



# St. John's

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## Ev. Lutheran Church

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### “THIS IS HIS GOOD AND GRACIOUS WILL.”

Over the week between Christmas and New Year's I opened a book I've attempted many times to read in its entirety, *The Structure of Lutheranism* by Werner Elert. It's so dense that I usually only read 4 or 5 pages. Within this usual range, I came across this gem:

The content of God's counsel and purpose (*consilium et propositum Dei*) is His decision that the human race be redeemed and be reconciled to God through faith: that Christ's merit be offered and distributed through Word and sacrament; that through preaching His Spirit convert and preserve in faith; that believers be justified, be received in filial relationship (*Kindschaft*), and be sanctified in love, strengthened in their weakness, comforted in trouble (*Anfechtung*); that the good work begun in them be preserved to the end; and finally that those who are elected, called, and justified also attain eternal salvation (SD XI, 14-22).

Elert here is summing up the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, and he comes up with a quote good enough to hang on the fridge or tape inside your Bible. It's the whole Christian life in one sentence, which is why it would do us well to briefly ponder each phrase.

First, God desires “the human race be redeemed and be reconciled to God through faith.” St. Paul tells Timothy that God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). This is preached every Sunday from the St. John's pulpit, with a special emphasis placed on this truth during the season of Epiphany, where we hear that Jesus is not just a Savior for the Jews, but the Gentiles as well. This is what God has always wanted and repeatedly said.

Second, God desires that “Christ's merit be offered and distributed through Word and sacrament.” This too is proclaimed repeatedly at St. John's. What you hear is that the Holy Spirit delivers His gifts objectively. They come to you from the outside. Regardless of how you feel or what you've been through or are currently going through, the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are guaranteed to be delivered at the font, from the lectern and pulpit and at the altar. Pr. Bruss and I consistently address God's delivery system on the Plucked Chicken Podcast ([www.thepluckedchicken.com](http://www.thepluckedchicken.com)). We do this because heterodox church bodies do not believe this. They believe Christ's merit is offered via a decision one makes in the heart.

Third, God has ordained “that through preaching His Spirit convert and preserve in faith.” St. Paul makes this very clear when he writes, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). Heterodox church bodies believe that the preaching of the Gospel is used only to convert, helping one make a decision in their heart. However, preaching to preserve one in the faith is something entirely

foreign to them. But you know otherwise. You know that God uses preaching also to preserve you in the faith. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” This is why *The Small Catechism* teaches we are not to “despise preaching or His Word but hold it sacred, gladly hear it and learn it.” Why do this? To preserve you in the faith.

Fourth, God desires that “believers be justified, be received in filial relationship, and be sanctified in love.” Since God has provided all the wonderful gifts listed above, it changes us. We live differently from the rest of the world. We are justified, or said another way, made righteous by a declaration from God. We are received into a filial relationship, that is, made a child of God. As *The Small Catechism* teaches, “[God] is our true Father and ... we are His true children.” Because of this filial relationship we can “with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Moreover, we are to be sanctified in love. This is the love we show to our neighbor—to those whom God puts in our path. 2 Peter 1:3 says, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.”

Fifth, God desires that believers be “strengthened in their weakness” and “comforted in trouble.” We have such a good and gracious God. Yet, this gracious God teaches that “man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7); and Jesus says in John 16:33b, “In the world you will have tribulation.” Even with trouble and tribulation, brought on either by our sinful selves or others, or, as in the case of *Anfechtung*, brought on by God Himself, He seeks to strengthen and comfort you, so that “the good work begun in them be preserved to the end” just as Philippians 1:6 assures us.

And “finally that those who are elected, called, and justified also attain eternal salvation.” This is the end goal, the *telos*—for us to get to the new heavens and new earth, where we hear Jesus say, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). If we are thinking with the end in mind, then every point above becomes more precious to us, *i.e.*, Word and Sacraments, being preserved in the faith, justification, sanctification in love, etc.

We could say more about this—things like why it’s important to come to church and give attention to how we can “stir up one another to love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24). It is truth that could even be developed into a class at Sound Words Academy. Hey! What a good idea!



**Senior Pastor - Rev. J. S. Bruss, ext. 104**  
**Associate Pastor – Rev. D. M. Kerns, ext. 101**  
**Kantor - Bethany M. Johnson**  
**TLS Teachers - Andrea Kosmicki, Edith Kerns, Rachel Kathman**

## 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL YEAR WITH THE BIBLE

Even though we started our classes in mid-January, it’s not too late to join in. Once again, we’ll use the booklets available in the Breezeway titled *God’s Promises in Christ...Fulfilled!* These are provided to you at no cost and will help you keep track of your reading. Following them will successfully allow you to read through the entire Scriptures in 365 days. Built into the schedule are make-up days in case you get behind in your reading. If you know of anyone in the congregation who embarked on this last year, ask them about their experience. We daresay you’ll find nary a person who didn’t find their reading engaging and rewarding. And once again this year, your effort will be supported by weekly Sunday a.m. Bible studies on your reading.

## SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

### Children

**Rhythm of Faith Choir (now – 8 May, 5:00-5:40 p.m.; Johnson)** Rhythm of Faith uses God’s gift of music to confess the truth of His Word in song. Develop life-long skills in singing, ringing, and reading music. Participate as a choir in Wednesday Evening Offices and Sunday services. Learn the rich heritage of Lutheran hymnody and liturgy. Enroll after Sunday services now through 9 September or contact Bethany Johnson.

**Jr. Lutherans (now – 8 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Sweet)** This fast-paced Bible, Catechism, and Lutheran history quiz game places Lutherans aged 4 – 12 yrs. in competition with one another and teams from other congregations—with “trivia” that is hardly *trivial*. Enroll after Sunday services now through 9 September or contact Daniel Sweet.

### Adults

**Every One His Witness (now – 13 February, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kerns)** Witnessing. What’s it all about? The *Every One His Witness* Lutheran evangelism program puts sound doctrine into practical action for sharing the faith with people in our everyday lives. Participants learn: What is witnessing? Why do we witness? And the “how-to” of witnessing using the LASSIE approach — Listen-Ask-Seek-Share-Invite-Encourage. See article and flyer included in this edition of the *Newsletter*, and keep your eyes open for reminders in the bulletin and on our bulletin boards.

**The LCMS and the Other Denominations (20 February – 27 March, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss):** Why doesn’t our church have pulpit and altar fellowship with our neighbors’ churches? What are the differences? Are they that big of a deal?

### College Students and Young Adults

**Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (now – 8 May, 7:45-8:40 p.m.; Kerns)** Martin Luther is the writer and Paul Althaus is the compiler. Join Pr. Kerns at Sound Words Academy as we go through one of his favorite Lutheran books. It is so good that once we come to the end of it, we will want to circle back around it again. Come drink from the fire-hydrant of good, confessional Lutheran thought.

### Adult Catechesis

**Adult Catechesis (now – 8 May 7:45-8:40 p.m.; Bruss now through May)** The central teachings of the Christian faith. What does God say *about* me in His Law? What does God say *to* me in His Gospel? How am I to relate to God? And where can I find Christ and what He wants to give to me? This September through May course, with breaks scattered throughout those 8 months, weaves together the teachings of Scripture and *The Small Catechism* and shows how God encounters you in the Divine Service. For those interested in becoming members of St. John’s or those seeking a refresher in the guts of Lutheran theology.

### Youth Catechesis

**YCat I (Wednesdays – 8 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kinnett)** Typically for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. 1 year long.

**YCat II (Wednesdays – 8 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss & Kerns)** Typically for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. 2 years long.

## NO MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN FEBRUARY

Because of the Paid In Full Celebration luncheon on Sunday, February 10, we will not be having a monthly breakfast in February.

## 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 voter's assembly for 2018. We hope that you will find this information useful.

Budget Receipts for 2018	\$712,883.24
Budget for 2018	\$754,064.00
Over (Short) Budget for the Year	(\$41,230.76)

As the voters learned on Sunday, 27 January, however, the news about the 2018 budget year is far better than these numbers show. The voters had adopted a 2018 budget with a nearly \$69,000 deficit. Due to the generosity of our members in supporting the ministry of Word and Sacrament in this place and to some cost savings, the \$69,000 gap was closed to roughly \$16,000. The council had planned to make up the deficit out of a "budget overage" savings from previous years. Thanks be to God, however, that the amount needed to cover the shortfall was only \$16,000 instead of \$69,000.

### PAID IN FULL UPDATE & SAVE THE DATE

**Sunday, February 10, 2019: Save the date! We've paid off our loan!** As we enter the last few months of our capital campaign, the *Paid in Full* steering committee is planning a celebration of the success the Lord has granted just two and one-half years into our campaign in allowing us to pay off the loan on the addition entirely as of December 21. Sunday, February 10, we are planning a single Divine Service at 10:00 a.m. followed immediately by a celebratory program and potluck with special guests District President Peter Lange, Pr. Tim Rossow of Wittenberg Church Consultants, and architect David Heit. We hope the entire congregation can attend this momentous occasion. If you have outstanding funds pledged to the campaign we ask that you prayerfully consider continuing with your gifts. Gifts to *Paid in Full* from this point forward will be directed to a newly-established Building Maintenance and Enhancement Fund to address large, specific, and known future needs. You might also consider using your pledge to support the upcoming capital campaign for Topeka Lutheran School or to close the gap in St. John's 2019 budget, which, like last year, shows a deficit.

### HYMN OF THE MONTH FOR FEBRUARY

"Salvation Unto Us Has Come" (LSB 555)

#### Introduction

"If we merit forgiveness of sins by [our] acts, of what benefit is Christ?" (AC IV) *The Augsburg Confession* tackles the important issue of justification, an issue that was controversial during the Reformation and that we struggle with even now in our human flesh. The phrase "you get what you deserve" seems reasonable to us. So if we do good works, we can merit salvation, right?

Wrong. When we try to obtain righteousness by this reasoning, we neglect Christ's teaching in His Word and diminish His work of salvation on the cross. Christ's way of justification is different than man's, as shown in the Gospel reading (Matthew 20:1-16) that goes with this hymn. Though each laborer worked a different portion of the day, each received the same amount for his work. The reward for heaven, i.e. salvation, is not based on what we do. Rather, it is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8-9).

#### Background & Explanation

The hymn, "Salvation Unto Us Has Come" contains ten stanzas packed full of this teaching on justification. It also contains much joy and comfort for burdened sinners. Paul Speratus (1484-1557) wrote

this text in the midst of his own sufferings for preaching that salvation is given to us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. He begins in stanza one by teaching that Christ “did for all the world atone” and is our “one Redeemer.” Stanzas 2-4 speak against those who sought to purify themselves by monastic living, or, more generally, those who try to redeem themselves by their works. Those stanzas teach us about our corrupt and sinful nature, revealed through God’s Law, “a mirror bright.” God’s Law doesn’t just urge us to “do better,” it demands a perfection that we cannot achieve on our own.

Christ appears in stanza 5 with the clear teaching of the Gospel that provides certainty in the midst of despair, comfort in the midst of sorrow, and salvation from sin and death. Stanzas 6-10 continue to teach wonderful Lutheran theological terms such as the following: atonement, salvation, grace, baptism, trust, faith, fruits [of faith], and justification. Stanza 9 teaches about good works, but only those that come from faith. They are the “proof that faith is living.” And finally, stanza 10 ends with the teaching of the Trinity – the Father who is one with His Son, the Christ, the Son who is our Redeemer from sin, and the Spirit who shows us Christ by revealing to us His “saving love.” Thanks be to God, for He has given us the gift of salvation through His Son, not based on any works of our own. And thanks be to God for solid hymnody that teaches us this faith!

*Bethany M Johnson*

### **JUNIOR LUTHERANS**

Congratulations to the St John’s Junior Lutheran Eagles! Our Senior quizzers championed the 2018 Fall season. We traveled to St. John in Alma and Zion in Vassar to encourage 9-12 year olds to study Biblical and Lutheran Catechesis trivia. Cheer on our team as we start the 2019 Spring season. Competition dates will be posted soon; we look forward to your support!

What is Junior Lutherans? This competitive event has 4 buzzers for each team, to allow contestants to quickly buzz in to answer Lutheran trivia questions. The goal is that our children learn the Word of God by heart, and the pattern of sound words, understand its teachings, know Luther’s *Small Catechism* and stay Lutheran throughout their entire lives. This program is centered around Facts, Fun, Fellowship, and Faith. The curriculum in support of this was developed in our congregation with the goal of enveloping children ages 4-12 in the Lutheran faith. Sound Words Academy has a Junior Lutheran rotating review session on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. The children are separated into three age groups and attend games, quizzing, and lesson sections. Parents of the Junior Lutheran Eagles start off the evening by reading Scripture. This is complemented by study in the home. The Junior Lutherans also review the Sunday School lesson plan and Sermon topic each week as part of the “Pass the Picture” initiative. The Junior Lutherans have a quiz book of graded questions aimed at knowledge and understanding of Scripture and *The Small Catechism*. This competitive approach encourages the children to spend time reviewing and understanding Lutheran faith values.

Please consider attending a Junior Lutheran competition when the event is posted soon. Are you up for a challenge? Ask a Junior Lutheran to ask you a quiz question. Many have already memorized the material!

### **LCMS STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY**

#### **Newsletter Article – February 2019**

The season of Epiphany focuses on how God was made manifest in the flesh of Jesus. The church spends time hearing of the miracles, the signs and wonders, of Jesus in the world. And this made plain to all that Jesus was who He said He was: He was the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only-begotten Son of the Father, in the flesh. For “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

It is revealed for all the world to see that Jesus is God in the flesh. It is made manifest by His words and His work, by what He said and by what He did. And these belong together, for “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Jesus is the Word and will of God in the flesh, that is, He is the walking, talking, enactment of God’s Word. It is no different for us. We are called not just to believe in God in hearts, but also to trust in God in word and deed.

As James wrote: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22), and again, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? ... So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:14, 17–18, 26).

Our faith is lived out in works for our neighbor. Our trust in the Word and will of God is lived out not in word only, but also in deed and in truth. In other words, the Epiphany of the Lord creates in us an epiphany of our faith in our works of obedience to God who commanded them. By this, our faith is made manifest to the world. It is, as Luther wrote of faith:

“Faith is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1). It kills the old Adam and makes altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Spirit.

“Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. And so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them.

“He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words about faith and good works.

“Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God’s grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures.

“And this is the work of the Holy Spirit in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace.

“And thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate burning and shining from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of the idle talkers, who would be wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works, and yet are the greatest fools.” (*Preface to the Book of Romans*)

So, then, let our faith be active by God’s power in the Word through the Holy Spirit. And let then our faith be made manifest to the world by what this faith does: serving our neighbor — in church, in the family, and society — with the works of faith in time, talents, and treasures.

## **2019 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES**

If you have not picked up your contribution envelope—they are now located in the church office. If you have any questions regarding contribution boxes/envelopes, please speak with Yvonne Berry in the church office. Thank you!

## 2019 FLOWER CALENDAR

Please check the Flower Calendar on the bulletin board outside of the church offices. 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.

### **TLS SUCCESS STORY – GRETCHEN SNETHEN HAMMOND, CLASS OF 1996**

#### **How has your education at Topeka Lutheran School prepared you for your life?**

While many schools focus on standardized testing, TLS provided an unparalleled academic foundation, where creativity and critical thinking skills were fostered. Learning that there isn't just one way to solve a problem at a young age gave me the tools to be bold in my academic and professional career. With this foundation, I felt confident to look at situations from different perspectives and take risks that have ultimately been rewarding. Through traditional academic courses, arts, and extracurricular activities, I was able to explore different skills and interests, ultimately building my own confidence and learning how I could best use my strengths.

#### **What is one thing you would want people to know about Topeka Lutheran School that they might not think about?**

When I was at TLS, it felt more like an extension of family than it did a separate school. Students from different grades knew each other, especially if you or your friends had siblings in other grades. Teachers and students genuinely cared about each other, which now seems rare in the rush of day-to-day life. While many of the students I grew up with at TLS have moved from Topeka, I find ways to stay connected with many of them and value the life-long friendships that came from my time there.

#### **How has the teaching and modeling of Jesus' salvation received at Topeka Lutheran School impacted your trust in the Lord?**

At TLS, faith was integrated into each day. This not only happened in the overt ways, like chapel and prayer, but also in ways that were more subtle. Faith was integral in how teachers interacted with each other and with students. I find myself guided by these more subtle expressions of faith, particularly in my relationships and in how I approach challenging situations.

#### **Please list some accomplishments that you have achieved since leaving TLS.**

I am a tenured associate professor at Temple University and work as the associate director for the Temple University Collaborative on Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities. This center receives funding from the National Institutes on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. I'm proud that the work I am involved with provides me with the opportunity to develop evidence-based strategies to support individuals with mental illnesses to participate in meaningful roles and activities, just like everyone else. As a faculty member, I also have the opportunity to teach students in the recreational therapy program. I love working with students who have a passion for using recreation to support individuals with disabilities to improve their lives.





## TLS NEWS

### The TLS Chili Supper and Raffle is February 1st from 5-7.

**TLS Kindergarten Round-up** will be held Wednesday morning, February 20 (time TBD), at the main campus (701 SW Roosevelt). Staff and volunteers will lead prospective new students in a variety of activities, while parents receive information about the benefits of attending TLS. Please call the school office at [785.357.0382](tel:785.357.0382) for more information. We look forward to meeting many new parents and children that day.

**TLS basketball tournament** is scheduled for February 15/16 in the TLS gym. Game times will be announced at a later date. Join us in supporting the boys and girls basketball teams - Go TLS Wildcats and Lady Wildcats!

**Deadline March 31!** If you are a Thrivent member and eligible to participate in the **CHOICE** program, the deadline to direct your 2018 CHOICE dollars is March 31. The gifts received by TLS through this program provide immediate resources for the school's tuition assistance program. Go to [www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com) or call your Thrivent representative for more information about how to direct your CHOICE dollars to TLS. Thank you to those who have already done this - your participation is a blessing to the school!

If a **Real Estate transaction** is in your future, take advantage of the "Giving Back Program" offered by Realty Executives where you can designate TLS as recipient of 5% of the earned commission earned on your purchase or sale. Dee Ellis (parent of TLS alum) 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, please ask about this opportunity. The contact person at Realty Executives is Tammy, 785.246.5386. Dee can be reached at 785.969.9474. Thank you for your continued support of TLS.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL CHOIR (GRADES K-5) SCHEDULE

### Rehearsals: 9:45 a.m. every Sunday morning before Sunday School

February 10 – special program for the celebration at 11:30 (Preschoolers included)

March 3 (beginning of both services)

April 14, Palm Sunday (beginning of both services)

May 12 (beginning of both services)

## DOORSTEP NEWS

Souper Bowl Sunday is February 3rd! Just around the corner! On this weekend Doorstep asks 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 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Operation Soup Line! This year it will be on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 from 11am – 2pm!

### OUR YOUTH NEED YOUR HELP!

The pastors are in the beginning stages of creating a more cohesive and coherent curriculum for our high school youth Sunday School class. Our vision? A comprehensive curriculum, regularly repeatable (every 2 or 3 years) that works through the critical questions Christians face as they mature from childhood to adulthood. Our goal? To apply the Word of God faithfully to these questions to keep our young people in the Faith and to give parents additional incentive to make sure their kids regularly attend the high school youth Sunday School class.

Here’s where you come in. We’d like you to send us your “critical questions”—the questions every Christian needs an answer to. You can communicate them to us orally, via email ([jbruss@stjlcms.org](mailto:jbruss@stjlcms.org) and/or [dkerns@stjlcms.org](mailto:dkerns@stjlcms.org)), via text, on the phone, in writing—whatever. We’ll amass those questions that need a solid, biblical answer, and use them, along with many of our own, as the spine of our curriculum.

To get the juices flowing: The answer to what question would have made a difference to you as you matured in the Faith? What have you only recently discovered that would have made a big difference to you as you grew up? What do you know today that you wish you knew years ago? What killer question has plagued you for a long time?

### EASTER LILIES

Members of St. John’s have the opportunity to purchase an Easter lily to be placed in the church for Easter Sunday, April 21. Complete the following form and return it to Pam Harms in the church office by Wednesday, March 06– with \$9.00 per lily. **You may take your lily home following the 11:00am service on Easter Sunday.**

For memorials you may list up to 2 names or you may prefer “in memory of loved ones.”

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

### SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FOR FEBRUARY 2019

In February there will not be Sunday School on February 10 due to having only one service and the celebration for the end of the Paid in Full campaign. However, since February 10 is also the celebration of the Transfiguration of our Lord, we will be learning about it in Sunday School a week ahead of time.

- |              |                           |  |                 |
|--------------|---------------------------|--|-----------------|
| February 3:  | 4th Sunday after Epiphany | Transfiguration                            | Matthew 17:1-9  |
| February 10: | <b>No Sunday School</b>   |  |                 |
| February 17: | Septuagesima              | The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard | Matthew 20:1-16 |
| February 24: | Sexagesima                | The Parable of the Sower                   | Luke 8:4-15     |

## ABOUT OUR SEAL



The seal of St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church was designed by Jonathan Mayer of Scapegoat Studio in Seward, Nebraska. Mr. Mayer specializes in ecclesiastical and liturgical art. The cross of Christ looms large over the Scriptures as the center point of the Bible: “I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,” says Paul (1 Corinthians 2:2). At the intersection between the vertical and horizontal pieces of the cross lies a likeness of Luther’s seal, identifying the confession of our congregation: “God’s Word and Luther’s teaching pure.” In the ribbon under the likeness of Luther’s rose are written the words of John 19:35, ΑΛΗΘΙΝΗ ΕΣΤΙΝ Η ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΑ, “The witness is true,” testifying to the truth of God’s Word, the Holy Scriptures. On the outer band is the official name of our congregation, “St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, U.A.C.” Evangelical, because here the Gospel predominates in teaching and proclamation; Lutheran, because here Scripture is taught according to the Lutheran confession; U.A.C., because we are a congregation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530.



## 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)