

# PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



Rev. Justin Panzer | District President



**“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.”**

**(Matt. 22: 37-38)**

Purely by His grace, God has rescued us out of the slavery of sin and death. He sent His Son to save us from our sins and give us life everlasting.

**This is why you love Him – because He first loved you.** He showed His love to you on a wooden cross and in an empty tomb. He showed His love to you when water was poured upon your forehead in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in Holy Baptism. He still shows His love to you when His Word is proclaimed and His true body and blood in the unleavened bread and wine are put into your mouths for you to eat and drink for the forgiveness of all your sins. This is how God shows His love to you in a very real way. We are the children of God, who love their Father. As Christians, this is not seen as a hard assignment. It comes naturally for those who know that they are His children because of what He has first done for them through His Son, Jesus Christ.

**God commands us to love Him above all other things. He commands us to worship Him. He commands us to give back to Him generously of what He has first entrusted to us. He commands us to spend time with Him by studying His Word and praying.**

Don't begin to think that this idea of God demanding all your worship is something that is limited to the Old Testament (*Deut. 6:4-9*). In Matthew 22:36-38, Jesus is asked a question, *“Which is the great commandment in the Law?”* He answered: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.”*

We worship the only true God that Israel confessed in Deuteronomy 6. We worship Jesus Christ, who, in John 8, identified Himself as Yahweh, along with the Father and His Spirit (v. 58). This, then, is the One whom we love and worship as God. The only true God is

the triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons in one divine being.

God first showed His love to us. Our response is now to love Him with our whole being – heart, soul, mind, and body. God calls us to love Him without reservations; that is, not reserving a part of our love for a spouse, a career, a child or a favorite pastime, much less a vice. God calls us to love Him with all of our time, at all times, not just on Sunday or when we are in need.

September means back to school for many. Consider that at all times God wants us to keep His words in our hearts and minds by reading Scripture everyday; engaging in family and individual devotions; praying; and attending worship at church. He wants us to repeatedly teach His words to our children. He wants us to remember His words in everything that we do by applying those words to our lives. **His Spirit will empower and direct us to do these things!**

*Devotions written by President Justin Panzer are the exclusive property of the LCMS Kansas District. Permission is granted to Kansas District congregations and schools to share these devotions with their members.*