



# St. John's

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## Ev. Lutheran Church

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### **MORE ON OUR SUMMER SERIES**

On the pluckedchicken.com podcast, Pr. Bruss and I have started to work through the *Epitome of the Solid Declaration*. Sometimes it gets frustrating listening to the vapid sermons of American Evangelicals and we want to do something more constructive for our listeners. We have entitled our latest episodes Summer Series, but due to our limited availability to work on the project, it will most likely take much longer than the summer to finish.

The *Solid Declaration* was written after Luther's death making up twelve articles considered to be, "the Layman's Bible." What's more, the Declaration boasts of these articles being, "everything necessary for a Christian to know for salvation." Below I have assembled excerpts from both the *Epitome* (i.e. summary) and the *Solid Declaration* (SD) proper. In this month's edition of the St. John's newsletter we will only examine the first four articles.

We begin with the Bad News, namely Original Sin. Excerpts from the *SD* declare, "Original Sin is a hereditary evil born in all. It is the lost image of God in Mankind and an unspeakable corruption of the soul's highest chief powers in the understanding, heart and will. It is the source of all actual sins such as wicked thoughts, words and works. It can only be covered and forgiven before God in those baptized and believing. In the blessed Resurrection original sin will be entirely destroyed." You can hear the truth of Original Sin expressed when one confesses, "...*I am by nature sinful and unclean.*"

Well, the bad news gets worse. Along with Original Sin the *SD* speaks of Free Will. Everyone today assumes they have Free Will, for you hear it all time. But this is not true. Just because one has a free will on things below them (i.e. temporal, earthly things), does not mean they have a free will on things above them (i.e. spiritual, heavenly things). The article states, "The unregenerate will of mankind is not only turned away from God but is God's enemy. As a result, in spiritual matters the understanding and reason of Mankind are completely blind and by their own powers understand nothing (in spiritual matters). He is the devil's captive and as a result his will is very strong, alive and active in everything that is displeasing and contrary to God. Only the Holy Spirit causes a person to be born anew and have inwardly another heart, mind, and natural desires. This God does through the preaching office when a person has been converted; his will is renewed, wanting to do what is good. Nevertheless, the combat and struggles of the flesh against the spirit remain even in the elect and truly regenerate people." This is expressed in numerous places but the one that comes to mind is in the explanation of the 3rd article of the Creed. It is stated at every chapel service at Topeka Lutheran School. It states, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him." Recall, what is quoted from the *Epitome* and the *SD* are merely excerpts. If you would like to read more about the Bad News, feel free. However, know this, it's pretty bad. We all desperately need a Savior to come and rescue us.

When I first read the *SD* some years ago, I was confident in Article #1. I was well trained in the knowledge of Original Sin. However, when I came to Article #2, I was relieved. I knew our Free Will had to be limited due to Original Sin, but none of the Amer. Evan. theologians I read ever explained it so clearly. Thus, Free Will was a little cloudy for me. But when I read the *SD* for the first time, I remember exclaiming out loud, “Right!—I knew it!”

So, one is confronted with the bad news (Art. I and II) before the good news comes in Article III. This article is summarized as follows: “A poor sinful person is justified before God that is, absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation and is adopted into sonship and an inheritance of eternal life without any merit or worth of his own. This happens without any preceding, present, or subsequent works, out of pure grace, because of the soul merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ alone. His obedience is credited to us for righteousness. These blessings are brought to us in the gospel promise and are received, accepted, applied and appropriated through faith alone.”

This is the glorious good news to revel in, but this good news is not left in the abstract. It has an effect—that being, Good Works. To summarize, “Good works certainly and without doubt follow truth faith—if it is not a dead, but a living faith—just as fruit grows on a good tree. Good works are entirely excluded from the question about salvation. Good works do not maintain faith and salvation in us, but God’s Spirit alone does this, through faith. Good works are evidences of His presence and indwelling.”

Again, the bad news leads us to the good news but the good news produces something. Or, if we use the language of the Reformers, Christ takes a bad tree which produces nothing but bad fruit and turns it into a good tree which produces good fruit. Amazing! This is called conversion, salvation or regeneration.

I had no problem with any of these articles when I read them. I still don’t. You hear it preached from the pulpit at St. John’s each week. However, when it came to what the Holy Spirit uses to sustains us in this faith was new territory for me originally. What sustains us, or preserves us in the faith, is what is addressed in Articles 5, 6, and 7. Reading them made me want to be Lutheran.

We will look at each one next time.



**SPECIAL DIVINE SERVICE WITH FAREWELL AND GODSPEED TO PRESIDENT LANGE  
FRIDAY, 2 AUGUST, 7:00 P.M. AT ST. JOHN’S**

On Friday evening, 2 August, at 7:00 p.m. our congregation is hosting a special Divine Service with Farewell and Godspeed for our former senior pastor, Rev. Peter Lange, presently serving as LCMS Kansas District President. On Sunday, 21 July at the 2019 National Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Pres. Lange was elected First Vice President of the Synod. The First Vice Presidency requires the officeholder to reside in St. Louis, and so during the month of August Pastor and Marcia will be making their transition to the other side of Missouri.

It’s difficult to say what a remarkable moment this is for St. John’s and for the LCMS Kansas District. Certainly in the history of St. John’s we’ve never had a pastor elected to full-time leadership at our Synod headquarters; nor in living memory here in our Kansas District has one of our pastors has been elected to such a position. The occasion is cause for giving thanks to the Lord for raising up faithful pastors to serve in these capacities throughout our Synod. Thanks and praise to Him alone!

The evening begins with a Divine Service with Farewell and Godspeed at 7:00 p.m. We anticipate a large gathering, including pastors and lay people from around the district (you may wish to arrive a bit early!). Concordia Theological Seminary—Fort Wayne President, Rev. Dr. Lawrence Rast, will serve as preacher; area clergy will process and recess in vestments; and special music will be arranged by our Kantor, Bethany Johnson.

Following the Divine Service our St. John's Ladies Aid will be hosting a farewell reception for the Langes in Luther Hall, to which you are also invited.

It is our sincere hope you can join us for this important occasion in the life of our congregation and our Kansas District.



**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 **35** days to go...and counting. We'll resume on Wednesday, 4 September, with the same good stuff. Mark your calendars! More details coming soon.

### **ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**(There is still time to sign up)**

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*

### **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 on our website:

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

**\*FREE\*** for SJELC members, but we ask that you still register. Thanks!

Questions? Contact Bethany Johnson ([bjohnson@stjlcms.org](mailto:bjohnson@stjlcms.org))

## MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN AUGUST

Bring your favorite breakfast food to share on Sunday, August 11, 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.)

Plan to be a part of...

### THE NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY NATIONAL NIGHT OUT SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 6-8 PM VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED

(Hosted by the Neighborhood Care Team and many additional St. John's volunteers)  
**Signup sheets to volunteer at the block party is on the table in the breezeway!**

## HYMN OF THE MONTH FOR AUGUST "The Church's One Foundation" (LSB 644)

### Introduction

In the third article of the Apostles' Creed, we learn about the Church as we confess that we "believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." The Holy Spirit is the one who leads us into the bosom of the Church together with all the saints, on earth and in heaven. And, through the Church, we receive Christ through the preaching of God's Word and the administration of His Sacraments. Thus, the Church is not a concrete house or building, but it is the common gathering of saints united in Christ. However, the picture of the Church as a house is useful in understanding Christ as the foundation, or cornerstone, and the members of the Church as the living stones built on Christ. This doctrine can also be pictured as the marriage between Christ and His bride, the Church. Christ loved the Church by giving himself up for her and continues to love the Church by sanctifying her and making her holy (Eph. 5:26).

### Background & Explanation

"The Church's One Foundation" was written by Samuel Stone (1839-1900), an Anglican priest who wrote twelve poems to aid his congregation members in their family devotions, personal prayer time, and Bible Study (all great places to sing hymns aside from the church service!). These poems were published in a booklet, *Lyra Fidelium*, and one of the poems is the text for "The Church's One Foundation." He wrote this in order to explain the part of the third article of the Apostles' Creed, "the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints."

Stanzas 1 & 2 teach us about the doctrine of the Church, specifically, how the Church came to be and what it consists of. As the bride of Christ, the Church is Christ's "new creation, by water and the Word." This is an invisible Church, a gathering of saints from every nation who are united by "one Lord, one faith, one birth," and who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, who gives Himself as the "one food" of which we partake in the Lord's Supper.

Stanzas 3 & 4 describe the way in which the world sees the Church, that is, "oppressed, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed." Though we are surrounded by false teachings and deceptive wisdom that seek to lure faithful believers away from the faith, Christians join with the martyrs and saints in heaven by crying, "How long?" and are called to remain steadfast in the faith which builds up the Body of Christ. The Church awaits the "vision glorious," that is, the fulfillment of our eternal life in heaven. Stanza 5 ends the hymn with a prayer to our Triune God to "save us by [His] grace, that we, like saints before us, may see [Him] face to face."

As the Church, we are built upon the foundation of Christ and sustained in faith by the forgiveness of sins in Word and Sacrament. As we continue to be strengthened in this faith, we are also called to love

and care for the members of the Body of Christ by respecting “those who labor among [us] and are over [us] in the Lord,” being “at peace among [ourselves],” admonishing and encouraging one another, helping the weak, and seeking “to do good to one another and to everyone” (1 Thess. 5:12-18). Our vocation as the Bride, the Church, in submitting to Christ calls us to live according to His will that we remain united to Him alone.

*Bethany M Johnson*

### **ST. JOHN’S WOMEN’S LEAGUE**

Thank you to everyone who has given supplies for the Lutheran World relief (LWR) health kits. Many willing hands have worked diligently to sew and put together approximately 50 Quilts. We will have the number of how many and what organizations will receive them in our upcoming article.

Caring Mission committee, (LWML), is collecting the following item for School Kits, 40-70 page spirals note books, plastic rulers, #2 lead pencils, blue or black ink pens, (no gel), 24 box crayons, pink erasers, small pencil sharpeners and blunt end scissors. 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 is the Lutheran School Foundation: You may bring your item starting Monday, August 19, 6-8, pm, Tuesday, August 20, 10 am -5 pm, and Wednesday, August 21, 10 am -2 pm. You may bring bakes items on Wednesday or early Thursday morning. We ask that you NOT bring any electronic items please. Also, 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”. The guest speaker is Heidi Goehmann: November 1 & 2, 2019 in Salina, Kansas. Sponsored by the Kansas District LWML Christian Life committee. Brochures are available in the Choir robing room.

It’s not too early to start thinking about our Annual Christmas bazaar. The date is December 6, 2019. More information to come.

### **LUTHERAN WITNESS SUBSCRIPTIONS**

A monthly publication, *The Lutheran Witness* speaks directly about what is important to today's Lutherans: Christian life, missions and ministries, and people of faith. Subscriptions are available through the church office. The deadline is August 11. Just write a check for \$18 made out to St. John’s and write Lutheran Witness on the check memo line. One check will be submitted from the church for all subscriptions.

### **TLS NEWS**

1. **TLS Alumni** Madeline (Skinner) Jackson, TLS Class of 1994, is featured in this month's Success Story. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson and family are members of Christ Lutheran; their two older children are TLS alum (Angelita 2015 and Antonio 2017), and Frankie will be entering 5th grade at TLS.
2. **First day of school** is Tuesday, August 13 with a special chapel service. We pray for God's continued blessings to the school, our students, and teachers as a new school year begins!

## TLS Success Story – Madeline (Skinner) Jackson, Class of 1994

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

TLS provided me with an amazing foundation of Christian education that I use every single day. By the end of my first quarter at Topeka High, I had already realized that public school would be cake compared to the high academic standards set at TLS. I'm currently a Training Specialist with the United States Coast Guard and my main assignment is rewriting the Personnel and Pay Procedures Manual. Thanks to the wonderful instruction I received from Ms. Margaret Schaefer, I am considered the English and grammar expert on my team. Even people from other departments reach out to me for assistance when writing important correspondence. I also appreciated learning about other religions and denominations in my 8<sup>th</sup> grade religion class with Pastor Goetz. This did not entail a lecture of "here is a religion, and this is why they are wrong." Instead it provided me with the basic information to help understand others' point of view. Later in life when I worked with a Jehovah's Witness, I was able to carry on healthy conversations about religion without discernment.

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

It is more like a family than a school. You grow up together, get to know one another and make life-long friendships. I keep in contact with more of my TLS friends than any of my high school classmates. It's been 25 years and my class shares a Facebook group page and keep each other informed on changes in our lives. I'd drop everything to help out any one of them if they needed me. I met my best friend at Topeka Lutheran. She is my daughter's Godmother and we will always be a part of each other's lives.

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

It strengthened my faith tremendously. I've been able to overcome horrendous obstacles in my life because of my faith and trust in the Lord. I know he has a plan for me and I pray frequently that "His Will" be fulfilled in my life. It's also been amazing to see the faith of my children solidified because of their time at TLS. I've never been prouder than when I attended a Bible study with my children, and they were told to "give the other kids a chance" to answer some of the questions. I owe that knowledge to TLS.

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

I am happily married to my husband, Frank. We'll celebrate 12 years of marriage this September. I have three wonderful children. Angelita (TLS class of 2015) will be attending Neumont College of Computer Science in Salt Lake City, UT in the fall. Antonio (TLS class of 2017) will be a junior at Topeka High this year. Frankie will be a 5<sup>th</sup> grader at TLS this fall. I've been a Federal Government employee for 19 years; 14 with the Coast Guard and 5 with the Department of Veteran Affairs. I'm very active at Christ Lutheran Church and am the Vice President of the Topeka Celiac Disease Support Group.



## 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: October 27; November 10 & 24; and December 1.

## DOORSTEP NEWS

### Save the date...

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

**Doorstep's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Neighbor Helping Neighbor Walk/5K Run is Saturday, October 5** 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!

## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FOR JULY 2019

|           |                           |                 |                                   |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| August 4  | 7th Sunday after Trinity  | Mark 8:1-9      | Blessed Bread for All             |
| August 11 | 8th Sunday after Trinity  | Matthew 7:15-23 | Beware of False Prophets          |
| August 18 | 9th Sunday after Trinity  | Luke 16:1-9     | The Parable of the Shrewd Steward |
| August 25 | 10th Sunday after Trinity | Luke 19:41-48   | The Lord's Visitation             |

### Upcoming Events

August 10 - Sunday School Teachers Meeting at 9:00

August 11 - Junior Lutherans Promotion – Sunday School only for Preschoolers

August 18 - Promotion Sunday for Sunday School



## 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)