



# St. John's

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## Ev. Lutheran Church

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### **~~IDEAS HAVE DOCTRINE HAS CONSEQUENCES~~**

I've thought it a terrible misfortune that the title of the recent Luther film produced for the 500th Anniversary of the Wittenberg Reformation is *Martin Luther: The Idea That Changed the World*. It verges on a howler. Martin Luther is an idea? Really? Or maybe it refers to Luther's discovery that the sinner is justified by a free grant of righteousness through faith in the all-atoning sacrifice of Christ for the sin of the world. But that's doctrine, not an idea. Ideas are human; doctrine is divine. And both have consequences—ideas for this life, doctrine for this life *and* the next.

We all know what the consequences are for the next life of the doctrine Luther discovered: eternal salvation. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!" But there were also consequences in this one. That's what the history of the Reformation is: a study of the ripple effect of Luther's 1518/9 discovery of that divine doctrine.

So get this: Nearly the first practical consequence of this doctrinal discovery was that *Luther translated the Scriptures into the language of the people*. The New Testament in German came out already in 1522, at nearly the same time as the first editions of his *Postils* (sermon helps for parish priests). Why? Because everything, even the divine doctrine, depends on this Word. Doctrine has consequences.

This was followed in quick succession by the reform of the Mass (1523 and 1525/6), which left the Western Rite intact, excepting only those things contrary to the Gospel (e.g., prayer to the saints, and the so-called Canon of the Mass, which aimed the Sacrament back to God, opposite the way God had aimed it—toward us). In 1529 the *Small Catechism* and *Large Catechism* appeared as systematic treatments of essential Christian teaching. The next year saw the delivery of the *Augsburg Confession*. The result? By 1530 all of this is in place: the Scriptures in the language of the people; a "purified" Mass; a tool for teaching the faith; a public confession. Doctrine has consequences.

And thanks and praise be to God, this heritage is largely alive and well in our congregation. We live it every Sunday. In our "Mass" Christ's Body and Blood are "for you for the forgiveness of your sins" not "for God." From the pulpit you hear that God for the sake of the Christ has reconciled the world—and you—unto Himself. Your children learn the ABCs of the Faith through the *Small Catechism*. And our congregation and pastors take an oath to teach and practice according to our public confessions. That's how doctrine *continues* to have consequences—500 years after the fact! This is our great heritage, lived out every week.

But so is God's Word, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. It is the *sine qua non*.

And so from 15 January 2018 through 14 January 2019, we're providing the congregation an opportunity fully to embrace the first consequence of the Reformation: the Scriptures for the people. We've titled our little project *God's Promises in Christ...Fulfilled! The Year with the Bible*. It's a systematic reading plan on 5 days of the week (with 2 for make-up). In 365 days it will take you from Gen 1:1 ("In the beginning...") through Rev 22:21 ("The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen."), and you'll see how in Christ curse (Gen 3:14-19) becomes "No longer will there be anything accursed" (Rev. 22:3). Each quarter we'll produce a little booklet with a daily Scripture reading schedule that contains a prayer before and after the daily readings. Sunday morning Bible classes in the nave and for the confirmed youth will be geared around our shared reading and explain, explore, go deeper, and answer your questions. We'd like to keep an email list of everyone engaged in the reading, as well, so that information relevant to your participation may be relayed that way.

Through Sunday, 14 January, you can register to participate in this project after each Sunday Divine Service in the courtyard. There we've got a sign-up sheet, samples of the first quarter's *God's Promises in Christ...Fulfilled!*, and ESV editions you can inspect before you buy one from church (we recommend *The Lutheran Study Bible*). If you do sign up, you can pick up your first quarter's *God's Promises* on the 14<sup>th</sup>. We'll have extra copies available that day for those who don't sign up until the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Though the project is daunting, it's certainly not impossible. The resources we'll provide, along with the encouragement of your fellow St. John's members, will support you in your resolve. We hope that you'll join in.

That's because the Reformation is so much more than just an idea. It's a lived reality, one in which God's Word is the "only true standard or norm"—for both life and doctrine (FC SD Rule and Norm, 3). Doctrine does indeed have consequences. Embrace them!



**Senior Pastor - Rev. J. S. Bruss, ext. 104**

**Associate Pastor – Rev. D. M. Kerns, ext. 101**

**Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102**

**Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz**

**Associate Kantor - Bethany M. Johnson**

**TLS Teachers - Ashley Jensema, Andrea Kosmicki, Edith Kerns, Rachel Kathman**

### **A SPECIAL “THANK YOU” FROM THE STAFF**

Each member of the called staff and the support staff wish to thank the congregation for the thoughtful and generous Christmas gifts. We are most grateful for the support, love, and care each of us receives from you throughout the year. May God in His mercy continue to bless the Body of Christ in this place with His Presence and His work in us and through us to the praise of His glory.

### **OUR SINCEREST THANKS TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS**

We give thanks to our gracious God for His continued gifts of the means of grace through which He establishes and nurtures our faith and life. We also give thanks to God for all the support of the mission and ministry of St. John's by our members of all ages, in both financial and time devoted ways. Without the willing hands and hearts of our members, much work would go undone that is vital for the efficiency of the congregation's ministry. Once again, we express our appreciation to all volunteers in the numerous capacities in which they serve.

## 2018 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES

Contribution envelopes can still be picked up in the breezeway. Please use the instructions on the clipboard located on the tables with the contribution boxes to locate your box of contribution envelopes. If you have any questions regarding contribution boxes/envelopes, please speak with Yvonne Berry in the church office.

## SOUND WORDS ACADEMY COURSE LISTING: CURRENT

### CHILDREN:

#### **Rhythm of Faith Choir (3 January – 9 May, 5:30-5:55 p.m.; Bethany Johnson & Marcia Lange)**

Rhythm of Faith uses God's gift of music to confess the truth of His Word in song. Learn the rich heritage of Lutheran hymnody and liturgy.

#### **Jr. Lutherans (3 January – 9 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Daniel Sweet)**

This fast-paced Bible, Catechism, and Lutheran history trivia game places Lutherans aged 4 – 12 yrs. in competition with one another and eventually teams from other congregations. It's trivia that is hardly *trivial*.

### ADULTS:

#### **New Testament Greek (5:00-5:50 p.m.; Pr. Bruss)**

Continuation of last year's New Testament Greek course.

#### **Leviticus (7 weeks; 17 January – 21 February, 5:55-6:55 p.m.; Pr. Kerns)**

Stated bluntly, God is holy and you are not. And it's dangerous for us to be around God. He is the One who has to do something about that, and gratefully He has.

#### **Hebrews (Spring Term; 5:55-6:55 p.m., Dennis Hintz)**

Luther describes Hebrews as a marvelously fine epistle. It discusses Christ's priesthood masterfully and profoundly on the basis of the Scriptures and extensively interprets the Old Testament in a fine way.

### COLLEGE STUDENTS & YOUNG ADULTS:

#### **Sharpening Our Discernment Skills (17 January – 9 May, 7:45-8:40 p.m.; Pr. Kerns)**

We will watch various non-Lutheran pastors who deal with the topics of the Lord's Supper and Baptism pausing to test and see if what they teach accords with sound words. This will allow us to be better equipped to spot false teaching.

### CATECHESIS:

#### **Spring Adult Catechesis (14 weeks; 17 January – 9 May; 7:45-8:40 p.m.; Pr. Bruss)**

#### **Youth Cat I (3 January – 9 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Dens. Linda)**

#### **Youth Cat II (3 January – 9 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Prs. Bruss & Kerns)**

## ADULT CATECHESIS CLASS FORMING FOR MID-JANUARY

A new Adult Catechesis Class is forming to begin in mid-January, running for 14-18 weeks and anticipating a May confirmation. Catechesis gives a systematic overview of the chief teachings of Scripture using Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*. This class is for anyone interested in learning more about the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the teachings of the Scripture, from those who know nothing to long-time Lutherans. All are welcomed. Please contact Pr. Bruss as soon as possible if interested. [jbruss@stjlcms.org](mailto:jbruss@stjlcms.org)

## ANNUAL VOTERS MEETING

The Annual Voters Meeting of St. John's will be held on Sunday afternoon, January 21, beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the nave. Each board and committee will present its annual report for the work of this past year and indicate plans for this coming year. The 2017 year-end reports of the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Eagle Foundation Treasurer will be presented.

## MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN JANUARY

Our Jr. and Sr. High Youth will be the host for our monthly breakfast on January 14. Please bring a breakfast dish to share and come join in the fellowship.

## 2018 FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2018 Flower Calendar is now posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. You can sign up for flowers on the calendar, or call the church office at 354-7132 to communicate the Sunday you would like to have your name placed on the calendar. Thank you to all members who have provided the beautiful flowers for us thus far this year.

## FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

*“For I was hungry and you gave me food.” Matt. 25:35*

We have been offered an opportunity to participate in a humanitarian project called “Feed My Starving Children,” a NGO which packs and sends nutritious food to children in 70 countries where starvation is rampant. The organization began in 1987, and has grown tremendously. Over the last thirty years, 99.9 percent of the food and 92.7 percent of the monetary donations go directly to the children who need help the most.

We all have seen pictures of skin stretched over bones and bloated bellies. These children do exist, and our church has been asked to make monetary donations and to volunteer **just two hours** to package food. FMSC appears to be a safe and efficacious way to answer Jesus’ mandate, *“for I was hungry and you gave me food.”*

In partnership with other churches in the Topeka area, the packaging of the food will take place on March 3, 2018 here at St. John’s in Luther Hall. Children as young as five and adults as young as 100 and everyone in between are welcome and encouraged to participate. No cooking is involved. The ingredients are shipped to the site ready to be packaged on an assembly line. Our church’s goal is **(100) volunteers**, but the more we have the more packages that can be sent. The reports from earlier volunteers from all over the country suggest that the experience is not only rewarding, but also enjoyable. For those who prefer, sit-down jobs are available. Please consider helping as a team, as a family, or individually. If you even just think you might be able to help, please **sign up in the breeze way**.

## CHECK OUT THE PACKET OF FOOD . . .

. . . on the table outside the Information Center. That is what we will be packaging on March 3, 2018, in Luther Hall. We hope to send 100,000 meals to starving children over the world. Sign up to be a part of this project of mercy.



## TLS NEWS

**Thank you** from TLS and the Foundation for the prayers and support from members of the TLS association churches throughout 2017. If you haven't already done so, you may make a tax-deductible gift payable to TLS Foundation and mail to: TLS Foundation, 701 SW Roosevelt St., Topeka KS 66606. All

gifts benefit the school directly to provide resources for tuition assistance, operation expenses, and building maintenance and upgrades. Thank you again for your generosity and faithful prayers!

### **LUTHERAN BRAILLE AND LARGE PRINT WORKERS**

WC#31 here at St. John's is still/again looking for a new leader to begin in January 2018. The position involves approximately ten hours a month. The ten hours include

- being in contact with the home office in California to schedule assembly of Bible books
- ordering supplies
- collating, punching and binding books
- checking and filling orders to be packed in boxes
- shipping to those who request them
- paperwork and details

The St. John's Braille workers gather once or twice a month from 8:00 to noon on Thursdays in the church undercroft. There is wonderful fellowship with a very industrious group of volunteers. I will still be volunteering and working alongside the new leader. Please give this very worthwhile mission project prayerful consideration and become a part of "Bringing Christ to Those in Darkness" worldwide.

For more information call *Rosalinda Addington* at 233-8263

### **THANK YOU'S**

A big thank you to everyone for any and all participation in this year's Women League Bazaar. Whether be it volunteers, donations and/or member participation. Results will be posted in the February newsletter.

### **DOORSTEP NEWS**

The Doorstep staff and volunteers would like to thank everyone who donated to Doorstep during the holiday season, and throughout 2017. Doorstep adopted 261 households with 824 individuals from the Christmas Bureau this past December. Because of everyone's generosity, and the Topeka community, they were able to provide food and gifts to their neighbors in need.

Along with the start of a new year also comes the cold weather and high utility bills. Please remember neighbors who are struggling to pay those high bills when looking for a place to donate. Doorstep offers utility assistance to individuals and families throughout the year as funds are available.

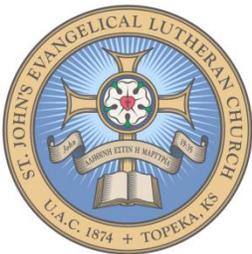
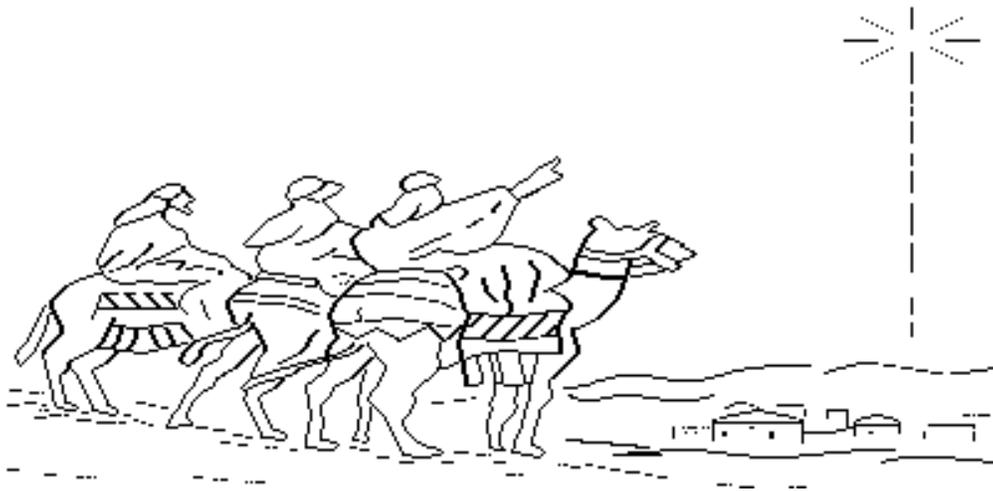
Souper Bowl Sunday is February 4. On this weekend Doorstep asks their member congregations to collect soup and crackers to help restock their food pantry. A can of soup can be a meal, and in the past, with a successful collection, they have had soup and crackers to last them into the summer months! Please remember Doorstep when you go grocery shopping, and pick up a few items for your neighbors in need.

Also, mark your calendars for Doorstep's 15th Annual Operation Soup Line. This year it will be on Wednesday, February 28, 2018 from 11am – 2pm!

Thank you, parents for bringing your children to Sunday school where they can be nurtured in the faith through the Word of God. Even the two-year-olds have their own class! Why not set a good example for them and attend one of the Bible classes during the Sunday school hour.

## YOU CAN IMPACT A CHILD’S LIFE BY BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT

The need for foster families in Kansas is ever-present. There are currently over 7,000 children in need of foster care. We are looking for compassionate families willing to open up their homes and hearts to children who are in need of a nurturing, supportive environment. FosterKansasKids helps you through the journey, making the process as smooth as possible, and providing your family the support you need through all of your questions and concerns. For more information call 1-844-380-2009 or visit the website: [www.fosterkskids.org](http://www.fosterkskids.org).



### THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19–20a)*  
 So that we may obtain faith in Christ, God instituted the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments. Through the gospel and sacraments, as through means, God gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when He wills, in those who hear the gospel. (*Augsburg Confession*, Article 5)