



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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APRIL 2015

LIVING SACRIFICES—YOUR SPIRITUAL WORSHIP

On Sunday, 19 April, our congregation plans a time-and-talents workshop. Please read more about that event in the brief article that follows this one. We intend the present article to provide the biblical background and rationale.

What do you think of when you think of worship? More than likely what comes to mind is the divine service. There we respond in thanks and praise to the Lord for His grace and goodness in sending His Christ to redeem us. And that “worship” in thanks and praise continues throughout time as the Lord continues to come to us in His Holy Word and Blessed Sacraments.

Oddly, though, when the New Testament talks about worship, it talks of nothing of that sort. To be sure, Christians gathered. They sang psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. They had a liturgy. They had prayers, even prescribed and formal prayers. And apostles and pastors read and proclaimed the Word of God and administered the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Altar. You can read all about that in numerous places (e.g., Acts 2.38-42, Col 3.16, 1 Tim 2, Acts 13.1ff., Acts 20.7ff.).

Today, for lack of a term found in Scripture, we call all of that “the divine service.” It’s the occasion when the Lord (divine) comes to us and serves us (service). Our “worship” in thanks and praise is secondary. The primary thing is the Lord’s presence in our midst in His Holy Word and Blessed Sacraments, bringing us the forgiveness of sins and life and salvation in Jesus’ name.

What the New Testament calls worship is found in Romans 12.1: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to *present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*” Then Paul goes on to explain what that “spiritual worship” looks like in vv. 4-6: “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.”

In other words, our living sacrifice isn’t presented to the Lord within the divine service, but flows from it. The divine service is where He presents to us what the once-dead-now-living sacrifice of His Son gained for us, the forgiveness of sins. Our living sacrifice is made *outside* of the divine service, within the body of Christ, His church and, later in Romans 12, in the world.

And that sacrifice is living, not dead. It’s active, not inert. It does something.

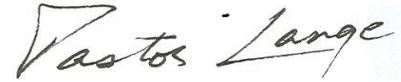
- It serves because it has been served by the Son of Man (Matt 20.28).
- It shares its riches because He who was rich became poor for our sakes, so that through His poverty we might be made rich (2 Cor 8.9).
- It redeems the time (Eph 5.16). That is, it makes the most of what time it has in service to the body of Christ and others, because in the fullness of time, at just the right time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law (Gal 4.4).

It’s also a sacrifice. It gives back something that’s truly precious to us—not just our money, but also our time and the many talents the Lord has given this congregation. Read all of Romans 12. You’ll get a strong sense of

what that sacrificial living and living sacrifice looks like both within the body of Christ and toward those outside.

So as we turn to “stewardship season” beginning this month, let’s follow Paul’s advice and present ourselves as living sacrifices; and, “having gifts..., let us use them.”

That’s what our congregation-wide workshop after the divine service and pot-luck luncheon is all about on Sunday, 19 April. Please accept this as a heartfelt invitation to join us and learn more about being a “living sacrifice” in the body of Christ here at St. John’s, your “spiritual worship.”

STEWARDSHIP TIME AND TALENTS WORKSHOP

Do you know how many volunteer hours are needed at church every year? How about how many volunteer hours would help our congregation meet needs we’re not currently meeting? We don’t either! **So we’re asking for your help. Please join us on Sunday, April 19**, for a pot-luck lunch followed by, “**Living Sacrifices**,” a workshop to assess our congregational needs and desires and to strategize ways to increase ownership on the part of all our members of all that our congregation does. The schedule for the day includes one divine service only at 10:00 followed by a pot-luck meal and the workshop, “Living Sacrifices.” Whether you’re heavily involved in various activities at church or not, please come. We need everyone’s input. Please read the introduction article to this newsletter by the Pastors to get a better understanding of what we mean by “Living Sacrifices.”

The Boards of Stewardship and Missions and Evangelism

EVERYONE SHOULD EXPERIENCE THE EASTER VIGIL!

(This piece appeared last year in our April newsletter. We present it here again to encourage everyone to join us for the Easter Vigil.)

It’s sundown on Holy Saturday, and Mark records these words: “But when the Sabbath was past Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint the body of Jesus.” (16:1)

There in the darkness, with candles, prayer and conversation and meditation on Scripture, the faithful women reflected on everything the Lord had done and taught, and how it all fit with what is recorded in Scripture about the Messiah. That’s the beginning of the *Easter Vigil*—the very first Holy Saturday.

Of course, God’s people had already observed a night-time Paschal vigil for some 1500 years by then, harking back to the night of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, *a night of watching by the Lord, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a “night of watching” kept to the Lord by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.* (Ex. 12:41-42)

No wonder, then, that the Easter Vigil has been *the* service for Holy Saturday in the Christian Church for more than one and a half millennia. In a visually stirring way, the Vigil awaits God’s salvation from sin, death and the devil’s power, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead, who, Scripture tells us, is the Light of the world.

Today’s Easter Vigil begins outside in the darkness around a newly kindled fire. There the prayers of the faithful cycle around themes of purifying fire and life-giving light. All gathered then light their own candle from the paschal candle, which points to Christ and the hope of the resurrection. (The paschal candle is the large “baptismal” candle that normally stands near the baptism font.)

In silent witness to the community, the faithful follow the paschal candle in procession toward the main church doors. The completely darkened church is lighted only by our individual candles. Three times in the church we stop to chant responsively, “The light of Christ! Thanks be to God!” The faithful gather in the front pews of the darkened church, and in the light only of candles the pastor now chants the ancient *Exsultet*, Rejoice!

God’s Word and our prayer follow, tracing the threads of God’s saving work through the Law and the Prophets which culminates in the resurrection of Jesus and our baptism into His death and resurrection.

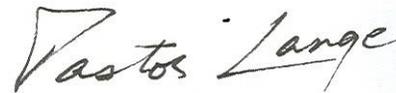
And now the paschal candle moves to the baptismal font. There our words recall our own baptismal renunciations and confession, and we sing together yet another ancient hymn of praise to God.

The breathtaking ancient Easter Litany follows—responsive prayer to the Paschal Lamb into whose death-destroying death we have been baptized.

And then comes the proclamation of the Paschal Lamb in Holy Word and Blessed Meal. As the altar is prepared for the Easter feast, the darkness of Good Friday and Holy Saturday gives way to the light of Easter. Bells peal. Light and Easter color wash over the congregation. And then a shout. “The Lord is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!” The congregation bursts forth into the Easter hymn of praise, “This is the Feast!”

The witness of the Easter Gospel fills the sanctuary with the light of Christ, and in that light the Lord Jesus gives us His feast of victory, His risen body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. The joyous service ends with the concluding communion liturgy and a final triumphant Easter hymn.

We invite you to join the redeemed people of God throughout history—the children of Israel, the Marys and Salome, and the Holy Church throughout the world—and experience the beauty and joy of the Easter Vigil as a regular part of your annual Easter tradition. **This year’s Easter Vigil will be held at 8:00 p.m. on the Saturday before Easter, April 4. Please join us!**

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 HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

| | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Holy Thursday | Thursday, April 2 | 12:15 & 7:00 p.m. |
| Good Friday | Friday, April 3 | 12:15 & 7:00 p.m. |
| Holy Saturday, the Vigil of Easter | Saturday, April 4 | 8:00 p.m. |
| Easter Sunday | Sunday, April 5 | 8:15 & 11:00 a.m. |

EASTER BREAKFAST

Easter Breakfast is on! Thanks to the many who have signed up to help, the breakfast will on Easter Sunday, April 5 between services. The menu will include breads, rolls, pastries, coffee, and juice. Bring your favorites and enjoy a pleasant continental-style breakfast at the celebration of our Savior's Resurrection.

YOUTH NEWS

Saturday, June 6: GOLF SCRAMBLE. This is the youth's annual fundraiser at Forbes Golf Course. This will be another 18-hole (2 rounds of 9) shotgun start, so start assembling your teams now. Prizes, a delicious lunch, goodie bags and loads of fun are just waiting for all you golfers. Registration sheets will be out in March, but you can sign up early by talking to Kathy Gehrke (785-331-4641) or by letting Jim Simpson know.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

The Board of Christian Stewardship has started including stewardship messages periodically in the Notes and News pages of the Sunday bulletin and in the monthly Newsletter. We often just think of stewardship each year when we think of our annual pledge. The Board of Stewardship intends to highlight how God's Word teaches stewardship throughout the church year, always exhorting us to share God's gifts to us through our God-pleasing use of our time, talents and treasures.

John 20:1 *"Now on the first day of the week. . ."* All is made new by the Resurrection of Jesus! Even the day of worship has transitioned from the Old Testament's Saturday Sabbath to the Lord's Day of the New Testament. For the Lord has made all things new: He has begun a new week for a new creation in rising from the dead as the New Adam. We are also made new in Him – a new heart, a new life, new desires, a new outlook toward God: all this comes from our Risen Lord's grace.

John 10:14 *"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me."* What does it mean to know the Lord? It starts with being known by the Lord: He claims us as His own and calls us by name. Then, once we are His, we learn to know Him...and in knowing Him we learn to imitate Him. And that is how the Christian life of good works and generosity grows from the Lord's grace.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REPORT

Periodically we will be providing a financial accounting of the loan for the building improvement as provided to the Board of Stewardship and the Church Council each month. We do this to help keep the congregation more informed how the repayment of the loan is progressing.

| <u>Amount Refinanced</u> | <u>Monthly Payment</u> | <u>Cumulative Interest</u> | <u>Cumulative Principle</u> | <u>Loan Balance</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| \$1,092,778.78 | \$6,839.64 | \$91,512.58 | \$122,506.88 | \$970,271.91 |

APRIL VOTERS MEETING

The quarterly voters meeting will be held on Sunday, April 12 at 2 p.m. The Constitution Committee will be discussing comments/questions received from members regarding the newly proposed Constitution/By-Laws. There will also be a reading of 3 changes that have been made to the current draft based on suggested changes from the District Office, along with reports from the various church boards and called staff.

SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 6, 2015

St. John's Annual Golf Tournament this summer will be held at Forbes Field. This is a fundraiser for the youth group and their activities and their trip to Higher Things Conference in July. Plan to participate as a golfer, a sponsor, or as a volunteer! See the Youth News for more information.

SPRING SALAD SUPPER

Ladies of all ages, 0-100, are welcome to the annual **Spring Salad Supper, on Wednesday, May 6**, and may bring a special tea set, tea pot or tea cup. The dining room will be open at 5:30, with the meal to begin at 6:00. Please bring a salad large enough to share and join in the celebration of our Spirituali-TEA. Table service and drinks will be provided. No advance registration is needed. As part of the program, those toting in tea pots, sets, or cups are welcome, but not required, to share a short description of their special item. Please contact Betty Fincher, 379-5614, if you plan to bring these to adorn the table. Any questions about the Spring Salad Supper may be directed to Ruth Scott, 272-4971.

57TH ANNUAL SMORGASBORD FOR MISSIONS

What a meal deal for you! Chicken, Baked Ham, B-B-Q Meatballs, Deviled Eggs, Baked Beans, Salads, & more, plus Homemade Pie—all that for a \$10.00 Adult ticket, \$4.00 for Children 6-12, and Children under 6 are FREE. It's the 57th Annual Smorgasbord for Missions in Luther Hall on Tuesday, April 28 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at the door or on Sundays after Easter between services. Anyone is welcome to sell tickets to family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers and may contact Chuck McMullen at 246-4337. Please help support this annual event!

Profits go to mission projects—Topeka Rescue Mission, Doorstep, Topeka Lutheran School Foundation, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Children's Christian Concern Society, the LLL Rosebowl Parade, and the Orphan Grain Train. Anyone wanting to volunteer to help prepare the food items or assist in the dining room would be welcome on Sunday, April 26 from 12-3 p.m., Monday, April 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon, and Tuesday April 28 any time after 11a.m. Congregational members may be contacted for additional volunteer needs as this is a tremendous project and any assistance is greatly appreciated. The men of St. John's will be receiving a letter requesting dining room help for the night of the smorgasbord. Please contact Jim Simpson at 379-5703 with any questions.

THE LUTHERAN FINE ARTS COUNCIL OF TOPEKA

LFACT invites all Lutheran artists in Shawnee County to be part of the **FIRST FRIDAY ART WALK**, May 1 from 5:30-8:00 p.m. This event will be held at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th in conjunction with the community First Friday Art Walk. All past or first time artists are invited to show and work may also be sold. For questions and to register to be a part of this event contact Susan Thowe at 379-0435, srthowe@gmail.com.

TOPEKA LUTHERAN SCHOOL NEWS

Topeka Lutheran School is Celebrating 140 years of providing a Christian Education to children in our congregations and the Topeka community. Please join us on **April 17, 2015** at The Great Overland Station. **Not many seats left - Everyone is invited - Prepaid Reservations Required – Limited to the First 200 People** The event kicks off at 5:30 pm with social hour followed with dinner, alumni entertainment, and special guest speaker Ken Calwell, TLS Graduate and CEO of Papa Murphy's International and more! Families are welcome. \$25/Couple; \$15/Single; \$7/Child (12 and under). **Mail ASAP to: TLS Foundation/140, 701 SW**

Roosevelt Street, Topeka KS 66606. If your payment arrives too late it will be returned. Leave a message for Janet Smith at 785-580-9216 if you have questions.

You can also help raise money for the Topeka Lutheran School with their 1st Annual 5k Fun Run/Walk on April 18 at 8 a.m. Please register at active.com, then click 5k for Topeka Lutheran School 1st Annual 5k Fun Run/Walk and it will give you information on all details of the race. Don't worry, if you don't want to run, you can walk. All participants will receive a Thrivent for Lutherans t-shirt and concessions after the race. Hope to see you there. Have some fun, get some exercise and also help out TLS!

RECEIVE THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

Go to the church web site www.stjohnlcmstopeka.org fill out the form on the news and events page "Subscribe to St. John's Newsletter." Enter your first and last name and email address. Select subscribe, then select submit. You will receive the newsletter via email next month. You can also contact the church office at 354-7132 as the list is administered by the church office. If you have any questions, please contact Dave Graversen.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep had a successful Souper Bowl Sunday taking in over 6,300 pounds of soup, crackers and other food items! Thank you to those who helped stock their pantry! Operation Soup Line was a success as well. They served 1,115 meals through lunch, dinner, carry out and delivery orders. There were 46 theme baskets bringing in over \$3,600. Doorstep didn't make their goal of \$20,000 this year, and even with increased expenses they still came close to the \$16,000 they made last year. Thank you to everyone who volunteered at the event and also to those who helped at Doorstep during the month of March, which was St. John's month for increased support.

Doorstep joins Dillons' Community Rewards Program

Would you like to support Doorstep just by doing your grocery shopping? Doorstep joined the new Community Rewards Program offered through Dillons Grocery Stores. Doorstep will receive a percentage of each purchase made from those who select Doorstep for their rewards. Please consider helping Doorstep in this new program offered by Dillons.

Enroll in the Community Rewards program and every time you swipe your Dillons Shoppers card, you will be earning rewards for Doorstep!

1. Make sure you have a Dillons Plus Shoppers Card
2. Visit : <https://www.dillons.com/communityrewards>
3. If you get weekly emails from Dillons then your account is registered.

You may need to add your personal information. Sign into your account, scroll to the bottom and click on "Apply Now"

Doorstep's NPO Number is 50394

If your card is not registered, you can create an account and then enroll. The advantage of creating an account is you'll get emails for Free Fridays - a coupon for a protein bar, bag of cereal, container of yogurt, etc. Plus you can download coupons directly to your shopper's card. Easiest of All - If you don't have email or you simply don't want to register your account, then Call 1-800-576-4377, option #3. Give them your card number and Doorstep's number, 50394, and you are enrolled.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR APRIL 2015

| | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|
| April 5: | <i>Jesus Dies and Lives Again</i> | Mark 15:1-16:8 |
| | Easter Sunday – No Sunday School | |
| April 12: | <i>Jesus Reinstates Peter</i> | John 21:1-19 |
| April 19: | <i>The Conversion of Paul</i> | Acts 9:1-31 |
| | One Divine Service at 10:00 – No Sunday School | |
| April 26: | <i>Paul’s First Missionary Journey</i> | Acts 13-14 |

YOUNGER CHILDREN

BIBLE WORDS FOR APRIL:

God gave us eternal life . . . in His Son. 1 John 5:11

CHILDREN IN GRADES 2 THROUGH 5

BIBLE WORDS FOR APRIL :

April 5: *God gave us eternal life . . . in His Son.* 1 John 5:11

April 12: *The Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.*
Psalm 100:5

April 19: *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.* 2 Corinthians 5:17

April 26: *Turn . . . to a living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.*
Acts 14:15

“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.

MOVIES FOR YOUR CHILDREN THROUGH JUNIOR HIGH

Want some good family movies to watch? There are 31 new DVD’s and one new VHS available in the children’s library located on the second floor of the Sunday school area. These are from Feature Films for Families. Please check out one or two at a time and return them in a timely manner.

He is Risen



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