



St. John's Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod

901 SW Fillmore Street • Topeka, Kansas • 66606-1445 • 785.354.7132 • www.stjohnlcmstopeka.org

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JANUARY 2015

CONSIDER INVESTING WITH THE LUTHERAN CHURCH EXTENSION FUND!

The weekend before Thanksgiving, Marcia and I were privileged to attend the annual Fall Conference of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) as representatives of the Kansas District. This was the second time I had been invited to attend, the first being in 2007.

The conference was attended by about 700 people, and was basically an overview and celebration of the mission work of the LCMS as that is supported by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. It also serves as the annual meeting of the LCEF with election of the LCEF Board of Directors, etc. Each year the LCEF conference concludes an entire week of meetings of many of the top leaders of the LCMS. And so, part of our experience was to be able to visit and network with dozens of church leaders from the LCMS, LCEF, CPH, Council of Presidents, Concordia University System, etc.

But perhaps the greatest benefit of the conference was to come away with a greater understanding and new appreciation of the mission of the LCEF, which is to support and facilitate the “extension” of God’s kingdom through the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. (Hence the name “extension” in Lutheran Church Extension Fund.)

The way it works is simple. Any member of an LCMS congregation can invest in one of several financial instruments that LCEF offers. (The return on these investments is uncommonly good! More details to come in the future.) LCEF then reinvests these funds and uses part of the earnings to make loans available to LCMS congregations, schools, etc., for the advancement of their mission, as well as to LCMS rostered church workers for consolidation of educational debt, home purchase, etc., so they can better focus on their ministry to the Church. Both St. John’s congregation as well as Topeka Lutheran School currently have loans from LCEF. Our congregation currently has 66 LCEF investors and a loan of \$1,005,875 for our building addition.

Here are a few basic financial figures for LCEF for the past fiscal year:

- Total Assets (nationally) – \$1,755,330,000
- Loans Receivable (nationally) – \$1,419,888,000
- Total Notes Payable (i.e., investments with LCEF) – \$1,547,815,000
- In Kansas there are 1,772 LCEF investors (4% of Kansas LCMS members).
- These Kansas investors have \$43,759,971 invested in LCEF.
- In Kansas LCEF has 45 loans outstanding totaling \$19,663,109.

There is so much more to say, but perhaps this is enough for starters. In the near future we hope to begin doing a better job of explaining the great benefits of investing with LCEF for the sake of extending Christ’s kingdom. In the meantime, please check out www.lcef.org or stop by and see the regularly updated newsletters on the Breezeway bulletin board (by the water fountain). Lastly, we invite you to visit with Ryan Weir, the LCEF Advocate for St. John’s, in order to learn more.

Your fellow partner in the extension of Christ’s kingdom through the ministry at St. John’s,

Pastor - Rev. Peter K. Lange, ext. 101
Assistant Pastor - Rev. Jon S. Bruss, ext. 104
Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102
Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz
Visitation Pastor - Rev. Glenn R. Bitter
Day School Teachers - Ashley Jensema, Andrea Kosmicki, Marcia Lange

2015 OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Following are the individuals elected or appointed to serve in a leadership capacity in St. John's Lutheran Church - Topeka, Kansas. We give thanks to God for their faithful and dedicated work.

President - **Ed Klumpp*

President Elect - **Al Goodpasture*

Secretary - **Clay Walters*

Treasurer - **Tracy Ireland*

Financial Secretary - **Jim Gerhardt*

Board of Elders: *Steve Gehrke, Ron Revelle, *Mark Pheasant, Larry Beam, Clayton Kinnett, Jeff LaCrone, Mark Pierce, *John Kite, *Roger Barr*

Board of Trustees: *Marc Weir, Keith Powell, *Joe Fergel*

Board of Parish Education: *Dave Weems, Jeff Zillinger, * Myron Akers*

Board of Christian Stewardship: *Jim Wagner, *Dave Graversen, Andy Grittman,*

Endowment Board: **Ryan Weir, Larry Meyer, Shirley Gorman, Chuck McMullen*

Board of Missions & Evangelism: *Jacob Kosmicki, Mike Rehmert, *Mike Grau*

Nominating Committee: *Keith Powell, Mark Pierce, Myron Akers, Bob Berry*

TLS Board of Directors: *Jeff Pierce, Christy Sorensen, Ryan Weir*

KS District Representative: *Stevin Gehrke; Clayton Kinnett (alternate)*

** newly elected/re-elected and appointed/re-appointed*

VOTERS MEETING - JANUARY 25, 2014

The **Annual Voters Meeting** of St. John's will be held on Sunday afternoon, January 25, 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 2014 year-end reports of the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Eagle Foundation Treasurer will be presented. The meeting will be in the Undercroft.

2015 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES

If you still haven't picked up your Contribution envelopes you still may do so at the church. If you have any questions regarding contribution boxes/envelopes, please speak with Yvonne Berry in the church office.

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The committee is very close to completing the new constitution/by-laws and we have taken the old constitution/by-laws and referenced either the location in the new document or the disposition of the item(s) so members can see what was done with each one. We plan on presenting the completed documents to the church council at their January meeting and then again at the voters meeting on January 25, 2015.

Synod requires that the District be furnished a proposed copy of the changes (in our case new versions of our constitution and bylaws) before formal adoption. After review by the District's constitution committee and approval by the District board of directors they will then notify the congregation that the changes are acceptable to the Synod. The congregation may then proceed with formal adoption.

In view of this requirement, we are proposing to hold a "straw poll" vote by the voters assembly in January which will be after the completion of the pastors' Bible study on the Order of Creation and subsequent discussion of the possible changes to women's suffrage at St. John's. This will allow us to submit to the District a version that correctly takes into consideration the various issues attendant to male only or women's suffrage. Our current constitution indicates that amendments may be adopted at a regular voters assembly provided the proposed changes have been submitted and read at previous voters assembly. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the voting membership present is required for adoption. This of course is only AFTER we have received the approval from the District Office.

Roger Barr, Chairman

NEW BAPTISMAL BANNER

For some time, St. John's has been working with Gaspard, Inc., to produce a new baptismal banner. The funding for this project comes from the special account created by the K.I.N.G. team to purchase furnishings for the church. Please take notice of the beautiful new banner hanging in the baptistery behind the font.

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.

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.

NEW ADULT CATECHESIS CLASS IN JANUARY

A new Adult Catechesis class will be forming in January. This class is designed to lead toward communicant membership at St. John's or simply serve as a great review of basic Lutheran theology. Several regular visitors to St. John's have already indicated their desire to participate in the class. All are welcome! Please contact Pastor Lange or Bruss for details regarding meeting time, duration, etc.

WEB COMMUNICATION AT ST. JOHN'S: BRAINSTORMING MEETING

St. John's is currently considering ways to enhance its presence on the Web. The Board of Missions, which is overseeing the project, is seeking input on current efforts as well as ideas for next steps. If you have skills with digital communication (e.g., graphic design; writing; social media marketing; PR; photography) or spend time on the Web and have ideas to share, please join us for a brainstorming meeting on Thursday, January 22 from 5:30 to 6:30 in the Undercroft. Contact Kris Bruss (kbruss7@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

ADULT CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The Adult Christian Fellowship will meet Jan. 25 at 4:00 p.m. in Luther Hall for our annual Souper Bowl Party. Soup, chili and drinks provided. Please bring a salad or dessert. We will play Bingo. Wear your favorite team jersey.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

St. John's Women's League gives thanks to all who helped in various ways to make this year's bazaar a success. Total sales were \$6,050. Thrivent matching funds amounted to \$1600. These proceeds will be used to support missions. Look for the breakdown of this support in an upcoming newsletter.

JANUARY'S MONTHLY BREAKFAST

The January breakfast will be hosted by the Lutheran Youth Fellowship of St. John's. They will provide the food for the breakfast, and the congregation may give a donation to the youth group. Everyone is invited to join us at 9:15 on January 11, 2015, in Luther Hall. If you would be willing to help host a breakfast, please notify Deaconess Linda at lkinnett@stjlcms.org or Jim Simpson. These events provide a great opportunity for you to get to know others in the Body of Christ.

FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2015 Flower Calendar is now posted. If you would like to provide flowers for a particular service this coming year, please sign your name and phone number by the date of your choice. The calendar is located on the bulletin board outside of the church office. Glenda Cox, Chairman of the Flower Committee, will call to remind you that you are responsible for flowers the week preceding the service you chose.

HONORING OUR DEARLY DEPARTED VETERANS

Some have asked if we could acknowledge former members of the military who are now sainted, just as we recognize our current members who are veterans or are currently serving in the military. On the church bulletin board is a list of names of those that we know have served in our Armed Services. We welcome you to forward us the names of former St. John's servicemen and women who now enjoy eternal peace with Christ. Please supply the name and branch of service. You may contact the church office at 354-7132 or email Secretary@stjlcms.org.

"THANKSGIVING DAY ENVELOPE" DISTRIBUTION

Thanksgiving Day envelope proceeds, totaling \$610.00 have been distributed to Door Step, Topeka Rescue Mission, Let's Help, LCMS World Relief, Marian Clinic, Children's Christian Concern Society and St. John's.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep staff, volunteers and clients would like to thank everyone who gave during the holiday season. With 250 households adopted through the Christmas Bureau and community needs ever present we were able to assist our neighbors in need with your help.

The New Year has arrived and along with it cold weather come high utility bills for most of us. Please keep those who are struggling to pay those high bills in mind when looking for a place to donate. Doorstep offers utility assistance to individuals and families throughout the year.

Souper Bowl Sunday is February 1st! Just around the corner! On this weekend member congregations are asked to collect soup and crackers to help restock our food pantry. A can of soup can be a meal. Please remember Doorstep when you go grocery shopping and pick up a few items for your neighbors in need.

During the month of March, our congregation's responsibilities will be to collect canned or boxed food and to provide volunteers to work in the Doorstep clothing room. More information will be provided in the February newsletter.

Doorstep is open Monday – Friday, 8am – 3pm for donations. They are located at 1119 SW 10th Street (10th & Buchanan). As always, you can leave donations in the Doorstep box in the vestibule south of the Fireside Room at St. John's. Thank you!

ST. JOHN'S PRAYER CHAIN

We want to make everyone aware of the availability of the Prayer Chain for special concerns of our members: illness, death, loss of job, etc. You may request that the prayer chain be started by calling *Nancy Taylor*. If she is not available, please call the church office at 354-7132.

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAMS

To all who are currently serving on Crisis Response teams for meals, for labor and disaster relief, or for meals for families of newborns: please contact Deaconess Linda if you wish to continue. Call the church office at 354-7132 or email kinnett@stjlcms.org. If anyone in the congregation is not already on the lists and would like to be, or if you have questions, please do the same.

RUSSIA MISSIONS CHANGING TO INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

In consultation with our Treasurer, the Board of Missions and Evangelism has decided to change the name of the Russia Missions fund to the International Missions fund. This is to reflect better the expanding list of missionaries and the countries that they serve (Russia, the Baltic states, the Czech Republic, etc.). This will also give the Board greater latitude in the future in selecting missionaries to support. Because of the one year lag in ordering offering envelopes, the 2015 envelopes will still say Russia Missions, even though the funds will be used more generally for International Missions. If there are questions or concerns about this, or if you would prefer that your gifts which have already be given would go only in support of Russia Missions, please contact Yvonne Berry in the church office.

“SHARE YOUR HARVEST” DISTRIBUTION

Thank you for your generous support to our community through the “Share Your Harvest” canisters. This year \$1,259.29 was received and was distributed evenly between Doorstep, Rescue Mission, Let's Help and St. John's Human Care. If you still have a canister at home, please return it to the church office (with or without coins) so it may be used next year.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR JANUARY 2015

January 4:	<i>The Boy Jesus in the Temple</i>	<i>Luke 2:41-52</i>
January 11:	<i>The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus</i>	<i>Mark 1:1-13</i>
January 18:	<i>Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael</i>	<i>John 1:43-51</i>
January 25:	<i>Jesus Calls Matthew</i>	<i>Mark 2:13-17</i>

YOUNGER CHILDREN, AGE THREE THROUGH FIRST GRADE, ARE LEARNING THE LORD’S PRAYER AND LUTHER’S MORNING PRAYER.

BIBLE WORDS FOR JANUARY:

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. John 6:68

Children in grades 2 through 5 are learning the Ten Commandments and their meanings from the Small Catechism as well as reciting the following Scripture verses:

January 4: *O Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.* Psalm 26:8

January 11: *And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* Philippians 2:8

January 18: *Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”* John 1:49

January 25: *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.* 1Timothy 1:15

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6: 6-7). Parents, this command from God’s Word is for you, and the Sunday school is here to support you in the nurture of your children’s spiritual growth. Please accept God’s invitation to bless your children through the Sunday school and worship service each week.



THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

[Jesus said] “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.

The Augsburg Confession, Article 5