



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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OF RAVENS, SAINTS, AND THE MASKS OF GOD

How does God serve His creation? He does it by hiding behind “masks,” tools through which He works His gracious providence in the world. And one of these tools is the stewardship of His saints.

In the mega drought years of Elijah, the land of Israel was thrust into a great famine, punishment from the Lord for turning from the God who had given them the land “flowing with milk and honey” and had promised them every good thing within the land. The Lord had chosen to show His grace and favor to the Israelites through the rich agricultural blessings of the land. You could say that was His mask. And indeed that’s just what the Lord did—until, that is, the Israelites turned from the Lord’s promises and took up the worship of a false fertility god, Baal. And so, to show clearly that the former fertility of the land was His mask and not Baal’s doing, the Lord laid the land under drought and famine.

And yet, the Lord would have no famine and drought of His Word. So He raised up the prophet Elijah to proclaim His Word in the midst of the drought-stricken nation. But now to sustain Elijah and His Word, instead of wearing the mask of the land’s bounty, the Lord “commanded the ravens to feed [him].” Instead of wearing the mask of the rain clouds that watered Israel, the Lord gave Elijah the brook Cherith, which still ran with water (1 Kings 17.4). Elijah became an object lesson to all Israel of the principle that the Lord always accomplishes what He accomplishes through masks He Himself has chosen—that is, through the miracles that seem so natural they hardly appear to be miracles. And yet, all He needs to do is withhold His gracious hand, as if by that to rip the mask off His face and expose His gracious and providential care.

These masks of God are found all over the Old Testament and New. Lambs raised on Israelite farms were God’s provision for sin offerings; the Levites were the Lord’s provision for the ministry of His Word and Old Testament sacraments; the judges and armies of Israel, His way of protecting His chosen people.

And then, in the fullness of time, the Lord undertook His greatest masked escapade and sent His Son who, “though He was in the form of God..., took on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient unto death.” (Philippians 2.6-8) And from the dead body of His Son, now risen, the Lord created another mask: the mystical body of Christ, the Church, the congregation of saints. Whoever believes and is baptized is a member of Christ’s mystical body and the saving mask of the saving God in the world. (1 Cor. 12.12-30)

The Lord commanded the ravens to feed Elijah. Likewise we, who through baptism and faith in Christ’s blood have been made saints, are commanded to feed the ministry of the Word and the ministry of mercy in this place. Today for lack of a better term, we call that stewardship. Stewardship is nothing but the use of the Lord’s gifts to us through His other masks (our jobs, wealth, time, interests, talents, abilities) to be the Lord’s mask in the world.

The month of June is dedicated to our stewardship. May the Lord cause all the saints of St. John’s to consider and see and commit to the ways in which He would use us to support the ministry of His Word and mercy both within and outside of our congregation. But instead of thinking of it just as “management of the Lord’s gifts,” let’s think about our stewardship as wearing the masks of God—the masks of a gracious, providential, and merciful God who cares for His people even through His people.

Jon Steph B

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,

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

It is not too late to register to participate in the St. John's Four-Person Scramble at Forbes Golf Course on June 6. Tee time is 8:00 a.m. and registration with donuts and coffee begins at 7:00 a.m. Please pick up a form in the breezeway to join a team or be a sponsor, and return it along with your check as soon as possible to the church office. This is the main fund raiser for the Lutheran Youth Fellowship to attend the Higher Things Conference and for other activities.

2015 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY IS JUNE 28

The month of June will be the backdrop for this year's stewardship education Sundays culminating in an opportunity for commitment on "Stewardship Sunday," June 28. Please mark these Sundays, and especially June 28, on your calendar as a time of spiritual growth, fellowship, and commitment here at St. John's.

Biblical stewardship helps to educate Christian disciples...not just raise money. To put it another way, biblical stewardship is not based on the budgetary needs of the church, but on the desire to have each person grow in discipleship and to experience the joy of giving in spontaneous thanksgiving for God's goodness and mercy. This year's "season of stewardship" will take place primarily on Sundays, June 14, 21, and 28 and will include the following:

- Stewardship applications in the Sunday sermons
- Stewardship Bible studies on Sundays June 14 & 21
- Scriptural reflections on stewardship shared by some of our members
- Stewardship education resources
- Congregational prayer for growth in biblical stewardship
- Celebration of the various aspects of our congregation's ministry
- Stewardship Sunday on June 28, with an opportunity to make a stewardship commitment during **the single 10 a.m. worship service.**
- A pot luck celebration meal will follow the single service. See June Pot Luck Luncheon in this issue for more information on this celebration meal.

As you are reading this, you may already have received your 2015 commitment card, or will be receiving it shortly. As with last year these are being sent early to give members/families time to give prayerful consideration of their commitment for 2015. Also, completion of a commitment card during the June 28 service will be completely voluntary. If you are unable to attend on Stewardship Sunday, you may leave your completed commitment card in a sealed envelope in the collection plate or in the church office.

There will be no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. Since there will be no follow-up visits to ask people to complete their cards, we will make every effort to inspire everyone to be present on Stewardship Sunday and for the opportunities leading up to that date. We pray that you will take advantage of all that is planned to educate God's saints at St. John's in the blessing of joyful giving.

2015 Stewardship Campaign Committee

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REPORT

The Board of Stewardship would like to provide the congregation with an update on the building loan. Payments on the building loan come from contributions to the special building fund campaigns and not from normal contributions to the church's general operating fund.

We are currently in the final year of our third building fund campaign called "Continuing the Journey" and as of the end of April we have a balance of \$ 963,655.49 remaining on the loan. Our monthly payment is \$6839.64 and up until December 2014 contributions to the building fund covered the monthly payments. However, for the first four months of 2015 contributions have fallen \$4100 short of matching our monthly payments. Fortunately, we have building fund reserves that enable us to make the monthly payments.

Later this fall the Board of Stewardship will initiate a new three year campaign to continue to pay on the building loan. To insure that the building fund reserves are still able to cover our monthly payments, we will need to have the next campaign be as successful as our last three year campaign. If not, the loan will need to be added to the church's general operating budget, most likely in 2017.

In the interest of fiscal responsibility the Board believes it is important to bring this to your attention now. St. John's is truly blessed with the support our congregation has shown with annual contributions, both for our yearly operation budget, as well as the building fund campaign. We pray that our members will keep this information in mind as we finish out our pledges for the current building fund campaign and begin the new campaign in the fall. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact Board of Stewardship members Andy Grittman (chair) or Dave Graversen (secretary). Thank you. Board of Christian Stewardship

SAINTS ALIVE AFTER 55

July 26-28

Theme: "Feed My Sheep"

Keynote Speaker

Pastor Ken Klaus

Speaker Emeritus of The Lutheran Hour Ministries

Deadline for registration - June 26

See more details in the Information Center

SINGLE CHURCH SERVICE ON JUNE 28

Due to the 28th being Stewardship Sunday, followed by a pot luck luncheon, there will only be one service at 10 a.m. on this date. We hope all will be able to attend the 10 a.m. service and join in the pot luck luncheon.

JUNE POT LUCK LUNCHEON

There will be no breakfast on June 14. Instead, there will be a celebration luncheon on Sunday, June 28 hosted by the Board of Stewardship. The Board will provide barbequed brisket and **church members are asked to bring a side salad or a dessert** for all to share. This meal will be in celebration of wrapping up the 2015 Stewardship campaign. **There will be only one service on June 28 at 10 a.m.** The luncheon will follow the 10 a.m. service. We hope all church members will join in this special occasion.

Plan to be a part of...
THE NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME
SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 6-8 PM

(Hosted by the Neighborhood Care Team and many additional St. John's volunteers)

Signup sheets to volunteer at the block party will be posted on the Human Care bulletin board soon!

RECEIVE THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

Go to the church web site www.stjohnlcmstopeka.org and fill out the form at the bottom of the homepage, then "Subscribe to St. John's Newsletter." Enter your name and email address. Then click on subscribe. You will receive the newsletter via email next month. The list is administered by the church office. If you have any questions, please contact Dave Graversen.

LWML

Upcoming June event—June 14 at 2:00 p.m. is the LWML Quarterly. In addition to tying quilts for Lutheran World Relief, there will be greeting card-making for our shut-ins. If you'd like to bring any supplies to share, they are welcome. Plan to come for crafting, fellowship, and snacks.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE BARGAIN/BAKE SALE

Bargain/Bake Sale—The Women's League is planning to have a Bargain Bake Sale August 20 and 21. As you do your Spring Cleaning, save your good useable items for the sale. The sale helps us to fund our expenses through the year. However, this year we will be designating half of our profit for LWML Mites. Our "mite" money goes to Kansas/National mission projects. An example of a Kansas mite project is \$5,000 for the Food Bank at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. An example of a National mite project is \$30,000 for training K-9 Comfort Dogs for LCMS Chaplains.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE CARING & MISSION

We will be preparing Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief May thru June.

Items needed are:

Light weight bath size towels (approximately 52" x 27", dark color)

Bath size soap bars (4-5 oz., any brand, in original wrapper)

Sturdy combs

Metal nail clippers

Adult size toothbrush in original wrapper

If you would rather let us do the shopping, monetary gifts will be accepted by:

Gerri Tate (271-0886) Marcia Wade (286-1119)

THANK YOU NOTES

A HUGE THANK YOU to Jim Simpson and the wonderful crew of workers who assisted in the kitchen for the Spring Salad Supper. It was a beau-tea-ful evening celebrating our spirituali-tea. Several tea sets were shared and a delightful devotion was presented by Allison Lehman. Thanks also to Andrea Kosmicki and Morgan Brown for their participation in the evening's program. *LWML*

Once again, we'd like to THANK all those who contributed to this year's successful Smorgasbord—food preparation, silverware wrapping, serving, carrying trays, cleanup, selling tickets, etc. Many helping hands were involved and your time is greatly appreciated. Close to 300 people were served that evening and the following are recipients of the net proceeds of \$2,650:

Lutheran Hour Ministries	Hintz Endowment, Concordia University, Seward, NE
Topeka Lutheran School	Lutheran Braille Work #31
LLL Kansas District	Orphan Grain Train
Children's Christian Society	Doorstep
LLL Rosebowl Parade	Topeka Rescue Mission

Thank you to everyone who helped with, participated in and supported the Topeka Lutheran / Luke Savage Memorial Golf Tournament on April 25. We had 120 golfers, 40 volunteers and raised over \$9000 for TLS. Praise God! The money will be used to purchase iPad Airs for use in the kindergarten through 5th grade classrooms.

DOORSTEP NEWS

The Topeka Community Foundation will host its 3rd Topeka Gives Event to benefit local charities on Tuesday, June 2 at Fairlawn Plaza Mall from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Doorstep will be participating again this year and will have a booth at the event. The Foundation has \$60,000 available in match money for donations made to the 130+ participating agencies. The match will be made proportionately on donations of \$25 - \$1,000. Thanks to our wonderful donors, Doorstep received \$8,809 last year to assist with agency needs and services. Please come out and join Doorstep staff and volunteers and help us raise needed funds. You must be present on June 2 to make your donation for the matching money to be applied. Visit: www.topekacommunityfoundation.org for more information.

Doorstep Needs Volunteers:

The Doorstep Clothing Room needs help on Wednesdays & Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. You can work half a day or the full shift. You will be assisting clients in their shopping and sorting donations. Call Carrie at 357-5341 if you are interested! The Dovetail Shoppe needs volunteers on Thursdays from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. or Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and you can work in shifts. You will be sorting donations and assisting shoppers. Call Ron at 234-3004 (Thurs, Fri, Sat) if you're interested!

Christmas In July

It is hard to believe now, but Christmas in July will be here before you know it. Start looking now at the winter clearance racks where you shop. Also, check out the store "Uniquely Yours" in Brookwood for bargain prices on new items. Remember, we need new winter items in all sizes for men, women, juniors and children.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION UPDATE

In January, the Board of Missions and Evangelism established a working committee to address digital communication at St. John's, specifically the website and social media efforts. Here's what's happening:

Social Media: St. John's now has an active Facebook page, where you can find announcements, reminders, and photos. If you're on Facebook, "like" St. John's to stay connected. We may add other social media accounts (e.g., Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram) in the future, but for now, we're starting small.

Website: You may have noticed a few changes on the St. John's website, including the addition of service times, sermon snippets, and a new footer on the homepage. We'll be rolling out more changes (e.g., new layout, lots more pictures, reorganized navigation) over the summer, with the goal of completing the website update by August 1. If you notice anything amiss as we're making changes (e.g., something doesn't look right on your device or in your browser), please let us know.

SHORT TERM VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

It may be difficult for us to comprehend, but many children in Topeka do not have adequate food in the summer when school is not in session. St. John’s has the opportunity to be a “site” for the Summer Meal Program from June 1 through July 10. At no cost to us, the USDA will provide meals for children ages 1 through 18 at our facility. We will serve breakfast 8:30 a.m.to 9:30 a.m. on the weekdays during the six weeks. We provide the building, supervise the children, and complete some simple paperwork. They provide the meals ready to serve and even send someone to serve them.

Volunteers will be needed who will choose a day of the week to help for six weeks, or will choose a certain week, Monday through Friday, or a single day. The kids will have the opportunity to use the basketball goals and balls during that one hour only. The Bridge, which is located just around the corner from St. John’s at 1023 SW 8th Street, will be serving lunch, so it might be beneficial for the children to get breakfast here. If you think this is something you might do, please contact Deaconess Linda **as soon as possible** so we will know if this is a viable option for St. John’s. lkinnett@stjlcms.org.

2015 FLOWER CALENDAR

The following services are available in the next few months if you would like to provide flowers for any of them:

June 21 & 28 July 26 August 2, 23 & 30

Just sign your name and phone number on the date of your choice on the Flower Calendar posted outside of the church office. The office staff will call to remind you.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR JUNE 2015

First Article of the Creed: I believe in God the Father Almighty

June 7: *God Made Us: God Creates the World*

June 14: *God Made the Angels: An Angel Rescues Peter*

June 21: *God Cares for Us: Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath*

June 28: *God Protects Us: God Rescues Israel*

BIBLE WORDS FOR JUNE:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

He will command His angels . . . to guard you in all your ways. Psalm 91:11

Cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. 2 Timothy 4:18

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Don’t forget to enroll your children, age 3 through those entering the 6th grade, in Vacation Bible School, July 20 – 24, 9:00 – 11:30, Monday through Friday. Please see the registration form in this newsletter or at the Information Center. Bring your friends and neighbors! Please consider volunteering to lead a small group from site to site, or to help with decorations, crafts, or preschool.

“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 THEME FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: “TE DEUM”
AN EXCITING AND QUALITY VBS CURRICULUM FROM HIGHER THINGS
Save The Dates: **July 20 - 24, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.**

In addition to the children, we invite adult and teen volunteers for these positions:

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|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Preschool teacher/helpers</i> | <i>Registration Personnel</i> | <i>Snack preparers</i> |
| <i>Elementary Teachers/helpers</i> | <i>Craft coordinator/helpers</i> | <i>Recreation</i> |
| <i>Leaders</i> | <i>Actors</i> | |
| <i>Decorators</i> | | |

We are looking forward to a good time at VBS this year. Each day the children will learn portions of The Lord’s Prayer and hear Bible stories that correspond to The Lord’s Prayer. The stories will be presented in drama form, which is why we need actors for each day. We will also need props and costumes to represent the various characters. Those needs are listed below. Please consider your God-given gifts and pray that the Lord would lead you to assist the children and the church in this endeavor. Call the church office at 354-7132, or speak to Deaconess Linda, or email lkinnett@stjlcms.org.

Here is a list of items we would like to borrow if you have any of them and care to lend them to us.
Shoes of all kinds: Sport shoes (golf, baseball, soccer, etc.); Beach shoes (flip flops); Ballet slippers; School shoes; Hunting boots; Hiking boots; Penny loafers; Bedroom slippers; Mario slippers (or something to represent video games). A Captain’s hat; A flight attendant hat or jacket; Something to represent a customs agent.

VBS ENROLLMENT

July 20 - 24, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Children's classes are open to **children age 3 years through those entering 5th grade this fall.**

I wish to enroll these children in our VBS: Write the grade that the child will enter in the fall of 2014.

Name _____ age _____ grade (in the fall) _____

Name _____ age _____ grade (in the fall) _____

Name _____ age _____ grade (in the fall) _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____ phone _____

I will be volunteering and will need child care for these children under age three:

Please place your completed form in the blue box at the Information Center soon!



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