



The Grace Messenger

Newsletter of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberal, Kansas

August 2026

Stewardship Article: “Define Your Life By How You Give”

Winston Churchill reportedly said that “we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” According to Churchill, our lives are defined not by what we have gotten, but by what we give away.

Our Lord’s life is defined in this way. He gave Himself completely for us. He became a man for us. He taught the truth of God’s Word. He healed those with many and various diseases. He died the death that we deserved for our sins. He gave Himself in order to save us from sin, death, and hell. And so it is that by giving Himself completely, He got for Himself us, making us citizens of His eternal kingdom by grace.

As it was for Jesus, so it also is for us. We get more from giving than we do from simply getting. Giving softens our hearts and frees us from the grip that the worries of this world and making a living have on us. When we are singularly focused on making a living, we are singularly focused on what we get. That mindset begins to bleed into all areas of our lives — our relationships with friends and family, with neighbors and coworkers, and with the Lord. It shifts our focus from asking the question, “How can I be a friend, family member, neighbor, and servant to others?” to asking the question, “What have they done for me lately?” We become more selfish instead of selfless.

But when we give, we do not have less, nor do we become less; rather, we have more and become more. When we give, we join in the bond of friendship and family, the bond of service to those around us, out of love for them. And love is the fulfillment of the Law. It is the nature of God Himself, for God is Love. Thus, we are participating in the Divine Nature. As Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

A Reading from *Just Words*

As the Lutheran Church is a confessional church body, the confessions declare what we believe, teach, and confess; we need to understand the words we use in church and what they proclaim. I will include a portion from *Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel* for us to consider.

This month's words are "Bread and Water":

Among the more visceral metaphors for the Gospel are those that refer to eating or drinking the blessings of Christ. The primary way of saying this is to use the most common elements in the biblical world: bread and water. Of course, these are still among the most common elements today, so their power as metaphors is still strong. Although eating and drinking are different from each other, they belong together because they both evoke a way of understanding our reception of the Gospel: We receive by the mouth.

Both of these ways of saying the Gospel—eating or drinking God's gifts in faith—are common in the Old Testament too. Eating was an important means of fellowship in ancient times. Partaking of numerous meals together is richly suggestive of the bonds that exist between people. Likewise, water and drinking as a metaphor for receiving the blessings of God is common in the Old Testament. The New Testament inherits and builds on both metaphors.

In John 6, Jesus is teaching the multitudes of people on the far shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus multiplied the five barley loaves and two fish to feed the 5,000 men gathered there. When they were finished eating their fill, 12 baskets of leftovers were gathered. The feeding of the 5,000 became the background for a sermon that Jesus preached the next day. When some asked Him about the manna that came down from heaven during the desert wanderings of the Israelites, Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. ... I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty" (John 6:32-33, 35).

In this passage, another of the great "I am" statements of Jesus in John's Gospel, Jesus makes the remarkable claim that He is bread—not just any bread, but the bread of God that gives life to the world in such a way that those who eat it will never hunger again. To receive Jesus by faith means to receive sustenance for life, to receive nourishment for our souls. We are satisfied, satiated, with what is really necessary for life. We are filled with good food, food from heaven.

The Gospel of John also develops the water metaphor. In John 4:4-26, the account of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar, Jesus is sitting by the well when a woman comes to draw water. He asks her for a drink of water. He then says, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:13-14).

Here Jesus does not actually say, as He did in the case of the bread, that He is the water. But He does promise that He will give the water of life. The metaphor is softer yet still vivid. If a person drink the water Jesus gives—if a person believes in Jesus—he or she will never thirst again. Jesus quenches thirst in a way that lasts forever. In fact, He gives to the recipient an internal spring of water for eternity—water that is fully and eternally satisfying. (J.A.O. Preus – *Just Words*, p72-73)

Christ's richest blessings, Pastor Toombs

Service at Lutherhaven Retreat Center

Join Lutherans from Oklahoma and Kansas at Lutherhaven Retreat Center, outside of Knowles, OK, for worship on Sunday, September 13th, at 11 am as they worship the Lord. There will be a potluck following the service, so stick around if you want to drive down.



September Spaghetti Feed

We are foregoing the Second Sunday Potluck for September as we want to host a September Spaghetti Feed on Sunday, September 20th, beginning at 11:45 am. Invite your friends, invite your neighbors, and be sure to sign up for Breads, Salads, Desserts, or other items that pair well with Spaghetti.

Website and Facebook Update

Over the next two months, we will be updating the website, gracelutheran-ks.org, and want some suggestions. Currently, the sermons are posted to [Facebook.com/GraceinLiberal](https://www.facebook.com/GraceinLiberal) at Noon each Sunday. Should they also be placed on the website so that you have the chance to read them without going to Facebook? Should we have a picture directory of the members, where you have to log in to view it, with updated contact information?

Youth Ministry

As the School Year is here, we know that getting the kids together can be difficult, but we also know that getting them together during the summer is difficult. We would appreciate the Youth Families sticking around after the Service on the 23rd of August to meet about activities we want to gather together to do this year.

Sunday School

We are looking forward to seeing all the bright, shining faces next month as we kick off another Sunday School Year. We are still looking for individuals to help out as backup teachers. We are also looking for a few more people to sign up to provide snacks for the kids and adults.

Confirmation

We know that Confirmation is important, as those 8th Graders are looking forward to communing once they profess their faith in God. There will be a Parents' Meeting on Wednesday, September 9th to talk about this year's Confirmation Class.

From the Synod & From the District

LCMS Worker Wellness

“Markers of a Well Church Worker” is a new discussion tool available for church workers to use in peer group settings. Visit thelc.ms/markers-of-a-well-church-worker

LCMS Family Ministry

As your family creates new routines in this new school year, consider adding a time of devotion together. A simple daily devotion guide can be found at thelc.ms/daily-devotions-guide.

LCMS Life Ministry

Join the LCMS in marches for life across the country in 2026! Visit lcms.org/marchforlife and get your gear!

LCMS Health Ministry

LCMS Health Ministry created a guide to help people identify the mental health services that are best for their particular needs. Download the guide today at thelc.ms/faq-mental-health-therapy-and-counseling.

LCMS Deaconess Ministry

LCMS deaconesses are women who are professional church workers, trained to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through works of mercy, spiritual care, and teaching the Christian faith. Visit lcms.org/deaconess-ministry.



Installation of Rev. Dan Kinley as senior pastor of the TIG Ministry (Garden City, Lakin, Ulysses).

Welcome to Kansas, Dan, Stephanie, Emmeline, and Michael!



Installation of Rev. Dr. Josh Cody at Zion, Concordia.

Welcome to Kansas, Pastor Cody, Sarah, Thaddaeus, Tirzah, Theodore, Titus, Thessaly, Tilde, and Tabitha!

LCMS Health Ministry

August is a month bursting with life and activity! The colors of summer linger for a little longer. Daylight hours are still long and sunny. Children are preparing to go back to school. As Christians, we get to relish in the good life that the Lord has given to us — not simply when the sun shines or when the energy of youthfulness exists — but we rejoice in all times and in all circumstances, for “this is the will of God in Christ,” Paul writes in 1 Thess. 5:16–18! Christians see life most vividly through the cross and resurrection of Jesus, which is utter folly to the world (1 Cor. 1:18). People will question how life has meaning in the face of suffering, challenges, and most especially in the wake of death, and the answer is always found in Jesus (1 Cor. 15). The Lord is the Author and Giver of Life. Whether life feels like a joyous summer or an endless winter, Christ’s movement through the cross and empty tomb means that His presence, His comfort and His joys are yours in all things.

For Scriptural reflections of life under the cross, visit the LCMS Life library at lcmslife.org and consider reading “God’s Presence in Suffering: The Theology of the Cross” at thelc.ms/suffering-theology-of-the-cross.

MEMORY VERSE

Now may our Lord
Jesus Christ himself,
and God our Father,
who loved us and gave
us eternal comfort and
good hope through
grace, comfort your
hearts and establish
them in every good
work and word.

2 THESS. 2:16–17



lcms.org

LCMS Family Ministry

1 Thessalonians 5:11 – “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” August is a crazy time.

Kids are going back to school, with all the activities and bustle. Parents are trying to make sure that their kids have all the things that they need to succeed in this new school year. In the midst of this time of new beginnings and transitions, it can be a challenge for a family to have meaningful connections with each other. Eating meals together can be a wonderful way to spend time together. In the midst of all the bustle and busyness, it is helpful be intentional about having time as a family where you can connect. At the beginning of each week, plan what meals you will eat together as a family. Make the most of them by having a family devotion, encouraging each other, building one another up, or having a time of prayer.



2026 SAA55 Retreat
September 20-21, 2026

“Fruit Bearing Christians”

Saints Alive After 55

Don't forget to register for the 2026 Saints Alive After 55 (SAA55) Conference! The conference will be held Sept. 20-21 at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Salina.

Visit the Kansas District homepage at kslcms.org to register and find the schedule at <https://kslcms.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/2026-SAA55-Program-and-Schedule.pdf>



SEPTEMBER SPAGHETTI FEED

JOIN US!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th
BEGINNING AT 11:45 AM

AT GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH - 1200 W 11TH ST, LIBERAL, KS

ALL YOU CAN EAT! - FREEWILL DONATIONS

