



# St. John's

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## Ev. Lutheran Church

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### **A TECHY WAY TO GET THE WORD ACROSS**

My initial exposure to the Lutheran distinctives came by way of a podcast, one that I listened to for years. Listening eventually led me to read the various Lutheran authors who were interviewed or highlighted on the podcast, until finally I read the *Book of Concord*. After several years of continued study, I entered the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod's Colloquy Program by which I was assigned a vicarage in Delaware. There, I was to learn and conduct the Lutheran liturgy and continue reading Lutheran works—twelve books in fact. All of this study was wonderful. And it all started by listening to a podcast.

In the last several years Lutheran pastors have put solid Lutheran material online. The flagship podcast titled *Issues, Etc.* is one you may be familiar with, for St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is one of their annual sponsors. However, *Issues, Etc.* is not alone. There are dozens more. There is a podcast on Luther's *Small Catechism*, on *The Book of Concord*, and one that focuses on the liturgy. And iTunesU carries courses from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

With more and more people connected to the internet who are looking for good theological content, Pr. Bruss and I want to throw our hat into the ring. Though we have had many ideas as to what to call our podcast, we have finally settled on *The Plucked Chicken Podcast*. Even though the back-story is much longer, here's the gist:

*The Plucked Chicken Podcast* takes its name from an historical event. In 1918 a handful of faithful Lutheran pastors gathered together in Lime Creek, Iowa, to preserve their confession from compromise. They would later form what was known as the "Little Norwegian Synod," a pale reflection of the old Norwegian Synod's former glory. But glory wasn't what they were after. What they wanted above all was to preserve the pure teaching and preaching of God's Word, something that never earns the accolades of the world, but its scorn.

And scorn they received. Gazing upon that rag-tag bunch of pastors, an outside observer remarked that they looked like a plucked chicken. So it goes with the Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is one of her marks. The church always lives *sub cruce*, under the cross. Luther calls this a "holy possession" belonging to believers in Christ.

In North America today, the Evangelical Lutheran Church still looks like a plucked chicken. Not that it matters much to her. Why? Because she already has what she wants: the pure teaching and preaching of God's holy Word. And if she has that, the cross must follow.

Pr. Bruss and I want *The Plucked Chicken Podcast* to do two things. First, we want to highlight bad preaching. To do this, we play American Evangelical sermons interrupted by our commentary. These

Evangelical sermons come from pulpits across the country, as well as some from Topeka, across a range of topics. The one under current review is titled “How to Hear God Speak.” Keep in mind, we are not criticizing the pastors of these congregations. We are listening to see if what they teach “accords with sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). Listening to these critiques will help our audience gain discernment between law and gospel, truth and error.

Secondly, we want our podcast to educate. We want to use it to teach through the teaching of the *Small Catechism* as well as various subjects that we rarely have the time to address at length. These subjects include: What the kingdom of God is, the distinction between living *coram hominibus / mundo* (before men / the world), *coram deo* (before God), the Hiddenness of God, the Masks of God, and other foundational doctrines of the Christian faith.

Given our schedules Pr. Bruss and I have limited time to work on this project. It’s like trying to fell a tree with only a couple swings of an axe each week. However, once *The Plucked Chicken Podcast* is online (Summer 2018) I trust it will help many. It will help the American Evangelical understand the full beauty and richness of the Christian faith. This is what they have never been taught. Moreover, it will help life-long Lutherans better appreciate what they already have.



**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**

### **WEDNESDAY ADVENT SERVICES**

**Meditations on the “O” Antiphons.** “O Come, O Come, Immanuel” is a favorite Advent hymn, expressing Israel’s (and the world’s) longing for a Savior from sin, death, and the devil. Less well known it is based upon the ancient liturgical text known as the “O” Antiphons, that weave together biblical prophecies and their fulfillment in the coming of our Lord into the flesh. This year’s Meditations on the “O” Antiphons lay bare this rich prophetic material and its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Advent services are planned for Wednesday, 6 and 13 December at 12:15 p.m. and again at 7:00 p.m. the same days (Vespers). Sound Words Academy continues during this time, as well. However, at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, 20 December, the Sunday School will put on its Christmas Program, **Emmanuel, God with Us**. That evening Sound Words Academy will not meet, but resumes on 4 January 2017.

### **2018 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES**

Contribution envelopes will be available to be picked up in the breezeway early in December. 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.

## HOLIDAY SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER – JANUARY 2018

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church - 901 SW Fillmore - Topeka, KS

<b>1 December</b>	10:30 AM	LWML Bazaar
	11:00 AM	LWML Luncheon
<b>6 December</b>	12:15 PM	Advent Service
	5:00 PM	Sound Words Academy
	7:00 PM	Advent Service
<b>9 December</b>	2:00 PM	Caroling
	4:00 PM	Chili Supper
<b>12 December</b>	6:30 PM	Sarah Circle will meet at McFarland's Restaurant Note: All women are welcome to attend.
<b>13 December</b>	12:15 PM	Advent Service
	5:00 PM	Sound Words Academy
	7:00 PM	Advent Service
<b>16 December</b>	9:30 AM	Final Children's Christmas Program Rehearsal
<b>17 December</b>	8:15 AM	Divine Service
	9:45 AM	Bible Classes
	11:00 AM	Divine Service
<b>20 December</b>	12:15 PM	<u>NO</u> Advent Service
	5:00 PM	<u>NO</u> Sound Words Academy
	6:30 PM	Children's Christmas Program
<b>24 December</b>	10:00 AM	Divine Service
	7:00 PM	Christmas Carol Service
	10:00 PM	Christmas Candlelight Service
<b>25 December</b>	10:00 AM	Christmas Day Divine Service
<b>31 December</b>	10:00 AM	Divine Service ( <u>NOTE: ONE SERVICE ONLY!</u> <u>NO SUNDAY SCHOOL.</u> )

### SOUND WORDS ACADEMY COURSE LISTING: CURRENT

#### Children

##### **Rhythm of Faith Choir (6 September – 9 May, 5:30-5:55 p.m.; Johnson)**

Calling all 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders! Join together in God's gift of music to confess the truth of God's Word in song. Rhythm of Faith develops life-long skills in singing, ringing, and reading music. You'll have opportunities to participate as a choir in Evening Offices at 7 p.m. and Sunday morning services and to appreciate the rich heritage of Lutheran hymnody and liturgy.

##### **Jr. Lutherans (6 September – 9 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Sweet)**

This fast-paced Bible, Catechism, and Lutheran history trivia game places Lutherans aged 4 – 12 yrs. in competition with one another and teams from other congregations in order to assist heads of the household fulfill their vocation to teach the Christian faith to their children. But the trivia is hardly *trivial*. Instead, it

places in the minds and hearts of our children fundamental Christian knowledge that can be built upon in formal catechesis.

### **Adult Offerings**

**Reading & Understanding the Psalms (Three weeks; 29 November – 13 December, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss)**

“Pastor, I think I should read the psalms, but I don’t understand them.” What is the “Hymnal of Israel” all about? Are there psalms elsewhere in Scripture? Is there a key to understanding the psalms? And how about their use in the Divine Service and Offices of the church? This class will introduce you to a handful of principles useful for making the psalms your own hymnal and prayer book, with time to put it into practice.

**COMING IN JANUARY! Leviticus: The Life Is in the Blood (Six weeks; 3 January – 7 February, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kerns)**

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” Leviticus was given to instruct Israel how to live in worship before God. God is holy, and Leviticus shows us how He gives His holiness to us. From the New Testament, we learn how the tabernacle worship foreshadows the redemption found in Jesus Christ.

**Hebrews (Fall Term, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Hintz)**

Luther describes Hebrews as a marvelously fine epistle. It discusses Christ’s priesthood masterfully and profoundly on the basis of the Scriptures and extensively interprets the Old Testament in a fine way. Join this class for a wonderful look into the mysteries of God in Christ.

### **College Students and Young Adults Offerings 2017 – 2018**

**C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*** *Mere Christianity* is a classic work of apologetics that all Christians do well to encounter at least once in their life. In his winsome manner, Lewis defends and explains the Faith. Perennially relevant.

### **Adult Catechesis**

Spring Adult Catechesis (Fourteen to eighteen weeks; starting 17 January 2018; 7:45-8:40 p.m.)

### **Youth Catechesis**

**YCat I (6 September – 9 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kinnett)**

**YCat II (6 September – 9 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss & Kerns)**

### **ADULT CATECHESIS CLASS FORMING FOR MID-JANUARY**

A new Adult Catechesis Class is forming to begin in mid-January, running for 14-18 weeks and anticipating a May 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](mailto:jbruss@stjlcms.org)

### **NEW MEMBER**

*Ray Eastham*

Received by Profession of Faith

Welcome Ray to St. John’s

## FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

It hardly seems possible, but only a month remains in the “Year of Our Lord” 2017. At this time, the Church Council and the Board of Stewardship wish to remind and encourage everyone to bring your year 2017 contributions up to date. The congregation’s financial books for 2017 will be closed for the year on December 31, 2017. As per Federal regulations, contributions intended for 2017 must be received (or postmarked) on or by 12/31/17 in order to be credited in 2017. 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter/Year-end contribution statements will be mailed near the middle of January 2018. Thank you for your regular and continued support of your congregation’s work!

**A Reminder!** *Please do not use your 2018 contribution envelopes before January 2018.* This will ensure that your contribution statements will be credited accurately. Thank you!

## NO MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN DECEMBER

The Coffee Hour will include cookies and coffee in the Courtyard.

## REHEARSALS DATES FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Rehearsals (meet in the Nave):

Wednesday, November 29, 5:30 – 5:55 p.m.

Wednesday, December 6, 5:30 – 5:55 p.m.

Wednesday, December 13, 5:30 – 5:55 p.m.

Saturday, December 16, 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. (dress rehearsal)

Christmas Program:

Wednesday, December 20, 6:30 p.m.

Thank you!

## HUMAN CARE TEAM

Each December, volunteers from the congregation assist the Human Care Team in delivering poinsettias to the homebound members of St. John’s. Would you consider helping deliver Christmas blessings to these dear people who no longer can come to church? The flowers will be delivered to the church on December 14. Please contact Deaconess Linda if you can be of service in this way. Call 354-7132 or email [lkinnett@stjlcms.org](mailto:lkinnett@stjlcms.org).

## 2018 FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2018 Flower Calendar is now posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. You can sign up for flowers on the calendar, or call the church office at 354-7132 to communicate the Sunday you would like to have your name placed on the calendar. Thank you to all members who have provided the beautiful flowers for us thus far this year.

## SHARE THE HARVEST

This year, \$1,122.50 was distributed in support of *Topeka Rescue Mission (25%), Let’s Help (25%), Doorstep, Inc. (25%), and St. John’s Human Care (25%)*. We deeply thank you for your contribution to this human care effort. *“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His love endures forever.”* Psalm 107:1

## THANKSGIVING/CHRISTMAS BASKETS & POINSETTIA DELIVERY

The Welfare Fund provides monetary assistance to members who have special needs. If you wish to contribute to this cause, please make your check payable to St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, "**Welfare**" on the memo line. In addition to monetary gifts, the Crisis Response Team, under the Human Care Team and The Board of Missions, prepares and delivers meals and purchases groceries and gift certificates at Christmas time and for members in need of assistance throughout the year.

If you would be willing to assist in providing meals and/or delivering poinsettias during the Christmas season, please contact Deaconess Linda at the office at 354-7132. This is an immediate need.

## WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

**LWML Bazaar & Luncheon:** It's that time of year again. Please mark Friday, December 1, 2017 on your calendar for the St. John's LWML Bazaar and Luncheon. It's time to think about what you can bring to this event to insure we have another successful bazaar. The ticket price for an adult is \$8.00 and \$3.00 for a child. Booths open at 10:30 a.m. and the Luncheon is from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. In addition, we also will have one of the largest "Cookie Walks" in Topeka. The price for the cookies is \$6.00 a pound. As in the past few years, we will be selling woodworking items, homemade craft items, gift items, paintings, quilts, etc. We will again be offering a baked goods area and the Sweet Shop. The proceeds will be divided among many different local and national missions. Without the contributions from St. John's members and the participation from the general public, this would not be possible. We thank you in advance for your help. Items may be brought to church on Wednesday, November 29 and Thursday, November 30, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thank you in advance for your support, by volunteering, contributions, attending and purchasing items and enjoying the wonderful luncheon.

## 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 monetary 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 on March 3, 2018 here at St. John's in Luther Hall. 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 **(100) 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**.



## TLS NEWS

1. Please join us! The **TLS K-8 Christmas program** will be held on Tuesday, December 12, at 7:00pm, in the TLS Gym. Refreshments will be served following the performance.
2. Students will be performing Christmas music at these area locations as well - we hope you can stop by!
  - Atria Assisted Living, December 6, 12:30pm, 1st grade class;
  - McCrites Apartments, December 7, 1:30pm, 4 and 5 grades;
  - Westridge Mall/Food Court, December 14, 1:00pm, 6 thru 8 grades
3. The **TLS class of 1980** will hold an alumni dinner at TLS on **December 23** (Joel Marquardt is leading this effort). If you have a family member, friend or know of someone from the TLS class of 1980, please have them contact the Foundation Office, [785-357-1468](tel:785-357-1468) or [foundation@topek Lutheran.org](mailto:foundation@topek Lutheran.org) so that their contact information can be confirmed. We hope to have the details of the event confirmed in the very near future and would like to be able to contact all the alumni. Thank you for your help.
4. As a quick reminder, for those members who are eligible to participate in the Thrivent CHOICE program (and haven't already done so), please **consider designating TLS as recipient** of your CHOICE dollars. In 2016, TLS received over \$15,000 in grant funds through this program which provided additional resources to the school's tuition assistance program. The TLS Foundation appreciates Thrivent Financial for making this opportunity available to the school and we thank you for your participation.

## LUTHERAN BRAILLE AND LARGE PRINT WORKERS

WC#31 here at St. John's is still/again looking for a new leader to begin in January 2018. The position involves approximately ten hours a month. The ten hours include

- being in contact with the home office in California to schedule assembly of Bible books
- ordering supplies
- collating, punching and binding books
- checking and filling orders to be packed in boxes
- shipping to those who request them
- paperwork and details

The St. John's Braille workers gather once or twice a month from 8:00 to noon on Thursdays in the church undercroft. There is wonderful fellowship with a very industrious group of volunteers. I will still be volunteering and working alongside the new leader. Please give this very worthwhile mission project prayerful consideration and become a part of "Bringing Christ to Those in Darkness" worldwide.

## THANK YOU'S

Thank you to everyone who played a role in the success of the Oktoberfest by: working, performing and attending. Roughly \$1,026 was raised for the "Feed My Starving Children" through the event.

## **DOORSTEP NEWS**

Our country has been hit hard the past several months with natural disasters and mass shootings. It has been hard to see the images, as people have lost their homes, belongings, and even family and friends in the floods, hurricanes, wildfires and shootings. The nation is hurting all over. In the midst of these images, we have seen heroes emerge, strangers helping strangers, and just like here at home, neighbors helping neighbors.

Many of you have likely donated money or items to those who are in need, far away from here, to help where you can. As we have watched these events unfold around the country, each day at Doorstep, they are still faced with those who are struggling here in our city. They see people who are in danger of losing their home to eviction, and need help getting back on their feet. They see mothers who need clothing for their growing children, and cannot afford to buy them herself. They see families and individuals who are hungry, and need a food order. And, adults who need help with a dental or prescription voucher to help them feel better; or a gas voucher or bus tickets to get to/from work or medical appointments.

This year has hit Doorstep hard as people have been helping around the country during these difficult times. They need a strong donation flow to help us finish up 2017. Particularly as they head into December, and Doorstep adopts 250 households for Christmas, just as they have done in the past. There are over 700 individuals in these households, and they all receive gifts, clothing, a food order, blankets, quilts and toys for the children. Please consider giving your year-end gifts to Doorstep.

The Christmas Store is the week of December 10 – 14. Doorstep needs volunteers each day. A flyer has been posted at the Doorstep display on the items they need to provide Christmas for the 700+ individuals in these 250 households. They ask that items be new for the Christmas Store. You can drop items off at the Doorstep display area, or you can bring donations directly to Doorstep for the Doorstep Christmas Store, Monday – Friday from 8am – 3pm. They are located at 1119 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue (10<sup>th</sup> and Buchanan). You can also donate online at: [www.doorsteptopeka.org](http://www.doorsteptopeka.org)

Thank you all who continue to help Doorstep not only this time of year, but throughout the year!

### **CHECK OUT THE PACKET OF FOOD . . .**

. . . on the table outside the Information Center. That is what we will be packaging on March 3, 2018, in Luther Hall. We hope to send 100,000 meals to starving children over the world. Sign up to be a part of this project of mercy.

### **YOU CAN IMPACT A CHILD'S LIFE BY BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT**

The need for foster families in Kansas is ever-present. There are currently over 7,000 children in need of foster care. We are looking for compassionate families willing to open up their homes and hearts to children who are in need of a nurturing, supportive environment. FosterKansasKids helps you through the journey, making the process as smooth as possible, and providing your family the support you need through all of your questions and concerns. For more information call 1-844-380-2009 or visit the website: [www.fosterkskids.org](http://www.fosterkskids.org).



## 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)