

The Grace Messenger

Newsletter of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberal, Kansas **October 2026**

Stewardship Article: "It Is the Way that You Use It"

Consider the humble baseball bat. It is a simple tool designed for a complex task. The batter needs a tool that can consistently deliver force to a small ball which may be thrown at over 100 miles per hour, but which might also come slanting across the plate as a slow curve. For a game like this, the founders of baseball had to redesign the old cricket bat, which is more of a flat paddle. The tool had to fit the job.

But even a specially-designed tool can be used for a different purpose. It turns out that some years ago in England, the home of cricket, baseball bats suddenly started selling like hotcakes. What were folks across the pond doing with all those baseball bats? Using them as clubs in riots!

A tool can be used, and it can be misused. It's all in the way that you use it.

The same is true with the things of God. The Second Commandment states that we should "not misuse the name of the Lord." In the Small Catechism, Luther goes on to tell us exactly what this misuse is, as well as the proper use:

"We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks." (SC I)

The Lord has given us His name: He has placed it upon us in Holy Baptism and He has invited us to pray to Him as our Father. In this sense, the Lord's name is something for us to use. We should not misuse it … and we should not fail to use it. The Pharisees of old were so afraid of misusing the name of God that they decided to simply never say the name of God (YHWH, Jehovah) at all! This non-use is just as bad as misuse. The Lord gives His gifts for our use.

A Christian steward is one who is called to use all of God's gifts for His purposes. This includes things like the Name of God, the Sacraments and the Word, and it also includes things like our family and friends, our talents and skills, our money and resources. Everything that God has given to you, He has given to you so that you may be blessed to use it for His kingdom.

It's all in the way that you use it!

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 "Property/Possession":

To call believers "God's people" is a fairly common biblical way to speak of those who live through faith in Christ as God's possessions. The imagery, of course, is closely related to the ransom and redemption metaphors. While ransom focuses on the price paid and redemption focuses on the act of paying, this last commercial metaphor emphasizes the result of the transaction: We are owned by God; we are His possessions, His property.

In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter affirms: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light." This passage is a primary source for the doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers." We are set apart, as were Israel's ancient priests, to offer spiritual sacrifices to God in Christ. We are also "a people belonging to God." St. Peter announces to his hearers that they are God's possession. Elsewhere in the same letter, Peter explains the price Christ paid to make us God's own: "not with perishable things such as silver or gold … but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish of defect" (1 Peter 1:18-19). Paul makes a similar point when he charges the elders in Ephesus: "Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

"They will be Mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up My treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him." (Malachi 3:17)

Many of the Bible passages containing the property metaphor also emphasize the idea of wealth or riches. In Exodus 19:5-6, God tells Moses to say to the Israelites: "If you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Later, God tells the Israelites: "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession" (Deuteronomy 7:6). Note the connection between being God's possession and being treasured by God. We receive our value from the one who owns us. Because we are owned by God, we have infinite value. (J.A.O. Preus – Just Words, p94-95)

As we are God's people, we are His possession; that is, we belong to Him. After all, He is the one who formed our father, Adam, from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life. When God breathes the breath of new life into us, it is the same way. We derive life and new life from God and are connected to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus paid for our sins, paying His life-blood as the cost, and brought us back to God. This is the reason that we continue to come to hear what He has done for us. All we do is simply give thanks and praise Him for what He has done for us, His people, His possession, His property.

Christ's richest blessings,

Pastor Toombs



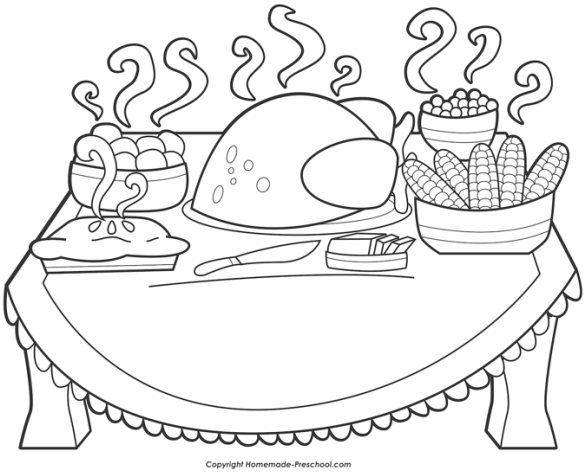
Youth Pre-Halloween Fun

Join the Youth of Grace as we are going to Cake N Cow Farms, 583 Road 24, Hugoton, KS, United States, 67951, later this month.



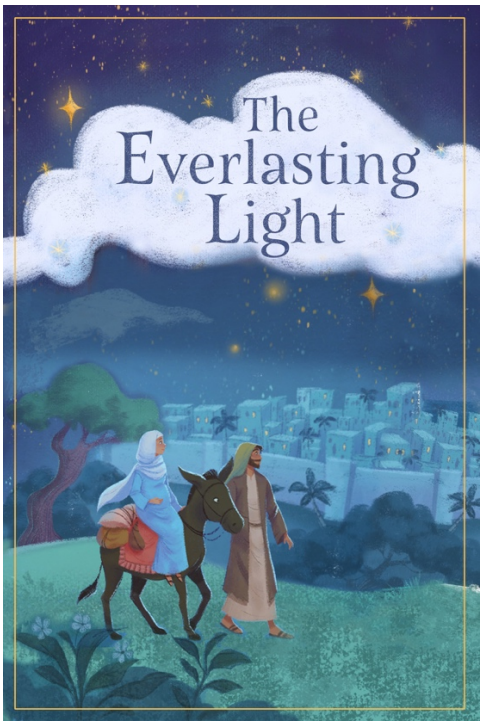
Trunk or Treat – Oct. 31

We know that Trunk or Treat is a big deal for the kids, and many adults like seeing all the super heroes, princesses, and everything else at the Trunk or Treat as we decorate the "Trunks" and "Treat" all the kids. 6:30-8pm.



Altar Guild Meal

Are you looking forward to Thanksgiving, but want something sooner? The Annual Altar Guild Thanksgiving Feast will be on the 1st Sunday, November 1st, at 11:30.



Children's Christmas Service Practice

We are preparing for the Children's Christmas Service on December 13th, so please have your precious ones join us at 9:45 am on Sundays as we will be going through the lessons, singing, and other items as we prepare to share the message that Christ is born for us.



From the Synod & From the District

LCMS Worker Wellness

Church Worker Care Teams (CWCTs) provide support and encouragement to church workers who serve their congregations. The CWCT webpage is a digital complement to our Church Worker Care Team Manual, designed to help care teams and their workers assess needs and locate helpful resources.

Our LCMS church workers — pastors; deaconesses; teachers; and directors of Christian education, outreach, parish music and family life ministry — work tirelessly on behalf of the church in service to all of us. Let's be sure to show our gratitude. No gesture is too small! Join us on the following dates in 2026 and 2027 as we let our church workers know, in word and deed, how very thankful we are for their service and dedication.

Oct. 11 (Pastor), Oct. 25 (Deaconess, Director of Family Life Ministry, Director of Christian Outreach, Director of Church Ministries), April 25 (Director of Parish Music), May 3–7 (Teacher) and June 26 (Director of Christian Education).

Operation Barnabas

MAILING CARE PACKAGES. Mail care packages to deployed LCMS chaplains and the service members at their location. For a list of recommended items or mailing addresses, contact Alicia Hinton at alicia.hinton@lcms.org.

Mission Updates from the Hagemans

The pull to mission work has been working the hearts of Pastor Michael and Shanna Hageman for decades. After participating in several short-term mission trips during their years as a pastor and director of Christian education (DCE), the Hagemans made the decision late last fall to move their ministry from the high plains of southwest Kansas to the plains of East Africa.

As new career missionaries for The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), Pastor Michael and Shanna Hageman arrived in Tanzania earlier this year and are in a phase of language and culture acquisition as they prepare for full-time mission work. He will work as a theological educator at a seminary in Shinyanga, and she plans to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to non-native English speakers.

While the thought of mission work had been at the back of the Hagemans' minds since they were young, the decision to become international missionaries came after Pastor Hageman had served for 25 years as pastor to congregations in Ohio, Florida, and Kansas. Learn more at

https://www.hagemansinafrica.org.

Domestic Violence Awareness

The Purple Leash Project The Purple Leash Project is a national initiative dedicated to helping people and pets escape domestic violence safely. Research shows that many survivors delay leaving abusive situations because they fear for the safety of their pets. The Purple Leash Project works to remove this barrier by supporting domestic violence shelters in becoming pet-friendly.

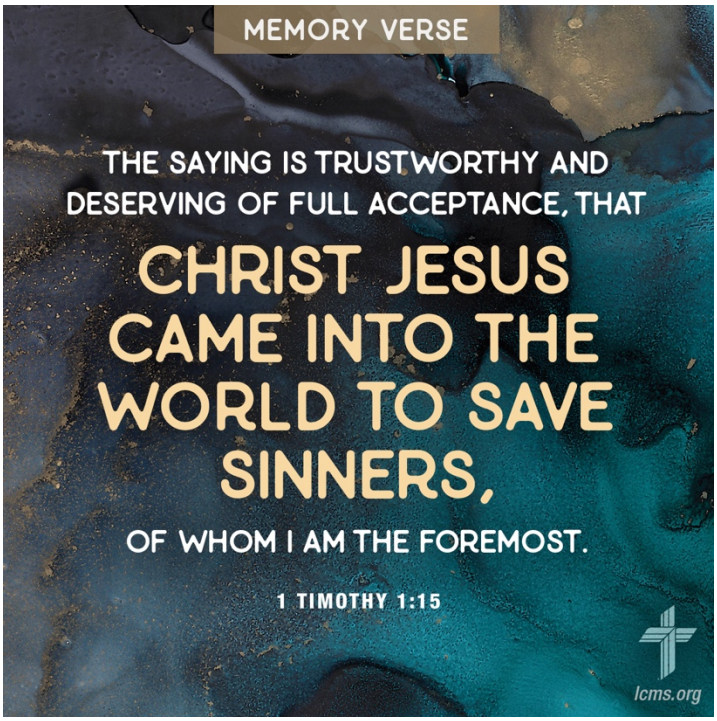
Launched by Purina (Purnia.com/purple-lease-project/about) in partnership with the nonprofit RedRover, the program raises awareness about the strong bond between people and their pets and how that bond can influence decisions during dangerous situations.

Through grants and community support, the project helps shelters build safe spaces where survivors can bring their pets with them when they leave abuse.

Purple leashes have become a symbol of hope and protection. They represent the commitment to ensuring that families—including their beloved animals—can find safety together. The project also encourages communities to advocate for policies and programs that protect both people and pets affected by domestic violence.

By supporting pet-friendly shelters and raising awareness, the Purple Leash Project helps remove one more obstacle that keeps survivors trapped in abusive environments. Its message is simple but powerful: no one should have to choose between personal safety and the safety of a beloved pet.

The project partners with shelters and domestic violence shelters in your community.



LCMS Family Ministry

"Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs" (Psalm 100:2 NIV).

The Bible is filled with places that praise God and talk about singing songs of praise. The Psalms in particular are full of this. We have a God who has done it all for us, and so we can respond with praise. We have a rich tradition of songs and hymns that praise our God. Many of these songs and hymns can help to teach the Christian faith, especially since songs are an easy way to learn and memorize. Little children learn songs easily and often these songs that we learn when we are very young are the ones that stay with us when we grow old. Parents can encourage children to sing by singing in church or by playing music at home or in the car that praises God and teaches the Christian faith.

Trinity Lutheran Church
in Garden City

invites the Circuit 16 congregations
to join together for a

CIRCUIT REFORMATION SERVICE

Saturday, October 31, 2026
10:30am

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.





