



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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

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JULY 2016

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO US?

How does God answer our prayers? Does He whisper in our ear? Come to us in a dream? Send us a sign? Give us a feeling in our heart or a quiver in our liver? Are any of these compatible with Lutheran theology?

“God told me . . .” is a phrase we may hear from televangelists and cult leaders. Surely God can speak to us in any way He wishes. He is God. But many times what “God told me” can have disastrous results. Remember Jim Jones and the 900 people who followed him and “drank the Kool-Aid?” Or how many people today follow the televangelist who says that God promises you health, wealth, and happiness, so they pray to that end and are sadly disappointed?

What about those situations which have nothing to do with things religious? I knew a man once who was selling his house and insisted that God told him the price he ought to sell it for. He was disappointed because the house would not sell because the price was too high. I wonder if his experience with “God told me” caused him to question his faith and to question God and His ways. Does God use reality and facts (about the real estate market) to reveal His will?

Can prayer be similar to a vending machine? Put in enough nickels and we get what we want from God. Pray consistently for a period of time; do X number of good deeds; and give the right amount of money to the right cause. God is certainly bound to fulfill my desire. Is that how it works?

God did speak in dreams to Jacob, Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar, and others in the Old Testament and even the Wise Men, Peter and Ananias in the New Testament. He spoke directly to St. Paul on the Damascus road. Why can't He still do that for us today?

He can. But He has only promised to come to us in His Word. Lutheran theology clings to the Word, and the Word on how God speaks to us is found in Hebrews 1:1-2a: Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, the Word Incarnate.

Sometimes there is no clear word of Scripture that will answer our prayer. In this case we pray for guidance, knock on doors, move slowly, and see what the Lord places in front of us. But when there is a clear word, particularly on moral issues, the “God told me” voice will never contradict His own Word. He has already spoken to us on those issues.

When I get away from God's Word my human nature begins to slide away from faith in God toward faith in faith itself. As a result, I may “hear” God say things that He never said. If I want something bad enough, I can imagine that God has spoken directly to me and approved my desire or action when His Word is clearly contrary to my wants.

Lutheran theology declares that God speaks to us and comes to us *extra nos*, from “the outside of us.” Our thoughts, feelings, wants, desires, and ideas cannot be trusted in the spiritual realm because they come from a selfish, sinful nature. But we can surely trust in the eternal truth of God’s Word in the printed pages of the Bible, through the sound waves of the pastor preaching Law and Gospel, and through the promise of forgiveness, life, and salvation in water, bread, and wine.

Deaconess Linda

Senior Pastor - Rev. J. S. Bruss, ext. 104

Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102

Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz

Visitation Pastor - Rev. Glenn R. Bitter

Topeka Lutheran School Teachers - Ashley Jensema, Andrea Kosmicki,

2016 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

June 26 was our Stewardship Sunday, where we received pledges for our July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 pledge year. If you were not able to turn in your pledge on June 26, you may still do so. Additional pledge cards can be picked up in the office, and are also available at the end of each pew in the church.

Finally, we’d like once again to assure you that there will be no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. If you have not yet pledged, we only ask that you give prayerful consideration to how best to use the gifts we all receive from God. St. John’s is truly blessed with a giving congregation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dave Graversen or Andy Gritman.

2016 Stewardship Campaign Committee

JULY QUARTERLY VOTERS MEETING

There will be a quarterly voters meeting **on Sunday, July 24 at 2 p.m. in the Nave**. Quarterly financial reports will be presented, as well as reports from the various boards. If you desire to become a voting member, you will need to pick up a copy of St. John’s Constitution and By-Laws from the church office to read and let Pastor Bruss or your Elder know that you desire to become a member. Once members are approved by the voting members, they are eligible to vote at the next scheduled voter’s meeting.

SJELC POPS (PARENTS OF PRE-SCHOOLERS)

All parents of pre-school aged children are invited to “join” the PoPS group that meets on the 2nd Sunday of every month between services, starting in the nursery and moving to Rm. 202. PoPS has one overarching goal: to help parents as they begin to raise their family in the Faith. In our monthly time together we hope to address everything from eliminating commotion at home before heading out the door on Sunday morning to helping your children pay attention in church to bed-time prayer rituals that will help your children use the gift of prayer. Parents will also have a chance to raise issues for discussion, offer their own solutions, and benefit from the wisdom of others. Our first PoPS meeting will be held on Sunday, 10 July, from 10:00 – 10:40 a.m., immediately following the monthly breakfast. Pastor Bruss will lead this first meeting. We plan to have a rotation of leaders in subsequent classes.

PAID IN FULL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

We now have 140 giving units that have pledged \$765,912. Combined with our already committed funds of \$123,000, which includes a \$90,000 bequest, we have a total of \$897,264 committed to the campaign toward our \$1,000,000 goal. The 140 giving units represent 50% of St. John's giving units. Pledges will be collected over the next 36 months, beginning with this month. Anyone still wishing to make a pledge may do so by turning in your pledge card with a Sunday offering plate, or turning the pledge into the office. Extra pledge cards can also be picked up at the office. While we will continue to give updates in the bulletin and Newsletter, there is also a display in the Courtyard showing our results. You can also see updates at www.stjohnlcmstopeka.org which is the church's website. Just go to the bottom of the front page and click on the Capital Campaign box.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE MOVING

If you're moving in town and plan to remain a member of St. John's, please let the church office know your change of address (you can also fill in your new address on the attendance cards). If you're moving out of town, please contact Pastor Bruss so he can provide you some help in finding a solid congregation near your new home and help you arrange a transfer. If you already have moved, please also contact Pastor, as well. You can also use the link on the bottom of the St. John's homepage that says "Evangelical-Lutheran Liturgical Congregations" as a good guide.

MONTHLY BREAKFAST

July's breakfast will be hosted by the Adult Choir on Sunday, July 10.
Please bring your favorite breakfast food to share in the pot luck.

2016 FLOWER CALENDAR

Please check the Flower Calendar on the bulletin board outside of the church offices.
Some dates are still available. Dates available yet this year are:
July 10; October 16; November 6, 13, 27; and December 11

Plan to be a part of...

THE NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 6-8 PM

(Hosted by the Neighborhood Care Team and many additional St. John's volunteers)
Signup sheets to volunteer at the block party are posted on the St. John's bulletin board.

LCEF GRANT RECEIVED

St. John's once again this year received a grant from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) in the amount of \$750 to assist with expenses related to our Night Out Against Crime Block Party, scheduled for August 6, 2016. This fun event has historically been well attended by members of the congregation, and very well received by the neighboring community. The Block Party offers the congregation an opportunity to cultivate relationships within neighborhood, while also providing great food, live music, and numerous activities for kids.

LCEF is a financial organization that empowers ministry in LCMS congregations and schools by offering low-cost loans and ministry support services to support LCMS growth and community needs. LCEF also offers loans to rostered church workers-those dedicated servants who are on the front lines of ministry. For more information on LCEF investment options, please contact Curt Loupe at 357-4421 or visit lcef.org.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Each year with “**Christmas in July**” Doorstep is trying to help alleviate the strain for donated items at the end of the year. Doorstep adopts 250 households with 700+ individuals annually through the Christmas Bureau. By having items donated in July, Doorstep has a better idea what items they are lacking in November and December. This year is asking their donors to focus on certain items instead of the whole list of needs. Since winter clothing is not out in July, they are asking to focus on toys, health kit items, household items and adult gifts. Each school aged child they adopt receives school supplies and a backpack if they need one at Christmas. Typically, children have used up their back to school supplies and they need replenished. Also, each of the 250 households receives a health kit filled with hygiene products, wrapped in a new towel!

They could also use more small appliances, dishes, sheet sets, glasses etc. The people they help at Christmas are excited over the simple things like a new coffee maker or a crockpot! Last year there was a big shortage on blankets. Each household receives at least one blanket or quilt. They started collecting blankets for 2016 in January and will need a lot more to fulfill the need. Each child receives one bigger toy as their gift and then other smaller items are available along with games, books, stuffed animals, stocking stuffers etc. Typically, they are lacking in the main gift area. If you can help with toys for children ages 2-12 and gifts for the teenagers that would be most helpful.

Please look over the Christmas in July flyer in this newsletter and see how you can help. Doorstep is successful in helping people in need because member congregations work together to provide for their neighbors in need. If everyone pitches in just a little, big things will continue to happen!

Donations can be dropped off in the Doorstep box located between the Fireside Room and Luther Hall.

TLS NEWS

Thank you to these TLS families and donors who blessed TLS with their gifts:

- a. Those families who made donations for the Camp Invention (STEM/Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) held June 6-10. Approximately 40 children participated in a wide array of educational and challenging tasks (more information posted on the TLS Facebook page). Thank you also to Lynette Chada, Andrea Kosmicki and Sarah Kutschkau who led the camp, as well as a number of young adult volunteers who helped with the activities.
- b. The Snethen families and Mrs. Linda Tysinger for donating their time, effort, and storefront for the TLS art display at the First Friday Artwalk in the NOTO District earlier this spring.
- c. The families of the late Nelda Flickinger, Ed Richardson Sr., Barry and Bonnye Beagle, and Ruth Grau for continuing the legacy of their loved ones with planned gift-giving to TLS.

First day of school is August 16! TLS is looking for an interested individual to lead an afterschool orchestra and small group lesson next school year. The individual needs to be familiar with leading a small group of violinists in this beginning program. They may design the program to their experience level and choose the day the orchestra meets. Any questions please contact Lynette Chada at [712-490-7772](tel:712-490-7772) or chada@topek Lutheran.org

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

It's that time again. The Women's league of the LWML will be again this year having a Bargain and Bake sale August 25 & 26, 2016 in Luther Hall. This year a percentage of our profits will be given to the Paid in Full campaign. So clean out those closets, drawers and cupboards and bring on over to the church. There is some room to store items in the basement. We would ask that you not bring any electronics, which includes TV, computers, DVD or VCR players.

We are still collecting Best Choice labels. This year we had 2000 and this netted us \$90.00. This money will be used to replace the ribbons in the hymnals. We are on our way to reach this goal again this year.

Just a reminder there are many dishes in the kitchen from either pot lucks or smorgasbord, please pick up ASAP, those that aren't claimed will be added to the bargain and bake sale items.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE CARING & MISSIONS

We are preparing SCHOOL KITS for July, August & September. Items needed are displayed on the table beneath the LWML bulletin board. Please place donated items in the Choir Robe Room in the LWML cabinet (West Wall).

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 donation. If you would rather we do the shopping, monetary gifts will be accepted by:
Geri Tate 272-0886; Marcia Wade 286-1119; Carol Ravins 266-7088

SAINTS ALIVE AFTER 55

The 2016 Saints Alive After 55 gathering will once again be held at the Spiritual Life Center, 7100 E. 45th St. North in Wichita. The dates are July 17-19. This year's theme is "Who Will Tell Them" based on Deuteronomy 4:9. The keynote speaker is, Ben Freudenburg, Director of the Concordia Center for the Family and Professor of Family Studies at Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Bible study leader is Rev. Dr. John Tape, Director of the Lutheran Student Center, Wichita State University. Small group sessions include, Rev. Rick Twenhafel, M.O.S.T. (Mission Opportunities Short Term)—Mission Work of Their Organization; and Trooper Chad Crittenden, Kansas Highway Patrol—Driving Tips. Rev. Wallace Behrhorst, will present the message at the closing worship service. If you have never attended before, give it a try this year. In addition to the excellent presenters, you will enjoy the peaceful setting and accommodations and fellowship with fellow Lutherans from all over Kansas. Check with your church office for registration forms.

ISSUES ETC. CONFERENCE RECAP

Several members attended the Issues Etc. conference in Collinsville, IL, on June 10-11. The conference consisted of six speakers on a variety of topics pertaining to the Christian faith and apologetics. Bethany Woelmer, John Keller, and Joshua Brandmahl summarize what they learned:

Making the Case for the Conservative Reformation:

Larry Rast expounded on the focus of doctrine and teaching within Christianity, the unchanging message of the Gospel, and the knowledge of what the Reformation retained rather than what it overthrew. He also pointed to another great error, American Evangelicalism, which became a detriment to Lutheranism through its progressive ideals.

Making the Case for Biblical Womanhood:

Adriane Heins pointed to God in the Scriptures to discover what it means to be a woman. Jesus' very incarnation as a man seals the difference between male and female, between Christ and the Church. Even Mary reflects true womanhood with her selfless and faithful nature, receiving the gift of Christ with an "Amen," and serving her vocation according to God's Word. Men defend life, while women care for life. They help, follow, and assist the men with humility and gratefulness to God. Such order in creation was made to be good.

Making the Case for The Lord's Prayer:

Why do we pray The Lord's Prayer? Pastor Jonathan Fisk shows that when we create our own prayer it comes from our sinful nature. The Lord's Prayer is God's Word and allows us to pray for His desire, our salvation.

Making the Biblical Case for the End Times:

Are you "Rapture ready?" Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller wades into the end times using the Bible to show the correct understanding of things like the rapture and the millennium.

Making the Case for the Means of Grace:

Pr. Chris Rosebrough's presentation was largely a comparison of the Lutheran sacraments (or Biblical sacraments as I like to call them) and the sacraments of modern evangelicals. He asserts that evangelicals look for assurance in their feelings (enthusiasm) as opposed to the outward gifts we have been given in the Lord's Supper and Baptism. The fallout of this view of scripture being that those under it are "starving in a grocery store". They have assurance sitting with the Bible right in front of them, and yet they refuse to reach out and grab it.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR JULY 2016

July 3	The Baptism of Jesus	Luke 3:15-22
July 10	Zacchaeus	Luke 19:1-10
July 17	Paul and Silas in Prison	Acts 16:16-34
July 24	Job	Job 1:1- 2:10, 42
July 31	God Provides Manna and Quail	Exodus 16

Bible Words for July:

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God. 1 John 3:1

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works. Matt. 5:16

The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel. Mark 1:15

For I know that my Redeemer lives. Job 19:25

The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing. Psalm 145:15-16

Take-home points:

God wants me to pray to Him.

God keeps me strong in faith.

God helps me keep His name holy.

God gives me what I need.

God works through me to make His kingdom grow.

Each Sunday morning at 9:45 in the regular Sunday School opening time, the children in grades 1 - 6 have the privilege of learning hymns and playing instruments under the direction of Bethany Woelmer, a graduate student in church music at KU. The Sunday morning sessions also serve as a rehearsal time for singing in the church service periodically. Encourage your children to participate.

Thank you, parents for bringing your children to Sunday School and church.

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
"BREAD OF LIFE"
JULY 25 - 29
9:00 - 11:30 A.M.**

We look forward to this exciting week of learning, singing, playing, and making! Enrollment forms are available outside the Information Center and in this newsletter. Helpers are needed in these areas: Crafts, Games, Snacks, Preschool, Decorations and set-up, Infant/Childcare, Small Group Guides, and Registration. Thank you for bringing your children, age 3 through 6th grade (in the fall).

**VBS ENROLLMENT FORM
JULY 25 - 29, 2016
9:00 A.M. TO 11:30 A.M.
"BREAD OF LIFE"**

Children's classes are available to children age 3 years through those entering the 6th grade this fall.

Name _____ age ____ grade (in the fall) _____

Name _____ age ____ grade (in the fall) _____

Name _____ age ____ grade (in the fall) _____

Parent/Guardian _____ Phone _____

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

I would like to volunteer to help with:

Crafts _____ Kitchen _____ Preschool _____ Registration____
Games _____ Small group guide _____

Decorations and set up_____ Infant/childcare _____

Place completed form in the blue box at the Information Center soon!

Even if you have never done so before, please consider helping with VBS! You'll be tired but glad you did! Contact Andrea Kosmicki or Deaconess Linda



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.