



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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

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OCTOBER 2016

AT IT...ONCE AGAIN

September always marks the start-up of the “other church year.” The regular one begins in late November or early December with the First Sunday in Advent. But I always feel like the week of Labor Day marks a new beginning, as well. Because that’s when Youth Catechesis begins. There’s a new crop of 6th graders (or YCat I catechumens—some start in 5th or even 4th grade if they’re ready and hungry for it). YCat II fires up again, as the 7th and 8th grade catechumens begin or resume their “deep dive” into the teachings of Scripture. It’s an exciting time. Especially for those of us who get to teach those classes.

And I do. I love it. There’s something invigorating about being annually reminded of the profundities of Scripture so well distilled in Luther’s *Small Catechism*. And for a guy who’s formally been dealing with theology at a level more advanced than YCat I and II since 1985, that’s saying a lot!

Far from being some perfunctory exercise in acculturating little Lutherans to the way we do things, the called staff—myself, Pr. Kerns, Deaconess—view teaching the Catechism as serious delivery of the goods; rolling out the teachings of Scripture that every Christian must know *and that every Christian must never cease to know*; giving the “tools” for *living* the Faith.

What should be the basis of all my belief regarding God, His will, and His salvation? The Bible. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching (some of us learned “doctrine”), reproof, correction, training in righteousness” (1 Tim. 3:16). And what does God expect of me in that book? Where do I find that? In the 10 Commandments. Boom. And so the Catechism begins. “You shall have no other gods.” “What does this mean?” “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.” And I’m skewered. Because I haven’t. And the march through the Commandments begins. One skewering after another. No. I haven’t done what I can to “help [my neighbor] improve and protect his possessions and income” (by the way, you can remember that phrase is like this: HIPPI—**H**elp [him] **I**mprove and **P**rotect his **P**ossessions and **I**ncome).

But the Lord not only kills me with His Law. He makes me alive through His Gospel. For it is He who has “given me my body and soul...my reason and all my senses. AND STILL (even though I’m a damnable sinner) TAKES CARE OF THEM!” Not only did He do that. He *redeemed* me from my sinful, willful, wayward use of them “not with silver or gold, but with His holy precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.” But even that didn’t totally fix my problem. Because Jesus meant nothing to me. I certainly wasn’t born with knowledge of Him. I was a sinner. And I was born distrusting, mistrusting, and hating God. No, instead He “called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, etc.”

Which means I have a gracious Father in heaven, who even asks me to pray to Him. And not just like a wimp, but “with all boldness and confidence.” He even gives me the words to use—words that become more precious each time I say them. Because in them He gives Himself to me as a Savior God who “rescues me from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation.” And when my final hour comes He promises to “graciously to take me from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven,” which is what I mean when I pray, “Deliver us from evil.”

The Catechism even teaches me where I can find this God. He’s not a shape-shifter who needs to be caught and pinned to the ground. Instead, *He* comes to *me* within His holy Church.

- Think of Baptism. It “isn’t just plain water, but it is the water included in God’s command...” and “it works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this.” And then it works the faith it demands, because it’s “the renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously.”
- Don’t forget Confession, either. There God for the sake of Jesus promises to “absolve those who repent and want to do better.” That absolution is “just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us Himself.”
- And then there’s the Supper, Christ’s “true body and blood” for me “to eat and to drink.” To what end? For the whole kahuna, that is, “for forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation....For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.” And I don’t even have to be “worthy” in the way I think I need to be, i.e., by having completely won the victory over sin in myself. Why? Because it’s for the forgiveness of sins, my sins. And it requires only trust in those words—the trust that I don’t even have to muster up, but that the Lord gave me in my Baptism.

This is why the start-up of the “other church year” is so exciting. We get to teach these things to another group of the Lord’s redeemed. And we ourselves get the chance, once again, to be minded of the things we dare never forget. Because they are our life and salvation. The most basic, most profound teachings of Scripture.



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, Edith Kerns

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!

THE MONTHLY BREAKFAST

The ladies of St. John’s LWML will host the October 9 breakfast with their biscuits and gravy, fruit, and pastries in Luther Hall between services. **You do not have to bring anything.** This is a good time to get acquainted with new members and old members whom you have not met.

2016 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of the printing of the newsletter, we had received 172 pledges totaling \$515,382 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.

NEW ELDERS POLICY ON GUEST SPEAKERS

At the September Elder's meeting, the board adopted the following policy: All guest speakers and presenters who come before St. John's organizations must be approved by the Board of Elders in consultation with the full-time pastor(s). The organization shall seek approval prior to extending the invitation. The approval process is initiated by the organization contacting (one of) the pastor(s) or the chairman of the Board of Elders.

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

It still is not too late for

"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**, 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 is the Office of Evening Prayer, Vespers, or Compline, to which not only those taking classes but all the congregation are invited. A lite dinner is served beginning at 5:30, supported by a free-will donation.

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.

OKTOBERFEST

Celebrate the Reformation by coming to **Oktoberfest on Sunday, October 30th after late service**, which is sponsored by the Young Adults and College Students of St. John's. Tickets will be sold between services and after late service. Tickets are \$7 for a single sandwich plate and \$9 for a double sandwich plate. **October 2, 9, and 16th are the only weeks to buy tickets, because a count is needed for ordering.** Get your ticket for brats, burgers, and German potato salad soon!



TLS NEWS

TLS Open House will be held Sunday, November 6 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Main Campus, 701 SW Roosevelt. The Beginning and Advanced Band will perform and tours of the school will be held. Please share this information with your family, friends and neighbors who have school-aged children and let them know of the blessings that TLS has to offer. Your help with recruiting new families is very important!

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.

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:

November 20, 27; and December 11

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2016 AT 2 A.M.

Set your clocks back before you go to bed Saturday evening, November 5.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE CARING MISSION YEARLY REPORT FOR 2016

Our Lutheran World Relief (LWR) projects are completed for this year. We are happy to report we have 49 Personal Health Kits, 60 School Kits, 15 lbs. of soap and 20 quilts to send this year to LWR. A special thanks to Marge Gehrt and Marcia Wade who made all 60 beautiful school backpack bags for the School Kits. Another special thank you for Barb Porter for all her time in making the quilts this year.

These projects will be taken to LWR pick-up truck at Christ Lutheran Church on October 7, which takes the LWR projects to their warehouse in Baltimore, MD. From there, the quilts and kits are shipped to different countries where they are needed most. Our thanks to all St. John's members and all the ladies who worked or donated to make this a success. Again, these ladies have taken St. Paul's words, "*Do not grow weary of doing good*" to heart.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

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.

Email Prayer Chain

It's not too late to sign up for the email prayer chain. This is a wonderful way that every member of our congregation can pray for those who are in need. The only time it takes is for you to open your email. So, watch the newsletter, a new prayer chain is in the works. It will be email and everyone with email may participate. All prayers requested will be sent out blind copy so your email address will be safe. Only the coordinator will have access to it. We hope to get this up and running by fall. All you need to do is send an email to StJohnPrayer@aol.com and indicate you would like to be added. Leave your name along with your email address. You will get a confirmation email that your request was received.

LWML Sunday is October 9. We will have the mites boxes available at the back of the church and in Luther Hall during the wonderful breakfast you get to enjoy. You don't have to bring anything. So come eat with us and see our displays of the items that we send to LWR.

It's not too early to start thinking about the Women's League Bazaar

St. John's Lutheran Church

Friday, December 2, 2016

Bazaar and Luncheon: Booths open: 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

Crafts, gift items, Baked Goods, Sweet Shop, and "The Cookie Walk"

Luncheon served: 11:00 am – 1:00 pm. Dine in or carryout:

Luncheon Tickets: Adults: \$8.00 Children under 12: \$3.00

All profits from the bazaar and luncheon will be donated to charities and mission projects.

CHICKEN OR BEEF NOODLE DINNER

Faith Lutheran Church is having its annual chicken/beef noodle dinner on Sunday, October 9 from 11:00 am until 1:00 pm. It will be held on their campus in their Fellowship Hall, in the basement. Adults are \$7.00, children ages 5-10 are \$3.50, and children under 5 are free! They will also have three quilts made by the women of their congregation available to raffle. Raffle tickets are \$1 each and you can buy as many as you please! Any and all are welcome!

THANK YOU'S

THANK YOU! Those two words seem woefully lacking as a comprehensive and complete expression of appreciation for everything that occurred during the Divine Service and Dinner in recognition of my 18+ years as the Visitation Pastor of St. John's. Especially, Pr. Bruss and Pr. Kerns, Deaconess Linda, Board of Elders, Church Council, and everyone involved in the dinner, preparing the food, serving and cleaning up. I don't know the names of all but those who should be named know who they are and are truly appreciated.

The love of the members of this portion of the Body of Christ is personally evident through personal well wishes, cards, gifts, and especially the tremendous support given through your monetary gifts to the Bitter Endowment at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. The proceeds of the endowment will help to reduce the financial cost of individuals aspiring to become pastors in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. If a student is a member of St. John's they will be the first to receive aid from the endowment. May the Lord bless all the members of St. John's for you kind expressions of love and support for me and for the rest of the Staff of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church.

Pastor Glenn Ray Bitter

We would like to sincerely thank all who contributed to the Bargain & Bake Sale in any way by brining for sale for the bargain and baked items, those who helped with the sale and those who came to shop.

We will be able to make a contribution to the Paid In Full Campaign. We were also able to send useful, unsold items to Doorstep. St. John's Women's League gave \$2,000.00 to the Paid in Full Campaign to be applied to the principal of the loan. Without the efforts of the members of this congregation and the lady named in paragraph below this would not have been possible so we THANK YOU! and we Thank God for you all.

We want to especially acknowledge Mrs. Jacqueline McBroom of Centennial, CO. Mrs. McBroom, a friend of John and Darlene Carr, heard of the million dollar building debt and sent many valuable collectible items for the Bargain Sale. We thank her for her generosity.

St. John's Women's League

This past week, I once again read through the lovely cards we received at my installation. They are so kind and thoughtful. Sadly, I still cannot place faces with all the names. This is my fault. Each week however, I make a few connections and put 2 and 2 together. Thank you for your patience. One card in particular (from Bill and Mary Roever) encouraged me to check out "Kansas' open spaces and beautiful Flint Hills." Well, Bill and Mary, we did. You were quite right. I have never seen such a beautiful landscape like that. Looking out makes me think the earth is flat. Wow. And to Marcia Wade, thank you for your card informing me that the State Flower for Kansas is the Sunflower. I had no idea. With the amount I see driving, I could have sworn the State Flower for Kansas was an orange and white construction cone.

Pax tecum
Pastor Kerns

THE THREE USES OF GOD'S LAW TO ENHANCE OUR LIVES

Pastor Goetz will be offering a two-session Bible Class on the topic "The Three Uses of God's Law to Enhance Our Lives." It will be held in the church nave between services on Sunday, October 30, and Sunday, November 6. This class should be quite useful in light of all that is happening around us.

For example, our member, Dr. Douglas Jones, has noted the following:

Occam's Razor suggests that when numerous events are occurring simultaneously, there is frequently a single cause. Our nation is currently experiencing numerous serious epidemics: depression, suicide, drug addiction, compulsive eating, sexual addiction and codependency to name a few. These are merely symptoms of a common underlying disorder. One way of describing this is "addictive thinking."

All of this points to the fact that we are born in sin and thus have something missing in our life. This problem has been described as having a hole in the soul. The items in Dr. Jones's paragraph give examples of some ways people try to fill the hole in the soul and thereby stop the pain and discomfort which may bother us at times in various physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual ways. Studying the three uses of the God's Law can help us learn to recognize, understand, and deal with this hole in the soul in useful ways. Our adults **and youth** are invited to attend.

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.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep is getting low on the below items in their food store. Any donation of these items is greatly appreciated.

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Canned Tomatoes | Spaghetti | Egg Noodles |
| Cold Cereal | Cream of Mushroom Soup | Vegetable Soup |
| Tuna | Ramen Noodles | |

Doorstep's Fall Fundraiser is Tamales & Cinnamon Rolls this year. They are taking orders October 1 through October 16. The Cinnamon Rolls with cream cheese icing (6 pack) are \$9. The Tamales come in pork or beef (6 pack) are \$12. These will be individually wrapped and frozen. You just have to heat and eat! You can pick up your orders the weekend of November 4 from your Doorstep representative. Their Fall fundraiser helps with client and operating expenses in the last quarter of the year, and with their Christmas Store for adopted families. We will have a table set up for sales on Sunday, October 16.

Also, keep an eye on school supplies and back packs as they go on Clearance! Doorstep gives school supplies 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. They are located at 1119 SW 10th Avenue (10th & Buchanan) or you can drop off items at the Doorstep display in the church.



HIGHER THINGS CONFERENCE 2017

Here I Stand
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Indiana
July 25-28, 2017

Now is the time to register for the Higher Things Conference for 2017. Registration forms can be found in the church office or on the Youth bulletin board in the breeze way. This week will fill up fast, so we are asking you to turn in your registration form, the medical release form, and a \$100 deposit by November 1, 2016. Checks may be made out to St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church with "Higher Things" on the memo line. Ask any youth who attended last year to hear how exciting and fulfilling an experience is this week. Plan for two travel days. We will leave on July 24 and return on July 29.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR OCTOBER 2016

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| October 2: | <i>Deborah</i> | <i>Judges 4-5</i> |
| October 9: | <i>Gideon</i> | <i>Judges 6:11-7:25</i> |
| October 16: | <i>Samson</i> | <i>Judges 16</i> |
| October 23: | <i>Ruth</i> | <i>The Book of Ruth</i> |
| October 30: | <i>God's Servant Samuel</i> | <i>1 Samuel 1 - 3</i> |

Bible Words for September:**Early Childhood**

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Be strong; fear not! | Isaiah 35:4 |
| The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. | Hebrews 13:6 |
| The Lord is my strength and my shield; in Him my heart trusts, and I am helped. | Psalm 28:7 |
| [God] cares for you. | 1 Peter 5:7 |
| Serve the Lord with gladness! | Psalm 100:2 |

Elementary Students

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you. | Psalm 50:15 |
| Be strong; fear not! Behold your God . . . will come and save you. | Isaiah 35:4 |
| The joy of the Lord is your strength. | Nehemiah 8:10 |
| My help comes from the Lord. | Psalm 121:2 |
| Serve the Lord with gladness! | Psalm 100:2 |
| <i><u>“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but <u>bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.</u>”</u></i> | Ephesians 6:4 |

Sunday school is one important tool for parents to nurture the faith given to your children in Baptism. Don't let your children miss out on this opportunity to grow spiritually and to get the life-giving Word into their ears, in their hearts, and on their lips. Parents, be an example for your children by attending Bible class while the children are in Sunday school.

**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.