2026-2027 Confirmation
Year 3: Lutheran Christianity
The Tomorrow River Lutheran Parish

Lesson 6:
The Small Catechism: The Fifth Commandment

The Fifth Commandment
You shall not murder.

What is this? Or What does this mean?
We are to fear and love God,
so that we neither endanger nor harm
the lives of our neighbors,
but instead help and support them
in all of life's needs.

20:13 *You shall not murder. Exodus 20:13 NRSV*

Some of us learned it "Thou shall not kill" and confusion ensued. What about soldiers? What about self-defense?

This rendering (murder) is better – more faithful to Scripture and to the teachings of Judaism and Christianity across time. "Thou Shall not murder".

- Does not apply to governments or agents of the government behaving lawfully
- Does not apply to soldiers conducting themselves properly inside the rules of warfare

- Does not apply to self-defense or to the defense of the innocent

We are not to murder. But before you get too proud that you have never violated this commandment…

It includes a ban on any physical attack on another
It includes a ban on gossip or libel
It includes murder by neglecting to provide the necessities of life!

We are not to murder. Instead, we are to ensure that our neighbors are protected in their bodies and in their reputations and that they have everything they need to live and thrive.

Who is my neighbor? … Absolutely everyone…

The problem with these commandments is not that we can't comprehend them. We can! It is not that we are unable to do them (We are! -- at least most of the time…!)

The problem is that we don't want to do them. We really really really don't want to do them….

May God forgive us and transform us.