



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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FAMILIES AND FAITH

I'm just now done with a fascinating sociological study published in 2017 by Oxford University Press titled *Faith and Families: How Religion is Passed Down across Generations*. Authored by a team from the University of Southern California, it's based upon a study of families over four, and sometimes five, generations. The researchers asked: "Can we observe factors in family life that contribute to whether people in the same family in later generations remain or don't remain in the faith of earlier generations?"

I want to share some of the findings with you.

The first and last thing to be said is that the new science of sociology simply confirms the ancient wisdom of the Scriptures: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov 22:6) And since that's the first and last thing, I'll start and end there, with some other comments in the middle.

The simple fact of the matter is that in households where serious, consistent, and sustained attention is given to teaching the faith and living the faith, the children remain steadfast at astronomically higher rates than if not. It's quite simple: parents (and grandparents) who want their (grand)children to remain in the faith:

- **Make a point of teaching the faith at home** (hymns from *LSB*, not lullabies; prayers at bedtime and meals—good, substantial prayers, like the Morning and Evening Prayers, and the Blessing at mealtime; family devotions using, e.g., *Portals of Prayer* and *LSB*; spending time *at home* with the children on Catechesis, Jr. Lutherans, and Sunday School lessons, etc.)
- **Are in church every Sunday** (every Sunday meaning *every Sunday*, whereby receiving the Lord's gifts in Word and Sacrament occupies the unqualified top position in family priorities)
- **Use every opportunity their congregation offers to aid them in teaching the faith** (children are in Rhythm of Faith, Jr. Lutherans, Youth Catechesis; attend Topeka Lutheran School; attend Sunday School every Sunday when their parents are in Bible class; attend VBS; and attend Bible class and Higher Things during the high school years)

There's no mystery here. The Lord has taught us, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). The Word brings and gives faith. But take away the Word, and faith withers and dies. So the sociology on actively teaching the faith supports the Lord's instruction—no big surprise.

However, there are "offenses" that stand in the way of that—things that parents (and grandparents) can do that make the job tougher. Mixed marriages in which, for example, dad is one thing or nothing, and mom another, send confusing messages to the children, and the number of children who remain in the faith drops. Divorce, addiction, and "hypocrisy" also undercut the success of passing on the faith from one generation to the next. Stable families form the context in which the faith is effectively passed on;

parents who can give sober attention to passing on the faith can actually pass it on; and parents who “talk the talk and walk the walk” also demonstrate that the faith has truly claimed them. These facts are worth pointing out, especially in light of their impact on your children’s eternal life.

But a couple of other interesting trends emerged. First, parents’ warmth toward their children enhances the effect of teaching the faith; or, to put it differently, parental harshness works against passing on the faith. This doesn’t mean a lack of discipline—anything but. It still means expecting—and getting—regular church, Sunday school, Catechesis, and Bible class attendance and teaching the faith at home as long as the kids’ feet are under your dining room table. But it means doing that in warm, connected way.

Second, children tend to remain in churches that actually teach something. I suppose this shouldn’t be a huge surprise. The greatest rates of falling away from one generation to the next occur in Roman Catholicism and the so-called “Mainline” denominations (think: United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ, Episcopal Church, ELCA). What this means is that, for the sake of your kids’ eternal welfare, it’s important to find a Missouri Synod church where the teaching is rigorous and vigorous, to stay there, and to expect—nay, to demand—of your pastors and called staff nothing less than the most solid biblical and Lutheran teaching and preaching: a strong curriculum, high expectations, and the support to them. Your children’s eternal salvation shouldn’t fall victim to your pastors’ laziness, lack of self-discipline, or qualms over this teaching of Scripture or that.

As a penultimate note, it’s worth saying something about “nones,” that growing group of people in the U.S who, when asked for their religious affiliation, say, “None.” The first thing to say is that the vast majority of them were raised in households in which at least one parent was already a “none.” But there’s also a sizeable chunk of them who left the faith. And in a great majority of those cases it didn’t have anything to do with the faith and its teaching—it had to do with the offenses enumerated above. This is Scriptural teaching, too (see Matthew 18:6). Nones also emerge in greater number either from households where the faith was handled harshly (not to be confused with lack of proper discipline), on the one side, or from those that attended a church where the teaching and preaching were insubstantial (and therefore inconsequential), on the other.

So what’s the takeaway? Nothing can substitute for full-throated teaching of the faith at church and school and in the home. (See? That is the first and last thing to be said.)

But there’s an art to it. It’s the art of living like a Christian—of regarding passing on the faith to the next generation as it really is—a *work of love and service toward [even your littlest] neighbor*. And parents (and grandparents) can perform no greater good work than that!



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

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

Kantor - Bethany M. Johnson

TLS Teachers – Erin Grass, Joshua Grass, Edith Kerns, Andrea Kosmicki

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

Sound Words Academy is on summer break, but we have only 66 days to go...and counting. We’ll resume on Wednesday, 4 September, with the same good stuff. Mark your calendars!

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

August 3, 2019

Forbes Golf Course

Registration begins at 7:00 with coffee and donuts

Shotgun start at 8:00 a.m.

Lunch and prizes will be provided

Cost: \$250 per team or \$65 per person

Registration deadline: Sunday, July 27th

Registration forms are in the breezeway.

Support St. John's Lutheran Youth Fellowship

2018-2019 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

We have mentioned this before, but it's worth saying again. We have shifted our stewardship education this year from June until September. Along with that, for 2019 only, our "pledge year" extends six months beyond 365 days—through December. Our anticipation is that members of the congregation will maintain their current level of giving through that time. The next "pledge year" will begin on January 1, 2020 and end on December 31, 2020. We'll make our pledges for 2020 after our Christian Stewardship education at the end of September 2019.

These changes have been undertaken to align the fiscal year with the pledge year, which, we hope, will reduce complications for your paperwork and record keeping. —The Board of Stewardship

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 2019. We hope that you will find this information useful.

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Budget Receipts through May, 2019 | \$284,265.00 |
| <u>Actual Receipts through May, 2019</u> | <u>\$299,964.94</u> |
| Over (Under) Budget Year to Date | \$ 15,699.94 |

2019 WORSHIP CONFERENCE

"Restoring Lutheran Sacramental Piety"

Saturday, August 17, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church

Dr. Joseph Herl, keynote speaker

Schedule, registration, and presentation summaries found at our website:

<https://stjohnlcmstopeka.org/learning/worshipConference/>

Questions? Contact Bethany Johnson (bjohnson@stjlcms.org)

Plan to be a part of...
THE NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME
SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 6-8 PM

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

Signup sheets to volunteer at the block party will be posted on the Human Care bulletin in June!

HYMN OF THE MONTH FOR JULY

LSB 688: "Come, Follow Me," the Savior Spake

Introduction

Baptism isn't just a "one-time event." It is the daily calling to repentance as we deny ourselves and our sinful natures to follow Christ and take up our crosses, i.e., sufferings. In Luther's *Small Catechism*, Baptism indicates "that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever." This ongoing power of Baptism reminds us of our daily calling to follow Christ, for though we could never do it on our own, God grants us the power through faith to deny our crosses, repent of our sins, and follow Him.

Explanation

"Come Follow Me," the Savior Spake" was written by Johann Scheffler (1624-77), who, along with his father, left an old way of life according to religious convictions. They, among many others in history, left their comfortable way of lives for the sake of doctrine. They remained true to the bold confession of their faith that should never be lost.

This hymn is the Hymn of the Day for the 5th Sunday after Trinity, and it pairs nicely with the Gospel reading from Luke 5:1-11, in which Jesus calls Peter to leave his boats and follow Him. Peter, though reluctant at first and relying on his own efforts, follows Jesus to become a "fisher of men." Our human nature will always attempt to ignore God's call to service, since it seeks satisfaction in the things of man and not of God. Jesus has the opposite calling: that we "hate our own life" (Luke 14:26), meaning that we must love God first and set our minds on the things of God. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 8:36)

Stanzas 1-4 of this hymn express the Savior's words to us, urging us to "deny [ourselves]," "obey [His] call and guiding," and "bear the cross." We can only do this by the light of God's Word (stanza 2) that guides us to live godly lives according to His Word. The "gracious words [His] lips express" (stanza 3) is the pure Gospel, which is our strength in the midst of temptation. It is through God's Word that we learn how to flee from that which harms our soul, that is, "sin and its temptation" (stanza 4).

Stanza 5 concludes with the believer's resolution to follow Christ and to take whatever cross is appointed to him according to his vocation. The "battle's strain" that we bear is given to us in our Baptism, where we obtain the "crown of heavenly life" and the faith to cling to God's Word, even in the midst of sin, temptation, and suffering. May we always live in repentance and faith as we follow Christ our Lord until our life's end, when we will reach our heavenly goal of eternal life with Him.

Bethany M Johnson

MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN JUNE

Join members on Sunday, July 14 for a potluck breakfast between services. Bring your favorite breakfast dish to share and join in the fellowship. At this time, join us as we meet TLS teachers Isaac and Emma Taylor and Claire Banion and hear how the TLS ministry has impacted their students. Additional capital campaign information will also be shared at this time.

PAID IN FULL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN ENDS

The Paid in Full campaign officially ended June 30, 2019. Congratulations! After retiring out debt, approximately \$66,600.00 remain in this account and will be transferred to the Eagle Foundation Building Maintenance Enhancement fund in July. Use of this fund will mainly be for long-term building maintenance items and items that were not anticipated when the budget was made.

If you continue to use the Paid in Full Capital Campaign envelope for any remaining pledges, these funds will be deposited in the Building Maintenance Enhancement fund with the Eagle Foundation. You can also contribute to this fund using a "Designated Offering" or "Eagle Foundation" envelope and write "Building Maintenance Enhancement" on the envelope or the check.

If contributions are placed in a "Building Maintenance" envelope, these will be deposited in a Capital Improvement fund with these funds being used as needed by the Board of Trustees.

Now that the Paid in Full campaign is completed, please prayerfully consider continuing to contribute an amount above your annual budgetary pledge/giving and designate the contribution toward one of the following:

1. General fund (a deficit budget of \$28,000 was passed for 2019)
2. Building Maintenance Enhancement
3. TLS Foundation Endowment
4. International Missions

Thank you for your ongoing financial support of the ministry at St. John's. To God be all the thanks and glory!

ST. JOHN'S WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Caring Mission committee, (LWML), is collecting the following item for personal care kits that will be sent to Lutheran World Relief, we are doing this thru months of April-July: Light weight dark colored bath size towels (52" x 27" or 20" x 40"), 2-3 Bath size bars of soap, (4-5 ounces, and any brand in original wrappers) totaling 8-9 ounces), Sturdy Large Combs, Metal nail clippers, Adult size tooth brushes in original wrappers. We have found that the best buys are at the Dollar General store.

School Kits, 4-70 page spirals note books, plastic ruler, and #2 lead pencils, blue or black ink pens, (no jell), 24 box crayons, pink eraser, and scissors, blunt end. Bags for these items have been provided.

The Women's League is still collecting Best Choice labels, ask you friends and family to save them for you, you may put them in the box in the labeled stamps along with any stamps you collect also.

The Women's League will again have our annual Bargain and Bake sale, the dates are August 22 and 23, 2019. Hours for sale will be Thursday, 7:30 to 5:30 and Friday, 8:00-1:00. Our project this year Topeka Lutheran School Foundation: You may bring your item stating, Monday, August 19, 6-8, pm, Tuesday, August 20, 10-5 and Wednesday, August 21, 10-2. You may bring bakes items on Wednesday or early Thursday morning. We ask that NOT bring any electronic items please. Please check the church kitchen for any dishes that you may have left from breakfasts or dinners, if there are no names on them, they will also be put in the sale.

Please join us at the Lutheran Women in Mission Christian Life Retreat “Fearless Women, Redefining Beauty Boldly” Guest speaker: Heidi Goehmann: November 1 & 2, 2019 Salina, Kansas Sponsored by the LWML Kansas District. Brochures are available in the Choir robing room.

TLS NEWS

1. **Capital Campaign Update.** Thank you to those who purchased an "IAmTopekaLutheran" t-shirt and supported recent events with prayers, commitments, and gifts. Guests who attended the dinner and initial presentation held March 29 included eleven alumni and eight former faculty members. Pastor and Mrs. Roger Goetz generously offered a \$10,000 match that evening in memory of Dr. Don Pierce. The TLS students performed their spring concert on April 12 to a packed house! All guests enjoyed singing together the TLS Alma Mater to close the show. On May 3, a TLS art festival was held and included artwork from students, alumni and friends. A special art piece was contributed by artist Pastor Karl Fay (TLS 1996). We thank God for His many blessings to TLS and especially to the generous hearts of our donors and friends! Go to www.topekalutheran.org to the Capital Campaign page for updates on events, gifts received to date, etc.
2. **Campaign Events** are being finalized for July, August and September. Watch as details will be announced soon.
3. Attached is a **TLS Success Story** from Eric Larson (TLS Class of 1991) who has served the Lord as a Lutheran high school teacher and a DCE. He is now a student at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Eric is the son of Dale and Sue Larson, members of Faith Lutheran.
4. **Summer Reading Camp** is scheduled for June 17-21 and July 8-12 at TLS, for incoming kindergarteners through 4th graders. The camp is devoted to build reading and writing skills. To register or for more information, call the TLS office at 785.357.0382.

2019 FLOWER CALENDAR

We have had a great response in signing up for 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 next to the date of your choice. Remaining dates available: July 14; August 11; and October 6 & 27; November 10 & 24; and December 1.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Last December Doorstep assisted 260 households involving 822 individuals with Christmas gifts and food. Each year they celebrate “Christmas in July” to get a jump start on collecting new items for their annual Christmas adoption! Their goal is to help alleviate some of the strain during the holidays by also collecting items mid-year. Doorstep will adopt 260 households with 750+ individuals this December through the Christmas Bureau. By having items donated in July, their Christmas Store Chair, has a better idea what items we still need by November.

Their focus for Christmas in July is household items, health kit items, toys, school supplies, gifts for men and women, sheet sets, and blankets. These are items that are not seasonal, and easy to find this time of year! The families they adopt need basic items. They are so happy to receive a new set of dishes, new sheets, pots and pan, or a crockpot! They give every family a blanket or quilt. Last year they were short 100 blankets and had to purchase them to make up the shortage.

Each school aged child Doorstep adopts receives school supplies and a backpack, if needed. Typically, they have used up their back to school supplies, and they need replenished. Also, each of the 260

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 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.

Please look over the Christmas in July flyer and see how you can help. Doorstep continues to be successful helping people in need because of our member congregations who are working together to provide for their neighbors in need. If everyone pitches in just a little, big things will happen!

Please bring your Christmas donations to worship in July or to Doorstep, Monday – Friday, 8am – 3pm.

Save the date...

Doorstep will have one food sale fundraiser this year! They will take orders for **Cinnamon Rolls and Tamales September 6th – 22nd**, with delivery the weekend of October 11th. We will have a table here at the church to take those orders. Mark your calendars to stock your freezers!

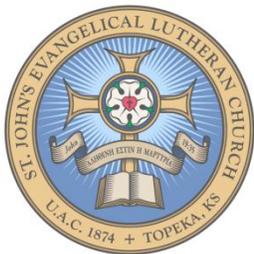
Doorstep's 2nd Annual Neighbor Helping Neighbor Walk/5K Run is Saturday, October 5th at Lake Shawnee, Reynolds Lodge. Plan to join them in getting some exercise around the lake and raise funds for Doorstep this October. There will be more information closer to the event!

THANK YOU'S

Our members owe a big thank you to Chris Hutton, owner of Hutton Monuments & Chapel Oaks Funeral Home & Cremation Services at 3rd & Topeka Avenue for the beautiful marker that identifies the St. John's Lutheran Church section at the Historic Topeka Cemetery. Thank you, Chris.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FOR JULY 2019

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|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| July 7: | 2nd Sunday after Trinity | The Parable of the Great Supper | Luke 14: 16-24 |
| July 14: | 3rd Sunday after Trinity | The Lost Ones | Luke 15: 1-10 |
| July 21: | 4th Sunday after Trinity | As Your Father is Merciful | Luke 6:36-42 |
| July 28: | 5th Sunday after Trinity | At Your Word | Luke 5:1-11 |



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*)