



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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APRIL 2020

An Excerpt from “Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague,” Martin Luther, 1527

Note: In 1527 plague struck Germany. What follows is an open letter composed by Martin Luther to Rev. Dr. Johann Hess, serving in Breslau. The letter is full of scriptural wisdom. If you're interested in reading the rest of the letter, a link is provided at the end of this excerpt.

Since the rumor of death is to be heard in these and many other parts also, we have permitted these instructions of ours to be printed because others might also want to make use of them.

To begin with, some people are of the firm opinion that one need not and should not run away from a deadly plague. Rather, since death is God's punishment, which he sends upon us for our sins, we must submit to God and with a true and firm faith patiently await our punishment. They look upon running away as an outright wrong and as lack of belief in God. Others take the position that one may properly flee, particularly if one holds no public office.

I cannot censure the former for their excellent decision. They uphold a good cause, namely, a strong faith in God, and deserve commendation because they desire every Christian to hold to a strong, firm faith. It takes more than a milk faith [See 1 Cor. 3:2] to await a death before which most of the saints themselves have been and still are in dread. Who would not acclaim these earnest people to whom death is a little thing? They willingly accept God's chastisement, doing so without tempting God, as we shall hear later on.

Since it is generally true of Christians that few are strong and many are weak, one simply cannot place the same burden upon everyone. A person who has a strong faith can drink poison and suffer no harm, Mark 16 [:18], while one who has a weak faith would thereby drink to his death. Peter could walk upon the water because he was strong in faith. When he began to doubt and his faith weakened, he sank and almost drowned [see Matt. 14:30]. When a strong man travels with a weak man, he must restrain himself so as not to walk at a speed proportionate to his strength lest he set a killing pace for his weak companion. Christ does not want his weak ones to be abandoned, as St. Paul teaches in Romans 15 [:1] and 1 Corinthians 12 [:22 ff.]. To put it briefly and concisely, running away from death may happen in one of two ways. First, it may happen in disobedience to God's word and command. For instance, in the case of a man who is imprisoned for the sake of God's word and who, to escape death, denies and repudiates God's word. In such a situation everyone has Christ's plain mandate and command not to flee but rather to suffer death, as he says, “Whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven” and “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul,” Matthew 10 [:28, 33]. Those who are engaged in a spiritual ministry such as preachers and pastors must likewise remain steadfast before the peril of death.⁴ We have a plain command from Christ, “A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep but the hireling sees the wolf coming and flees” [John 10:11]. For when people are dying, they most need a spiritual ministry which strengthens and comforts their consciences by word and sacrament and in faith overcomes death.

“Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague” can be found here: <https://blogs.lcms.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plague-blogLW.pdf>

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

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

Kantor - Bethany M. Johnson

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

HYMN OF THE MONTH FOR APRIL

LSB 422 “On My Heart Imprint Your Image”

[The devil] is ever around us and lies in wait to bring us into sin and shame, disaster and trouble. But he hates to hear God’s name and cannot remain long where it is spoken and called upon from the heart...It is also useful that we form the habit of daily commending ourselves to God, with soul and body, wife, children, servants, and all that we have, against every need that may arise. So also the blessing and thanksgiving at meals and other prayers, morning and evening, have begun and remained in use. Likewise, children should continue to cross themselves when anything monstrous or terrible is seen or heard. They can shout out, “Lord God, protect us!” “Help, dear Lord Jesus!” and such. (Large Catechism, Second Commandment)

Hymn Explanation

“On My Heart Imprint Your Image” was originally part of a larger hymn with 29 stanzas and written by Thomas Kingo. This particular stanza was in the very center of the hymn in order to focus on Christ and His crucifixion. Following the theme of Lent, Kingo’s entire hymn focuses on Christ, the Lamb of God, and His suffering on the cross. It was used to accompany the Passion readings during Lent but was also used in home devotions (here’s a tip: it is one of the greatest and easiest hymns for your children to learn and memorize!).

This hymn refers to the parable in Matthew 13 that teaches us about the Sower and the Seed. No riches, cares, or pleasures cannot erase the work of God through His Word. It is God who plants the Word into our hearts, imprinting the image of Christ on us through Baptism. Thus, as referenced above in the Large Catechism, we can make the sign of the cross to remind ourselves that we belong to Christ and not to the devil, who tries by day and night to pull us away from the faith.

With all boldness and confidence, we sing and proclaim, “Let the clear inscription be: Jesus crucified for me / Is my life, my hope’s foundation / And my glory and salvation.” This clear teaching centers on Christ and Him crucified for sinners. It is a powerful statement against the devil and his work, and it supports the teaching of the 2nd commandment that calls upon God’s name, acknowledging who He is and what He has done for us. God gave us His Son to us, and we keep His name holy as He lives in us through Word and Sacrament. Our “new hearts” imprinted by Christ receive life from Him alone. May we always look to Him through all temptations, disasters, and suffering. Nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:38-39), and what comfort we have in God who gave us Himself to dwell in us and through eternity!

Bethany M Johnson

TUNE IN TO THE LUTHERAN HOUR IN TOPEKA

The Lutheran Hour is broadcast here in Topeka on FM 92.5 KCTV on Sundays at 8:00 a.m.
and on AM 580 WIBW on Sundays at 7:30 a.m.

2020 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, sign your name and phone number by the date of your choice. You may pick the flowers up after the late service that day, or at the latest, Thursday morning of the following week. You will be reminded the week before your date.

VOLUNTEER HELP

St. Johns is still in need of some volunteers to help clean restrooms and the church Nave. If we could get 7 volunteers to clean the restrooms and 2 more volunteers to clean the church Nave, the responsibilities would only be once per month. If you can help, contact the church office at 354-7132.

NO SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

For Now Until Next Fall

ADULT & YOUTH CATECHESIS—SEE 24 MARCH COVID-19 UPDATE

Adult Catechesis

Adult Catechesis (8 January – 6 May 7:45-8:40 p.m.; Bruss) 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 – 6 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kinnett) Typically for 6th graders. 1 year long.

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

RHYTHM OF FAITH MUSIC CAMP

“God's Own Child I Gladly Say It”

What? This music camp is a week-long opportunity to use your voice and hands to sing and play music, while learning more about music technique, hymnody, theology, architecture, and more. This year's theme is Baptism. Snacks, games, and fun with friends included!

Who? Children entering grades K-8th. Whether you have been in choir or not, all are welcome!

When? Monday-Friday, June 15-19, 2020, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. We will be singing in nursing homes on Friday, June 19.

Where? St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church (901 SW Fillmore, Topeka)

What now? Fill out the Google Form (<https://forms.gle/RugtXDELf6FsRMCq7>) by June 14 or contact Bethany Johnson for registration. Payments by cash or check can be made prior to or on the first day, June 15.

Cost? \$10 per child

Questions? Please contact BethanyJohnson.

HELP SPREAD THE LIGHT OF GOD'S WORD TO THE VISION-IMPAIRED

Lutheran Braille Workers #31 (housed at St. John's) requests your prayerful consideration of giving of your time to a great cause of bring the word of our Lord to the vision impaired around the world. We do not meet every month only

when we have a project to either put a book of the bible together or pull orders to send out. If you are interested in this great cause, please contact me Eileen Klumpp at 633-3870. Thank you.

CAN ST. JOHN'S BECOME A ZERO-WASTE FACILITY IN 2020?

Well - - maybe. Nobody's perfect.

Encouraging, though, are these member comments: “We set out on the curb more recycling than trash since we compost,” and “I've been recycling since Shawnee County began the service,” and “Your supermarket or Let's Help or Doorstep probably takes plastic shopping bags for recycling or reuse.”

You can find online that Shawnee County landfill gladly accepts recyclables as they minimize the size of our dump, postponing the need for new landfill sites. The website claims that ALL numbered plastic containers, rinsed of food particles, are re-formed into new plastic items. Lids from all types of clean plastic containers go in the trash.

Styrofoam is another issue - not recyclable locally and with 50 year+ decomposition rate, harmful to our God-given Earth. We are looking for answers.

Your comments are welcomed in person to Marilynn Bahr or @ mmarbahr@gmail.com

2020 WORSHIP CONFERENCE AT SJELC

Saturday, August 22

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Keynote speaker: Dr. Paul Grime,
from Concordia Theological Seminary
More information to come!

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep has decided to keep their building closed until Monday, April 6th. This is of course subject to change, and they will play it by ear from week to week. They are accepting food donations Monday – Friday from 9am – 2pm. They are not accepting clothing/household donations at this time. Food items can still be dropped off at St. Johns if you like.

Of course, depending on how things are with the COVID-19 virus, you can still mark your calendars for Doorstep's 3rd **Annual Neighbors Helping Neighbors Walk/5K Run** at Lake Shawnee. The big day is **Sunday, October 4th at 2pm!** You can come out and support Doorstep, and get some exercise at the same time! Doorstep made over \$6,000 last year, and have set a goal of \$9,000 for their third year! Note that they have moved it to Sunday afternoon for 2020!

ST. JOHN'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

In 2024, SJELC will be celebrating our 150th anniversary, but it's not too early to get started with compiling the congregational history. Like most congregations, we will most likely put together a memento history book or booklet, but we may also create a video history. Pastor Goetz has graciously agreed to be an honorary chairperson and we have three additional volunteers, but we could use additional people to sort through our history and develop our final products. Please contact the church office if you are interested in volunteering particularly if you have some video editing skills, writing or editing skills, photography skills, an interest in history or you just want to help in any way and be involved with this once in a lifetime opportunity.

LUKE SAVAGE MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 6th annual Luke Savage Memorial Golf Tournament is scheduled for Saturday, April 25th, at Western Hills Golf Course. Registration will begin at 8 a.m. with a shot gun start at 9 a.m. All proceeds from the tournament will go to the Topeka Lutheran School where Luke had been a kindergartner. The tournament will be a 4-person scramble. Entry fee per person is \$80.00 or \$320 per team. A light breakfast along with a boxed lunch will be provided. Both raffle and various other prizes will be awarded. Hole sponsorships are available (and needed) for \$100.00, and any donations for raffle prizes would be kindly appreciated. To sign up, contact Kim Savage at 785-640-0092.

COLLEGE CARE TEAM

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is wanting to initiate a "**College Care Team**". The purpose of this team is for our members to care both for our own students who are away at college as well as those who come to us through Washburn and KU. Some duties of the team members will be:

- sending a card on their birthday
- mailing a card on their baptism birthday
- sending a "finals care package"
- praying for them
- serving as a "home away from home" for those at Washburn and KU.

Please contact Pam Harms in the church office if interested.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

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 also collect. We recommended that St. John's members sign up on Dillon's Food Store's website for their community program, Circle Chairs may remind members of the Dillon's program to help St. John's or TLS.



Image: The Man of Sorrows. From Martin Luther, *Eyn sermon von der betrachtung des heyligen leydens christi* [A Sermon on Considering the Holy Suffering of Christ] (Wittenberg: 1517). The image depicts Jesus as the man of sorrows of Isaiah 53:3. He is surrounded by the instruments of His suffering and death—spear, scourge, crown of thorns, cross, dice, and the garment his crucifiers would not tear in two. Courtesy: Pitts Theology Library Digital Image Archive. Used with permission.



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

A PRAYER

We want to thank everyone who has kept the Topeka Lutheran School family in their prayers. It's during times of trial we must rely on God and the peace only He can grant. "I [Jesus] have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) The staff is incredibly thankful to everyone who has supported us in countless ways. The devil's evil plans are no match for God's great love. "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) Please continue to pray for the Topeka Lutheran family, especially our students.

"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" Psalm 56:3-4

TOTAL COMMITMENTS

Capital Campaign

- ◆ Total Amount Committed: \$811,243 Total Special Gifts Received: \$32,871 Total Amount Raised: \$844,114

Special Burglary Recovery Fund

- ◆ Total Amount Received: \$7,771
 - Three gifts in memory of loved ones 1 gift to honor 1-year-old daughter

Thank you to everyone for your support!

SAVE THE DATES

- ◆ Luke Savage Memorial Golf Tournament Saturday, April 25, Western Hills Golf Course
 - The incredible generosity of this annual event with proceeds to TLS. We are very thankful and blessed to have this family's generous support each year.

SUPPORT TOPEKA LUTHERAN TODAY! CLICK TO DONATE.

<https://www.topek Lutheran.org/pledge-tracker>

TLS UPDATE FROM PRINCIPAL FRANCIK

Thank you for the outpouring of support, kind wishes, offers of assistance for cleaning the school, and generous financial donations after Topeka Lutheran School suffered a burglary. Thankfully, no one was hurt or injured. Some of the damaged property and stolen items have already been repaired or replaced. The insurance claim process is ongoing.

Many of you received an email regarding Topeka Lutheran School's plan for staffing for the 2020-2021 school year. A call committee has been formed to call a full-time first grade teacher to TLS.

Finally, as our world has been turned upside down by the COVID-19 crisis, the TLS staff and administration are adapting to a new situation and way of life and teaching. An email will be sent to congregation members if long-term distance learning is implemented. In times like these, the TLS staff and administration encourages you to rest in God's promises in Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Making Christ Known...

as We Worship Together: **Word & Sacrament Ministry**

Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ. Romans 10:17

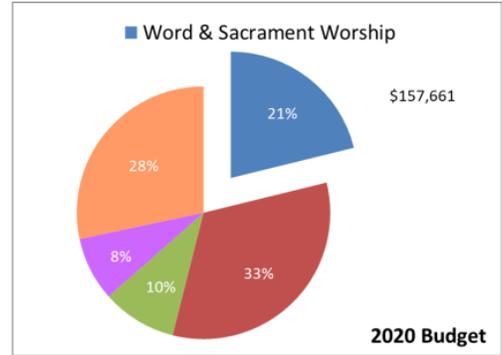


Every time we gather together in worship, God's goodness abounds. Through water and Word, Body and Blood, God creates and sustains life within His Church, creating a new heart for us in Christ. With our fellow believers, we hear God's Word and sing of eternal life and redemption from sin, bought by Christ's death and resurrection. We confess our faith. We pray for God's will to be done in this mortal life of sin and suffering. We taste and see all that the Lord has given to us—

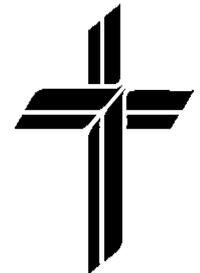
all that we need in this body and life. In every service here, the Lord is with us, destroying sin and death in His name and giving us forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Week after week,
God Himself is
present.

He's at our weekly Divine Services, midweek Evening Prayer, and monthly homebound services. He's in hospital rooms, at weddings and funerals, and at confirmations and baptisms.



In all these places, our pastors speak the Word.
We hear. And our faith is sustained.



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)