



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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

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WELCOME TO MY BIG BOX STORE

To Those Redeemed by Christ at St. John's:

I talk a lot. Every day I am sure I exceed my daily allotment of words. Come to think of it, I make a living by speaking words. However, I have absolutely no words to express the way my family feels about being a part of such a wonderful congregation. We are thrilled to have been called by God through the congregation and now serve under the leadership of Pastor Bruss. Moreover, the shower of gifts that Edith and I received was simply overwhelming. We have read through all of your kind notes, and all we can express is how grateful we are to God our Father.

As most of you know, I was not raised Lutheran. I believe there are many ways to be Christian, in that there are Christians who are Southern Baptists, and Christians who are Presbyterians, etc., however, the best way to be Christian, no doubt, is to be Lutheran. With that said, I want to share a parable with you about my shift from Evangelicalism to Lutheranism. I trust that it will give you some insight as to where the Holy Spirit has brought me. It goes like this...

Welcome to my big-box store! I have spent my entire life in this place; stocking, selling and restocking products. I sweep the floors, run the cash register—I do it all. My big-box store has vast floor-to-ceiling shelves. There are rows and rows of theological and biblical knowledge. Granted, not many people shop here anymore, but for those who do, they find everything they could possibly need.

When it comes to the way everything is laid out, all of my theological education and church experience has taught me to stock my store in a particular fashion. I was taught that shelves are to be stocked alphabetically. So, in thinking of topics of theology as food and home good supplies, as soon as a customer walks into my door, he or she finds a bin of asparagus, followed by a display of aspirin. On another aisle, next to the baby formula selection there's bins of bacon which are followed by bagels. Like I said at the outset, this is a lovely store, but it's killing me.

I was growing more and more frustrated with the way in which things were laid out. The energy I expend walking through this place is incalculable. Though it had seemed right in the beginning, it made no sense to stock tomatoes beside tuna. Sure, some customers complained. But I couldn't do anything about it. At times I would review the notes I took at the various store conferences I attended. The notes clearly stated that the way in which theological data has to be displayed was in alphabetical order. Moreover, this is what my colleagues, other store owners did as well—their tomatoes were displayed beside the tuna.

There had to be a better way. There was no certainty, nor any assurance.

Through a series of providential circumstances, God led me to the Lutheran Confessions—or more specifically, to the Small Catechism with its six chief parts. This way of thinking and organizing everything took so many of the things already inside my store and organized it in a better way—a more user friendly-way. It called for the abandonment of the alphabetical system and instead put all of a certain type together. Everything which revolved around Law, went on that aisle. Everything regarding Creation, Redemption and Sanctification—all that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have done to pardon, forgive and give us life went in the aisle marked Apostles' Creed. Speaking to God and showing what this new life in Christ looks like were grouped around the Lord's Prayer.

This was revolutionary! Things were becoming clearer and I could sense I wasn't as frustrated as I had been. God's revealed logic made me love my store again.

With this totally new way of stocking the shelves, some things had to be thrown out. A lot of my product line on the end times had to go, as well as the items regarding dispensationalism. I was embarrassed that I used to sell that ridiculous stuff. I didn't even try to recoup my money. I just hauled it off to the dumpsters at night so none of my colleagues would see me. But that was not all. I had to get rid of my symbolic understanding of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Yet again, what a shame that I ever let that nonsense in my store. Lord, have mercy! Gratefully, with all of the extra room when I tossed certain Evangelical products out, Word and the Sacraments became the central feature of my store. The Means of Grace were now very visible. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism section shows how one is brought into the most holy faith. The Office of the Keys is vital as Confession and Absolution become a regular part of our walk, and the Sacrament of the Altar is the food that nourishes our faith, giving us the ultimate picture of the end. All of these items—labeled Word and Sacrament—which are the means to give us Jesus are now the first thing customers see when they walked inside the store. I love it. Thanks be to God for leading me to discover these wonderful truths.

Has it been tough to go through this Spirit-wrought reorganization? Yes, it has. I have not been eager to do so all the time. Gratefully, I have had help every now and then. Even though at times it feels like it has been me restocking and rearranging, it is the Holy Spirit who has worked, through books I have read and the implanted Word doing its work. A lot has been completed, and it has taken several years. I would love to think that I am almost through, but as I walk the aisles when everyone is gone, every now and then, I still sometimes find the display of popcorn stocked next to pork products.

Pastor Devin Kerns

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

Associate Pastor – Rev. Devin M. Kerns, ext. 101

Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102

Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz

Topeka Lutheran School Teachers - Ashley Jensema, Andrea Kosmicki

NEW MEMBERS

*Rev. Devin and Edith Kerns,
Caroline, Greyson, Mollie, and Owen
from North Carolina.*

We are so happy to welcome our new associate pastor and his family!

Kyle Johnson

from Calvary Lutheran Church in Topeka

Kyle and Bethany Woelmer are engaged to be married in January.

Welcome to St. John's!

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!

2016 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of the printing of the newsletter, we had received 169 pledges totaling \$513,006 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 Gritman as members of the 2016 Stewardship Campaign Committee.

THE MONTHLY BREAKFAST

There will be no monthly breakfast in September. **It will be replaced with a potluck lunch after the 10:00 Divine Service on September 18.** If you can, please bring a main dish and a side dish/dessert for the meal **celebrating the retirement of Pastor Bitter and his many years of faithful service to St. John's.** Pastor Bitter has requested **no cash gifts** for him or Denise. If you do wish to give something, Pastor Bitter has asked gifts go to Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Just make your checks out to St. John's Lutheran Church, and place CTS, Ft. Wayne on the memo line.

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 65 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.

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK

Pr. Bruss will be offering an Introduction to New Testament Greek on Wednesday evenings at Sound Words Academy from 5:00 to 5:50 p.m. This class will last for an entire year (with breaks here and there). The class will give students the equivalent of one year of college-level New Testament Greek, and will prepare students to read the New Testament and the Greek Old Testament (known as the Septuagint). In subsequent years, an ongoing New Testament Greek reading group will allow those who have learned the language to keep their tools sharp. Introduction to New Testament Greek requires out-of-class homework (3 or more hours per week). Students will need to buy the required text book prior to the beginning of the class, which begins on Wednesday, September 7. Please contact Pr. Bruss at jbruss@stjlcms.org or by calling church for more information.

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

“Hold fast the pattern of sound words,” Paul instructs Timothy (2 Tim 1:13). To that end, the Board of Parish Education is dedicating Wednesday evenings at St. John’s to **Sound Words Academy** 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 schedule of offerings for this fall includes the following:

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| 5-5:50 | New Testament Greek (Bruss) |
| 5:30-6 | Lite dinner (Luther Hall; supported by free-will donation) |
| 6:-6:50 | The Rhythm of Faith (grades 1-5) (Woelmer) |
| | Youth Catechesis I (Kinnett) |
| | Youth Catechesis II (Bruss) |
| | Philippians (Kerns; high school and adults) |
| | Lifelight (Hintz) |
| 7-7:45 | Evening Prayer, Vespers, or Compline (Nave; open to everyone) |
| 7:50-8:45 | Adult Catechesis (Kerns) |
| | Women’s Bible Study on Jesus’ “I AM” statements in John, 7 weeks (Kinnett) |
| | Young Adults/College Students (Bruss) |

At the core of each evening will be the Office of Evening Prayer, Vespers, or Compline, to which not only those taking classes but all the congregation are invited. Please note that we are, in fact, offering a lite dinner beginning at 5:30.

It is our sincere hope that you will find at least one study to join in and attend the 7 p.m. Office of Evening Prayer, Vespers, or Compline. Bring along friends and family. Please enter by the south, aka glass, aka Luther Hall doors. All other doors will be locked.

2016-2017 YOUTH CATECHESIS

Youth Catechesis I and II are offered at Sound Words and begin on Wednesday evening, September 7, at 6:00 and run through 7:45 for the Office of Evening Prayer, Vespers, or Compline. Parents, please remember that those evening classes are supplemented by the 6-8th grade Sunday School class that meets in the Youth Room (which is part of the required curriculum). A lite dinner is offered for all who participate in Sound Words Academy, including catechumens, beginning at 5:30 in Luther Hall. Parents of catechumens are highly encouraged to join the Youth Catechesis class their children are enrolled in or one of the Bible Studies offered through Sound Words (see the article above on Sound Words Academy).

NEW ADULT CATECHESIS CLASS FORMING

Pr. Kerns is offering Adult Catechesis in Fall of 2016. The class will begin on the Wednesday evening, September 7 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 from 7:00 until 8:45, and takes in the 7-7:45 service. If you’re interested or have a friend or relative who’s interested, please contact the church or speak with Pr. Kerns or Pr. Bruss. A lite dinner is available from 5:30 to 6, and there are additional study opportunities for you in the 6 o’clock hour (see the article on Sound Words Academy).

NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY – NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME RECAP REPORT

The Lord blessed us with a beautiful evening and what looked to be a record turnout for this 11th annual event. We had a total of 450 registered guests, including 185 from the immediate neighborhood, 108 from other neighborhoods, 157 St. John's members of which 86 were volunteers. For the 4th year in a row, we received a \$750 mission outreach grant from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. Those funds, combined with a \$250 grant from law enforcement, and funding from the Historic Old Town NIA, the expense of putting on the event was fully paid for. The **Neighborhood Care Team** wishes to express their sincere appreciation for those who volunteered to help with the event along with St. John's members and families who attended the event and helped interact with our neighbors. The neighbors are very appreciative for the opportunity to enjoy the food, activities and comradery. This event continues to be one of the top attended sites for the Night Out Against Crime in the City. This year, there were 70 plus sites around the City of Topeka for this event.

PAID IN FULL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

We have 141 giving units that have pledged \$767,352, plus \$6,555 unpledged funds received. Combined with our already committed funds of \$124,992, which includes a \$90,000 bequest, we have a total of \$898,899 committed to the campaign toward our \$1,000,000 goal. The 141 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. While we will continue to give updates in the bulletin and Newsletter, there is also a display in the Courtyard showing our results, and you can see updates at our website, www.stjohnlcmstopeka.org. Just go to the upper right hand corner of the home page and click on the Capital Campaign box.

SEPTEMBER COMMUNION SCHEDULE

September 3 & 4
Wanda Wash
Nancy Scheuerman
Linda Simpson

September 11
Joyce Magee

September 17 & 18
Nancy Stolz
Ruth Scott

September 24 & 25
Linda Dunn
Gigi Goodpasture

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



TLS NEWS

1. Welcome to new board members for the Lutheran School Ass'n of Topeka (LSAT) and TLS Foundation for the 2016-17 school year. A sincere "thank you" goes to outgoing LSAT members Jeff Pierce, Shelly Jones, Jane Schaible as well as Pastor Ross, Pastoral Advisor to the Foundation. New LSAT Board members include Judy Kennedy, Don Rankin, and Joyce Zillinger along with Pastor Jake Wampfler, Pastoral Advisor to the Foundation. Nick Johnston begins his new role as LSAT Chair. Thank you for your willingness to serve and your commitment to TLS.

2. Enrollment night was held August 11. Parents were invited to meet/visit with their child's teacher in addition to completing enrollment materials. We are pleased to report an increase of 12 children for the 2016-17 school year, as well as the addition of three new teachers who were installed on August 21. The school year began on August 16.
3. Save the Date! Grandparents Day at TLS is scheduled for Friday, September 9. Please watch for more details over the coming weeks, or you may contact the school office at [785.357.0382](tel:785.357.0382) for more information.
4. The TLS school carnival is scheduled for Saturday, September 17, from 4:00 - 7:00 pm at the main campus (701 SW Roosevelt Street). This event, which is sponsored by the TLS PTL, will offer a wide variety of games, entertainment, food, and music for children of all ages! We hope to see you there.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

LWML FALL QUARTERLY – LUTHERAN WOMEN'S MISSIONARY LEAGUE

Sunday, September 18, at 2:00 p.m. will be the Fall Quarterly for any interested women of St. John's to enjoy the presentation of Mission Work in Thailand by David and Ryan Cavanaugh, part of the Brookwood Covenant Mission Team. They helped complete a fish farm in Ranote, Thailand, which helps give hope and a sustainable way of life for abandoned women. We will meet in the Courtyard and after the program, refreshments will be served. Please mark your September calendars, invite family members or friends, and come for an intriguing afternoon and wonderful fellowship.

DEACONESS TRAINING — LCMS SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNER CHURCHES

The Grant amount was \$90,000, of which \$55,000 has been paid. There is still a balance of \$35,000.

- To provide educational and financial support to our partner churches who have introduced deaconess training programs within their church body, promote education to the underprivileged women who have a passion to learn confessional theological studies and serve the church.

This grant will provide educational and financial support to our partner churches who have introduced deaconess training programs within their church body like the Philippines, Latvia, Liberia, Indonesia, to name a few. It will also promote education to the underprivileged women who have a passion to learn confessional theological studies and serve the church. Further, the grant helps to purchase text books and other resources; funds short term mission trips to disaster hit areas; and scholarships, student aid, and tuition support.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

We now have two women's Bible studies: Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. where the group will continue the study of the Old Testament history; and Wednesdays from 7:50 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. when we will look at the "I AM" sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of John for seven weeks. All women of the church and friends are most welcome!

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.

LUTHERAN FINE ARTS COUNCIL

Dave Anderson and Roger Walck will present a musical concert at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 3625 SW Wanamaker Rd., on Friday evening, September 16 at 7:00 p.m. Dave and Roger's music is a blend of contemporary, gospel, hymns and lots of old-time Sunday School songs. The audience will also be invited to sing along. Dave, from Arizona, compiled "The Other Song Book" and "The Best of The Best." Dave and his wife Barbara, have traveled world-wide in their concert ministry. Roger, from California, is a skilled vocalist and guitarist and teacher. A free will offering will go towards Shepherd's Canyon Retreat, a specialized counseling ministry for wounded professional church workers and their spouses, which Dave, Roger and Barbara are currently involved with. This event is sponsored by Prince of Peace and Lutheran Fine Arts Council of Topeka. A reception will follow the concert.

THANK YOU'S

Thank you for sharing God's love, not only with your words and cards but with your support and prayers. The Lord shows his love for us through special people like you. God Bless You.

Jan Polter

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 Homebuilders. 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.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 IS ST. JOHN'S CONGREGATION'S 142ND ANNIVERSARY!

DOORSTEP NEWS

Please keep our Christmas Store in mind as you see school supplies and backpacks go on clearance! Each school aged child adopted receives new school supplies to start the second half of the school year.

Friday, September 16th, is the Nancy Perry United Way Day of Caring. Doorstep will have volunteers to help put hygiene kits together. If you can donate soap, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, razors and shaving cream before the 16th they would greatly appreciate it!

Doorstep is open for donations Monday – Friday from 8a.m. – 3p.m. and items can be dropped off at the church at our Doorstep stand.

ST. JOHN'S TLS STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PASTORS



SJELC TLS students and teachers, with pastors, on the first day of school, August 16, immediately following chapel. Pictured are, left to right, in the front row: *Kennedy Pierce, Jackson Emme, Emilio Brackman, Robert Stagrays, Evan Gastineau, Remy Hossain, Levi Cason*; second row: *Mrs. Kosmicki, Zachery Sivertson, Chase Phillips, Riley Briggs, Owen Kerns, Peyton Briggs, Aiden Hossain, Miss Jensema*; third row: *Justin Phillips, Jacob Lehmann, Edd Fay, Tyler Sivertson, Mrs. Kerns*; back row: *Pr. Bruss, Colton Cattoor, Jenna Fergel, Gabby Kinnett, Molly Kerns, Alex Lehmann, Trustin Schafer, Pr. Kerns*.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR SEPTEMBER 2016

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| September 4 | The Twelve Spies in Canaan | Numbers 13-14 |
| September 11 | Entering the Promised Land | Joshua 3:1-5:12 |
| September 18 | No Sunday School | |
| September 25 | The Fall of Jericho | Joshua 6 |

Bible Words for September:

Early Childhood

Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Proverbs 3:5

Great and amazing are Your deeds, O Lord. Revelation 15:3

My help comes from the Lord. Psalm 121:2

Be strong; fear not! Isaiah 35:4

Elementary Students

Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made . . . had failed; all came to pass.
Joshua 21:45

The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . leads to eternal life.
Jude 21

[God] alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.
Psalm 62:2

Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you.
Psalm 50:15

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
Ephesians 6:4

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.