

OCTOBER
2026

GraceNotes

A PUBLICATION OF GRACE FREE LUTHERAN CHURCH, VALLEY CITY, ND

In October of 1526, 500 years ago, Luther published his answer to a question from Assa von Kram, a professional soldier whom Luther had been in contact with the previous year. Von Kram asked Luther whether soldiers can be saved and whether they can serve with a clear conscience. These are good questions considering the difficult and dangerous calling of a soldier. Perhaps the soldier had in mind the example the Apostle Paul gives in Acts 24:16 when he says, "So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man." Or the words from Hebrews 13:18 which say, "Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things."

A troubled and burdened conscience is a heavy and difficult condition. Thankfully, God in His grace and mercy has provided to us His Word that brings forgiveness and unburdens troubled hearts. Jesus Himself said clearly that He desired that His disciples not have troubled hearts. Jesus, in John 13 and into chapter 14, spoke about His upcoming betrayal and arrest and to strengthen His disciples He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me" (John 14:1). Later in the chapter He said that He would be sending the Holy Spirit and peace. John 14:27 says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Our consciences might be burdened and troubled for all sorts of reasons. We may be burdened because we have harmed someone we love or even harmed ourselves. These might be isolated incidents, not necessarily something which we have repeated, but nonetheless they trouble us. We who are troubled in this way might consider how our troubles could be multiplied if what we had done to hurt someone was actually our job. If our job has been or is that of a soldier, how troubled might we be by what we have done?

We recognize that the soldier, in a way that most never deal with, is often presented with the reality of a sudden death. So, it is a good and beneficial practice to minister words of encouragement and hope to those considering eternity so carefully. In Luther's thorough answer to the question, he begins by introducing the concept of vocation and how offices can be rightly used and how they can be abused. He writes, "In the first place, we must distinguish between an occupation and the man who holds it, between a work and the man who does it. An occupation or a work can be good and right in itself and yet be bad and wrong if the man who does the work is evil or wrong or does not do his work properly."¹

Luther's writing helps to clarify that as we think of how God desires to gift and use us in this world that no vocation makes us righteous before God. God's vocation, we might say, is to make us righteous. Jesus Christ our Lord was sent for the purpose of making us right before God. So, when it comes to the work of a

soldier, which is so tied together with many actions that otherwise would be seen as wicked, how can it be that a Christian can hold without troubling and burdening his or her conscience? Luther brings forth Scripture, which speaks of the task of governing authorities to punish evil and protect their people, to answer this concern. He writes, "For the very fact that the sword has been instituted by God to punish the evil, protect the good, and preserve peace [Rom. 13:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13-14] is powerful and sufficient proof that war and killing along with all the things that accompany wartime and martial law have been instituted by God. What else is war but the punishment of wrong and evil? Why does anyone go to war, except because he desires peace and obedience?"²

The governments of this world are given to people by God to keep order in this world. What Luther is trying to make clear is that the soldier is fulfilling an office that is of a similar kind to those enforcing order within the borders of a nation and the sort that parents exercise with the children that God has given to them. Think of what chaos and heartbreak there would be if no parent disciplined their child or if no teacher ever corrected their students. Would there not be brokenness all around us? No doubt the calling of a soldier presents difficult and dangerous situations for those who serve but they too are serving God as they live in faith and serve through punishing evil and protecting their family, friends, and even themselves.

Throughout Luther's answer he works to give Biblical wisdom to unburden the consciences of those who serve as soldiers. The calling to be a soldier is a legitimate and useful one in this world. Luther has many other helpful thoughts and encouraging words for soldiers and others who might have this type of question in his publication entitled, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can be Saved." If you want to read more or have questions about what Luther said please let me know, I would love to get a copy into your hands or talk about what Luther discussed.

*By Pastor
Dennis Norby*

1 Luther, M. (1999). Luther's works, vol. 46: The Christian in Society III (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.; p. 94). Fortress Press.

2 Luther, M. (1999). Luther's works, vol. 46: The Christian in Society III (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.; p. 95). Fortress Press.



DATES to remember

- **POTLUCK & QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**
October 18, 2026
- **ZION FALL AUCTION**
October 22, 2026

Grace Council Updates

Monthly Meeting:

Thursday, October 8, 2026

Deacons Meet 6:30pm
Boards Meet 7:00pm
Council Meets 8:00pm

**Quarterly Congregational Meeting:
Sunday, October 18, 2026**

Potluck following the service
Congregational Meeting will
begin at approximately 12:30pm

*Complete Council meeting minutes and monthly
financial report are available in the copy room.*

Financial Summary

As of 9/21/26

General Fund=\$40,905.14
Building Imp. Fund=\$11,281.27
Scholarship Fund=\$8,151.61
Seminary Fund=\$0.00

General Fund CD (1)=\$46,133.50
General Fund CD (2)=\$33,533.56
General Fund CD (3)=\$62,673.29



**October is Pastor
Appreciation Month**

**Thank you Pastor Dennis
and Samantha for your
service to our congregations!**

OCTOBER 2026

AFLC Ministry Focus for October



AFLC Parish Education
AMBASSADOR PUBLICATIONS

Parish Education is all about the teaching ministry of the congregation. We are here to come alongside your congregation and help you shine forth God's light and truth as you seek to faithfully teach God's Word to all ages. Following are three areas of focus in our service to AFLC congregations.

Encourage and Support by providing books and resources in our campus and online bookstores and at AFLC events such as conferences, district gatherings, WMF rallies, and workshops, and by giving guidance and support for your educational ministries by phone, email, and online communication.

Teach and Equip through teacher training resources, educational workshops, and online features like our Education Spotlights, blog articles, and book reviews at ambassadorpublications.org

Produce and Publish resources such as Sunday school curriculum, catechetical tools, Bible studies, devotional and historical books. The most recent publications are: *The 10 Commandments* children's board book; Volume 6 in the AFLC Heritage series, *From Freedom to Life*, by Rev. Robert L. Lee; and *Alive in Christ* devotional book for teens.

To shop the online bookstore or to give a donation to Parish Education visit www.ambassadorpublications.org

"Your life is valuable, and your life has purpose. It was not an accident; it was planned from the beginning. But that doesn't mean it will be easy. You will experience hardship and suffering. As you age, your body will wear out. Your mind will dull. Your abilities will lessen. And yet, it is in your body with all of its brokenness that the Holy Spirit resides. It is this, your body, that God the Father formed by hand, and it is this, your body, that Jesus, God's Son, redeemed. And your body, a unique and miraculous gift, will be raised from the dead and made new."

*Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life – A Life Quote from
Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

Zion Free Lutheran Events

Sundays

9:00am Divine Worship

10:00am Fellowship

Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

WMF

7:00pm Monday, October 19

Fall Auction

7:00pm Thursday, October 22



Meal Volunteers Needed!

CELEBRATE RECOVERY

A MEAL IS
SERVED
EVERY
THURSDAY
AT 6:15 PM.

Celebrate Recovery is a non-denominational ministry group that meets every Thursday evening at Grace Free Lutheran. A meal is served to participants at 6:15 PM prior to the 7 PM meeting. Volunteers to prep, serve, and clean up these meals are needed each week!

- Plan to serve 25-30 people.
- Include an entree, side, & dessert, if possible.
- Follow laminated instructions provided by Celebrate Recovery for setting up, serving, and cleaning up.

Consider volunteering to serve and clean up a meal with your family or friends - you can even pick a theme and make it fun!

Items can be stored ahead of time in the Celebrate Recovery refrigerator.

If you cannot serve and clean up but want to drop off a meal, that is welcome! Just let Erin DeVries (701-213-6834) know what needs to be prepped/warmed up/etc.

Celebrate Recovery can reimburse you for the cost of food if you'd like - just save receipts and give them to Erin DeVries (701-213-6834).

If you would like to be on a call list to make a meal when it works with your schedule, please sign up on the kiosk.

Call or text
coordinator Val Reinsel
at 814-715-3022 to
sign up for an
upcoming date!



6 Andrew Hokana (Brandon)
8 Libbie Perleberg
10 Alton Himmerick
11 Dennis Norby
13 Axel Miller (Matt)
14 Carina Roehrich
15 Dan Hannig
17 Brent Peterson
19 Gracia Rolf (Walter)
Macy Schlaht
22 Shantell Schlaht
LaDeen Knutson
23 Eldwyn Van Bruggen
Preston Dahl (Mardy)
24 Adam Shanenko (Erik)
25 Adyson Hannig (Darin)
Connie Retterath
26 Sylvia Neros
28 Grant Christensen
29 Evie Groberg (Ezra)
30 Tavin Glasman (Devin)
Della Richman

OCTOBER EVENTS

Quilting

1pm Thursday, October 8

Potluck & Quarterly Meeting

11:30am Sunday, October 18

WMF Bible Study

7pm Monday, October 19

Faith Circle

9:30am Tuesday, October 27

Women's Bible Study

10am Thursdays

Men's Prayer

7am Saturdays

Sundays

9am Sunday School

10:30am Divine Worship

Wednesdays

6pm Confirmation

6pm Answers For Kids

7pm Youth Group

Adult Bible Study

Meals on Wheels

Volunteers are needed to deliver Meals on Wheels on the 3rd Sunday of each month, immediately following the worship service.

Sign up at the kiosk. Questions? Contact John Drummond 720-217-8934



Verse of the Month

October~

Psalm 23:4-6 - ⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

September~

Job 19:25-26 - ¹For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. ²And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God

August~

Haggai 1:5 - Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways.

July~

Isaiah 44:8 - Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.

June~

Psalm 23:1-3- ¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

May~

1 Peter 5:6-7- ⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

OCTOBER 2026

 **Life
Chain**

**Sunday
October 4, 2026
2:00-3:00 pm
2026**

Every year since 1987, on the first Sunday of October, Life Chains form in cities nationwide to make a public, prayerful, peaceful stand for life.

Valley City will join over 1500 cities in the U.S. and Canada for Life Chain 2026, which will be held Sunday, **October 4, 2026**, from **2:00 to 3:00 PM**.

Life Chain **IS NOT** political or confrontational. Life Chain **IS** a silent prayer vigil by Christians to communicate their opposition to abortion. Participants prayerfully display uniform signs which state the truth about abortion. It is an opportunity for local churches to unite in prayer and stand up for the rights of the unborn. Everyone who believes in the protection of unborn children and their mothers is invited to participate.

Bring your whole family! Rain or Shine!

~ Water, lawn chairs, & strollers are welcome

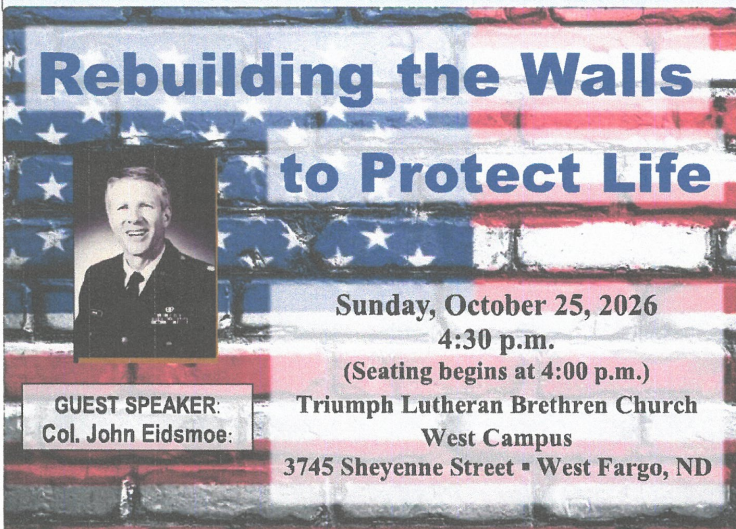
~ Signs will be provided

~ Participants stand 20--50 feet apart and pray.

***** Receive your signs at the Valley Meat parking lot or just east of the flood wall across from Bank Forward.**

2 Chronicles 7:14 ~ "If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

F-M Lutherans for Life
37th Pro-Life Dessert Banquet



**Rebuilding the Walls
to Protect Life**

Sunday, October 25, 2026
4:30 p.m.
(Seating begins at 4:00 p.m.)

GUEST SPEAKER:
Col. John Eidsmoe:

Triumph Lutheran Brethren Church
West Campus
3745 Sheyenne Street • West Fargo, ND

And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes." Nehemiah 4:14 ESV

To pre register or for information,
email **Andrew Wollin** at
fmlfl.dessertbanquet@gmail.com

or call **701 740 3601**.

May also pre register at

<https://forms.gle/wY56maePmRy33ja88> or

scan this QR code.



You are invited to
partner with us and give
generously to a free-will
offering in support of
Lutherans for Life.





OCTOBER

2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Women's Bible Study 10am	2	3 Men's Prayer 7am
4 Sunday School 9am Fellowship 10am Divine Worship with Holy Communion 10:30am	5	6	7 Confirmation 6pm Answers For Kids 6pm Youth Group 7pm Adult Bible Study 7pm	8 Women's Bible Study 10am Quilting 1pm Deacons Meet 6:30pm Boards Meet 7pm Council Meets 8pm	9	10 Men's Prayer 7am
11 Sunday School 9am Fellowship 10am Divine Worship 10:30am	12	13	14 Confirmation 6pm Answers For Kids 6pm Youth Group 7pm Adult Bible Study 7pm	15 Women's Bible Study 10am	16	17 Men's Prayer 7am
18 Sunday School 9am Fellowship 10am Divine Worship 10:30am Potluck Quarterly Meeting 12:30pm	19 WMF Bible Study 7pm	20	21 Confirmation 6pm Answers For Kids 6pm Youth Group 7pm Adult Bible Study 7pm	22 Women's Bible Study 10am Zion Fall Auction 7pm	23	24 Men's Prayer 7am
25 Sunday School 9am Fellowship 10am Divine Worship 10:30am	26	27 Faith Circle 9:30am	28 Confirmation 6pm Answers For Kids 6pm Youth Group 7pm Adult Bible Study 7pm	29 Women's Bible Study 10am	30	31 Men's Prayer 7am

GRACE FREE LUTHERAN CHURCH

2351 West Main St
Valley City, ND 58072



Sundays at Grace

Sunday School 9:00 AM (September-May)
Divine Worship 10:30 AM

Sundays at Zion

Divine Worship 9:00 AM
Fellowship 10:00 AM

Sundays: Lift High the Cross KOVC (1490) 10 AM KSJB(600) 8 AM

Watch Live! Sunday Mornings at 10:30 AM at www.gracefree.com/watch-online

Church office hours are 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Mon-Fri

Phone: (701) 845-2753

E-mail: gracefree@msn.com

Website: www.gracefree.com

Senior Pastor Dennis Norby thenorbys@msn.com

Administrative Assistant~ Sarah Meester gracefree@msn.com

Children's Ministry Leader~ Erin Dahl gracefreechildrensministry@gmail.com