



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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

VOL. 96 NO. 8 MONTHLY

AUGUST 2016

YOU AND YOUR NEW PASTOR

I've often thought new pastors should come with a brochure titled, "You and Your New Pastor." Unfortunately, they don't. But if you'll permit me, I'd like to use this opportunity for just that purpose.

Some Interesting Background

Pr. Kerns will arrive fresh, vibrant and full of energy—like a young man. But don't be fooled: the office he occupies is ancient and stems from the eternal counsel of God the Father (this is the same reason Paul tells Timothy, "Do not let anyone look down upon you for your youth" [1 Tim 4:12–14]). Jesus told the 11, "As the Father has sent Me, so I send you" (Jn 20:21). This sending is a shockwave emanating from the Father's eternal love for the world He created: that love first moved the Father to send His Son into the world (Jn 3:16), and the Son extended the Father's love by sending the eleven, who in turn ordained and sent others (see, for example, Acts 13:13).

What Goes Out Must Come Back

The motion extended outward is complemented by a motion extended inward. Jesus promised, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth [in My crucifixion], will draw all men unto Myself" (Jn 12:32). That's the "inward" or "backward" motion: God sends out to draw in. Jesus thus told the 72 whom He sent out, "Whoever hears you hears Me" (Lk 10:16). And Jesus promises, "Whoever has seen Me [Jesus] has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). Pr. Kerns' ministry in our midst will, like Paul's, "know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2) and "depict before your eyes Jesus Christ crucified" (Gal 3:1). It will thereby reveal the gracious heart of your heavenly Father to you: "Who has known the mind of God that he should take counsel with Him? We have His mind—Christ!" (1 Cor. 2:16).

Purpose

This discussion drives right to the nub of the purpose of Pr. Kerns' ministry among us. The purpose is God's, not Pr. Kerns' (nor mine, nor the congregation's, nor anyone else's). What God wants to do through the ministry of Pr. Kerns or any other pastor is save people from their sins. That's it. "[God] wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?...So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ." (Rom 10:13–17).

Please continue reading on the next page.

Ways and Means

Because the purpose is God's, so are the ways and means. One modern American misconception about speech in the church is that the more it sounds like the gushing of a pious heart (testimonials, etc.), the more genuine and hence real it is. Tragically, this misconception exchanges the objective pronouncements of God in Scripture that we can cling to for the subjective emoting of human beings that we can't.

Pr. Kerns doesn't come with his own piety or emoting, but with God's message. With Paul, he and all faithful pastors declare, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel [note: this is God's Gospel, not Pr. Kerns'], for it is the power of God unto salvation for all who believe" (Rom 1:16). Our Confessions reflect this language when they say, "That we might obtain such faith, the ministry of preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments was instituted [by God]. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, who effects faith where and when it pleases God in those who hear the Gospel, that is, that God, not on account of our merits, but on account of Christ, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace on account of Christ" (Augsburg Confession 5). The ways and means by which God saves are His Word and Sacraments (the Word, Rom 1:16, 10:14–15; Baptism, Titus 3:5; Absolution, Jn 20:21–23; the Lord's Supper, Mt 26:26–28). Pr. Kerns' job is to use them faithfully—as God Himself instituted them—for your benefit.

Using This Gift

So as our new pastor faithfully brings us God's Word and Sacraments, what are we supposed to do? We're supposed to react to this great, priceless gift of Pr. Kerns, given us for our salvation, like, well, like our life depends on it—our eternal life. Because it does. Hear and listen to him, because in hearing and listening to him, you hear and listen to Christ Himself. Bring him your children to be washed of all their sins in the waters of Baptism, because Christ Himself does the washing. Bring mouths and souls hungering and thirsting for righteousness to the altar where Pr. Kerns presides, because Christ Himself feeds you there. And hang on his words as he pronounces the Absolution, because it's Christ Himself who speaks. Luther sums it up well: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and the Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it" (Small Catechism, Third Commandment, Explanation).

Do & Don't: A Quick Checklist

Do: in preparation for receiving your new pastor, read 1 & 2 Tim. and Titus; support your pastor's faithful proclamation of the Word and right administration of the Sacraments; encourage him to preach, teach, and apply the whole counsel of God, Law and Gospel, in all its articles; come every Sunday and listen to what he preaches and teaches with gladness and eagerness; encourage him to remain faithful to his installation vows; support him with your earthly gifts; welcome his family.

Don't: do the opposite of the do's.

May the Lord bless Pr. Kerns' ministry among us, and us by his ministry!



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

ACCEPTANCE LETTER FOR A DIVINE CALL (JULY 6, 2016)

Dear Larry Beam and the saints gathered around the life-giving Word and Sacraments at St. John's: "Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2).

With this letter, I announce my acceptance of the Divine Call you have extended to me to serve as Associate Pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church in Topeka, Kansas. I cannot tell you how excited we are to be placed in a vibrant confessional Lutheran congregation with members of all ages and interests. As we have waited, Psalm 50:15 has been my favorite text, "... and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." I called and God has delivered. Glory be to God. Receiving this call is a humbling reminder of the many ways in which the Lord works through us to accomplish His work on earth.

I am eager to work with Pastor Bruss to maintain and extend the good work your congregation is involved with. Please keep my family in your prayers as we make the transition from Charlotte, NC to Topeka, KS.

Regarding my family, Edith is looking forward to living in the mid-West and my oldest two—Caroline and Greyson—are excited about attending Topeka High School. Mollie and Owen will attend Topeka Lutheran School. Edith and I will house-hunt next week; and, if all goes as planned and *God willing*, we will move to Topeka in late July/early August. The exact date of our move is contingent upon a closing date and discussions with Pastor Bruss regarding the date of my installation. That is a day we look forward to with great anticipation.

Thank you again for the trust and confidence you have extended to me through this call to serve your congregation. I humbly look forward to joining my efforts to yours under God's blessing.

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Sincerely,

Devin M. Kerns
Associate Pastor Elect

2016 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

At the printing of the newsletter, we had received 162 pledges totaling \$499,802 for our July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 pledge year. If you have not been able to turn in your pledge, you may still do so. Additional pledge cards can be picked up in the office. 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 Grittmann as members of the 2016 Stewardship Campaign Committee.

THE MONTHLY BREAKFAST

will be replaced with a potluck lunch after the 10:00 Divine Service on August 7. There will be no breakfast this month. If you can, please bring a main dish and a side dish/dessert for the meal **celebrating Pr. Kerns' installation as our Associate Pastor.** You are also invited to participate in a *gift card shower* for the Kerns' family. A basket will be available to collect these cards.

WEDNESDAY PARISH EDUCATION EVENING

Our Wednesday Parish Education Evening will be held beginning the Wednesday after Labor Day and running through the week before Memorial Day. Breaks will largely coincide with USD 501 breaks. All mid-week educational opportunities will be concentrated on this evening. The classes will include:

- All Youth Catechesis I & II
- Young Adult
- Adult Catechesis
- Bible studies
- Book reading groups
- New Testament Greek

At the core of each evening will be the offering of Evening Prayer or Vespers, to which not only those taking classes but all the congregation are invited. Depending on interest, we may also consider adding a meal to this evening, but we need to hear from you on that. Keep your eyes on News and Notes and this Newsletter for a precise schedule of offerings. See elsewhere in this Newsletter the brief notice titled “How Creative Are You?” We’re still looking for an excellent catchy name for this evening.

2016-2017 YOUTH CATECHESIS

In response to some of the scheduling conflicts encountered by our families, ALL Youth Catechesis for 2016-2017 and for the foreseeable future will take place on our Wednesday Parish Education Evenings throughout the period from Labor Day through the end of April. This is for ALL catechumens—from home schools, public schools, or the parochial school. The Wednesday evening classes are, of course, supplemented by the 6-8th grade Sunday School class that meets in the Youth Room (which is part of the required curriculum). Youth Catechesis classes will begin at 6:00 p.m. and run through 7:45 p.m. (taking in the 7:00-7:45 Evening Prayer; also required). For more information on the Wednesday Parish Education Evening, see the announcement in this Newsletter. Parents of catechumens are highly encouraged to join the Youth Catechesis class their children are enrolled in. They may also attend one of the adult Bible studies offered at the same time as Youth Catechesis.

NEW ADULT CATECHESIS CLASS FORMING

A new Adult Catechesis class is being put together for Fall of 2016. The class will begin on the Wednesday following Labor Day and run for 16-18 weeks. Designed primarily for those who wish to become communicant members of St. John’s, it can still offer an excellent review to long-time Lutherans. The class is set to meet (tentatively) from 7:00-8:45. If you’re interested, please contact the church or speak with Pr. Bruss (or Pr. Kerns, once he has been installed).

OUR SINCEREST THANKS TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

We give thanks to our gracious God for His continued gifts of the means of grace through which He establishes and nurtures our faith and life. We also give thanks to God for all the support of the mission and ministry of St. John’s by our members of all ages, in both financial and time devoted ways. Without the willing hands and hearts of our members, much work would go undone that is vital for the efficiency of the congregation’s ministry. Once again, we express our appreciation to all volunteers in the numerous capacities in which they serve. For those of you that would like to know what “Opportunities for Involvement” are available at St. John’s, see the St. John’s brochure located in each pew or at the Information Center.

HOW CREATIVE ARE YOU?

We need a great name for our Wednesday Parish Education Evenings. And that's why we need your creativity. Some ideas that have been batted around so far are:

- **Eagle Evening** (since the symbol for the Apostle John is an Eagle)
- **Eagle Education Evening** (variation of the above)
- **Adlerabend** (said **AH-dlur-AH-bent**; which is the German word for Eagle Evening, reflecting not only the Apostle John, but also the congregation's German Lutheran heritage)
- **Paideia** (said **pie-DAY-uh**; which is the Greek word for education and has some currency in use in other LCMS congregations)
- **Life Together** (what else does a congregation do, at its core, but live—together—from the Word of God?)
- **Koinōnia** (said **coy-no-NEE-uh**; which is the Greek word for “life together,” and part of the LCMS “brand”)

Does any of these strike your fancy? Do you have other ideas? Please communicate them to Pr. Bruss, Dens. Linda, or Pr. Kerns (once he has been installed).

SJELC POPS (PARENTS OF PRE-SCHOOLERS)

Parents of Pre-Schoolers: At the August 14 meeting of Parents of Pre-Schoolers Chris Francik, Principal of Topeka Lutheran School, will make a presentation on the TLS Preschool Program, the application process, and staffing. Additional printed information about TLS will be available as well. Meetings of the group will feature childcare in the nursery, a brief devotion, study of God's Word as it applies to raising small children in the Faith, and time for parents to discuss. If you have a pre-schooler, you will receive a mailing, an invitation to the SJELC PoPS Facebook Group, and further announcements.

PAID IN FULL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

We 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. 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. In what can be called a true blessing, some pledges have already been paid up front, along with the above mentioned bequest. These have been used to pay down the principle of our loan. Our loan balance has gone from \$935,060 to \$714,792. That is definitely the direction we want to be heading. The net effect of these payments is that our regular monthly payment now has \$800 more being applied toward the principle of our loan each month. Thanks be to God. 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 upper right hand corner of the home page and click on the Capital Campaign box.

SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKERS MEETING

All Sunday School workers are encouraged to attend the quarterly meeting in the church library on Saturday, August 20, at 10:00 a.m. to kick off the new school year. We look forward to seeing you there. Thank you for loving the children by passing on the faith.

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 give us 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.

LUTHERAN WITNESS SUBSCRIPTIONS

There is no better way to keep up on what's new in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The flagship magazine of the LCMS, *The Lutheran Witness* offers synodical news, reports from Lutherans around the world, features, columns, Q&A's, a Bible study, and so much more. This is the premier magazine for Lutherans who want to be informed and stay informed! A monthly publication, *The Lutheran Witness* speaks directly about what's important to today's Lutherans: Christian life, missions and ministries, and people of faith. Subscriptions are available through the church office until August 21. Just write a check for \$17 made out to St. John's and write Lutheran Witness on the check memo line. We will submit one check from the church for all subscriptions.

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:

October 16; November 6, 13, 20, 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 table in the breezeway.

Volunteers are still needed!

The *National Night Out Against Crime* is a great way for St. John's:

- To promote and enhance safety in our neighborhood and throughout Topeka
- To help and support our partner leaders in the Historic Old Town Neighborhood Improvement Association.
- To build bridges for further sharing of the Gospel with those in our neighborhood.
- To love those around our church "in deed" as well as "in talk" (1 John 3:18).

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT A SUCCESS

We owe many thanks to a lot of people who helped make the tournament a rousing success: those who golfed, those who donated money or gift cards, those who brought desserts, those who helped prepare the meal, including Terry and Nancy Scheuerman, and those who helped with clean-up. We especially thank our sponsors, Dr. Mark Underwood, Ron and Sue Revelle, the Weir Family, Bill and Shirley

Nolting, Jane Schlicher, Stan and Karla Rettig, and RJ Berry Home Builders. We thank Jim Gerhardt also. A very special thank you goes to Jim Simpson for the hours he gave and hard work he did to organize this event and to make it happen. We could not have done it without him and Kathy Gehrke who spent many hours preparing prizes, gift bags for the golfers, and many other things. Thank you Kathy! The tournament earned about \$3,100 for youth activities.

TLS NEWS

1. Upgrades are being made to the exterior of the school building during the summer months, including landscaping, repainting and replacement of guttering. We appreciate the responsiveness and timely work by River Valley Landscape owned by Marc Weir, a TLS alum.
2. A makeover of the interior of the school building was also done this summer with cleaning and repainting of several classrooms. Thank you to all who volunteered their time and hard work to complete this task. A special thank you to Pastor and Mrs. Roger Goetz for their generous donation to the school to purchase needed supplies for the classrooms' makeover!
3. Installation of the new teachers is scheduled for August 21 at 2:00 pm at Faith Lutheran Church. Please join us in welcoming: Edith Kerns (wife of Pastor Kerns) from Charlotte, NC, the new teacher for 1st/2nd grades; Elizabeth "Liz" Maxwell from Fullerton CA, the new teacher for 4th/5th grades; and Rachel Kathman from Seward, NE, the new middle school Language Arts teacher.
4. The first day of school is Tuesday, August 16, from 8:00 am to 3:25 pm. Please pray for these young children as they begin a new year, learning and growing in the love of Christ!

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

Women's League Bargain and Bake Sale

Thursday, August 25, 8am – 5 pm

Friday, August 26, 8am – 1 pm

It's that time again; Clean out those closets, drawers and cupboards and bring your goods on over to the church. There is some room to store items in the basement. Furniture, dishes, linens, shoes, clothes, etc., will be accepted. We would ask that you **not bring** any electronics, which includes TVs, any computers or computer equipment, DVD or VCR players. Donations of baked good, jellies, etc., will be welcome. Help with the sale will also be welcome. Non-food donations should be brought by 2 pm on Wednesday, August 24.

Donation Hours

Items may be brought to Luther Hall the following times:

6 pm – 8 pm Monday, August 22

10 am – 5 pm Tuesday, August 23

10 am – 2 pm Wednesday, August 24

This year a portion of our proceeds will be designated for the Paid In Full Campaign.

We are still **collecting Best Choice labels**. This year we had 2000 and this netted us \$90.00. It was used towards the purchase of replacement ribbons in the hymnals. We are on our way to reach this goal again this year.

NEW PRAYER CHAIN TO BE STARTED

Watch the newsletter as a new prayer chain is in the works. It will be by email and everyone with email may participate. All prayer requests will be sent out blind copy so your email address will be safe. Only Nancy Taylor will have access to it. The Women's League hope to get this up and running by this fall. All you need to do is send an email to StJohnPrayer@aol.com and indicate you would like to be added and leave your name along with your email address. You will get a confirmation email that yours has been received.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE MITES

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League has given \$14,063.94 to the Rosa Young Academies – Rosa Young Initiative. Also unused funds from the 2013-2015 biennium were reallocated by the LWML Board of Directors in April 2016 to fulfill the full \$25,000 of the proposed grant. This grant will aid children with a safe environment for education and spiritual growth. It will provide an opportunity to worship together; grow in the Word of God; and witness to one another of God's love, mercy, and grace.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE CARING & MISSIONS

We are still preparing SCHOOL KITS for 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 inch; 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

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR AUGUST 2016

August 7	Joseph Forgives His Brothers	Gen. 37:12-36;45:1-15
August 14	The Temptation of Jesus	Matt. 4:1-11
August 21	Three Men in a Fiery Furnace	Daniel 3
August 28	The Saints in Heaven	Revelation 19:1-10

Bible Words for August:

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

Be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion. . . Resist him, firm in your faith. 1 Peter 5:8-9

The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom.

2 Timothy 4:18

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.

Revelation 19:1

Take- home points:

- God forgives me and wants me to forgive others.
- God helps me resist temptation.
- God rescues me from every evil.
- God has power to answer my prayers.

God's Word is very clear that the responsibility of teaching the Word to children belongs to parents. Join a Bible class to set an example and to equip yourself to pass on the Faith to the next generation.

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



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.