



The Grace Messenger

Newsletter of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberal, Kansas

September 2026

Stewardship Article: “Stewardship in the First Commandment”

The greatest gift that Martin Luther gave to us was his Small Catechism. The word “enchiridion” is part of the original title of this work. This is the Greek word for “handbook.” The Small Catechism is a handbook of the Bible. All the basic knowledge that a Christian needs to understand the faith and live a godly life has been taken from the Bible and distilled into this beautiful little book of Christian piety. Luther starts with the Ten Commandments.

The First Commandment:

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things. (SC I)

We have a God above us. He is the Lord God and we are not. He is Almighty and in control. He is righteous and good. And therefore, we should fear Him.

This God is also our heavenly Father. He wants us to be saved. He does not want us to suffer His just wrath. He has provided salvation for us in His Son, Jesus Christ. And therefore, we should love Him.

Our heavenly Father will never leave us nor forsake us. He has promised as much — and the Bible shows us that He always keeps His promises. So, we should trust Him.

In the Large Catechism, Luther explains how money and possessions form one of the greatest temptations against the First Commandment:

This I must unfold somewhat more plainly, that it may be understood and perceived by ordinary examples of the contrary. Many a one thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and possessions; he trusts in them and boasts of them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. Lo, such a man also has a god, Mammon by name, i.e., money and possessions, on which he sets all his heart, and which is also the most common idol on earth. He who has money and possessions feels secure, and is joyful and undismayed as though he were sitting in the midst of Paradise. On the other hand, he who has none doubts and is despondent, as though he knew of no God. For very few are to be found who are of good cheer, and who neither mourn nor complain if they have not Mammon. This [care and desire for money] sticks and clings to our nature, even to the grave. (LC I 5–9)

These words of Dr. Luther should call us to repentance; sometimes, we live and act like we don’t have a Father in heaven. We seek our comfort and peace outside of His gracious promises. But we do have a Father in heaven. He does love us. All His promises are true. And the Lord will surely provide. If that is our belief, then our outward lives will reflect this belief in our acts of generosity and mercy. We will see money and possessions not as gods but rather as tools for doing God’s work.

A Reading from *Just Words* and Pastor's Reflection on the Reading

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 word is "Ransom":

The commerce or transaction metaphors in Scripture are among the most vivid and helpful ways to proclaim the Gospel. These metaphors use language and imagery that is universally understood. You don't need a business degree to understand the concept of barter and exchange. Everyone knows the idea of offering one thing in trade for another, whether it be in-kind services or shells or precious metals or paper money.

Although most people aren't aware of it, some of the most popular Gospel language in the Bible comes from the realm of commerce. The language of the marketplace is borrowed to convey the implications of Christ's suffering and death on the cross. Jesus Himself chose to speak of His work in this way—in the language of ransom.

In Matthew 20:28, Jesus characterizes His entire work and ministry: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." Ransom is a word that evokes the marketplace, particularly the slave market. The ransom was the price paid to purchase a servant or slave from indenture or slavery. In this passage, Jesus says that He came to be a servant, not to be served. Jesus is playing all the roles. He is the servant—perhaps it would be better to say slave—standing in our place. He is the one who came to pay the price for securing the freedom of those in slavery. And He is the price paid, the ransom required to secure the slaves' freedom. Christ is everything in this transaction.

The ransom metaphor pictures those whom Jesus came to purchase as helpless slaves, chained in the marketplace, standing on the auction block with no hope of freedom. For all they know, they will be purchased by an evil taskmaster as bad as the one in whose chains they now stand. Amazingly, along comes Jesus. He takes His place among the enslaved, fully identifying with them, becoming one of them. Then He pays the price for their freedom, and, incredibly, the price is His own life. His precious blood (Hebrews 9:12) is poured out on the auction block of the cross. The image is powerful. (J.A.O. Preus – *Just Words*, p80-81)

Christ has ransomed us; He has purchased us with His own lifeblood as the price for our sins, transgressions, and iniquities. More than just ransoming us, He has claimed us as His own. We no longer belong to the devil, no longer are bound for hell, and no longer are forever separated from God because He cannot abide any unclean thing to enter into His presence. Instead, we belong to Christ, we are bound for heaven to be with God, and we delight to come into His presence to be with Him, that where He is, we will be.

Christ's richest blessings, Pastor Toombs



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.

Oktoberfest October Potluck

Our Second Sunday Potluck for October will be Oktoberfest. We are looking for your best German, Austrian, and Bavarian foods. If you want some ideas: Bratwurst, Schnitzel, Spaetzle, Soft Pretzels, German Potato Pancakes or Salad, to name a few. For recipe ideas, check out <https://www.tasteofhome.com/.../recipe-ideas-for.../>, <https://food52.com/blog/20578-oktoberfest-recipe-roundup>, <https://www.craftbeering.com/oktoberfest-food-ideas/>, or <https://germanfoods.org/recipes/german-oktoberfest-recipes/> to get you started.

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 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?

Sunday School & Bible Study

We are kicking off the Sunday School Year on Sunday, September 20th. There will be classes for all ages. The kids will continue to work their way through the New Testament. The adults will take up a new topic, Exploring God's Mission Here, as we see how the Lord has placed us in our community to share the good news of salvation in Jesus alone. Don't worry, this isn't a personal evangelism program; this is a way to step back, see where we are in the world, and see how the Lord can use Grace to share the good news of the Gospel to those who need to hear what God proclaims.

Youth Pickleball Fun

Join the Youth of Grace as we look to play Pickleball at Bluebonnet Park on Saturday, September 26th. We will determine the time via text, so please text Pastor Toombs at (281) 330-8282 to be included on the text chain.

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.

KS District Mission Grants

It's time to prepare for the 2027 mission grant cycle! The window to submit mission grant applications will be September 1 - October 15, 2026.

The Kansas District Board of Missions is directing some mission grant dollars to include options such as \$500 SEO Micro-grants, Expanding the Spanish Footprint immersion training, and Circuit Convocations with a focus on witness and outreach training (limit number of eight Circuits, \$2,500 available for each Convocation mission grant. This grant option will be on a first come, first served basis.)

The 2027 Mission Grant Application and Cover Letter is available on the District website under "Missions, Mission Funding": <https://kslcms.org/missions/mission-fund>.

Mission Updates from the Hagemans

We give thanks to God for Rev. Michael and DCE Shanna Hageman and their mission work in Tanzania, Africa!

Pastor Hageman is the former second vice-president of the Kansas District, and former senior pastor of Trinity, Garden City. He now serves as a theological educator in Tanzania, equipping pastors and church workers to share the Gospel in East Africa.

Director of Christian Education (DCE) Shanna Hageman serves by teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to non-native English speakers.

The Hagemans have a website which includes the latest mission updates, a monthly newsletter, a blog, and prayer requests. Learn more at <https://www.hagemansinafrica.org>.

LCMS Health Ministry

September is a month of transition for many people. School is back in session, the weather cools and schedules naturally change pace. Fall is also a great time to re-engage in physical activity and exercise - whether indoors or outdoors. It may seem unusual to hear the church talk about exercise, but LCMS Health Ministry exists to promote a Christ-centered approach to health. Yes, even physical health! The church cares about health — spiritual, mental, physical — because our Lord cares for us in every bodily need. We confess that God creates, redeems and sanctifies our whole person: body and soul, mind and spirit (Gal. 2:20). As such, we are given the task to steward our bodies as members of the larger body — Christ's church (1 Cor. 6:19–20; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27)! For more information on LCMS Health Ministry, visit lcms.org/health.

MEMORY VERSE

Let me hear in the
morning of your
steadfast love, for in
you I trust. Make me
know the way I should
go, for to you I lift
up my soul.

PSALM 143:8

LCMS Family Ministry

“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

God has given us communities in our own families, in our church family and in other places as well. This verse reminds us of what a great blessing our church family is. In our culture, we often have Sunday morning as the only time that we see our church family. Our time together on Sunday morning is good and important, but we can also have a relationship with those in our church family beyond that time. Find ways with your family to build connections with other members of the congregation. You can talk to someone that you do not know well and encourage your children to do the same, or even invite them over for a shared meal.

PROCLAIM



TEACH



SHARE



Name

Daniel Kinley

CongregationHoly Cross Lutheran Church
Fort Wayne, Ind.**LCMS district**

Indiana

Seminary route

M.Div.

Years in pastoral ministry

Less than 5 years

Previous careerNCO and Surgical Technologist
U.S. Air Force | 14 years
Surgical Technologist (civilian) | 10 years

"I love being

able to serve God's people when they need it most. To be able to proclaim the Gospel to the brokenhearted sinner is like providing medicine for their soul. God is faithful."

Daniel's Journey

God's Calling

From the time I was very young, adults in my home church encouraged me toward the pastoral vocation. Those words stayed with me and as I grew, pastors and congregation members continued to affirm the possibility, and the Lord used Scripture, personal study and His Word to shape that encouragement into something steadier and clearer. Looking back, I can see that God was already at work long before I recognized what He was doing.

My Path

Before seminary, the military helped mold my sense of responsibility and better formed my pursuit of excellence and integrity in all aspects of my life and vocation. I served in the U.S. Air Force as an enlisted NCO and surgical technologist and later continued as a surgical technologist in civilian life.

Those years gave me skills I didn't realize I would one day rely on so heavily: public speaking, organization, attention to detail, emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication and especially confidence in a crisis.

Entering seminary as a second-career student required humility. I didn't navigate the process alone, but with lots of help from my pastor, wife, family and friends. And God, in His faithfulness, provided for my family and me in innumerable ways along the journey.

Now, in my first call at a large congregation and school, I see how the Lord has used those earlier years to prepare me. As pastor of care, I'm responsible for visitation and for our education program on the church side, and being able to organize, plan and execute those plans has been essential. Having experience in



management and in large, complicated organizations, where personalities sometimes clash, has been a gift.

My Reflection

What surprised me most throughout my journey is how amazing the love and respect from congregation members can be. And what I love most is being able to serve God's people when they need it most because to proclaim the Gospel to the brokenhearted sinner is like providing medicine for their soul. God is faithful.

When someone wonders if they have the "right" background, my encouragement is simple: *trust God's calling*. All the "stuff" always gets taken care of in some way.

The same faithfulness God showed my family through seminary is the faithfulness I lean on now, day by day. Time and time again, the Lord has shown that He provides what is needed, sometimes before we even know to ask.

Pastor Kinley now serves at Trinity Lutheran Church, part of the T.I.G. Partnership, in Garden City.

Pray for More Workers for the harvest is ripe:

Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Our Lord commanded His church to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send out laborers into the harvest (Matt. 9:35–38) until He returns, that all may hear the Gospel and have saving faith. We pray earnestly that the Lord will provide men to preach the Gospel, women to serve as deaconesses, and men and women to teach and share the Word of Christ in all other full-time church work vocations.

Trinity Lutheran Church in Garden City



*invites the Circuit 16 congregations
to join together for a*

CIRCUIT REFORMATION SERVICE

Saturday, October 31, 2026

followed by a

Potluck Luncheon

We will hear Christ Crucified for Sinners
as well as the hallmark of the Reformation
that we are justified by Christ Alone.

