



## Grain

“We are all one—and if we don't know it, we will learn it the hard way.”  
–Bayard Rustin

## Field

“1 Then God spoke all these words: 2 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; 3 you shall have no other gods before me... 7 You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. 8 Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy... 12 Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. 13 You shall not murder. 14 You shall not commit adultery. 15 You shall not steal. 16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. Exodus 20:1-3; 7-8; 12-17

## Thoughts

Do you think about the Ten Commandments in relation to our communities and government? Or do we think about how they only point to our personal flaws?

In 2001, a 5,280-pound granite monument depicting the Ten Commandments was installed in the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court's judicial building. That's one way to connect the Ten Commandments to government. But we don't live in a theocracy or even have one common understanding of what the commandments mean for today. Another response to government, with the commandments as a part of God's love covenant written in our hearts, is to personally resist laws and political rhetoric that do harm to our neighbor. But obviously, actual changes in the law and national rhetoric also make a difference.

Out of Oklahoma, which has passed the most anti-LGBTQ laws than any other state in recent history, came a recent news story about a non-binary youth, Nex Benedict, who was bullied for several months in a school that was intolerant of even discussions about LGBTQ issues. Nex died a day after being beaten in a school bathroom, though it is unclear if Nex was attacked that particular time because of their gender. The exact cause of Nex's death hasn't been released but has drawn attention to their experiencing harassment. Do we recognize a cause and effect related to the state laws, school intolerance from the top down and the bullying, or only correlations? Anecdotally, in WI, when the amendment to ban same sex marriage was in the news in 05 and 06, I heard more about anti-gay and anti-gay family harassment. One lesbian mother told me that for the first time her son had been jeered at by classmates who shouted, “You don't have a real family,” during the height of the amendment debates. I personally was surprised by the depth of my own emotional relief when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled to legalize same sex marriage. As a lesbian, I trusted in a just God above government, but public policies make a difference personally and can impact how we treat one another.

Allowing the Ten Commandments to help us to face our flaws and let grace into the cracks of our lives is spiritually significant. That goes hand in hand with discerning how the commandments are about the well-being of all God's children. The Ten Commandment are always about loving our neighbor and envisioning how we can live together. Happy Monday!

## Share

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to [cynthia.crane@elca.org](mailto:cynthia.crane@elca.org)  
All Monday Quotes found under the Resources & Advocacy Tools tab at [www.loppw.org](http://www.loppw.org)

Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy