



St. John's Lutheran Church

Missouri Synod

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CHRISTIANITY IS NOT FOR EVERYONE

Let's face it. The media, the secular world, and many Christians themselves do not have a correct concept of what Christianity actually is. We are called hypocrites because they (and we) equate it with holy, high morality and good works, and, of course, we cannot live up to that standard. It's about sinners in need of forgiveness and a Savior who has and continues to give us His perfect righteousness. We do not go to church because we are holy; we go because we are not holy and need a Savior. It's a sad thing that Christianity is so misunderstood.

The following article by Chad Bird (see birdchadlouis.wordpress.com) expresses it well.

If you're a religious person who has made such huge strides in holiness that you deem grace a crutch for those still handicapped by sin, who can detect the faint applause of angels clapping their wings at your record of obedience, who has led such an exemplary life that you've landed a spot on heaven's honor roll, then you'll feel like you're slumming in Christianity, for Jesus calls poor, miserable sinners, not those who sport homemade halos.

If you've clawed, rung by rung, up the ladder of life and now, kicked back on a pedestal of success, look down your nose on the masses of good-for-nothings who'll never be your peers, then you'll have no use for the God of failures who bled between lawbreakers.

. . . If you've walled yourself in so you don't have to rub shoulders with people that could use a helping hand, a shoulder to cry on, a handout now and then, a listening ear, a whispered prayer, then the God who calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves will seem hopelessly out of touch with your insulated life of self-sufficiency.

If you smile at the man in the mirror because by not smoking and drinking and womanizing and gambling and swearing, you've built up a moral bank account so fat with cash you could open a pawn shop of piety and lend out your righteousness to others, then you'll be scandalized at the Father who sprints like a madman to throw his arms around the neck of the returning prodigal.

Yes, Christianity is not for everyone.

But if, rich or poor, you realize that your moral bank account is penniless, that you have no righteous riches to fill the wallets of others, much less God, then let me tell you about the God who, though he was rich, for your sake became poor, that he might enrich you with golden blood minted in divinity's veins.

If your life is one screw-up after another, if your closets are so packed with skeletons that you've had to rent space at a storage facility for the overflow, if you've served time for your crimes, if you're afraid the ceiling will collapse if you darken the doors of a church, then let me tell you about a Savior who went out of his way to hang with society's pariahs so as to earn the nickname "friend of sinners."

If you're at the end of your rope, if the dark walls are closing in, if you've walked on that bridge ten times with the goal of making a final dive into the black waters, then let me tell you about the God who knew that you were so important and so precious to him; who has such crazy, wild love for you; that he

smiled at death and said, “Take me,” in order that he might take you in his arms, make you alive, and love you back into hope again.

If you’re lost and hurt and guilty and trapped and can’t seem to do a damn thing about it; if you’re basically happy with life but still feel a biting hunger within you that no earthly delight can satisfy; if you’re bored with your existence and keep thinking that there must be something else to life; if you’re straight or gay, divorced or married, addicted or clean, young or old; then Christianity is for you.

And Christianity is not a religion; it’s a person. It’s Jesus, the God of flesh and blood, who is looking at you even as you read these words, saying, “Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I forgave you before you even knew you needed forgiveness; died for you even before you were born; rose for you even before you knew you were dead and needed by life. I am your God—all yours and you are my child—all mine.”

That’s Christianity; it’s all gift, and that gift is Christ for you.

Deaconess Linda

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,

A BRIEF NOTE ON PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITIES

I wish to convey my heartfelt thanks to the entire congregation. In the last months so many of you have expressed to me your awareness of how the vacancy on the pastoral staff might impact my work load. Your understanding and your continued prayers for health and strength and stamina are greatly appreciated.

I sincerely hope and pray, however, that no one in the congregation will hesitate to let us know at church if you’re in need of pastoral care. This would include pre- and post-surgery visits, hospitalizations, accidents, personal crises, confession and absolution, pastoral counseling, and so on. Pastors are called to comfort the sick and dying and those in crisis, offer Christian counsel to the troubled and confused, and bring and apply Christ’s blood-bought forgiveness to repentant sinners—just as much as they’re called to preach and teach in more public settings. These things remain the highest priority for me even with our present vacancy. Pastor Bitter and Deaconess Linda are also available to do many of these things, as well; and the Lord has graciously provided me with the energy and health to continue to bring to the saints of St. John’s the pastoral care for which He has called me here.

In short, please do call when pastoral care is needed. It is no burden, but rather a pleasure and a privilege in the Lord to serve you with the comfort, counsel, and forgiveness that is yours as the baptized children of God.

+ pax +

Jon S. Bruss

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.** You can contact the office to get instructions on how you can become a voter. One reason you may wish to consider in regard to becoming a voter, is you must now be a voter to be able to vote on a call for a pastor.

2016 CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET HEARING

On Sunday, October 19 at 2 p.m. the annual “Budget Hearing” meeting will be held in the church nave at which the Board of Christian Stewardship will present a preliminary proposed budget for 2016. All communicant members are encouraged to attend to hear the presentation, to ask questions, and provide further input. The Boards will listen carefully to the discussion and comments, evaluate information, and finalize the 2016 budget proposal to present to the Voters’ Assembly in November. Voters especially should plan to be present to have ample time to evaluate budgetary matters before voting on them in November.

SPECIAL OCTOBER VOTER’S MEETING

Immediately following the Budget Hearing there will be a Special Voter’s meeting on Sunday, October 19. Be sure to look for the Sunday church bulletins for details on this special meeting.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2015 AT 2 A.M.

Set your clocks back before you go to bed Saturday evening, October 31.

CELEBRATE REFORMATION DAY! OCTOBER 31

Reformation Day is an important liturgical festival that is celebrated by Lutherans and Christians of many Protestant denominations. It commemorates Dr. Martin Luther’s posting of his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg Germany on October 31, 1517.

MONTHLY CONGREGATIONAL BREAKFAST

The LWML will be doing their annual biscuits and gravy breakfast on October 11 between services. We ask congregation members to bring a fruit or a pastry to share and join in the fellowship.

OCTOBERFEST LUNCHEON

Join us for our Oktoberfest Luncheon on Sunday, October 25 after the late service, sponsored by the Young and for the entire congregation. Adults and College Students 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: 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.

ADDRESSING OUR DEBT BY HAVING A PROFESSIONAL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Board of Stewardship has looked into the feasibility of initiating one final campaign effort to retire the Building Campaign loan. The loan balance as of August 31 was \$948,559.89. Looking at how the last couple of campaigns have gone, it is conceivable that without outside help 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. With 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 a professional capital campaign needs to be launched to retire the debt. Per action taken at the Special Voter's Meeting on September 27, the voters have approved contracting with Wittenberg Church Consultants (WCC) from Naperville, IL to help with this campaign. WCC is rooted in the confessional and liturgical theology that we love. They serve only Lutheran churches and have done several successful campaigns in churches like ours.

What will the campaign look like and what will it entail? There will be twenty weeks of training and enacting the campaign followed by a three year period in which we would make our gifts. In the past, WCC's campaigns have generally raised 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. WCC will 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 will then return for periodic training sessions and lead several different teams through each step of the campaign. The campaign will include a spiritual renewal component for each member of St. John's, along with several additional short publications on spiritual renewal, prayer and stewardship. There will also be a campaign video, home gatherings, special sermons and Bible studies, all of which will culminate in a congregation-wide fellowship event where our pledges will be gathered.

We believe bringing in this firm will ground us more firmly into God's Word and Sacraments, increase our general stewardship, involve more members, raise the level of intensity of our campaign and unite us around our common goal. It will also save our pastors and leaders preparation time and keep us on track to more effectively help us pay down our debt in a timely manner, freeing us up to address emerging needs and opportunities in the ministry in our congregation and community.

The Board of Christian Stewardship

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!

THANK YOU

Women's League Caring & Mission:

Thank you to all the ladies of St. John's LWML who have washed, cut, sewn, ironed, tied, or bound material for the twenty-one quilts for the Lutheran World Relief. These will be picked up by the LWR truck in October and sent to countries as needed. In addition to being a cozy, clean new bed cover, it can be:

- a baby carrier, tied around a mother's back;
- a market display, spread on the ground and piled with vegetables;
- a sack for transporting those goods to market;
- a sunshade;

- a shawl; and most importantly
- a constant reminder that someone, far away, cares a lot.

Anyone who is interested in assisting with this project during the next year, may contact Diana Sims, Betty Fincher, or Nancy Scheuerman. Some of the tasks can be done at home as your schedule allows. There will be a few work days to put together quilts to be tied at the March Quarterly. Again, THANKS, and know you're SERVING THE LORD WITH GLADNESS.

BELL CHOIR WORKSHOP

The Lutheran Fine Arts Council will be sponsoring a bell choir workshop on Saturday, October 31 at First Lutheran, 1234 SW Fairlawn. There will be six bell choirs participating with Jane Anderson directing the workshop which will be held from 9:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. At 2:00 p.m., that afternoon, the choirs will be giving a concert at First Lutheran. St. John's is not one of the six bell choirs but the public is invited to attend.

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.

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 this 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. So you can head over there and Like us!

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. The display will be updated for the month of November when we celebrate Veteran's Day.

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 service is available if you would like to provide flowers for this date:

November 8

Just sign your name and phone number on the Flower Calendar posted outside of the church office. The office staff will call to remind you. The 2016 Flower Calendar should be up sometime early November.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE INFORMATION

October 11 is LWML Sunday and the Mites boxes will be out. For this month the project LWML is supporting is the Clean Water and Evangelism Ministry. There is a grant amount of \$50,000 to provide sustainable safe water by installing water filters and instructions on hygiene and sanitation, and also to share the Gospel and implant the seeds of faith into those communities.

LWML also would appreciate any Best Choice bar codes. Please put them in the box in the Courtyard.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR OCTOBER 2015

October 4:	The Birth of Moses	Exodus 1: 1 – 2:10
October 11:	Moses and the Burning Bush	Exodus 2:11 – 4:31
October 18:	Moses and the Plagues	Exodus 5 – 10
October 25:	The Passover	Exodus 11 – 12

Bible Words for October:

Early Childhood

October 4:	<i>God cares for you.</i> 1 Peter 5:7
October 11:	<i>God says, "I have chosen you . . . fear not, for I am with you."</i> Isaiah 41:9-10
October 18:	<i>God is our . . . help in trouble.</i> Psalm 46:1
October 25	<i>Fear not! Behold, your God will come . . . and save you.</i> Isaiah 35:4

Elementary Grades

October 4:	<i>God gave us eternal life . . . in His Son.</i> 1 John 5:11
October 11:	<i>In Your presence there is fullness of joy.</i> Psalm 16:11
October 18:	<i>The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer.</i> Psalm 18:2
October 25:	<i>The Lord passed over the houses of the people of Israel.</i> Exodus 12:27

“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.

DOORSTEP NEWS

The annual CROP Walk for Hunger is Sunday, October 11th at Lake Shawnee. Thanks to our supporters, Doorstep made \$1,895 from the walk last year. Please remember to designate Doorstep on your donation forms. There will be games and sugar cookies to decorate again this year along with some good exercise for a great cause!

Also, as school supplies and back packs start to go on Clearance remember we give these out to the school aged children we adopt at Christmas. Pick up some great bargains and help us restock these children for the second half of the school year!

Doorstep is open for donations Monday – Friday from 8am – 3pm. We are located at 1119 SW 10th Avenue (10th & Buchanan).



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.