against what the words of Scripture say. Don't let wily hucksters twist the words and try to make you doubt them. The words of the Bible are very clear to any sane person. As Luther was wont to ask, "what do the words say?" Let's not try to explain what God meant, or what God failed to say, or how society has grown beyond what God said. Let's just stick with what the Word says. That is when we know we're right no matter what funhouse mirror we might be tempted to look into.

Wear Red

Wear Red for Pentecost services on May 18-19

Save the Date

June 20 - Third Thursday

July 18 - Third Thursday

July 21-27 Summer Servant Event in North Carolina – Current 8-12 Graders

August 15 - Third Thursday



New Banners

If you've noticed the new Alleluia banner hanging in the sanctuary this season, give Cindy Meier a big thank you. She made this banner for our Easter worship services and has started work on another new one for Reformation next fall.

The **7:00 pm Ascension service on Thursday, May 9**, will be the debut for our new banner of the ascending Christ. Jenny Swenson found it in a catalog and it was purchased last year, but postal delays made it arrive late. We can finally use it this season. Unlike most of Trinity's other felt banners, this one is made of nylon which allows for very vibrant colors.

Thank you to Jenny Swenson and Cindy Meier for all their work on our banner ministry.

Youth News

Tuesdays in May @ 3:30 - 5:30 THE PROJECTS for junior high youth. 5th graders are invited!

YOUTH FAMILY DINNER WEDNESDAY, MAY 8 @ 6:00 Families of youth currently in grades 5-12 are invited for dinner and to learn of the upcoming youth ministry plans for the summer and the 2025 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

Friday, May 31 @ 7:00 Parent's Night Out

Parents - Pastor Rogers is inviting you to spend a relaxing time getting to know each other and enjoy some heavy appetizers along with beer and wine. If you'd like to attend, please contact the church office to reserve your spot. You're welcome to bring your friends.

Men's Beef & Bourbon Night

Saturday, May 18,
2024

6:00 PM



Vacation Bible School

June 3-6, 2024

9:00 am - 11:30 am

Ages 3 - 10 Welcome!

Join Trinity of Villa Park for an exciting four days exploring the ocean and learning why God is our friend FOREVER!

Contact Ashley Collins with questions or to volunteer at VBS@trinityvp.com

***Registration will close on May 15th. After May 15th, please email directly for registration.*

Stewardship Corner

More Than a Negative

Even if you've never had to testify in court, a thousand TV shows have made you familiar with the question, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" Why not just make people swear to tell the truth? Or make them promise not to lie?

Any parent who has ever had to interrogate a child about a broken cookie jar or a scuffle over a toy knows the answer. There are plenty of ways to try to get out of trouble without technically lying. You tell just enough of the truth to skate on by.

We often play the game of seeing how close we can get to sinning without technically going over the line.

But in our heart of hearts we know that this is not what God intended when He gave us the commandments. He's not giving us a merely negative rule and challenging us to just barely stay away from this or that. There is much more to each commandment than a prohibition. We shouldn't just avoid murdering people — we should be of service to our neighbor.

For each negative prohibition in the commandments there is a positive good that we are to cherish and protect. In the Eighth Commandment, that gift is the reputation of our neighbor and our relationship with him:

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

Your relationship with your family members (who are your nearest neighbors), the other members of your congregation, your coworkers and your friends is one of the most precious gifts you have been given. You need to exercise good stewardship with this gift just as much as you need to exercise good stewardship with your life, resources, time and income. This is an especially fragile gift because it's easy to ruin a relationship with slander and talking behind someone's back.

But speaking well of your neighbor in Christian love is absolutely free; it costs you nothing, yet it pays you great dividends. If you find this challenging at times, if you are tempted to speak ill of others, just remember that this other person is also a beloved child of God for whom your Lord Jesus suffered and died. Your Lord Jesus loves you both.

Worship Services

Saturdays 4:30 pm

Sundays 8 am & 10:30 am