



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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

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AUGUST 2017

GOD'S WORD THROUGH MUSIC: GLADLY HEAR, SING, AND LEARN IT

One of the first developments within the life of a child in the womb is the ear, the most fascinating construct that allows the child to receive sounds from outside. We are certainly people formed by hearing. It becomes a part of us, and the sounds we recognize, such as a mother's voice, help secure who we are as children and to whom we belong. In the spiritual sense, we are all children of our heavenly Father, given the faith by hearing God's Word, as St. Paul tells us in Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ." What better way to begin a discussion on music than with God's Word as our foundation.

Music comes to us "extra nos," from "outside of us." However, the Old Adam curves us inward toward the self. He wants to hear what he wants to hear. He doesn't want to hear the Law and Gospel proclaimed even through music. He doesn't want to hear of the true joy we have through faith as we sing with Mary, "My spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Instead, he wants his human emotions to rule as he seeks to be entertained rather than to be receiving God's Word and to meditate on it day and night. He wants to sing about a glorified Christ, rather than a suffering Christ on the cross. He doesn't want to sing about our sin and our need for a Savior. He'd rather spend his Sabbath Day resting in the pleasures of this age, his own good works, and the songs and emotions that stem from that. As sinners, we are all guilty of this.

Our New Adam, however, sings with true joy in the Gospel, having been redeemed by the blood of Christ. We desperately need God's saving Word each day, especially in the Divine Service, where God comes to us to save us in Word and Sacrament. As we have learned from the catechism, the Third Commandment urges us to hold God's Word sacred and "gladly hear and learn it." Thus, the music we sing and play serves this purpose, and we, as God's royal priesthood of believers, have been given the faith to proclaim the Gospel even through music. Luther held fast to this idea during the Reformation. Prior to Luther, the priests were the only ones who spoke and chanted God's Word. And even then, it was not in a language the people could recognize. The choir were the only other ones participating in the singing of the Mass, and the congregation remained silent. Could you imagine not participating in the worship service at all?

Dear believers in Christ, the music of the church belongs to *you*. Though there might be an occasional choir behind you during worship, *you*, the congregation are the *true choir*. Just as we have all been given the gift of hearing, we have all been given the gift of singing. Just as we must *hear* God's Word and learn it, we must also gladly *sing* God's Word and learn it. We are part of the "living voice of the Gospel," taking part in the beauty and order of liturgical song since creation. God opens our lips so we can declare his praise, and He works through theologians and musicians to create the liturgy and hymns that reflect the strength of our confession.

When we proclaim the truth in song, we are not singing “inward,” but rather “Godward.” He gives us the words to sing so that we need not fill empty notes with our own reason and emotions. Rather, through faith in God’s Word flow true emotions attached to something greater: despair in our sin as we sing “Kyrie, Lord, have mercy,” reverence toward God as we sing “Glory to God in the highest” and “Holy, holy, holy,” joy in our “Alleluias,” thankfulness and praise to God for what He has done, and contentment in the promises of God through His Son. “Amen, Amen. Yes, yes, it shall be so.” We can, time and time again, take part in the Church’s Song, gladly hearing and singing God’s Word as we learn of our sin and our Savior each day. Thanks be to God we have these gifts of music and the Word here at St. John’s.

Bethany M Johnson

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

COLLEGE STUDENTS—OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND?

We can’t help it. We take care of what’s right in front of our nose. That means that the “invisible” things—even if they’re really important—can inadvertently get put on the cold back burner.

One demographic that fits the mold of the “invisible” in the church are college and university students. After all, suddenly one Sunday in August the college-aged people of our congregation aren’t there in the pews at St. John’s anymore. We might notice it that particular Sunday. But a few weeks go by, and the difference is no longer felt. And even the LCMS college students who move to Topeka to attend Washburn have that quality of invisibility. “They” are “over there” (at Washburn) and “we” are “here” (at St. John’s).

But that doesn’t make them any less important. In fact, the college years are a critical time for young Christians. They’re persuasively challenged by people a lot smarter than they are to think outside of the box. Their roommates and classmates come from all walks of life with all sorts of perspectives on the great moral and philosophical and theological questions of the day. And they’re surrounded by fun things to do, which often include late Saturday nights, with Sunday mornings slated for “recovery.” In short, they’re intensely subjected to the unholy trinity: the wiles of the devil, the allurements of the world, and self-idolization of the sinful nature.

Of course, that’s nothing new. We all are. It’s just that, to the church, at least, they’ve become...invisible.

And yet what they need more than anything is what all of us need more than anything and what the church has: Jesus. Jesus, with His forgiving and life-giving Word and Sacraments. Jesus, with His holy Word breathed out by the Spirit. Jesus, with the new life in Him that alone makes sense of life in the creation of His Father.

So how do we prevent college students from becoming invisible? First—and this is for everyone in the congregation—keep them in your prayers. You don’t even need to know their names. Just a simple prayer like this one is good: “Heavenly Father, guard and protect all the college students of our congregation in the true Faith and bring them to everlasting life. Amen.”

Second—and this one is for parents and grandparents—when you take your kids to college, make your first stop not the bookstore, not the dorm room, not the athletic center, but the local LCMS congregation.

You can even call ahead and set an appointment with the pastor. Introduce your college student to the pastor. And allow enough time—half an hour’s good—for the pastor to get to know your college student, exchange contact information, etc. To help with this, we’re making a concerted effort to get the email address and cell number of all our college students so we can farm them out to the nearby pastor.

Third, if you see young people here at St. John’s that you don’t recognize, greet them. Introduce yourself to them. Find out their names. Find out what they’re studying. Tell them you’d love to see them next Sunday. Sit next to them if you think it would make them feel more comfortable. Take them out to lunch or dinner—or better yet, to your home. In short, welcome them to our congregation. Because this is exactly what they need. They need to be connected with the church; and through the church, with the Means of Grace; and through the Means of Grace, with Jesus, their Redeemer.

Meanwhile, the staff are hard at work to help St. John’s students who are away and to embrace those who are attending Washburn. We’re assembling a database of all our college students. If you or your college student gets contacted about that, please help us out. That database will allow us to stay in regular contact with your college students, get them lined up with an LCMS congregation nearby, and keep them in the Faith.

The goal is the same for our work with Washburn students. Very soon, we’ll be adding an LCMS-U page to our website, and we’ll have a database of all the LCMS students attending Washburn. Pr. Kerns and I plan to be in touch with them all, to be on the campus with some regularity, and to meet with all the LCMS students there. But that’s just the front door. We want them in our building for the Divine Service on Sunday morning and on Wednesdays for Sound Words Academy, where they can get a wonderful home-cooked meal and take in Evening Prayer and a special Young Adults and College Students Bible study. Where they’ll no longer be “out-of-sight-out-of-mind.” And, more importantly, where Jesus comes to them with the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.



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 June 2017

Budgeted Receipts through June	\$359,694.00
<u>Actual Receipts through June</u>	<u>\$317,459.27</u>
Shortfall through June	(\$42,234.73)

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. For those of you that would like to know what “Opportunities for Involvement” are available at St. John’s, see the St. John’s brochure located in each pew or at the Information Center.

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

In Topeka (sponsored by St. John's)

Saturday, October 28	Plans are in the works for a Reformation 500, Details TBD
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, 5-7 p.m.
Tuesday, October 31	Reformation Day Divine Service (with incense), nave, SJELC, 7 p.m.
Friday, November 10 or Saturday, November 11	Luthers Geburtstag (Luther's Birthday) Celebration, Details TBD
Saturday, November 11	Reformation Presentation, Prof. Joel Biermann of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Courtyard, SJELC, afternoon
Sunday, February 11	Reformation 500 Hymn Sing, nave, SJELC, 3 p.m.

Around

Sunday, August 6	Lecture: "Human Traditions vs. Doctrine," Pr. Chris Vossler, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Manhattan, 4 p.m.
Sunday, September 24	Lecture: "Luther's 95 Theses," Pr. Michael Schmidt, Trinity Lutheran Church, McFarland, 4 p.m.
Sunday, October 15	Reformation 500 Hymn Festival, Helzberg Hall, Kaufmann Center for the Performing Arts, 7 p.m. (more information in Sept. newsletter)

2017 WORSHIP CONFERENCE AT ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Saturday, August 26, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Cost: \$8 for lunch (or bring your own)

Schedule:

9:00-9:30 a.m. – "Meet and Greet" with coffee and refreshments

9:30 a.m. – Service of Matins

10:00 – 10:45 a.m. – "The Song of the Church during the Reformation" by Bethany Johnson

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Chanting Workshop by Bethany Johnson

12:00 – 12:45 p.m. – Lunch Break

12:50 – 2:10 p.m. – Breakaway Sectionals A) Organist Workshop by Bethany Johnson or B) "The Unwritten Ceremonial of the Lutheran Rite" by Pastor Bruss and Pastor Kerns

2:15 – 2:45 p.m. – Service of Vespers

You are welcome to attend any or all of the sectionals and services.

YOUTH NEWS

Another wonderful year is coming to a close for the St. John's Youth Group (grades 6-12). Here are all the FUN and HELPFUL activities we participated in during the past school year:

JUL.—Ice cream social and car wash. Cleaned 30 cars and made over \$300 for the Paid in Full Campaign!

AUG.—Midwest Health Aquatic Center (tried out a brand-new waterpark on Urish Road)

SEP.—Roller skating at Sk8Away on Fairlawn Road

OCT.—Gary's Berries (pumpkin patch and corn maze) off Hwy. 24

NOV.—Ice skating at the Kansas Expocentre

DEC.—Christmas party with our 3 adopted families from Haskell Indian Nations University (LIGHThouse members)

—2017—

JAN.—Helped serve the Congregational Breakfast and went skiing at Snowcreek Ski Resort in Weston, MO

FEB.—Did a gum-scraping contest (underneath the pews!!) during the Catechesis Retreat. Also transformed the courtyard into a romantic valentine evening for St. John's singles and couples complete with waiters/waitresses, live piano, youth clarinet solos, homemade lasagna and gorgeous decorations provided by Marcia Lange and Donna Barr!

MAR.—Lock-in at St. Paul's Lutheran High School in Concordia, MO and Gage Bowling the next day.

END-OF-SCHOOL EVENT—Trampolazerockballpark (with laser tag, zip line, arcade games, trampolines, pizza and prizes!!)

JUN.—Annual St. John's Golf Scramble at Forbes Golf Course (earned over \$3,000 for the youth program—thanks to all who helped!!!) and spent the next day at the Gage Park Swimming Pool (very refreshing and so much fun!)

JUL.—Wrapped up the whole year with our biggest event of all: **GOING TO HIGHER THINGS!** This year it was at Valparaiso University in Indiana and there were 11 attendees.

Now we are looking forward to the end of summer and the start of another fantastic year with the amazing St. John's Youth Group!! OUR THANKS TO ANYONE WHO HAS HELPED/DONATED IN ANY WAY TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS IMPORTANT MINISTRY.

Kathy Gehrke (Youth Activity Director)

2017 FLOWER CALENDAR

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

2017 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of July 12, we had received 157 pledges totaling \$501,978 for our July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 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 2017 Stewardship Campaign Committee.

SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKERS MEETING

All Sunday School workers are encouraged to attend the quarterly meeting in the church library on Saturday, August 19, at 10:00 a.m. to kick off the new school year. We look forward to seeing you there. Thank you for loving the children by passing on the faith.

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

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 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.

AUGUST MONTHLY BREAKFAST

Bring your favorite breakfast food to share on August 13, between services. Sit down and enjoy the meal with someone new! (Don't forget to pick up your dishes from the serving table so that those cleaning up will have less to do.)

THANK YOU'S

A special "thank you" goes to these individuals for their volunteer service at TLS during the summer months:

1. **Camp Invention** was held June 5-9 at TLS, where approximately 45 children experienced hands-on learning of the concepts and applications of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). Many thanks to the staff and volunteers for their help.
2. **The TLS gym floor** was recently refinished to prepare for the new school year. Thank you to Bill Schafer and sons, Mr. Gene Schultz, and Stephanie Saunders and family for their help with removing gym bleachers and preparing the gym for the floor refinishing.
3. **Installation of new windows and upgraded lighting** should be completed by the end of August. A special thank-you goes to Jeff Pierce for his tireless efforts on this project; and to Andrea and Jacob Kosmicki, and Caleb and Hayden Saunders for their help in preparing the classroom windows by removing numerous blinds from the interior windows.

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.

BRAILLE 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.



TLS NEWS

1. The **first day of school** is Monday, August 14. Please pray for these young children as they begin a new year, learning and growing in the love of Christ!
2. **Join us in welcoming** Isaac and Emma Taylor from the Chicago area, the new teachers for the Kindergarten and 2nd grades respectively; and Ms. Claire Albrecht, a member at Faith Lutheran in Topeka, who will be the new teacher for the 4/5 combined class. You are welcome to attend the installation of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor and Ms. Albrecht which is scheduled for Sunday, August 27 at 4:00pm at St. John's, with a reception following.
3. **Save-the-dates!** September 8, 9:00 to noon, is Grandparents Day at TLS; and September 9, 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm is the TLS PTL school carnival with a dunk tank, cake walk, and many fun activities for the family! Please watch for more information in the upcoming weeks.

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.

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

"For I was hungry and you gave me food." Matt. 25: 35

We have been offered an opportunity to participate in a humanitarian project called "Feed My Starving Children," a NGO which packs and sends nutritious food to children in 70 countries where starvation is rampant. The organization began in 1987, and has grown tremendously. Over the last thirty years, 99.9 percent of the food and 92.7 percent of the monetary donations go directly to the children who need help the most.

We all have seen pictures of skin stretched over bones and bloated bellies. These children do exist, and our church has been asked to make donations and to volunteer **just two hours** to package food. FMSC appears to be a safe and efficacious way to answer Jesus' mandate, *"for I was hungry and you gave me food."*

In partnership with other churches in the Topeka area, the packaging of the food will take place sometime in October, in proximity to the celebration of the Reformation, and at a site to be determined. Children as young as five and adults as young as 100 and everyone in between are welcome and encouraged to participate. No cooking is involved. The ingredients are shipped to the site ready to be packaged on an assembly line. Our church's goal is **twenty five volunteers**, but the more we have the more packages that can be sent. The reports from earlier volunteers from all over the country suggest that the experience is not only rewarding, but also enjoyable. For those who prefer, sit-down jobs are available.

Please consider helping as a team, as a family, or individually. If you even just think you might be able to help, please **sign up in the breeze way**.

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.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep would like to thank everyone who donated items for Christmas in July. Also, as kids are getting ready to go back to school, now is the perfect time to stock up on school supplies. Doorstep provides new school supplies to the children we adopt at Christmas to replenish them for the second half of the year. If you can help with these items while supplies are plentiful, and on sale, they would greatly appreciate your donations!

In the heat of summer Doorstep is seeing more requests for hygiene kits. In 2016, they gave out nearly 700 hygiene kits. They are in need of deodorant, bar soap or body wash, shampoo/conditioner in one, razors and shaving cream, sunscreen and chapstick. Thank you in advance if you can help!

Doorstep is open Monday – Friday from 8am – 3pm for donations. They are located at 1119 SW 10th Avenue (10th & Buchanan).

WOMEN'S LEAGUE CARING & MISSIONS **School Kits Only**

LWML is continuing to prepare School Kits for 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:



SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR JULY 2017

August 6	Ahab Covets Naboth's Vineyard
August 13	Paul and Philemon
August 20	The Rich Young Ruler
August 27	Peter's Reinstatement

Be content with what you have.

Hebrew 13:5

I have learned that in whatever situation I am to be content.

Philippians 4:11

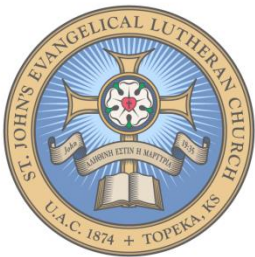
Do justice . . . love kindness, and . . . walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

Galatians 3:13

Thank you, parents for bringing your children to Sunday school where they can be nurtured in the faith through the Word of God. Why not set a good example for them and attend one of the bible classes during the Sunday school hour.



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)