



# St. John's

---

## Ev. Lutheran Church

901 SW Fillmore | Topeka, Kansas 66606-1445 | 785.354.7132 | [www.stjohnlcmstopeka.org](http://www.stjohnlcmstopeka.org)

VOL. 107 NO. 7 MONTHLY

JULY 2017

### SECURITY AND CERTAINTY

Those two words sound an awful lot alike. If I'm certain of something I should also be able to be secure in that same thing.

But in theology and its description of human beings, they label opposite characteristics. Luther puts it like this:

Grace and forgiveness of sin do not make us such who are secure in relation to sin, death, and law, as if they were nothing anymore,... but rather such who are diligent and scrupulous that we might overcome them daily in Christ the Savior." (*Solus decalogus est aeternus: Martin Luther's Complete Antinomian Theses and Disputations*, trans. and ed. Holger Sonntag [Minneapolis: Cygnus Press, 2008], p. 239)

So let's begin with what's common between the *certain* person and the *secure* person. Both of them *know* that Jesus Christ has redeemed them from sin, death, and the devil's power.

But for the *secure* person, this is where it stops—at knowledge. The secure person can mentally assent to every word of the Creed and the Catechism. But what distinguishes her from the *certain* is that she doesn't regard her own death, her own sin, her own danger before Satan as such a terrible thing. She's not troubled by it. She doesn't see her own inability to escape from it. And she regards the faith expressed in the Creed and Catechism as if it were a band-aid on a little booboo.

But the *certain* person knows otherwise. She looks at the wrinkles in the mirror, the weakening of the body, the inescapable prospect of her own grave, and says, "What can I possibly do about that?" She looks at her own sins. And even as her sanctification improves outwardly, she becomes more aware that what she can't outrun or stop or bring to an end are her own sinful impulses. She sees her sin for what it is—an incurable disease—and feels herself locked up without a key under sin and disobedience (Rom 11:32 and Gal 3:22). She recognizes herself as a "marked man": marked by the Cross of Christ in her Baptism as one redeemed by Him, which Cross has become a bright red target for the devil (1 Peter 5:8). And far from just knowing it, she confesses with her mouth and believes with her heart what Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:56-57: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, how do you suppose these two different people act—the secure one and the certain one? If a person's *certain* that Jesus Christ has redeemed her from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil and that He did it and had to do it because she couldn't, what does that person think of her sins? Surely not as little peccadillos, but as a daily threat to send her to hell. So when God's sin-forgiving, life-giving, hell-storming Word is being proclaimed, where else will you find the *certain* person but in front of that Word?

And when the medicine of eternal life is being handed out, where else would the *certain* person be found, except on her knees at the rail? That's someone you can spot a mile away.

And you can spot the secure person a mile away, too. The secure person knows all the right words. In fact, she might talk *exactly* like the certain person. But her actions betray her words. Her conception of Jesus is entirely different. Sometimes He's the "Jesus of the Big Events"—the one who's supposed to show up for weddings and funerals—namely, for hers—but no more than that. Sometimes He's the "Jesus of Auld Lang Syne"—the one whose birth evokes fond memories of days of yore. Can't miss that! Other times He's a cloak. He covers and excuses obvious sins and deflects just accusations (read Rom 6:1-14). And when she looks at her life, she counts up the good she's done, forgets the evil, and says, "All's well." You've met her. So have I. She lives right inside of me. In fact, she's a he. The Old Adam.

So what's to be done? First, recognize the very real difference between the secure and certain person. Second, realize that the secure person, because she's the Old Adam, is always hung around your neck. And third, follow Luther's implicit advice and be "diligent and scrupulous that you might overcome sin, death, and law daily" by seeking and finding Christ often and where He may be found: in the weekly Divine Service.

God grant it for Christ's sake!



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

**Associate Pastor – Rev. D. M. Kerns, ext. 101**

**Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102**

**Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz**

**Associate Kantor - Bethany M. Johnson**

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

**Dear members of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church:**

Thank you for your constant love and support during these past two years. My husband, Kyle, and I are truly blessed to be a part of this church family and are thankful for each one of you as you continue to confess the Gospel in Word and deed.

Thanks be to God that I have been installed as the Associate Kantor at St. John's! I am honored to serve in this ministry with you, God's faithful people, and I ask for your continued prayers as I assume the responsibilities of my vocation.

As the hymn-writer wrote, "How can any praise we offer / Measure all the thanks we owe? / Take our hearts and hands and voices / Gifts of love we can bestow." May God continue to bless this ministry of music as we use it to proclaim God's truth, praise Him for His gifts, and pray for what He has promised to give us.

I look forward to working with you as we continue to confess God's Word with all our hearts, hands, and voices. Thank you!

In Christ,  
Bethany Johnson  
Associate Kantor

## **BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP: BUDGET AND RECEIPTS REPORT**

In an effort to keep our congregation informed about our financial situation, the Board of Stewardship has agreed to publish monthly budget reports. These reports are designed to give you a snapshot of our congregational support of the budget adopted by the voters assembly for 2017. We hope that you will find this information useful.

Through the month of May 2017

Budgeted Receipts through May	\$299,745.00
<u>Actual Receipts through May</u>	<u>\$259,195.03</u>
Shortfall through May	(\$40,549.97)

### **JULY QUARTERLY VOTERS MEETING**

There will be a quarterly voters meeting **on Sunday, July 23 at 2 p.m. in the Nave**. Quarterly financial reports will be presented, as well as reports from the various boards. If you desire to become a voting member, you will need to pick up a copy of St. John's Constitution and By-Laws from the church office to read and let Pastor Bruss or your Elder know that you desire to become a member. Once members are approved by the voting members, they are eligible to vote at the next scheduled voter's meeting.

### **UPCOMING REFORMATION 500 EVENTS AT ST. JOHN'S AND AROUND**

Saturday, August 12	Pop-up Conference on the Lutheran Reformation, Washburn University, Details TBD
Saturday, October 28	Reformation 5[00]K, Details TBD (likely course: Faith to SJELC)
Sunday, October 29	Circuit 6 (Topeka-Lawrence) Reformation 500 Celebration Joint Divine Service, TPAC, 10:30 a.m. (no Divine Service at SJELC that day)
Tuesday, October 31	Oktoberfest, Luther Hall, SJELC, 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, October 31	Reformation Day Divine Service (with incense), nave, SJELC, 7:00 p.m.
Friday, November 10	Luthers Geburtstag (Luther's Birthday), Ritchie House, Details TBD (sponsored by SJELC)
Sunday, February 11	Reformation 500 Hymn Sing, nave, SJELC, 3:00 p.m.

### **2017 FLOWER CALENDAR**

The following services are available in the next few months if you would like to provide flowers for any of them: September 24, November 5, 12 & 19 and December 10 & 31.

### **2017 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN**

June 25 was our Stewardship Sunday, where we received pledges for our July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 pledge year. If you were not able to turn in your pledge on June 25, you may still do so. Additional pledge cards can be picked up in the office, and are also available at the end of each pew in the church.

Finally, we'd like once again to assure you that there will be no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. 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.

## HEADING TO COLLEGE?

Do you have someone in your family who's at college or going off to college? St. John's would love to help the college-bound find an LCMS church and LCMS-U chapter near their school. Please contact Pr. Bruss ([jbruss@stjlcms.org](mailto:jbruss@stjlcms.org) or 354.7132) with their email address and cell number so we can get a pastor near their school in touch with them. Remember, too, that for those who attend Washburn, St. John's is the local LCMS-U chapter, serving Washburn students on Sound Words Academy evenings with Evening Prayer and our Young Adults and College Students Bible Study afterwards.

## HELP FOR THE HOMEBOUND

The pastors are looking for people in the congregation who could provide transportation for a homebound member for a **once a month** Divine Service throughout the summer especially for them. This member would need to be picked up and taken back home after the service. The first such service was held June 25 at 1:00 p.m. Please contact the church office if you would be willing to help.

## JULY MONTHLY BREAKFAST

The Kantorei and Ecclesia Bells will host the **pot luck breakfast** on July 9 between services. Please bring your favorite breakfast food to share in the pot luck.

## THANK YOU'S

Dear Friends:

The Christian Fellowship at St. John's Lutheran Church held their annual Smorgasbord Dinner on April 25, 2017. 281 meals were served. Each year the money that is received is divided among different mission organizations. This year St. John's Welfare Fund was chosen to receive \$600 to help those in need.

With God's Grace,  
Adult Christian Fellowship Treasurer  
Chuck McMullen

**THANK YOU** to all the sponsors, golfers and helpers who contributed to the success of this year's golf scramble! The Youth Group relies on this annual fundraiser to help support its program and your generosity of time and talents was much appreciated. Special thanks to **Jim Simpson** who, once again, made all the arrangements with Forbes Golf Course, provided us with seven teams of eager golfers and prepared a world-class taco bar! THANKS, JIM!

Dear Pastor Bruss & members of St. John's:

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! We are so grateful for your gift of \$200 in support of God's work through us in the Dominican Republic and Latin America! We are arrived in Santiago, Dominican Republic on May 23 and are enjoying getting settled into our apartment here and finding places to purchase food. Our journey to the DR and entrance to this country went smoothly, thanks be to God.

We thank you for your ongoing prayers, and for the encouragement that you have given to us. We have a Facebook page called *Naumanns in Latin America* if you would ever like to look at that. We will also continue to send you our monthly mission newsletter via email.

May the Lord bless all that you do in His name!  
In Christ,  
Deaconess Cheryl and Pastor Jonathan Naumann

## LWML NEWS

Mark your calendars and start saving your unwanted items, if you have good, clean articles you no longer need, save them for the upcoming St. John's Women's League Bargain and Bake Sale. Furniture, dishes, linens, shoes, clothes, etc. will be accepted. We would ask that you not bring any electronics, which includes TV, computers, DVD or VCR's players. No computer equipment please.

The sale this year will be Thursday, August 24 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday, August 25, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also, continue to save your Best Choice labels and sign up for Dillon's rewards if you have not already done so. Information on the instructions has been in the Sunday bulletins.



## TLS NEWS

1. The installation of new windows (east side) and updated lighting (at entrances) for the school building should be completed by late July. Thank you to our generous donors for their prayers and financial support to make this capital improvement possible!
2. We are pleased to welcome Isaac and Emma Taylor from the Chicago area as new called teachers for the Kindergarten and 2nd grades respectively, as well as Ms. Claire Albrecht, a member at Faith Lutheran in Topeka, who will be the new teacher for the 4/5 combined class. Mr. Francik will be sharing more information about Mr. and Mrs. Taylor and Ms. Albrecht in the very near future.
3. For members eligible for the Thrivent Financial CHOICE program, if you haven't already done so, please consider designating TLS as recipient for your CHOICE dollars. TLS was blessed to receive over \$15,000 from this program in 2016, so taking the time to make this designation is truly a benefit to the school! To enroll, please contact your Thrivent representative, or call [1-800-847-4836](tel:1-800-847-4836), or visit [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice). Thank you for your support!

Marlene Shellenberger, Director of TLS Foundation

Plan to be a part of...

**THE NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY**  
**NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME**  
**SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 6-8 PM**

(Hosted by the Neighborhood Care Team and many additional St. John's volunteers)

**Signup sheets to volunteer are on the table in the breezeway.**

## BRILLE WORKERS' REQUEST

WC#31 of the Lutheran Braille Workers needs new/used Christmas and other greeting cards, especially Christian cards. They are used to make Spanish large-print booklets of the Christmas Gospel. These booklets are then included with the large-print Bibles that are shipped to Spanish speaking countries at Christmas. The cards that cannot be used are taken to KNI for their use. There will be a basket in the Breezeway marked "Christmas/greeting cards" for the Braille Workers. Thank you so much.

## **LCEF GRANT RECEIVED**

St. John's once again this year received a grant from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) in the amount of \$1000 to assist with expenses related to our National Night Out Block Party, scheduled for August 5, 2017. This fun event has historically been well attended by members of the congregation, and very well received by the neighboring community. The Block Party offers the congregation an opportunity to cultivate relationships within neighborhood, while also providing great food, live music, and numerous activities for kids.

LCEF is a financial organization that empowers ministry in LCMS congregations and schools by offering low-cost loans and ministry support services to support LCMS growth and community needs. LCEF also offers loans to rostered church workers—those dedicated servants who are on the front lines of ministry. For more information on LCEF investment options, please contact Curt Loupe at 357-4421 or visit [lcef.org](http://lcef.org).

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

If you are interested in washing and drying the vestments and gloves that are worn by the pastors, communion assistants and liturgical assistants on a quarterly basis, please contact the church office. St. John's has a washer and dryer that can be used to wash the vestments. We appreciate your consideration concerning this volunteer opportunity.

## **SAINTS ALIVE AFTER 55**

The 2016 Saints Alive After 55 gathering will once again be held at the Spiritual Life Center, 7100 E. 45th St. North in Wichita. The dates are July 17-19. This year's theme is "Who Will Tell Them" based on Deuteronomy 4:9. The keynote speaker is Ben Freudenburg, Director of the Concordia Center for the Family and Professor of Family Studies at Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Bible study leader is Rev. Dr. John Tape, Director of the Lutheran Student Center, Wichita State University. Small group sessions include Rev. Rick Twenhafel, M.O.S.T. (Mission Opportunities Short Term)—Mission Work of Their Organization; and Trooper Chad Crittenden, Kansas Highway Patrol—Driving Tips. Rev. Wallace Behrhorst will present the message at the closing worship service. If you have never attended before, give it a try this year. In addition to the excellent presenters, you will enjoy the peaceful setting and accommodations and fellowship with fellow Lutherans from all over Kansas. Check with the church office for registration forms.

## **DOORSTEP NEWS**

In December 2016, Doorstep assisted 259 households involving 811 individuals with Christmas gifts and food. Each year they celebrate "Christmas in July" to get a jump start on collecting new items for our annual Christmas adoption! Their goal is to help alleviate some of the strain during the holidays by collecting some items mid-year. Doorstep will again adopt 250 households with 700+ individuals this December through the Christmas Bureau. By having items donated in July, they have a better idea what items they are lacking in November and December.

Last year Doorstep changed the focus of Christmas in July to only include items that are not seasonal. Therefore, they have requested no clothing at this time. Instead, they need sheets and blankets, health kit items, household items, gifts for adults, school supplies and toys. These items should be new.

Each school aged child Doorstep adopts receives school supplies and a backpack, if needed. Typically, by Christmas, they have used up their back-to-school supplies, and they need replenished. Also, each of the 250 households receives a health kit filled with hygiene products, and wrapped with a new bath towel,

hand towel and washcloth! Each child receives one bigger toy as their gift and then other smaller items are available along with games, books, stuffed animals, stocking stuffers etc. Typically, they are lacking in the main gift area. If you can help with toys for children ages 2-12 and gifts for the teenagers (make up and nail kits) they would be grateful.

Doorstep continues to be successful in helping people in need because of their member congregations who are working together to provide for their neighbors in need. If everyone pitches in just a little, big things will continue to happen. Please bring your Christmas donations to worship in July or to Doorstep, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

### **WOMEN’S LEAGUE CARING & MISSIONS School Kits Only**

LWML is preparing School Kits for July, August and 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”; 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 donations. If you would rather the LWML do the shopping, monetary gifts will be accepted by:

Geri Tate 272-0886; Marcia Wade 286-1119; Carol Ravins 266-7088

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR JULY 2017**

July 2	Joseph Cares for Jacob
July 9	Abraham Rescues Lot
July 16	Isaac and Rebecca
July 23	Achan’s Sin
July 30	David and Jonathan

*Children obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Colossians 3:20*

*Love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:39*

*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper. Genesis 2:18*

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have. Hebrew 13:16*

*Speak the truth in love. Ephesians 4:15*

*“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6: 6-7).* Parents, this command from God’s Word is for you, and the Sunday school is here to support you in the nurture of your children’s spiritual growth. Please accept God’s invitation to bless your children through the Sunday school and worship service each week.

*I can do ALL THINGS  
through Christ  
who STRENGTHENS me.*  
—Philippians 4:13




### 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*)