



St. John's Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod

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

VOL. 86 NO. 9 MONTHLY

SEPTEMBER 2015

DADS—JUST DO IT!

The August 2015 *Lutheran Witness* contains some arresting statistics regarding the role of fathers in the spiritual life of their children (statistics, I might add, borne out in study after study):

- When dad and mom regularly (weekly) attend church, 75% of children persist in the church
- When dad regularly (weekly) attends church and mom doesn't, this falls by roughly half
- When dad does *not* regularly attend but mom does (weekly), the floor crumbles: only 2 to 3% of children stay in the church (*Lutheran Witness*, August 2015, p. 7) (Good Christians, pray for these moms and children!)

Now, to be sure, this isn't to say that moms aren't important. Nor should these stats cause them to lose heart or not to put to use the Lord's direction for fathers. After all, we hear nary a word about St. Timothy's father in Scripture; but we do hear about his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois who instructed Timothy in the faith (1 Tim 1:5); and the Lord through Moses commands "all Israel" to "teach [these words] to your children"—mothers to daughters and sons, fathers to sons and daughters (Deut 11:19). Above all, we have the Lord's promise that His Word does not return to Him void (Is 55:11)

But the stats above and the Lord's instruction in Scripture do warrant some focus on fathers.

Scripture tells us, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). In the Lord's original plan that word of Christ was to be taught by Adam ("the dad") to his family (see Gen 2:16; 3:1-3). That's the original pattern. And that's just what Adam did...until he didn't (see Gen 3:17).

And yet, despite Adam's failure that pattern—father to household—persisted.

- Noah taught the Word of God to *his* family (Gen: 6-7)
- At Passover the *father* is to tell his son the Lord's saving work in freeing the Israelites from the Egyptians (Ex 13:14)
- In Ex 20:5, the sins of the *fathers* are visited upon the children—chief of them not instructing their children in the Word of the Lord
- Father Joshua determines his family's devotion—"As for me and my household, we shall serve the Lord" (Jos 24:15)
- Fathers are to "bring [their children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4)
- In Acts Peter addresses the Jewish *men* gathered on Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children" (Acts 2:38-39)
- Cornelius in Acts 10 and the jailer in Philippi (16:33) receive the Faith—and their households

How are fathers to do this? Here's an incomplete, high-level list:

- Be a student—hold the Word of God sacred and gladly hear and learn it, and then...
- Be a model
 - Regularly (weekly) attend church with the entire family

- Regularly (weekly) attend Bible study when the kids are in Sunday School
- Be a teacher
 - Have regular (daily) devotions with the family at home (use *Portals of Prayer*)
 - Talk about the sermon and the Sunday School lesson on the way home
 - Help the kids with catechesis at home and attend catechesis classes with them
- Be consistent—keep up the pattern throughout life

Dads, you have a big job. But in the words of the Nike ad, Just Do It. And trust that the Lord will bless your work on His behalf.



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,

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A VOTING MEMBER?

The new constitution of our congregation defines “voting member” as a communicant member who has reached the age of 18 years and been received as a voting member upon application for such privilege upon approval of the voters of the assembly. This means that, unlike in the past, communicant women age 18 and above are eligible to join the voters assembly. **We encourage all eligible St. John’s members to join the voters assembly.**

To do so there are a few steps (details outlined in the policy below):

- Contact Pr. Bruss or an elder well prior to a voters meeting
- Review the constitution that you’ll be given by the elder or Pr. Bruss, and
- Attend the next voters meeting to be received as a voter

For those who’d like to join the voters assembly at the soonest possible date, contact an elder or Pr. Bruss well in advance of the 27 September voters meeting and please plan to attend that meeting once you’ve spoken with the pastor or an elder.

We’d like to make sure that our voters assembly include those who wish to be voters and accept the responsibilities thereof. With our current called staff vacancy there will be critical actions to be considered by the voters assembly in the near future.

Reception and Duties of Voters under Paragraph 5.2.3

1. An applicant for voting membership shall give notice of intention to the pastor or one of the elders and will be furnished a copy of the Constitution and By-laws of the congregation to read prior to a voters meeting in order to become a voter. At a subsequent constitutional meeting of the voters and in the presence of the applicant, a member of the Board of Elders shall present such application, the applicant shall sign the constitution, and the applicant will be received as a voter upon approval by the voters assembly.
2. It shall be the duty of every voting member to attend the voters assemblies. If a voter fails to attend such meeting, the voter waives the right to cast a vote during that meeting. Voters shall accept nominations for board membership and committee appointments, if possible, after having

been a voting member for a period of one year and shall participate in the business activities of the voters assembly.

3. Voting members who are absent from the meetings of the voters assembly for a full year without an excused absence shall have their name removed from the roster of voting members by the Board of Elders and informed by letter. However, they may be reinstated by re-applying for voting membership.

(Adopted 12 Aug 2015)
The Church Council

YOUTH CATECHESIS

Classes for the first, second, and third year catechesis are set to begin on Monday evening, September 14. If you have a student in the 6th, 7th or 8th grade or high school who is eligible for catechesis, please watch your mailbox and the Notes and News in the weekly bulletins for details.. In catechesis, students learn the Faith more deeply, learn Scripture passages and the Catechism by heart, and attain skills that will aid them in their spiritual journey to the end of life. We look forward to having your children in class.

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 or the church office at 354-7132.

ECCLESIA BELLS & KANTOREI

Ecclesia Bells will have its first rehearsal 6:30 - 7:15 p.m. on September 10, the Thursday after Labor Day. Enter through the north door to the narthex.

Kantorei will have its first rehearsal 7:20 on September 10, the Thursday after Labor Day. Enter through the north door to the narthex.

Pastor Goetz's Adult Bible Class will not meet on Sunday morning, September 6, the day before Labor Day. The following Sunday, September 13, he will begin a new series of Bible classes under the theme "The Lies We Believe".

LIVING SACRIFICES BRAINSTORMING SESSION UPDATE

While the above session took place back in April, we wanted to let the congregation know that the information gathered isn't sitting dormant. Members of the Board of Stewardship, the Board of Missions, and Pastor Bruss have met to outline a game plan for how we proceed to process and implement the many ideas brought forth at that meeting. All ideas have been entered into spreadsheets. For the different topics area that we brainstormed on, there were 421 ideas posted. We also had 62 ideas for volunteer opportunities submitted with the cards we had on each table. Finally, we had 41 ideas on how we can best interest people in these opportunities. Obviously, there is some duplication of ideas, but you can see that we have no shortage of excellent ideas to work with. So the plan will start off with sending ideas pertaining to a particular board's area of responsibility to that board. First to weed out

duplications, and then using a ranking system we have put together to rate each idea. Below you will see the rating system:

Prioritize lists using the following scale:

- a. 1 - Great idea. Work on implementation now.
- b. 2 - Good idea. Will try to implement when we have the time or resources.
- c. 3 - Not Feasible at this time, will save for future consideration
- d. D - Done–We are already doing this.
- e. ?–We don't understand the suggestion, need more information.

Once we have the prioritization back from each board, we will build a master prioritized work list. While this is being done, it is our intention to form a Living Sacrifices Initiative Group to identify ways that we can recruit people to help work on the prioritized projects. Creatively identify ways to engage with people who currently do not volunteer. These ideas will come from the 41 suggestions submitted by the congregation during our brainstorming session. Finally, we plan to form a focus group from members of the congregation to meet with the Living Sacrifices Initiative Group and provide feedback on the ideas generated to engage with members. Working foremost with our top priority ideas, and the best ideas to encourage our members' interest, this group will hopefully get the teams formed up to start tackling some of the great ideas submitted by our congregation. This is by no means an easy assignment, but one certainly well worth pursuing. Our overall theme for this process is: **Make Christian Friends, Do the Lord's Work, and Have Fun.** We feel confident with the Lord's guidance, that will happen.

The Board of Stewardship & The Board of Missions and Evangelism

ADDRESSING OUR DEBT BY HAVING A FORMAL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Board of Stewardship has been looking into the feasibility of initiating one final campaign effort to retire the Building Campaign loan. The loan balance as of July 31 was \$953, 136.47. Looking at how the last couple of campaigns have gone, it is conceivable that it could possibly take three more 3-year campaigns to retire this debt. That is nine more years. Plus, in February of 2023, we will have to refinance our loan if it is not paid off. We have no idea what interest rates may be at that time. St. John's most certainly would benefit by paying off our debt. If there would be no further campaigns on this loan after this year, the monthly loan payment of \$6839.84 or the \$82,078.08 per year would have to be rolled into the church's operating budget. As finances now stand, that is an expense we don't believe the operating budget can absorb. So the Board of Stewardship believes some sort of capital campaign needs to be launched to retire the debt. The question becomes whether we should do that ourselves or hire a professional firm to lead us through a formal campaign. We believe there are many good reasons to hire professionals.

First of all, we have found a firm that is rooted in the confessional and liturgical theology that we cherish – Wittenberg Church Consultants, Naperville, Illinois. They serve only Lutheran churches and have done several campaigns in churches like ours. Second, professionally run campaigns are more successful than home-spun ones. Most importantly, a professionally run campaign will increase our general stewardship, involve more members, unite us around a common goal, and lead us more deeply into God's word and sacraments.

What does a campaign look like and what would it entail? There would be twenty weeks of training and enacting the campaign followed by a three year period in which we would make our gifts. The pledges raised typically equal 100% to 150% of annual offerings. For St. John's this would amount to \$600,000 to \$900,000. The latter figure would basically retire our debt. This capital fundraising firm would spend a couple of days with us to learn our systems and our way of doing church and then customize the program for us. They would then return for periodic training sessions and lead ten different teams through each step of the campaign. The campaign would include a spiritual renewal component for each member of St. Johns, along with several additional short publications on spiritual renewal, prayer and

stewardship. There would also be a campaign video, home gatherings, special sermons and Bible studies, all of which would culminate in a congregation-wide fellowship event where our pledges would be gathered.

Bringing in an outside firm would raise the level of intensity of our campaign, save our pastors and leaders preparation time, keep us on track, and more effectively help us pay down our debt in a timely manner. We present this information at this time, as the Church Council has voted to bring this issue before a Voters Assembly on September 27. More information will be forthcoming via bulletin inserts and email submissions and we ask for your prayerful consideration of this important matter.

The Board of Christian Stewardship

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 IS ST. JOHN'S CONGREGATION'S 141ST ANNIVERSARY!

MONTHLY CONGREGATIONAL POT LUCK BREAKFAST

September 13 is the Sunday for the monthly congregational breakfast – a pot luck arrangement. Bring your favorite breakfast casserole, meat, bread, or pastries and join everyone for good food and good conversation. This is a great opportunity to get to know someone you are not well-acquainted with. Thanks to the Christian Fellowship group who will host this event.

OCTOBERFEST LUNCHEON

The Young Adults and College Student Bible Study group will host an Oktoberfest Luncheon on Sunday, October 25 after the late service. Tickets will be \$7/plate for a brat or burger, German potato salad, a wedge salad, and cobbler. If you would like a double brat or hamburger it is \$9. Tickets will be available the following Sundays between/after services in the courtyard: September 13, 20, 27 and October 4, 11. Please buy your tickets in advance so the proper amount of food can be made in advance, but at the door ticket sales will also be available. You can also order brats and burgers to-go. All money raised will be going to St. John's Mission Fund.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Come join us on Tuesday mornings at 9:00, beginning September 8, for an overview of the Old Testament. We know the accounts, but not necessarily the order in which they occurred. Do you know which prophets spoke to which kings? How does the Old Testament point forward to Christ? These are some of the discussions we will have this fall and next spring. Please join us and bring your friends.

THANK YOU'S

Work Center #31 would like to thank you again for the packing material the congregation has so abundantly supplied for us. You might be interested to know your supplies have gone to places like Peru, Colombia, Bangladesh, Mexico, India, Cuba, Guatemala, Puerto Rico and the USA and other Spanish speaking countries. The plastic bags are used to keep the precious Bible Books dry when packed, and the other packing materials keep the books from being damaged during their long trip. It's so important to ship God's Word in the best possible condition to the people in these countries. We often receive word from them telling us how they treasure their Bible's and share them with others. We so appreciate your support.

We wish to thank all those who contributed and helped out with the Bargain Sale August 20 & 21.
Women's League

CONTACT CHANGES OR GOING AWAY TO COLLEGE?

If you have any changes in your address, email address, or phone number, please notify the church office of these changes. You can phone us at 354-7132 or email us at secretary@stjlcms.org.
We would like to stay in touch with you!

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION UPDATE

We are making steady progress on the **new St. John's website**, with the goal of making the switch to the new site sometime next month. The extended deadline will allow us to test and evaluate all the links, features, and pages before making the site public. We'd like to eliminate as many glitches as possible before going live, but after that, we hope you'll let us know if something's not working as expected. And one quick note regarding Facebook: Some of you have asked about how to find the St. John's Facebook page. We're listed under **St. John's Lutheran Church, Topeka**.

CALLING ALL MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS

We would like to identify all members of our congregation who have served or are presently serving in the United States military. To date we know of 68 St. John's members who are currently serving, or have served. We ask you to contact the church office or one of the Elders identifying your branch of service. Our plan is to maintain an up-to-date roster for recognition/support and remembrance for dedication to God and country. Also, if you know any of our dearly departed members who served in the military, please give us their name and branch of service. There is a bulletin board display for both categories.

TLS NEWS

BACK TO SCHOOL! The TLS students are attending, Bibles and books are being used, teachers and staff are back to work for the 2015-2016 school year. BUT we need you too. Your help will provide technology items and financial assistance for our students. Please mail your gift of any size before September 15 to TLS Foundation, Inc., 701 SW Roosevelt St., Topeka, KS 66606. Just think how much TLS will receive if everyone in church with you sends in \$10.00! It really adds up fast. Blessings, *Janet Smith*

Come join the fun at **Topeka Lutheran's School Carnival** Sept 26th from 4-7 p.m. We will have carnival games, unlimited inflatable usage, bracelets, a dunk tank, face painting, food, and prizes. Mention seeing this in the St. John's newsletter and get a free face painting from Creative Faces by Heather (valid only for non-TLS families).

SINGLE MINISTRY RETREAT

The Kansas District Adult Single Ministry of the LCMS would like to invite all singles (18-108) to the Annual Fall Retreat, October 16-18, 2015, Retreat Center in Herington <http://retreatcenter.yolasite.com>. The Theme is "**Give Me a Break!**" **A mini vacation with Christian friends**; based on *Matthew 11:28* & 29. Interested, contact *Nancy Taylor*, Chairman Kansas District Adult Singles Ministry
ntaylor713@aol.com 785-221-3371

2015 FLOWER CALENDAR

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

October 26 November 8 & 15

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.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE INFORMATION

Any Best Choice bar codes are appreciated. Please put them in the box in the Courtyard.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE CARING & MISSIONS

We are continuing to prepare SCHOOL KITS in September. Items needed are displayed on the table beneath the LWML bulletin board, with a basket beneath the table for collection.

Items needed at this time:

- 70 sheet notebooks of wide or college-ruled paper 8 ½" x 11"; no loose-leaf paper
- 30 cm. ruler or a ruler with cm on one side and inches on the other
- Pencil sharpener
- Blunt scissors (safety scissors with embedded steel blades work well)
- Unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers
- Ballpoint pens (no gel ink)
- Box of 16 or 24 crayons
- Eraser approximately 2 ½" long

Thank you in advance for your donations. Again, monetary gifts will be accepted.

Geri Tate 272-0886; Marcia Wade 286-1119; Carol Ravins 266-7088

LWML FALL QUARTERLY MEETING

To begin the new LWML year, the Fall Quarterly will be Sunday, September 20th, at 2 p.m. in the Courtyard. Our program presenter is one of our own members, Allison Lehman, from Rebound Physical Therapy! She will discuss the topic of Women's Health. All women of the congregation are invited to attend and learn from Allison's wealth of knowledge. Check the Sunday bulletins in September for further details, but please mark your calendars and look forward to an informational and enjoyable Sunday afternoon!

NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY – NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME RECAP REPORT

The Lord blessed us with a beautiful evening and a great turnout for this 10th annual event. We had approximately 300 attendees. For the 3rd year in a row, we received funding through a mission outreach grant from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. The amount awarded this year was \$1,250.00. Those funds, combined with a \$250 grant from law enforcement, and funding from the Historic Old Town NIA, we will come close to having the expense of putting on the event covered. The remaining funds to support the event come from donations to St. John's Human Care. The Neighborhood Care Team wishes to express their sincere appreciation for those who volunteered to help with the event, and also to those church members and families who attended the event and helped interact with the neighbors in attendance. This event continues to be one of the top attended sites for the Night Out Against Crime in the City. This year, there were approximately 80 sites around the City of Topeka for this event.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR SEPTEMBER 2015

September 6:	<i>Joseph and His Brothers</i>	<i>Genesis 37</i>
September 13:	<i>Joseph's Troubles</i>	<i>Genesis 39</i>
September 20:	<i>Joseph Feeds Egypt</i>	<i>Genesis 40-41</i>
September 27:	<i>Joseph Forgives</i>	<i>Gen. 42-45; 50:15-21</i>

Bible Words for September:

Early Childhood

September 6: *For those who love God, all things work together for good.* Rom. 8:28

September 13: *God, the Lord, is my strength.* Habakkuk 3:19

September 20: *Your Father knows what you need.* Matthew 6:8

Sept. 27: *Be kind . . . forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.* Ephesians 4:32

Elementary Grades

Sept. 6: *For God shows no partiality.* Romans 2:11

Sept. 13: *My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.* Proverbs 1:10

Sept. 20: *And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:19

Sept. 27: *If we say we have no sin, the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* 1 John 1:8-9

“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.