



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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

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TAKE UP YOUR CROSS: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

A few years ago in our discussion of “Dying to Live: the Power of Forgiveness,” by Harold Senkbeil, the women in Bible study on Tuesday morning came across the familiar but mysterious phrase spoken by Jesus, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

The room became silent when the question was asked, “What does this mean?” The teacher (myself) could not speak intelligently to the question either, so she (I) decided to do some research.

To begin, no one chooses his own cross to bear. Nor does ‘bearing our cross’ mean that there is something lacking in Jesus’ work of salvation for us. Jesus’ sacrificial life, suffering, death, and resurrection completely paid the penalty for our sin.

In a recent Memorial Moment devotion, Pastor Scott Murray tells of a group of murderers imprisoned for their crimes who wrote to him requesting copies of Luther’s Small Catechism. One of the men also asked for a copy of the Book of Concord. Pastor Murray says, “These men, although in bonds and serving time in the prison system of the state of Texas, also confessed their Lord Christ in terms so clear and faithful that any free Christian should envy this confession.”

The Apostle Paul is another example of bearing the cross of Christ. He suffered hardship and imprisonment for the ‘crime’ of preaching the Gospel. But while in prison he did not delay his preaching, thinking that he had to put off his confession of Christ until his circumstances were improved. He went on receiving from Christ the forgiveness of sins, and he continued to share that love of Christ with those around him.

This group of men as well as the Apostle Paul were ‘taking up their crosses and following Jesus.’ They continued to confess Christ in each uncomfortable situation. Sure, the Texas prisoners were paying the consequences of their own sin, while Paul suffered because of the sins of others. It doesn’t matter whether the sin was done by you, or was done *to* you, or is merely the result of living in this sinful world; the cross is the same: selfish sin. The circumstances are not the problem; our sinful nature is. The only remedy is the forgiveness that Jesus bestows.

Jesus, “who *for the joy that was set before him endured the cross*, despising the shame” (Hebrews 12:2). There would have been eternal consequences for us if Jesus had avoided the cross. Remember, Peter wanted him to do just that when he rebuked Jesus for telling about his coming crucifixion (Mark 8:33). It sounded good to Peter for Jesus to avoid the cross, just as it sounds good to us that we also avoid suffering. Selfishly, we’d really rather not be bothered with pain, weakness, and affliction; we’d rather have strength, power, and prestige.

But just as Jesus obeyed His Father's will and went through the suffering of the cross into the joy of heaven, so, too, the Christian will experience suffering on this side of heaven. Our prayer is not, "Get me out of this, Lord," but "Help me to trust You and to continue in your purpose for me in this suffering." In our baptism, we died with Christ, were buried with Him, and we were raised with Him. Not only that, but we have been seated in the heavenly places already with Him (Ephesians 2)! His cross is not only our redemption but also our model for the Christian life.

We do not choose the crosses that we bear, but they are placed upon us. And since God placed us into Christ in our baptism, He knows every dart that Satan throws. Each one that comes to us goes first through Christ. And when that dart of suffering gets to us, it finds us safe in Christ. He is with us in suffering; He is glorified in suffering; He is triumphant over suffering! In Him we rejoice in suffering as we look to the *joy set before us, that is, eternal life in Jesus!*

By Deaconess Linda

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

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

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Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz

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

2017 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES (LAST CALL)

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.

SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF MEETING

Saturday, February 18 at 10 a.m., St. John's Library

ADULT CATECHESIS CLASS BEGINS FEBRUARY 8

A new Adult Catechesis Class is forming to begin on Wednesday, February 8, 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. Something to invite your unchurched friends and family to. Please contact Pr. Bruss if interested. jbruss@stjlcms.org

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THE KANSAS DISTRICT OFFICE

The Kansas District is seeking volunteers to assist in the following three areas at 10th & Fillmore: Interior – handyman projects (no electrical or plumbing), decorating, furniture moving; Exterior – maintaining the landscaping once it is redone; Bids – calling and meeting with contractors, etc. Interest and abilities in only one of the three areas will be sufficient. Volunteers will work primarily with the District Business Manager, Debbie Crites. A one-year commitment will be sufficient and appreciated! For further information, or to offer your help, please Contact Debbie Crites at debbie@kslcms.org.

MONTHLY BREAKFAST

A group of our men will be treating us to pancakes and sausage on Sunday, February 12, between services. Don't miss it!

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)

ANNUAL CHURCH CLEANING

SATURDAY, APRIL 8TH

The Annual Church Cleaning in preparation for Holy Week and Easter has been set for Saturday, April 8, beginning at 8:00 a.m. or as close to 8:00 as you can make it. More information on this annual cleaning will be in the March newsletter.

PIPE ORGAN REPAIRS

In January, \$3,105.00 of repairs was made on our pipe organ. This was paid for out of the Anne Goetz Designated Fund established some years ago at St. John's in Anne's memory by her parents, Pastor and Mrs. Goetz.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

Thanks to all the LWML members who contributed to the Doorstep food challenge! Your efforts brought in 275 pounds of non-perishable food. Our initial food purchase totaled 204.6 pounds so the grand total of this challenge was 479.6 pounds of food to share with those in need who seek assistance from Doorstep. The breakdown by circle was Dorcas Circle - 133 pounds and Sarah Circle - 142 pounds. The totals are very close in number and each Circle member deserves a big thank you for helping this to be a successful campaign

Women of St. John's do you like to sing, lead devotions and share time with shut-ins? If so the ladies that go to the care center need your help. They go on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 10:00 am and spend about 30-45 minutes. If you are interested please contact Ruth Scott or Betty Goetz, or just meet them at the main entrance of Rolling Hills located between 21st and 29th on Urish road.

March 26 is the date for our spring quarterly meeting. Watch the bulletin for more information. Ladies, do you like to sew, if so the Women's League quilters would love your help sewing quilt blocks together. If interested contact Nancy Scheuerman or Diana Sims.



TLS NEWS

TLS Basketball Tournament will be held Friday/Saturday, February 17 and 18, 2017, with both girl's and boy's teams participating. Join us at the main campus at 701 SW Roosevelt and show your support for the TLS Wildcats! For game times, check the TLS website or the TLS Facebook page.

TLS Open House for K-8 grades will be held Sunday, February 26, from 2:00-4:00pm. Help us share the benefits of a TLS education! Tell your friends and neighbors to stop by for a tour of the school and a "meet and greet" with TLS teachers. The TLS choirs and bands will also be performing and refreshments will be served.

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.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PIPE ORGAN

The Topeka Chapter of the American Guild of Organists is pleased to sponsor *An Introduction to the Pipe Organ*. This event will be Sunday, February 12, 2 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 817 SW Harrison Street. This event is a fun and educational multi-media opportunity to learn more about the "King of Instruments". This event will feature a craft for children and a hands-on demonstration of various components of the pipe organ for youth and adults as well as a short concert of two fun pieces featuring organ and narrator. Children of ALL ages are welcome, and this event is free of charge and open to the public. To ensure we have plenty of crafts and snacks, please email agotopeka@gmail.com with your name and the number of adults and children in your party that will be attending this concert. You can learn more about the Topeka Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and their events by visiting their Facebook page (TopekaAGO).

2017 FLOWER CALENDAR

The following services are available in the next few months if you would like to provide flowers for any of them: February 19 and 26; March 12, 19 and 26.

LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION

"Luther and the Reformation – Why It Still Matters" is a Reformation 500 event being held at Hope Lutheran Church in Shawnee, KS on Sunday, February 12, at 4:00 p.m. Dr. Mary Jane Haemig, a specialist in Reformation Studies from Luther Seminary, will be the guest presenter. A light fellowship meal will be served and the evening will conclude with evening worship featuring Luther hymns and readings. See the flyer on the bulletin board.

THE LUTHERAN FINE ARTS COUNCIL OF TOPEKA (LFACT)

The Lutheran Fine Arts Council of Topeka will be hosting A Fiber Arts Workshop on Saturday, February 18, from 8:30 a.m.-noon at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 2021 SW 29th. Presentations will be held on weaving, soft Sculpture dolls, needlework, felting and quilt art. The workshop is free and open to the public. Those attending are welcomed to bring and display their own fiber art but RSVP's are required and can be made to JoLana Pinon at jolanapinon@gmail.com or 785-409-5468.

A Children's Theater Workshop will be held on Saturday, March 4, from 9:00 am -noon at the Topeka Civic Theater and Academy and will include dance, costumes, and make-up. This event, sponsored by the Lutheran Fine Arts of Topeka, is for children, grades 2nd-8th, and is free but RSVP's are required and can be made to Ann Mah at annmah@att.net or 785-266-9434.

DOORSTEP NEWS

February is a busy month for Doorstep! They have **Souper Bowl Sunday, February 5** where they ask member congregations to collect soup and crackers to help stock their food pantry! Their goal for 2017 is 4 ton... 8,000 pounds! Watch for sales and bring donations to St. John's or to Doorstep directly! Last year's goal was 4,000 pounds and 8,663 pounds was donated. Let's help do it again!

The month of February brings cold weather and what is better on a cold day than hot soup and chili! Doorstep's major fundraiser, **Operation Soup Line**, is in its 14th year! Mark your calendars for **Wednesday, February 22**. They will have both lunch and dinner available again this year. As always, they will offer delivery on orders of 10 or more during lunchtime (11am – 1:30pm). They will have celebrity servers, carry out, entertainment and the theme basket auction during lunch and dinner. Food will be available from 11:00am – 7:00pm.

Ticket price is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. You will receive your choice of soup or chili, dessert and a drink. We hope you will plan to attend and support Doorstep's major fundraiser by coming to the Ag Hall on February 22! The funds raised at this event are used to help our neighbors in need with rent and utility assistance throughout the year.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR FEBRUARY 2017

February 5	Jesus Heals a Man Who Is Paralyzed	Mark 2: 1-12
February 12	Jesus Calms a Storm/Walks on Water	Mark 4:35-41; Matt. 14:22-33
February 19	Jesus Heals Jairus' Daughter	Mark 5:21-24, 35-43
February 26	Jesus Heals a Blind Man	John 9

Bible Verses for February:

Jesus says, *"Your sins are forgiven"* Matthew 9:2

Do not fear, only believe. Mark 5:36

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

Though I was blind, now I see. John 9:25

Youth Catechesis Retreat/Lock-In

When: Friday, February 3, 6:00 p.m. through Saturday, February 4, 8:00 a.m.

Where: St. John's Luther Hall and the Youth Room

Who: Catechumens who are currently in catechesis.

What to bring: Pillow/blanket or sleeping bag; phones and other electronics will be checked in at the beginning of the evening.

Cost: \$15.00 per participant

Chaperones and food needed. Parents, see previous email.

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)