

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.

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Worship This Week Oct. 19, 2025

SCRIPTURE INTRO – A recap on the first five commandments. First, no other god except me. Second, do not make an idol of me. Third, keep my name holy. Fourth, keep the sabbath day holy. Fifth, honour your parents and elders.

SCRIPTURE & MESSAGE – Exodus 20:13

You must not murder. – New Living Translation

Thou shalt not kill – King James Version

Do not kill other people. – New Living Version

One of the things I love about small group discussions, where folks bring their own Bibles, is hearing different versions of the same verse. We can be taking turns reading from the same passage and what someone is reading will be slightly different than what's in mine. The fact that we have many English translations of the Old Testament Hebrew scriptures at our disposal tells us that words can be translated and understood differently. This is just another example of our diversity. One truth in the Bible – for sure, without a doubt, the Bible says one thing. But different ways of saying it. That said, words can be potentially confusing. It's important to get the right words to avoid confusion. Same original words in Hebrew, but translated, interpreted and potentially understood in different ways. In situations such as this, I often go to the Amplified Bible, which as the name suggests, stretches it out with additional information to shed light on the truth. "You shall not commit murder (unjustified, deliberate homicide)." The key word in this scripture is what we understand as "murder."

(Although did you catch the King James Version? It was "kill." There is nothing totally wrong about the KJV; it's just not as accurate because it relied on older manuscripts. It was written in the 17th century. Additional and more reliable manuscripts have since been discovered by archeologists and biblical scholars.)

There is a big difference between murder and kill. Both refer to the taking of life or ending of life. Look at how we use each word. Cancer kills millions. Soldiers are killed in battle. Hunters kill ducks. I use a natural herbicide to kill weeds. Murder is on a different level. Someone is found guilty of murder. A rebel army murdered thousands of village residents. The key difference is that one type of life-taking is acceptable and the other is not. While killing can be justified, murder is the unlawful or unjust taking of life.

What did God mean when He used this one particular word? The Hebrew word רָצַח (*ratsakh*) refers to the premeditated or accidental or unauthorized taking of the life of another human being. This commandment teaches the sanctity of all human life. So the Amplified Bible is close to the mark when it says “unjustified, deliberate homicide.” All human life is sacred.

The intent of the Sixth Commandment is to protect human life. In the beginning, after creating the heavens and earth, creating the sun and the moon and the solar system, forming the dry land, planting vegetation and creating wildlife – only then did God create human life. He did that on the final part of creation because everything had to be ready for us. Genesis 1:27 tells us that “God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” Stop for a second and take that in. We were created in God’s image. Not the animals, not the mountains or the trees. God breathed life into us. All life and creation is sacred because it’s the work of God’s hands. But human life is especially sacred. It is on a higher shelf. It must be valued and protected.

Of course, we have failed to do that almost from the beginning. “Murder pollutes the land,” God told Moses in Numbers 35:33. God allowed the adversary, Satan, to exist and tempt us. To provide us with a choice. We have free will. As we have been in Genesis and Exodus, we have been at war with God and each other ever since. This is why we have laws. Human laws are based on God’s law. Paul reminded the Romans that “The authorities are God’s servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you.” It’s why murder is at the top of the list for crime, why only the best detectives are on the homicide squad and why the greatest penalties are reserved for those guilty of deliberate taking of life.

If scripture teaches that all human life is sacred, then it’s worth asking when does life begin. Birth or conception? Scripture is clear that it’s in the womb. “You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb” – Psalm 139:13. Medical science agrees with that. American College of Pediatricians in March 2017 stated that “human biological research confirms that human life begins at conception—fertilization. At fertilization, the human being emerges as a whole, genetically distinct, individuated zygotic living human organism, a member of the species.” Which means abortion is murder.

What about capital punishment? The Bible provides conflicting messages. But I lean to the words of Christ. What happened when the woman who was caught in adultery was hauled before Jesus? The law required that she be put to death. Jesus did a remarkable thing. He didn’t abolish the law. Rather, he reminded the accusers that all sin is equal

and no one is without sin, so if you happen to be free of sin, go ahead and throw the first stone. One by one, they dropped their rocks and walked away. Turning to the woman, he said “go and sin no more.” Jesus is more about forgiveness than vengeance. “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?” “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!” (Matthew 18:21-22).

What about at the end of life, when someone has an incurable condition, cannot move, has no quality of life or dignity and relies on large amounts of pain medication? Suffering is horrible – whether it’s through pain, the inability to move and care for oneself, the failure of our organs and physiology or the darkness of depression. Many reasonable and caring people see Medical Assistance in Dying as a loving and compassionate act which reduces suffering that they see as unnecessary. I understand that. No one is opposed to medication for pain. We all take Tylenol, Advil or Aleve for head and muscle pain. Some of us are blessed with injections which make life tolerable and allow us to work and live and be there for each other. For decades, we have used palliative sedation, in which a generous amount of painkiller is used to take the body into a restful state when death is imminent. The difference between sedation and MAiD is that the intent is not to end life, but to bring comfort until natural death occurs. People can live for days or weeks with sedatives.

Let’s review the definition of murder in the Sixth Commandment, “premeditated/accidental unauthorized taking of the life of another human being.” In the case of MAiD (or abortion) it’s premeditated. MAiD fails the test.

What’s the value of suffering? Ask God, who allowed His Son to die on the cross. It’s been said that crucifixion is the most painful death possible. The Lord of Life, completely innocent, endured the indignity of being on public display in his final hours of suffering. Prior to the crucifixion he was offered wine mixed with myrrh, a sedative, but he refused it. He chose to suffer for the sins of the people with no sedation or pain relief.

God allowed His Son to suffer and die to the point where Christ wondered if His Father had actually abandoned Him. But we know that God did not abandon Him. God the Father was grieving in Heaven. At the point of death, the skies darkened, the curtain in the Temple was miraculously torn in two and the dead rose from their graves. God the Father provided his Son with the strength to endure. And the result of that undignified torture that He did not deserve was the salvation of our souls.

So what’s the value of suffering? Out of His pain came great victory. We’re not Christ, it’s true. But we are invited to model our lives after Christ. As a body, the church, for sure. Also as individuals. Just as Christ suffered, we are called to “take up your cross

daily and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). More than once, Israel was told to "be strong and courageous" in the face of the enemy. And the greatest threat is death.

If we are to take the Sixth Commandment seriously, then God will grant us the strength and courage. God will bless anyone who decides not to abort a pregnancy. God will bless those who forgive the murderer. God will grant strength and courage to the sick and their families at the end of life. The invitation in all of these situations is that when we are at our weakest, to invite God to take over and allow His mighty hands to take over.

Know that whatever happens to us in our life's journey, our loving Creator is more than willing to provide the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual strength we need to endure. To be a powerful witness. To refuse to give in to death. And then to live with Him forever. Amen.

NEW PRAYER

- Continued healing for Andrew Neely after breaking a hip in an ATV crash
- Recovery for Mark Richards from gall bladder removal

CONTINUE TO PRAY

- Healing and strength – Becca Braithwaite, Pam Cornell, Susan Doom's father, Jen Langstaff Mason, Bonnie Lozon, Kris Richards, Bruce Stephens, Julie & Dan Shaw
- Shut ins – Dianne Richards at Wallaceburg Retirement Residence; Bonnie Lozon, Jim Lusk and Sandra Pegg at Oaks Wallaceburg; Ross Fuchs and Shirley Houston at Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg; Margaret Follows at home.

DATES

- **Wednesdays until Dec. 3** – Weekly Bible study, hosted by Evangel.
- **Oct. 26** – Anniversary Service with guest preacher Barb Sargent
- **Nov. 1** – Noon. Interment service for Robert Manderson at Dresden Cemetery, led by Pastor Andy. Robert and his family grew up in Dresden, where his father was a lawyer and were active members of St. Andrew's. The late Ivy (Manderson) Wilmott was his aunt.
- **Nov. 8** – Our annual Roast Beef Dinner and auction. \$25 for adults, children under 12 are \$12.50.
- **Nov. 9** – Guest preacher Rev. Colin Paterson
- **Nov. 23** – Baptism of Aubrey, Graham and Jack McCallum, children of Nick and Leanna