

Communion – Remembering Jesus

Joshua Stricker, Counselor



Author's note: Remembering can mean many things— Call to mind; bring to awareness; bring a previous happening or experience into the present by willful, conscious, embodied attention. My Anabaptist tradition emphasizes the symbolic nature of the bread and wine as emblems of Christ's body and

blood—I think this perspective is appropriate. The purpose of this article is not to provide theological support for the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Rather, I feel sad when I hear people experiencing communion only as a time to remember their sins. And that this way of remembering eclipses the sufficiency of Jesus' work on the cross. I would like to invite and encourage a kind of remembering in which Jesus' work on the cross is more central than sin or inadequacy. Please hear the following from this frame of reference.

Communion – Remembering Jesus.

Human beings have the capacity to re-experience something that happened previously—either firsthand or vicariously. If you have a traumatic experience—for example, riding an elevator when it stops and the lights go out—you will likely have unpleasant feelings the next time you need to ride an elevator. A unique pattern of neurons in your brain fires similar to the pattern that fired in your brain in the previous traumatic event. You are remembering in your mind and body what happened before. Your body recalls the experience from an earlier moment and recreates that experience in the present moment— this is remembering something that happened to you firsthand.

We can also remember vicariously, which means we feel pain as a reaction to someone else's experience. We know what it's like to hear someone tell a story about getting hurt, maybe accidentally cutting a finger with a kitchen

knife, and suddenly flinching because we feel pain. This is vicarious remembering. We are taking on in our body the recreation of another's experience. We are remembering, experiencing pain, even though nothing is wrong with our own finger.

Communion – Remembering Jesus. 1 Corinthians 11:24 says, "This is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me." Consider the implications. Jesus asks us to take communion. He asks us to take bread as a symbol of His body and eat it as His flesh for the purpose of vicariously remembering Him. He asks us to create an embodied taste in this present moment, of what He did on the cross 2000 years ago in His own body. He did this for you.

Theologically we know that Jesus came in the flesh, "... but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15) He died on the cross in our place and proclaimed the work of our redemption completely and entirely finished. This experience occurred in Jesus' human body, and now, He asks us to remember—to recreate in our own body—a taste of the enfleshed redemption that He accomplished on the cross.

When we take communion, we recreate the finished work of Christ on the cross. Jesus says, "If you love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15) **When we take communion, we please our Savior by recreating in this present moment - in our own body, the work that He experienced, the work that He finished, the work that He gives us, the work that He will use to carry us into eternity.**

Communion – remembering Jesus. Consider the following prayer. *Lord Jesus, give me the grace to take the bread as a physical representation of your perfection, given for me. You lived flawlessly while on earth, and this was a representation of the way I was meant to live, without sin. But this is a thing impossible for me to accomplish, so you did it for me.*

continued on page 2

Communion – Remembering Jesus

continued from page 1

May the reality of your perfect life and your finished work for me on the cross eclipse and overwhelm my spirit, soul, and body. May it become a greater reality than my sense of need. May the tangible physical nature of the bread reinforce in my spirit the tangible physical nature of your sinless embodied life, and the completion of my redemption won on the cross by the death of God.

May the taste of the cup be a tangible reminder that one day in eternity you will invite me to taste the cup with you; an invitation to endless joyful freedom from my sinful instincts that are still enfleshed in this body. I am so

grateful that these future realities are just as real as this taste on my lips. Give me daily bread. Give me today the capacity to obey and to live from this truth, for the sake of Jesus and His Kingdom.

When you take communion the next time, I invite you to please the Savior by remembering Him, by recreating in your body a vicarious experience of remembering what Christ did on the cross for you. Take communion – remember Jesus - and in taking the bread and the wine, may it draw us toward the new day when we will be with Jesus in the new heaven and the new earth.



Our Staff Updates



Welcome Lydia

I was introduced to the song “Sovereign Over Us” several years ago. The chorus says, “*You’re faithful forever / Perfect in love / You are sovereign over us.*” This is the song that came to mind when I thought of beginning my position as Office Manager here at Life

Ministries. This job wasn’t in my future considerations. However, an extended health journey over the last several years has changed a lot of my plans.

I have worked in the offices of local businesses for the last 20 years, so this feels like a different brand of the same kind of work I have done for many years.

Lancaster City has been my home for the last 10 years, where I appreciate the diversity of the many people I meet there, especially the variety of Internationals who are my friends—the Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Muslims, and Mennonites are my neighbors. I take pleasure in the city parks with the flowers that I don’t have time or energy to grow myself and the maintained trails and sidewalks that allow for walking almost year-round.

My personal journey through life has been filled with deep heartache and hope, pain and compassion, grief and anticipation. Through it all, I have experienced many surprising and precious moments of God’s provision. My desire is that I can honor the clients that walk in and out these doors every day, sharing grace and compassion for wherever their life’s journey is taking them at the time.



With appreciation, Brenda

Brenda Hershberger has been a welcoming face to the clients who have walked through the doors of Life Counseling Ministries for the last seven years. As office manager, she kept the office running smoothly in many behind the scenes tasks. We wish God’s abundance in her life as she follows God’s leading on to the next steps in her journey.



Farewell, Naomi

Naomi Zimmerman enriched the lives of many clients through her role as counselor over the last twelve years. We will miss her gentle wisdom and compassion among the counselors. We desire God’s richest blessings in her retirement as she continues to serve alongside her husband, Leon.



Transition

We are grateful that for the last five years James Mast has been a Counselor and Director of Development for LCM. We bless James as he transferred out of these roles, but he and his family continue to live on the grounds and serve the ministry in Maintenance and Housekeeping.

Attendee Reflection

Core 2 / Lab 2 Counselor Training

John 10:10b *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* These familiar words come to my mind as I reflect on my time and experience at Life Ministries and the Core 2 / Lab 2 Counselor Training course. "More abundantly"—there must be more.

Morning dawns as I prepare for Day 1 of Theory. Having read the assigned study texts, printed my reflection reports, and packed my favorite coffee mug, I approached the impeccable premises of Life Ministries with enthusiasm and expectation. The abundant life! What an invitation! Dedicating the next two weeks to concentrated study into God's design for mankind. And as we study mankind, we must study the Creator in whose image we are made!

Day 2 & 3 continue in Theory. What are the deepest longings of man? How do we pursue those longings? How do we respond when we experience disappointment? How do we cope? What about forgiveness? How does Jesus and the cross fit into this picture? Am I responsible? Victim or agent? What about lies believed as truth? Or vows I have made to never be hurt in relationship again? Why are we lonely? Have my choices resulted in an abundant life? Is this Christianity at its best? Is there more? "More abundantly"...?

Proverbs 16:25, *"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* These words arrest me in my tracks. Are my best efforts at being a good Christian not enough? I need to do better. Maybe pray more, serve more, teach more, parent better, preach better, help others more. But I'm tired. I'm exhausted. I can't keep doing more . . . more, more, more. But "more abundantly"? All my attempts to do more and be better are leaving me tired and empty—and alone. I'm lonely.

Day 4 introduces Lab 2—where the "hands-on" group work happens. I find my group and enter the meeting room. I'm hopeful but heavy. Can I trust? Will I dare? Is it safe? I'm concerned but also hopeful. "More abundantly"... There must be more. So, day merges into night—there's homework to do, audios to listen to, reflection time, study for the next class, touching in with family at home. Lab has been exhausting work, but it's speckled with hope. It's intense but inviting.

Day 2-11 of Lab are more of the same. But every day, every session, every conversation, every prayer, every tear is inviting us toward hope and healing. It's not quick.

It's not easy. But it is freeing. As my group helps me trace the path through my frustration, my style of relating, the lies and vows I have adopted, the disappointments of life, and the God-given longings I was created with, I become aware of the ways I have chosen to do life on my own terms, and sadly, without God. I have been lonely. But God is not absent! He is waiting. His arms are open wide. His embrace restores my soul! I am alive, and the more abundant life is available as I walk hand-in-hand with the Shepherd.

Song of Solomon 6:3 "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." My life is not painless. It is not perfect, but it is time to go home! I miss my family and friends. I look forward to going back to my job. I lean into my responsibilities. But I am not alone. I am full of hope. Life more abundantly. I am secure.

A grateful student
-Peter Dyck

I Am Secure

*The storm is raging Lord,
The boat I sail is small and oh, so frail;
The wind is blowing Lord,
I cannot hold the course against the gale.
The lightning strikes on every side:
Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide,
Your hand alone can hold the tide,
Lord, rescue me.*

*I cannot hold the course against the gale.
The lightning strikes on every side:
Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide,
Your hand alone can hold the tide,
Lord, rescue me.*

*I am sinking Lord;
The boat is taking water - going down.
Part the waters Lord,
I long to plant my feet on solid ground.
O Lord of earth and sky and sea,
Your hand is reaching out to me,
I know that You have heard my plea,
I am secure.*

-Unknown



REGISTRATION OPEN NOW

Rocky Mountain Men's Retreat July 19-23, 2025

The week includes:

- Horseback riding to base camp
- Daily trail riding
- Discussions surrounding issues men face
- Personal solitude time
- Sharing how our stories are part of God's larger story

Contact the office for more information.

Phone: 717.871.0540 or

Email: info@life-ministries.com

REGISTRATION OPEN NOW

Father/Son Retreat July 17-19, 2025

250 Meadow Lane, Conestoga, PA 17516

Held at Life Counseling Ministries

A weekend of father & son activities and initiatives

Cost: \$250 per family.

Limited to two sons (ages 7-16) per dad.

Contact the office for more information.

Phone: 717.871.0540 or

Email: info@life-ministries.com

PRAYER & PRAISE

Praise God for...

- For His daily provision of grace and sustenance for our needs here at LCM
- For the landscaping work project that is nearly finished
- For an engaging group of Counselor Training Workshop Core 2 students eager to grow and learn

Pray for...

- The need for a Public Relations Director for the ministry
- The upcoming Counselor Training Workshop Core 1 class: teachers, students and group leaders
- Wisdom for the board and administration as they lead the ministry

Letting Go Ladies Group

May 26 - July 7, 2025

August 4 - September 15, 2025

October 13 - November 24, 2025

For more information, contact Janice at
jmiller@life-ministries.com

Phone: 717-871-0540

Counselor Training Core 1

November 6-8, 2025

January 15-17, 2026

March 19-21, 2026

Upcoming Events

CONTACT US

Address: 250 Meadow Lane, Conestoga, PA 17516

Phone: 717-871-0540

Fax: 717-871-0547

Email: info@life-ministries.com

Website: www.life-ministries.com

Spring Garden Office

5207 Old Philadelphia Pike, Kinzers, PA 17535

(GPS Only. Do not mail to this address.)

Life Counseling Ministries is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization established to provide counseling for individuals, marriages, families, and church leaders. LCM also offers training and teaching through workshops and seminars. This newsletter is published quarterly and is available to interested persons at no cost.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Lynn Zimmerman, *Chairman*

Kevin Hahn, *Asst. Chairman*

Merrill Nolt, *Secretary*

David Allgyer, *Asst. Secretary*

David J. King, *Treasurer*

Eugene Hurst, *Asst. Treasurer*

John Fisher, *Board Member*

STAFF

Sam & Cathie Gingerich, *Administrator/Counselors*

Adam Lehigh, *Business Manager/Counselor*

Lydia Kropf, *Office Manager*

Janice Miller, *Receptionist*

Anna Stoltzfus, *Receptionist*

James & Sherilyn Mast, *Maintenance/Groundskeeper*

Hannah Beiler, *Counselor*

Darla Hackman, *Counselor*

Michael Hochstetler, *Counselor*

Dave Myer, *Counselor*

Mary Petersheim, *Counselor*

Joshua Strickler, *PsyD, Counselor*

Lonita Wise, *Counselor*

Bettina Yoder, *Counselor*

Elaine Yoder, *Counselor*