



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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

VOL. 101 NO. 1 MONTHLY

JANUARY 2017

WHAT WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE?

One of our elders has suggested the idea of having a drive of sorts for everyone in the congregation. The goal wouldn't be to raise money or accomplish something we could point to, like a Habitat for Humanity house. Instead, the aim would be to get every member of the congregation to commit to attending church every Sunday for a certain period.

I've wavered on the idea, not because I think attending church every Sunday is a bad thing—far from it. But I wonder about the possibility of a flash-in-the-pan effect (i.e., great attendance for the period, then back to normal), turning church attendance into a competition, and the like.

And yet, I can't get the idea out of my mind. *What if* every member of St. John's committed to being in church every Sunday, year in, year out, missing only for sickness or emergencies? (When traveling, of course, you could still worship at a local LCMS congregation.) What would that look like?

Here's what I think it would look like. First, it would look like far fewer baptized members drifting from church and from faith in Jesus over the course of their lifetime. Good habits bring good results. If you're taught to brush your teeth every morning when you get up, it's no guarantee against cavities, but the chances of getting one drop like a stone. So it goes with church attendance. If you habitually attend church, it's no guarantee against falling away from the Faith, but the chances of it happening are tremendously reduced, just as Christ promises, "If you remain in My Word, you are My disciples indeed" (Jn 8:31).

The Bible identifies another outcome: encouragement (see Heb 10:24)—not just life encouragement, but encouragement for *eternal life*. Think about what happens whenever there are more people than expected in church on a given Sunday. I'm encouraged when I see it from the pulpit, and I'm guessing you notice a difference, too. (We can seat up to 392 comfortably, which means that in two services there'd be room for our entire congregation of 780+ with extra seats for a few visitors!). You might not think you matter, but you matter to your fellow congregant.

I wonder, too, what would happen to our Christian witness as individuals. I expect that if we were all always in church, we might find ourselves talking about the Gospel more often—in our homes and in our daily vocations. That, in turn, would result in more people "called by the Gospel" (e.g., more seats necessary in adult catechesis; more use of the baptismal font, etc.), because the Gospel would always be sounding.

Finally, I think it would give us all the strength we need to live boldly according to our confession. I'm not [necessarily] talking about being able to make detailed arguments about doctrine to your friends. Rather, I'm thinking about daily faithfulness to our calling as Christians. It would positively influence

what we do every day, guarding and protecting us from “the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh.” There *is*, after all, a Christian way of life, one of faithfulness to all the Lord’s teachings in Scripture (Rm 13:10; Eph 5:1-2). It looks more and more different from the world we live in (Rm 12:2), but it comes with great blessing (Ex 20:6).

Here’s how simple this all is. Don’t make a New Year’s resolution. Just take out your calendar (on your phone or the one on your wall). Every Sunday, write down an appointment. “Church at 8:15 (or 11); Bible Study at 9:45.” On Wednesdays, write down another appointment for Sound Words Academy. Go ahead. Find your 2017 calendar and do it right now. It’s easier yet on your phone—just set a repeating appointment. And that’ll serve as your reminder. On those days you have an appointment with God. He’ll be right here, with His Holy Word and Blessed Sacrament, waiting to give you just what you need: forgiveness of sins, life, and eternal salvation.

Imagine what that would look like!



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

TLS Teachers - Ashley Jensema, Andrea Kosmicki, Edith Kerns, Rachel Kathman

CALVARY VACANCY

Calvary Lutheran Church has asked Pastor Bruss and Pastor Kerns to help out during their vacancy. For the foreseeable future and until the Lord calls a new pastor to Calvary, our own pastors will provide that assistance. One of the pastors will be at Calvary on Sunday morning, and the other here at St. John's. Calvary wishes to thank St. John's and the St. John's board of elders for the help.

A SPECIAL “THANK YOU” FROM THE STAFF

Each member of the called staff and the support staff wish to thank the congregation for the thoughtful and generous Christmas gifts. We are most grateful for the support, love, and care each of us receives from you throughout the year. May God in His mercy continue to bless the Body of Christ in this place with His Presence and His work in us and through us to the praise of His glory.

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.

IMPORTANT: COMING IN JANUARY

It has been over five years since St. John's produced a Church Pictorial Directory, so January is the time for photographs for the booklet. Life Touch Photography will be on hand to take family and single photographs for this directory January 9, 10, and 18 – 23 by appointment in Luther Hall. The hours for weekdays are 2 – 9 p.m., and for weekends 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Sunday mornings, look for the table in the Courtyard to make your appointment. Signing up on-line is an option this year also. We would like as many people as possible to participate. Everyone will receive a free 8 x 10, and no one is obligated to purchase any more photos; however, the opportunity to do so is available at a 20% discount. Watch for more information in the bulletin and on the bulletin board in the breezeway. If you have any questions, contact Timothy Humphrey.

2017 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES

Contribution envelopes for those who have not picked theirs up are still available in the breezeway. Please use the instructions on the clipboard located on the tables with the contribution boxes to locate your box of contribution envelopes. If you have any questions regarding contribution boxes/envelopes, please speak with Yvonne Berry in the church office.

ADULT CATECHESIS CLASS FORMING FOR LATE JANUARY

A new Adult Catechesis Class is forming to begin in late January/early February, running for 14-18 weeks and anticipating a late May or early June confirmation. Catechesis gives a systematic overview of the chief teachings of Scripture using Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*. This class is for anyone interested in learning more about the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the teachings of the Scripture, from those who know nothing to long-time Lutherans. All are welcomed. Please contact Pr. Bruss if interested. jbruss@stjlcms.org

COMING TO SOUND WORDS ACADEMY, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18: MISSION 101

In a culture where we quickly move from one thing to the next, the idea of going over the basics of our Christian message might not seem that important. However, consider what Paul says to the Corinthians, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). Pastor Dan Galchutt, the Kansas District missions executive, offers two Mission 101 workshops at SJELC on Wednesday, 18 January, at 6:00 p.m. and 7:45: "Back to Basics" and "Why We Proclaim." Be sure to join us that evening.

Reformation500: Die deutsche Messe / The German Mass

In 1526 Martin Luther published his so-called *German Mass*, a Divine Service entirely in German for use in Wittenberg and Electoral Saxony. *The German Mass*, along with his earlier (1523) *Formula missae* (*Formula of the Mass*) became the foundation for the liturgy of the Divine Service in lands and cities that adopted the Augsburg Confession. The latter-mentioned was in Latin. In form, it was the same as *The German Mass*.

Luther's purpose in developing *The German Mass* was threefold. The first was an entirely positive purpose: so that the people could be taught. Up to 1526, the standard Mass even in now-Lutheran lands was still in Latin. Do you know what "Benedictus, qui venit in nomine domini" means? Neither did the many people of Luther's day whose circumstances didn't allow them the luxury of a Latin-school education. (By the way, it means: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.")

Thus, primarily *to teach the Gospel*, Luther introduced a Mass in German, in which the "ordinary" (or stable) parts of the Mass, including the Kyrie, Gloria in excelsis, Salutation, Creed, Preface, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and

Nunc dimittis were given as chorales and canticles *in the German language*. Often using already-existing medieval melodies (but not always), Luther's *German Mass* became a staple of the Church of the Augsburg Confession. The "propers" (those parts of the Mass that change from week to week, such as readings, hymns, collects, etc.), were also put into German. An example everyone knows well is "A Mighty Fortress," the chief hymn for *Invocavit*, the First Sunday in Lent, which riffs off the Psalm for that Sunday, Psalm 46.

The second purpose Luther had in writing *The German Mass* was to give to the Church of the Augsburg Confession a Mass that had been purified of papistic accretions, such as the many prayers that surrounded the Words of Institution. Those prayers not only confused what was happening in the Sacrament, but according to them the priest was re-offering the Body and Blood of Christ, even though Christ's death at Calvary was a once and for all death for all sins of all people of all time.

The third was a defensive purpose. From 1521 through 1525, Wittenberg, Electoral Saxony, and much of the surrounding area were rocked by radical reformers. In 1521-22 Luther was in hiding in the Wartburg. At that time, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt destroyed all images and crucifixes in the Wittenberg churches, forced the people to receive the chalice in the Sacrament (a reform Luther wished to introduce gradually), smashed altars, broke stained glass windows, completely gutted the Mass, and did away with chanting, candles, censers, albs, chasubles, and stoles. *The German Mass*, along with the *Formula missae*, thus also sought to restore what had been lost at the hands of Karlstadt and other radicals who had destroyed the Church's worship.

Today, the *Formula missae* survives largely as our Divine Service Setting 3 (the old *TLH* p. 15 service), though it's no longer in Latin, but in English. The melodies of many parts of that setting date to the early days of the Reformation.

The German Mass, on the other hand, is probably better known by our congregation in piecemeal fashion. We all know hymns like "Isaiah, Mighty Seer," and "May God Bestow on Us His Grace." Divine Service Setting 5 in our hymnbook draws those hymns together and places them in the liturgical context for which Luther intended them. During Reformation500 and in celebration of Luther's restoration of the clear teaching of the Gospel, our congregation will use Setting 5 once per month. In the process, we'll be adding a handful of hymns to our repertoire, not to mention an entire setting of the Divine Service. It's our hope that you'll be delighted once again to sing the songs of the Reformation as we gather around the Lord's Word purely and rightly taught and His Sacraments administered according to His command!

To acquaint the congregation with some of the less familiar portions of Setting 5, our Bible Study hour on Sunday 15 & 22 January will be set aside to consider their theology and to learn them. We will first use Setting 5 in its entirety appropriately on Sunday, 29 January, our Missions Festival.



MONTHLY BREAKFAST

On Sunday, January 8, the Youth will host a potluck breakfast between services. Bring your favorite breakfast food to share and enjoy conversation with fellow St. John's members.

JANUARY IS REFORMATION500 MISSIONS & EVANGELISM MONTH

"May God bestow on us His grace ... that we... to the heathen show Christ's riches without measure and unto God convert them." So Luther prayed in his chorale "May God Bestow on Us Grace" (*LSB* 823), and so we pray as often as we sing it. January 2017 is our Reformation500 Year missions and evangelism month. Mark your calendars for a couple key dates, as we have two major congregational events planned for it.

On Wednesday, January 18, Pr. Dan Galchutt, the district admissions executive, will visit Sound Words Academy from 6 to 8:45 p.m. with two workshops on everyday evangelism (see article on p. 3 above).

On Sunday, January 29, Fr. Aleksey Streltsov of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELC) will preach at both Divine Services for our annual missions festival, and give a presentation on the work of the SELC between services in the nave. That day a special door offering will be taken to support Fr. Streltsov's travel to the States and St. John's and the SELC.

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

Start off the New Year with "Sound Words"

"Hold fast the pattern of sound words," Paul instructs Timothy (2 Tim 1:13). St. John's **Sound Words Academy** offers mid-week educational opportunities every Wednesday evening, including:

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 (Kerns)
	TBD (Bruss; high school and adults)
	Lifelight (Hintz)
7-7:45	Evening Prayer (Nave; open to everyone)
7:50-8:45	Adult Catechesis (Kerns)
	Women's Bible: Pew Sisters (Kinnett)
	Young Adults/College Students (Bruss)

VOTERS MEETING - JANUARY 22, 2017

The **Annual Voters Meeting** of St. John's will be held on Sunday afternoon, January 22, beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the nave. Each board and committee will present its annual report for the work of this past year and indicate plans for this coming year. The 2016 year-end reports of the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and the Eagle Foundation Treasurer will be presented.



TLS NEWS

Topeka Lutheran School Information and Enrollment Meeting, January 30 at 7:00 p.m.

St. John's hosts our annual Topeka Lutheran School Information and Enrollment Meeting on Monday, 30 January, at 7:00 p.m. in the Courtyard. All parents of school age children are invited to attend. Ask questions. Learn what great things TLS has to offer. Find out specifics about how St. John's supports your children's Christian education. Led by Principal Francik, members of the TLS Board of Directors, the St. John's teaching faculty, and the St. John's Board of Elders will be on hand to answer questions. Enter by the south / aka glass / aka Luther Hall door. **This meeting is required for all parents of TLS students.**

Thank you to those of you who responded to the Foundation's November 2016 special gift appeal for the Daily, Grant-in-Aid, and Capital Campaign/Grow Our School funds. The school continues to be blessed by the generosity and faithful prayers from our donors and friends. If you haven't already done so, you may make your gift payable to TLS Foundation and mail to: TLS Foundation, 701 SW Roosevelt St., Topeka KS 66606.

Save the Date! We hope to see you at the **annual PTL Chili Supper** on Friday, January 27 in the school gym! Watch for more details to be announced soon.

TLS parents, would you be willing to share a few remarks about your experience with TLS to be included in TLS brochures, annual report, and other publications? Think about the deciding factor(s) that resulted in joining the TLS family—what has been your experience to reaffirm your decision? Please email 1-2 sentences (we'd like to include your name too if possible) to foundation@topek Lutheran.org If we could hear from you by January 31, that would be helpful. If you prefer to have your remarks published anonymously, we will honor your wishes and just include the quote. Thank you for your help.

Is a **Real Estate transaction in your future?** If so, take advantage of the opportunity to send 5% of the selling agent's commission back to TLS. Realty Executives, Topeka, offer a "Giving Back Program" where you can designate TLS as recipient of 5% of the earned commission earned on your purchase or sale. Dee Ellis with Coldwell Banker Griffith & Blair Real Estate is offering a similar opportunity for association church members or TLS families. If you will be working with either Realty Executives or Dee Ellis on a real estate transaction, please ask about this opportunity. The contact person at Realty Executives about this program is Tammy and she can be reached at [785.246.5386](tel:785.246.5386). Dee can be reached at [785.969.9474](tel:785.969.9474). Thank you for your continued support of TLS.

LEADER FOR LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS

WC #31 here at St. John's is looking for a new leader. If you are passionate about spreading Holy Scriptures to the sight impaired in Spanish speaking countries and America then this job is for you. It is such a rewarding volunteer job. A person or couple that can organize the workings of the Center is needed. Currently Braille Workers volunteer on Thursdays once or twice a month, depending on how much work is sent from headquarters.

I am in my 16th year and feel it is time for someone with new creativity and ideas to reach those sitting in darkness. I have enjoyed working with the most enthusiastic group of volunteers in town. They all know their job and are eager to help. I will also continue to volunteer and work side-by-side with the new leader. After prayer and consideration, if you have questions or I can help in any way, just call me at 233-8263.

ATTENTION: PARENTS OF TWO-YEAR OLDS

The class led by Wendy Humphrey will begin anew on January 8, at 9:45 a.m. in Room 208. This is an excellent opportunity for your child to become accustomed to Sunday school, and for parents to network regarding parenting issues. Don't miss this special time with your toddler.

LUTHERAN HOUR RADIO PROGRAM

A question was raised recently regarding when the Lutheran Hour radio show was on local radio. So here you go:
 Station KCVT 92.5 FM – Sundays @ 8:00 a.m.
 Station WIBW 580 AM – Sundays @ 7:30 a.m.

2017 FLOWER CALENDAR

Please check the Flower Calendar on the bulletin board outside of the church offices. The *2017 Flower Calendar* is now posted. If you would like to provide flowers for a particular service this coming year, please sign your name and phone number by the date of your choice.

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 or Pastor Kerns so they 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 the contact Pastors, 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.

THE LUTHERAN FINE ARTS COUNCIL OF TOPEKA (LFACT)

LFACT is sponsoring a Fiber Arts Workshop on Saturday, February 18 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The event will be held at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th, and will feature presentations on weaving, doll-making, needlework, felting, quilt art and more. No charge and the public is invited to attend. More information on this workshop will be made available in the coming weeks.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep staff and volunteers would like to thank everyone who donated to Doorstep during the holiday season and throughout 2016. With the 250 households they adopted through the Christmas Bureau and community needs ever present they were able to assist more of our neighbors in need because of your generosity. They especially want to thank everyone who stepped up when they found out about Toys for Tots and those efforts helped provide Christmas for the children they adopted!

Along with the start of a new year also comes the cold weather and high utility bills. Please remember your neighbors who are struggling to pay those high bills when looking for a place to donate. Doorstep offers utility assistance to individuals and families throughout the year as funds are available.

Souper Bowl Sunday is February 5th! On this weekend they ask our member congregations to collect soup and crackers to help restock our food pantry. A can of soup can be a meal, and in the past with a successful collection we have had soup and crackers to last us into the summer months! Please remember Doorstep when you go grocery shopping and pick up a few items for your neighbors in need.

Also, mark your calendars for the 14th Annual Operation Soup Line! This year it will be on Wednesday, February 22, 2017! Doorstep is open Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. for donations. They are located at 1119 SW 10th Street (10th & Buchanan).

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

A great big thank you to the members of St. John's and Women's League for another successful bazaar and luncheon. Without your contributions, planning and organizing, helping in many ways and shopping we would not be able to give what we do to our missions projects. This year our proceeds came to \$8,148.40. We will have a detailed report in the February newsletter on the division of the proceeds to our mission projects. Again thank you and Thank You God for the blessings you give us all.

"SHARE THE HARVEST" AND THANKSGIVING DAY OFFERINGS

The donations for "**Share the Harvest**" totaled \$1,284.66. This amount was divided equally between *Topeka Rescue Mission, Doorstep of Topeka, Let's Help* and St. John's Human Care. If you still have a "Share the Harvest" canister at home, please return it, (empty or full) as we will use them again next year. Thank you for your generosity.

The **Thanksgiving Day** offering totaling \$804.10 was divided 10% for *The Marian Clinic*, 10% for *Let's Help*, 25% to Doorstep, 10% to Topeka Rescue Mission, 20% for *St. John's "General Fund"*, 15% for *LCMS World Relief*, and 10% to the *Children's Christian Concern Society*. We are grateful to our gracious Lord for prompting many of our members to generously share with the needy of the community and the world through these contributions!

St. John's Board of Missions & Evangelism

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR JANUARY 2017

January 8	Jesus Changes the Water into Wine	John 2:1-11
January 15	Jesus Teaches Nicodemus	John 3:1-21
January 22	Jesus and the Samaritan Woman	John 4:1-42
January 29	Jesus Calls Disciples	Matt. 4:12-25

Bible Verses for January:

Jesus Christ . . . is the true God and eternal life.

1 John 5:20

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

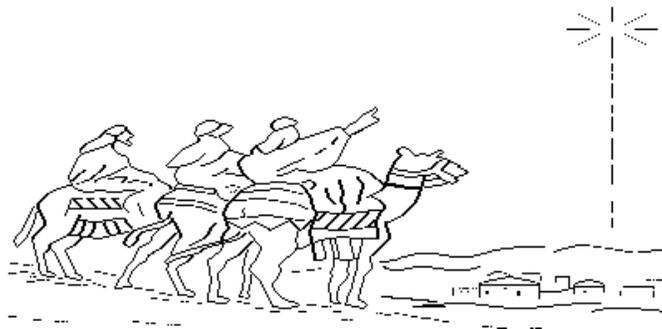
Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

John 3:36

[Jesus says,] *"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

Matthew 4:19

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

“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. (*Augsburg Confession*, Article 5)