



# St. John's

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## Ev. Lutheran Church

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### WHAT SUSTAINS US

In my last Newsletter article, I wrote that none of the first four articles of the *Solid Declaration* took me by surprise. However, the next three certainly did! They are the Law and the Gospel, the Third Use of the Law and the Lord's Supper, or what we typically call the Sacrament of the Altar. All of which are what the Holy Spirit uses to sustain us in the one, true Christian faith. Needless to say, each one was new territory for me. They are addressed in Articles 5, 6, and 7, of which are summarized below:

**Law and Gospel** – The distinction between these two is to be kept in the Church. It is an artform taught by the Holy Spirit through much experience. The Law shows what the quality of a person should be in his nature, thoughts, words, and works, in order that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God. It also threatens its transgressors with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishments. Though the Law's peculiar office is to rebuke sins, it also teaches about good works. In other words, it teaches that God's Son, our Lord Christ has taken upon Himself and borne the Law's curse and has atoned and paid for all our sins. Through Him alone, we again enter into favor with God, receive forgiveness of sins through faith and are delivered from death and all the punishments of sins, and are eternally saved. The Law teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and it rebukes everything that is sin and contrary to God's will. To repent means nothing other than to truly acknowledge sins, to be heartily sorry for them, and to stop doing them. This knowledge comes from the law.

Conversely, the Gospel shows a person who has not kept the law is to believe the Gospel, comforts consciences against the terrors of the law, points only to Christ's merit, and raises them up again by the loving preaching of God's grace and favor, gained through Christ's merit.

Everything that comforts, that offers God's favor and grace to transgressors of the law, is and is properly called the Gospel. It is a good and joyful message that God will not punish sins but will forgive them for Christ's sake.

In summary, the Gospel is properly the promise of the forgiveness of sins and of justification through Christ, and the law is a doctrine that reprieves sins and condemns. Both the Law and Gospel should always be diligently taught in God's church forever, even to the end of the world.

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Southern Baptist seminary students are not trained to think in terms of Law and Gospel—certainly not when I went through seminary. I was never taught this distinction in my years of attending church nor in any of MDiv training. It wasn't until I attended a Reformed Seminary working on a Doctorate of Ministry that I heard it for the first time. I was so intrigued, I started preaching Law and Gospel sermons in my American Evangelical church. Though I was limping along as it were, I was seeing the L/G distinction ever more clearly. Moreover, I began reading authors who were helping me to see it everywhere I turned.

Who do you think those authors were? Lutherans! It wasn't that my congregation began to jump up and down when I preached this way, but there was a transformation taking place in my understanding of Scripture and in theirs. The *Solid Declaration* continues...

**Third Use of God's Law** – This use is for those born anew by God's Spirit. Though they do God's will from a free spirit, the Holy Spirit uses the written law for instruction, showing how to order a life in accordance with God's eternal and unchangeable will. This is because believers are not renewed in this life perfectly or completely. The putting to death of the old Adam and the renewal in the Spirit of their mind is begun through the Holy Spirit. The law is God's unchangeable will, according to which people are to guide themselves in their lives. And this doctrine of the law is needed by believers in order that they may not make up a holiness and devotion of their own. The Old Adam, like an unruly, stubborn ass, is still apart of us. It must be forced to obey Christ. It not only requires the teaching, admonition, force and threatening of the law, but it also often needs the club of punishments and troubles. This goes on until the body of sin is entirely put off and a person is perfectly renewed in the resurrection.

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If Southern Baptist seminary students are not trained to think in terms of Law and Gospel, they certainly know nothing of this Third Use. To think that God has expressed His will in the Law is not something American Evangelicals understand. They are clueless—as crass as that may sound. They think God's will is found in the throne room of their heart or in the providential alignment of their circumstances. In this false schema, God's will is determined by their own blinded interpretation of emotions and events instead of what is revealed in Scripture. Yet, the freedom that comes from understanding God's will, as it's revealed in Scripture, was something new to me. Are you telling me that finding God's will was something that wasn't left up to my own devices?! What a relief! What else does this *Solid Declaration* teach? I couldn't put it down! Well, the *Solid Declaration* continues with article 7, which speaks about the Lord's Supper. This article...well, this one probably deserves an entire Newsletter article. For me, reading and believing this article was to cross the Rubicon; it was climb Everest; bite the bullet and take the bull by the horns.

This next article changed everything.



**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**

**FEAST OF ALL SAINTS DIVINE SERVICE AND COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL  
 DEPARTED, 7:00 P.M., FRIDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2019**

On the evening of Friday, 1 November 2019, we will gather in the Courtyard to celebrate the Feast of All Saints and for our annual Commemoration of the Faithful Departed. The Commemoration will take place at the start of the Divine Service and the names of those from our parish will be read whom the good Lord in His mercy has called from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven since last All Saints' Day. We want everyone to know that this is the only time that we will be celebrating the Feast of All Saints and commemorating the faithful departed. We encourage everyone in the congregation to make this part of your "first Friday" and especially encourage those who have lost loved ones in the last year to attend.

## SOUND WORDS ACADEMY 2019 – 2020

### Everyone

**Evening Prayer (4 September – 6 May; 7:00 p.m.)** The center and heart of Sound Words Academy is our congregation’s gathering together, irrespective of age, to receive the gifts of the Lord and call upon Him in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. Required for all catechumens, it is not for catechumens alone; and, in fact, the presence of the entire congregation demonstrates their support for the catechumens and their learning of the faith. Stay an extra half hour to learn, together with your brothers and sisters in Christ, what God would have you believe and do according to His holy Word. Office switches between Evening Prayer, Vespers, and Compline according to the season of the church.

### **Children**

**Rhythm of Faith Choir (4 September – 6 May, 5:00-5:40 p.m.; E. Grass, Johnson & Smith)** 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 (4 September – 6 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; J. Grass & 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*. To enroll, just show up!

### **Adults**

**The Books between the Testaments (6 November – 11 December, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kerns)** How many books does the Bible have? The Lutheran answer to that question may be more surprising than you think. Come and learn about the Apocrypha and other interesting Jewish writings from the time between Malachi and Jesus’ birth and the wonderful way in which they anticipate and look forward to the birth of the Messiah, Israel’s Savior and the world’s.

**1 & 2 Timothy (4 September – 6 May; 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Hintz)** Through these words of guidance to young Pastor Timothy, St. Paul portrays the model of a Christian pastor: one prepared in season and out to proclaim the whole counsel of God and to find his sufficiency not in himself but in Christ, who has called him to his office. Filled with warnings about end-times corruption and Gospel nuggets, these letters remain a precious possession and always applicable to her life.

### **LCMS U/College Students and Young Adults**

***Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification* (4 September – 11 December; 7:45 – 8:40 p.m.; Brass)** In *Living by Faith*, Oswald Bayer brings biblical, Lutheran teaching into direct confrontation with the ideologies, idols, and -isms of our age. A must-read for every Lutheran who swims in the morass of cultural decay and the corruption of our dying world on her heavenward way. Buy the book. Available online in a variety of conditions from \$7 to \$29 per copy.

***The Theology of Martin Luther* (8 January – 6 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 (4 September – 6 May 7:45-8:40 p.m.; September through December, Kerns; January through May, Brass)** 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 (12 September – 8 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kinnett)** For 6<sup>th</sup> graders. 1 year long.

**YCat II (12 September – 8 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss & Kerns)** For 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. 2 years long.

## MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN NOVEMBER

Come join the monthly breakfast on Sunday, November 10. Please bring a dish to share with your Christian friends. Our usher teams will graciously be helping with the serving and clean up!

## DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2019 AT 2 A.M.

Set your clocks back before you go to bed Saturday evening, November 2

## THANKSGIVING GIFT CARDS/POINSETTIA DELIVERY

At Thanksgiving time, the Welfare Fund provides gift card assistance to members who have needs. If you wish to contribute to this cause, please make your check payable to St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church with "Welfare" on the memo line. If you would be willing to deliver poinsettias during the Christmas season, please contact Pam Harms at [pharms@stjlcms.org](mailto:pharms@stjlcms.org) or call her at the church office at 354-7132 ext. 102.

## ST. JOHN'S WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Thank you to everyone who came out and helped with LWML Sunday preparation, serving and cleaning up after the service. We know that some of you don't come to the meetings but you're there to help us, so thank you so much.

Thank you also to everyone who has given supplies for the Lutheran World relief (LWR) Health Kits, and School Kits. Also for the many willing hands that sewed and put together the quilts. Our totals for this year are: Health Kits = 65, School Kits = 106 and Quilts = 30, plus 20 more to other organizations. Thank you God for all the people contributing and receiving these gifts.

The Women's League is still collecting **Best Choice labels**. Ask your friends and family to save them for you. You may put them in the box labeled for stamps along with any stamps you collect. However, we no longer collect Campbell soup labels. That program has been discontinued.

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 Kansas District LWML Christian Life committee.

It's that time again, for our Annual Christmas Luncheon, Bazaar and Bake Sale. The date is December 6, 2019. More to come! Much help is needed to make this a success. We will be selling tickets on Sunday November 24 and December 1 in between services in the Court Yard.

## 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. Only one remaining date is available: November 24.

## **SHARE THE HARVEST**

This year, St. John's members will again have the opportunity to "Share their Harvest." This donation goes to local agencies to assist the needy in the Topeka area. The Harvest will be gathered at services on Thanksgiving Day and the following Sunday. Please use the "Share the Harvest" Designated Offering envelope from your contribution envelopes. Additional "Share the Harvest" envelopes and canisters are available in the narthex. Through "Share the Harvest" we direct those in need of assistance to a local agency that we support. Last year, \$1277 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

## **TLS NEWS**

1. You are invited to participate in Topeka Lutheran School's 2nd Annual Day of Prayer which will be held on Saturday, November 16 in the TLS gym. There are 20-minute time increments offered between the hours of 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. You can enter from the west entrance to the school and enter the school gym for a time of prayer. We will provide hymnals and prayer booklets as well. Imagine the power of the many prayers asking for God's blessings on our churches and school with all the students, parents, friends, and congregation members participating! (TLS students are also encouraged to attend as well!) You do not have to sign up to attend, but by signing up here you will receive an email reminder the day before. Thank you! Sign up here: <https://bit.ly/2IRui5l>

2. We invite all veterans from the congregations to attend our annual Veteran's Day program on Monday, November 11 at 2:00pm. This program will include hymns, patriotic songs, student-led presentations, and special recognition and thanks with a light reception to follow.

## **DOORSTEP NEWS**

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Fall Fundraisers by participating in the Walk/5K Run or buying tamales and cinnamon rolls! Every little bit helps. Doorstep's basement was flooded on August 30th by a City sewer back-up. Unfortunately, insurance did not cover the expense of the clean-up and repair (roughly \$18,000), and the loss of at least one-third of their Christmas Store donations they had collected.

As they prepare for the over 800 individuals they will adopt for Christmas, there are specific items they lost, and others they always need. They need blankets (queen & king), school supplies and backpacks, children's toys, new winter clothing for boys and girls sizes 6-16, men and women, and household items such as crockpots, coffee makers, sheets (queen & king), dishes, pots and pans, etc.

You can help by start watching those pre-holiday sales and help Doorstep where you can this Christmas. You can bring donations to Doorstep Monday – Friday from 8am – 3pm., located at 1119 SW 10th Avenue (10th & Buchanan). Please let them know when you have donations specifically for Christmas. You can also drop items off at the Doorstep display here at St. Johns. Doorstep's Christmas Store will be December 8th – 12th this year, and they will need volunteers all week long to help out!

## **POSITION OPENING**

St. Johns will be interviewing for a Facility Maintenance Supervisor position to start January 2, 2020. Pay is \$10,800 to \$13,200 per year depending on qualifications. This is a non-benefit position. A position description is available in the church office. If interested, send a letter expressing your interest along with a resume and/or documents showing your experience to the church office: Attn: St. John's Board of Trustees.

## **2020 BUDGET HEARING**

A budget hearing will take place Sunday, November 17 between services at 10 a.m. in the nave. The purpose of this meeting is to hear what is being proposed to bring before the Voters for final approval on Sunday, November 24, at 2:00 p.m. Questions are encouraged, but formal action will be taken at the hearing.

## **NOVEMBER VOTER'S MEETING**

There will be a Voters Meeting Sunday, November 24 at 2 p.m. in the church nave. Items of business will include:

1. Reports from Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Board Chairs
2. Presentation of the Proposed 2020 Congregational Budget for voter approval
3. Presentation of the ballot of nominees for congregational officers and board members for 2020

## **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A VOTING MEMBER?**

Our constitution defines "voting member" as a communicant member who has reached the age of 18 years and been received as a voting member upon application for such privilege upon approval of the voters of the assembly. **We encourage all eligible St. John's members to join the voters assembly.** You can contact the office, a pastor, or your elders to get instructions on how you can become a voter.

## **QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS**

We have mentioned this before, but since it is getting close to tax time, we are providing it again. This only applies to members who are at least 70 ½ and are required to withdraw funds from their retirement accounts. As those who must do this know, these withdrawals are taxed as income. A way to defer part or all of those taxes is through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (Contribution). If you have been giving to St. John's with your charitable gifts each year, or are seeking a way to contribute, we would advise you to look into this option with your financial advisor if you meet the above-mentioned criteria. We believe you will be glad you did. Board of Stewardship

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FOR NOVEMBER 2019**

November 3 20th Sunday After Trinity	The Parable of the Wedding Banquet Matthew 22:1-14
November 10 3rd to Last Sunday of the Church Year	The EndTimes Matthew 24:15-28
November 17 2nd to Last Sunday of the Church Year	The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats Matthew 25:31-46
November 24 Last Sunday of the Church Year	The Parable of the Wise & Foolish Virgins Matthew 25:1-13

Be sure to join us each week with opening devotions in the courtyard.

Beginning Wednesday, November 13, all children need to be sure to attend Rhythm of Faith choir. During this time we will be practicing for the Sunday School Christmas Program.

Sunday School Teacher's Meeting will be November 16 at 9:00 a.m.

# November 2019

## St. John's Lutheran Church - Topeka, Kansas

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
8:15am - DIVINE SERVICE** 9:45am - BIBLE CLASS/SS 11am - DIVINE SERVICE	4:30pm - LWML EXEC	CITY/SCHOOL GENERAL GENERAL ELECTION	8:15am - TLS CHAPEL 10am - WOMEN'S BIBLE 5pm - SOUND WORDS 7pm - EVENING PRAYER	6:15pm - ECCLESIA BELLS 7pm - LSAT BOARD 7:15pm - KANTOREI	ALL SAINTS DAY COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED 7pm - DIVINE SERVICE IN COURTYARD	*DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS INDIVIDUAL CUP**
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
LUTHER'S BIRTHDAY TLS SUNDAY 8:15am - DIVINE SERVICE 9:30am - MONTHLY BRKFEST 9:45am - SS ONLY 11am - DIVINE SERVICE**	VETERANS DAY 9pm - SARAH CIRCLE	1pm - DORCAS CIRCLE 5:30pm - STEWARDSHIP	8:15am - TLS CHAPEL 10am - WOMEN'S BIBLE 5pm - SOUND WORDS 7pm - EVENING PRAYER	10am - WL CARE CENTER 6:15pm - ECCLESIA BELLS 7pm - BOARD OF ELDER 7:15pm - KANTOREI	6pm - EMME REHEARSAL	5pm - EMME WEDDING
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
8:15am - DIVINE SERVICE ** 10am - 2020 BUDGET 11am - DIVINE SERVICE	3pm - DIVINE SERVICE at McCRITES	5:30pm - PARISH ED 5:30pm - STEWARDSHIP 6:15pm - MISSIONS/EVANG 7pm - TRUSTEES	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 8:15am - TLS CHAPEL 10am - WOMEN'S BIBLE 5pm - SOUND WORDS 7pm - EVENING PRAYER	6:15pm - ECCLESIA BELLS 7:15pm - KANTOREI		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
8:15am - DIVINE SERVICE 9:45am - BIBLE CLASS/SS 11am - DIVINE SERVICE 1:30pm - HOMEBOUND DS 2pm - VOTERS MEETING	7pm - COUNCIL			OFFICE CLOSED THANKSGIVING 9:30am - DIVINE SERVICE	OFFICE CLOSED	SAINT ANDREW, APOSTLE
24	25	26	27	28	29	30



*Growing God's Children*  
for generations to come  
Topeka Lutheran School

## CAMPAIGN IMPACT PHASE

Dear Father in Heaven, as we have now moved into the Impact Phase of our Growing God's Children Capital Campaign, we ask that you make us aware of the bountiful blessings You give us each and every day. Continue to guide and direct our efforts to be supportive of Topeka Lutheran School with our prayers, our time, our talents and our monetary gifts. Amen. During the next three years, the Impact Phase hopes to inspire others to find the significance and importance of the campaign with continued generosity while also encouraging new giving. Look for upcoming communication regarding new events like Giving Tuesday which will help us make it to the next level of

## TOTAL COMMITMENTS

Total Commitments/Special Gifts received to date \$788,863.

During month of September - received 18.4% increase in pledge cards from students, parents, and family members!

Approximately 48 Parents/Grandparents of TLS students have now become donors!

## THANK YOU

Take notice! The new TLS sign on 6th Ave. was made possible by a generous donor. Thank you for your continued support!

♦

## SAVE THE DATES

- ♦ TLS Sunday at St. John's Lutheran Sunday, November 10
- ♦ Veteran's Day Assembly at TLS Monday, November 11 at 2:00pm 2nd Annual Day of Prayer
- ♦ Saturday, November 16, 8:00am - 12:00pm TLS families, friends and congregation members are
  - invited to come
- Topeka Pilots Game at 7:00pm
- ♦ November 16 at Stormont Vail Events Center students from TLS singing National Anthem
  -

## TOPEKA LUTHERAN SCHOOL IN THE MEDIA

LCEF "Interest Time" magazine just published article about TLS and its history and future of Lutheran education, featuring Mr. Francik and Dr. Mark and Linda Pierce.

◦ Go to <http://interesttime.org/issues/>, click on "Our Church Has a Future", Pages 20-22.

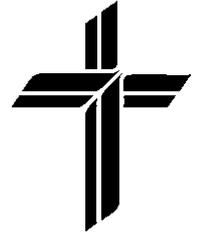
Edith Kerns, 1st Grade Teacher, and Zach Snethen, TLS alumnus and parent, were on the WIBW Red Couch on September 23. Thank you for promoting TLS in the Topeka community!

## SUPPORT TOPEKA LUTHERAN TODAY! CLICK TO DONATE.

<https://www.topekalutheran.org/pledge-tracker>

## TEACHER HIGHLIGHT: CLAIRE BANION

I am thrilled this year, in my 3rd year at TLS, that I have made the jump to middle school. With a major in Classical languages and a minor in Linguistics, I have really enjoyed focusing my efforts on the nuances of English language and literature, while tying it into the intricacies of Latin and ancient literature. In my seven years of teaching, I have always taught in Christian schools, where teachers get to share their love of learning through the lens of exploring the wisdom and wonder of God's creation.



## **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)