Trinity Tribune: November 2026

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church
Paola, Kansas

"Capital Punishment"

Capital punishment has been in the news lately. There has been a botched lethal injection of a death-row inmate in Tennessee, Christa Pike. The Pentagon announced the livestream executing of Nidal Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter, by firing squad, to take place on December 3rd. Pres. Trump has since withdrawn the livestreaming of that execution.

Both stories have caused widespread political and religious commentary. Some criticize capital punishment entirely, some criticize the live streaming of it, while some are in favor of all of it. Even Pope Leo XIV has spoken out against the death penalty, saying it is "inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person." He went on to promote life imprisonment. What does the Bible say about capital punishment?

First, it is proper to Christians to appeal to the Old Testament. Although we are not bound to its specific laws because Christ is the fulfillment of the law, we ought to understand the moral law underneath the particular laws, which still applies and by which God judges our thoughts and actions. The Fifth Commandment still condemns murder—the intentional taking of life.

Even before God gave the Law on Mount Sinai to Moses with all its decrees and punishments, God permits capital punishment in his covenant with Noah. Genesis 9:5–6 says, "**And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.**" This passage echoes the creation of man from Genesis 1, that each of us are created with both body and soul, in the image of God. It also echoes what God says to Cain after he murdered Abel, "**The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground**" (Gen 4:10). Innocent blood cries out for vengeance to God.

This is because the intentional taking of a human soul is so heinous a crime that the murderer's own life is forfeit. God spends much of Leviticus and Numbers detailing the restitution for various crimes. If you hurt someone, steal from them, or damage property, restitution is possible. Some guilt can be forgiven by sacrifice. But there is no restitution for the taking of a life. Nothing can be given in return except one's own life. (Side note: God does provide exceptions for what we call "manslaughter," the unintentional taking of a life. Those guilty of manslaughter could flee to a "City of Refuge" [Num. 35:9–15] and stay there for a time, similar to a house arrest.)

The New Testament does not negate the possibility for the death penalty, but it does change who carries it out. The Church is not ancient Israel; it is the job of the governing authorities to carry out punishment for crimes against the state. Romans 13 says that the ruler "**does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer**" (v. 4). Governments now decide how (or whether) to punish various crimes, and this has changed over time. But the Bible, and New Testament in particular, do not bind governments on whether or not to punish murderers with the death penalty.

Christians (including the Pope) ought to consider the humanity of the murdered victim over that of the perpetrator. This also applies to most crimes. Modern Western society has decided to be kind to those accused of a violent crime, not considering justice that ought to be done for the victims. Kindness to the cruel is cruelty to the kind. It is cruel to the murdered victim(s) and their families when murderers receive light punishments.

Does a criminal have rights? Absolutely, thanks to American law. The state needs to prove its case and do so beyond reasonable doubt. Does the criminal have the right to an attorney, to appeal, etc.? Yes—and we need to hold our prosecutors and judicial system to the highest standard. Does injustice still happen when the innocent are accused of crimes they did not commit? Unfortunately, yes. In seeking to do justice for the taking of a life, we should be even more cautious about taking a life in return—ensuring to the greatest degree possible that guilt has been established and that the judicial process has been unbiased.

The manner of execution is also up to the state. We ought to recognize that executions were public for most of history to deter future murders. Even Jesus was executed publicly. But the state may decide that private executions are now preferred. The state also ought to decide on a method that will accomplish its stated end. Although botched executions have unfortunately been a part of history, more reliable methods ought to be considered.

So even though there are considerations that the state must make when adjudicating and carrying out executions justly, it is certainly biblical for Christians to support the death penalty. Someone who has committed murder has lost their right to live. No amount of restitution will bring back those who were murdered. Innocent life cries out to God. We ought not justify the actions of a murderer, as if their twisted rationale justifies their actions. Proverbs 17:15 gives wonderful advice for making careful judgments, "**He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.**"

Yours in Christ, Pastor Woelmer



Birthdays

November 1 ..... Christopher England
November 2 ..... Steve Debrick
November 2 ..... Martin Carter
November 4 ..... Peyton Mitchell
November 6 ..... Jill Druse
November 7 ..... Fritz Meyer
November 8 ..... Erin England
November 9 ..... Greg Windler
November 9 ..... Brad Ashley
November 11 ..... Lana Kettler
November 11 ..... Chylar Jones
November 13 ..... Dennis Ohlmeier
November 14 ..... Elena Smithhisler
November 15 ..... JoAnn Vaughn
November 17 ..... Devin Canada
November 18 ..... Sam Allred
November 19 ..... Elaine Brocker
November 19 ..... Kreston Debrick
November 20 ..... Alexis Belsanti
November 20 ..... Luke Elkinton
November 20 ..... Randy Maisch
November 21 ..... Jim Prothe
November 21 ..... Megan Tesar
November 22 ..... Whitney Shoemaker
November 22 ..... Burl Peckman
November 22 ..... Jason Peterson
November 22 ..... Martin Carter
November 23 ..... Lisa Shannon
November 23 ..... Charlotte Yarborough
November 24 ..... Lindsey Garrison
November 24 ..... Christie Stephens
November 25 ..... Courtney Belsanti
November 25 ..... Dana Hall
November 26 ..... Liliana Peckman
November 29 ..... Rick Druse
November 30 ..... Alan Hutchison

Anniversaries

November 3 ..... Ken and Karla Debrick (44)
November 18 ..... Darrell and Barb Brandt (54)
November 20 ..... Harry and Gay Stubbs (50)
November 21 ..... Fritz and Miciah Carter (11)
November 22 ..... Brad and Susan Ashley (21)
November 30 ..... Brett and Becky Stutzman (57)
November 30 ..... Sam and LeAnn Allred (25)

COFFEE HOUR



Everyone is invited to stay for Coffee Hour in the Gathering Room following worship. Our thanks to those that provide snacks each Sunday. The sign-up sheet to provide snacks for Coffee Hour in 2026 is on the counter in the Gathering Room. Consider signing up to honor birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc.

ADULT BIBLE CLASS:

"Wisdom Literature"

What is "Wisdom"? Our next series of books will be the Wisdom Literature books of the Bible: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Come to hear what wisdom is and how we can learn from her regarding faith and life. Join the Adult Bible Class at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays in the Heritage Room to learn more!

"LOOKING AHEAD" BIBLE STUDY

We meet on Wednesdays from 10:30–11:30 am in the Heritage Room. Join us to study the Scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday service, so you can get a "sneak peek" of what you will hear on Sunday.

THANKSGIVING DAY SERVICE

Our Thanksgiving service this year will be at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 26th. Come give thanks to God for another year of His grace and mercy and blessings. Without His providence for us, we would have nothing, but in Christ, we have all that we need.



TRUNK OR TREAT

Thank you to everyone who brought treats to share, along with all those who helped set up, clean up, prepare hotdogs, and serve food at Trunk or Treat! We had the most beautiful day and a pretty nice turnout, especially in the 4:00 hour.

CREATION MUSEUM AND ARK ENCOUNTER

Our Youth and families are planning a trip to the Creation Museum and Ark Encounter in Kentucky June 2–6, 2027. Congregation members are also invited to join them! In order to finalize housing plans, we need a firm commitment from any Youth families by November 1. Please let Kristina or Lori know if you are planning to attend. We are asking each Youth family attending to pay a $100 commitment fee to help offset the cost of the trip. There will be a sign-up list in the back of church for any other congregation members planning to join us. We ask that congregation members sign up by December 1. See Lori Schlegel for any questions you have.

NURSING HOME SERVICES

You are invited to help Trinity provide brief worship services for nursing home residents this month. The simple services are approximately 20 minutes in length at each home. This month, we are scheduled for Sunday, **November 8th and 29th**. On November 8th, we will begin at 1:30 pm at Country Club Estates and then go to Homestead around 2:15 for the second service. On Nov. 29th, we will begin at 1:30 pm at North Point and then go to Medicalodge around 2:15 for the second service. The residents really enjoy these services, especially singing their favorite hymns. It's great to have church members there to greet the residents and sing along. We have a few members who help but we could use your help too!

VOTERS MEETING MINUTES

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Windler, followed with prayer by Pastor Woelmer. Roll call was answered by 22 members; Jai Jenkins requested voters assembly membership. Financial reports by the home treasurer and mission treasurer were given. Trustees reported the west parking lot concrete is complete, work continues on the north teacherage door, the HVAC filters have been replaced, the basement Sunday school room doors have been changed, and work continues on the attic sign light.

Reports were heard from Pastor Woelmer, as well as the Endowment, Board of Education, Blocktoberfest committees, and Youth group. New business items were officer elections. Results are Chairman – Greg Windler, Elder – Kyle Minden, Treasurer – Paul Brack, Trustee – Clint Haley, Board of Education – John Schlegel, Finance Committee – Autumn Menefee, Endowment Committee – Lori Schlegel, Usher – Stan Loftiss, Secretary – Jim Prothe, Sunday School superintendent and secretary – Kristina Eilts and Michelle Haley. Voters approved next year's Mission Budget to be the same as past year ($7500 to Kansas District, $500 to mission partner, and holiday loose offering to missions).

Also approved was congregational support of LCMS constitutional resolution regarding who may call a special district convention. Membership transfers and releases per Pastors report were approved. Voters were reminded to continue funneling historian items to appropriate location, to continue updating the memorial projects listing, to review the bulletin board for any correspondence, to continue directing Thrivent choice dollars, and that the church will be locked around upcoming November elections. Discussion was held regarding interest in the LCMS foundation (Kurt Junkel is the rep); contact Chairman Windler for further details. Approval was given to the elders and Pastor to coordinate acquiring new green paraments. The meeting was adjourned with the singing of the Doxology.

YOUTH GROUP

Our Branson Sight and Sound Theatre trip is coming up soon, November 13–15th! We will be seeing "Miracle of Christmas."

ELECTIONS

Please remember that our church is a polling location, so the building will be locked while the election equipment is here, roughly from Monday morning (11/2) through Wednesday morning (11/4), except during the time that the elections are being held on Tuesday. We do anticipate still having the Wednesday morning Bible class.

KANSAS LUTHERAN SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

The Kansas Lutheran Schools Scholarship Foundation (KLSSF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, provides essential scholarships for K–12 students attending Lutheran schools in the LCMS Kansas District. As an approved Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) under the Kansas Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program, KLSSF enables donors to support Christ-centered education while receiving a 75% Kansas state income tax credit on eligible contributions. Your gift can directly transform a child's educational journey. Visit www.klssf.org to donate and learn more. Join us in expanding access to Lutheran education and strengthening its mission across Kansas.

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

If you have a Thrivent account (or know someone else who does), don't forget to periodically check the account for Thrivent Choice Dollars; you are able to donate them to church or to various charities of your choice. If someone you know is not able to check online easily, feel free to help them see what might be sitting in their account, ready to be designated!

AUBURN PHARMACY CAPS

Please save your Auburn Pharmacy caps; Trinity earns 25 cents for every specially marked cap collected from AuBurn Pharmacy and submitted! There are 4 submission periods per year with an opportunity to earn up to $2500 per period! There is a box in the gathering room for collection.

PRAYER CHAIN

If you would like to be added to a texting group for getting prayer requests, please sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Room, or speak with Pastor or Susan Schmitt.



ONLINE GIVING

Visit our church's Facebook page sometime and look for the bright blue "Donate" button next to the "Like" and "Message" buttons. The company Guidestar processes the transactions; you may either tack on an additional amount to pay the 3% fee that they would charge, or allow the fee to come out of the donation. You may, of course, continue to donate via the offering plates in church; this is just one more way that people can donate.

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