



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

VOL. 142 NO. 06 MONTHLY

JUNE 2020

FAITH & DIRTY FINGERNAILS

The 10 April *CJOnline* editorial brought out an opinion that's probably widely shared among the church-going and non-church-going American public alike: "Faith is not about physical presence. It is about what is in one's own heart."

You've probably heard something to the same effect. The idea here is that if something's spiritual, it cannot be physical. And this idea becomes the primary filter through which to understand all things Christian. If faith is spiritual, then everything having to do with faith must be spiritual, i.e., aphysical. Since faith is in the heart (wherever that is), then Christianity must be a disembodied thing. If faith is a nebulous, spiritual thing, then of course physical presence doesn't matter, and this is why it's not uncommon to hear people say that they "worship God in nature," which is just a defense of why they don't attend church.

This spiritualizing perspective, in fact, leads to a sort of horror of a God who gets His fingernails dirty by interacting with His world in a physical way.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. The God of Scripture got His fingernails dirty for the first time when He formed Adam from the dust of the earth, and the history of the entire Old and New Testaments is the history of that dirty-nailed God. He saved Israel from Egypt through the slaughter of the first-born and the blood of lambs. He dwelt among His people in a pillar of cloud and fire. He parted the Red Sea. He and His legions of angels defended His people from their enemies (2 Kings 6:15-17). He saved His prophet Jonah in the belly of a great fish, and after three days regurgitated the undigested prophet on a beach. He both blessed and bruised Jacob (Gen. 32). He rained manna from heaven, and He caused ravens to feed Elijah (1 Kings 17). He was born on a bed of straw and hay. He spat in dust and wiped mud on blind eyes to make them see (John 9:6). He was physically flogged, beaten, nailed to a cross, and laid in grave to pay for sin. And the list goes on. In fact, it might be a good family discussion at the dinner table to try to think of all the ways that the Lord used physical means to bring salvation.

But stick with me here. If God is such a God that in His very own Scriptures He Himself expresses the least bit of horror over the physical and indeed embraces it for His saving works, then what has changed?

Nothing.

In fact, the pattern of God's interaction with His fallen creatures persists. He continues to work by means. He commits His eternal, heavenly Word to writing, black ink on white pages. He places that holy, immortal Word on the lips of dying sinners to be preached. By nothing but water taken with His Word and poured over the head in His name, He forgives sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation. He joins the Body born of Mary and nailed to the tree to bread and the Blood typed after Mary's own that ran down the wood of His Cross to wine to forgive sins and give life and salvation. With the building blocks of sinful human beings He builds the holy church, His mystical embodiment. And through all of those things, through Church, Word, and Sacrament, He creates and sustains that faith in the heart with which we began. But all of those things actually *are* about physical presence. Which means that faith is, too.

As we look forward to returning to church in full force (whenever that may be), may we remember the reasons why we go at all. It's not about doing the right thing, pleasing mom and dad or anyone else, or even because it's part of the weekly routine: it's because there, in the gathering of His saints, that's where the dirty-nailed God does His work of creating and sustaining faith—the faith through which Christ, the Victor over death, gives His Christians their own victory over death, who will on the Last Day rise in *their bodies* to eternal life.



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 JUNE

LSB 693 “O Holy Spirit, Grant Us Grace”

From the last couple of Sundays in Easter to Pentecost and Holy Trinity, we learn about the person and work of the Holy Spirit, who is God Himself, both convicting us of sin and delivering to us Christ's blessings of salvation on the cross. Luther summarizes it this way in the Small Catechism: “The Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified me and kept me in the true faith.” He does this until the last day when He will bring us to heaven and give us eternal life.

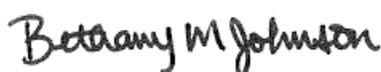
“O Holy Spirit, Grant Us Grace” (LSB 693) is a prayer to the Holy Spirit and was written by Bartholomaeus Ringwaldt (1531-99). He paired this hymn text with the Gospel for Trinity Sunday, which is about Jesus' teaching to Nicodemus about being “born again” of the Spirit. We pray in this hymn that the Holy Spirit would grant us grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Stanza 1 is a prayer that we would embrace and serve Jesus by faith and the fervent love that flows from it, just as we pray in the liturgy following our reception of the Lord's Supper: “We implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another” (LSB p. 201). The fervent love described here flows from the living and active faith sustained by Word and Sacrament. The Holy Spirit delivers forgiveness of sins from the cross to the baptized. We are rich in Christ, even at our death, because we have eternal life.

Stanza 2 is a prayer that we may treasure God's saving Word with faithful hearts, just as Mary treasured in her heart the joy of Christ born to save us. We pray in this stanza that we would die to sin, rise with new life created by Christ, and then produce flourishing fruits of good works God has prepared for us to do. The “new grace in richest measure” is found in the body and blood of Jesus, our “Bread of Life,” who grants us forgiveness of sins.

Stanza 3 is a prayer based on 2 Timothy 4:7-8, where Paul says, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.” At our hour of death, the Holy Spirit will complete His work of salvation that began in our Baptism. We commend ourselves to God and “our souls into our Savior's hand,” so that at our death, we will obtain the “crown of life” in eternity.

In summary, we pray that we would remain steadfast in the faith by the help of the Holy Spirit until our life's end. May this be our prayer always throughout our life and even at our last hour of death. This is also a wonderful prayer for our confirmands, who have confessed the faith given to them in their Baptism and who will receive the “new grace in richest measure” in the Lord's Supper. We as the Church pray with them that we will continue to live in Christ here and in eternity by God's grace and mercy.



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FOR JUNE 2020

As you know, we have been forced to take a break from Sunday School as we took time to adjust to this new normal. Since this will continue for the immediate future, we want to make sure children of the congregation are still receiving instruction in God's Word on a weekly basis.

Preschool and *rising* Kindergarten and 1st grade children will receive a packet of Sunday School materials.

We have added these additional resources to reach our elementary children and Middle School students. The plan is as follows:

- The materials you received start Trinity Sunday, June 7.
- Parents of *rising* 2nd and 3rd grade students will receive a video of digital instruction each week via email. These instructional videos will also be available on the St. John's website. Parents, it's imperative you view each week's lesson with your child using the video as a guide.
- *Rising* 4th through 6th grade students will receive live instruction over Zoom taught by Mrs. Kosmicki. Zoom sessions will be Saturday morning at 9:00.
- Middle School (*rising* 7th and 8th grade students) will receive live instruction over Zoom taught by Pr. Kerns. A post card has already been mailed to your Middle School student about this. These Zoom sessions will be Saturday morning at 10:00.
- These online sessions will start on Saturday, June 6. This will give the students an opportunity to have instruction on the Gospel reading for church the next day. Look for future communication via email regarding how to log-in to these Zoom sessions.

2020 RHYTHM OF FAITH MUSIC CAMP

"God's Own Child I Gladly Say It"

*****moved to: July 13-17, 9:00-11:30 a.m.*****

What?

This music camp, led by Bethany Johnson and Erin Grass, is a week-long opportunity to use your voice and hands to sing and play music written throughout the Church Year while learning more about music, hymnody, theology, and art. Games, snacks, and fun with friends included!

We will be following the necessary precautions to remain safe. Instruments will not be passed from child to child, non-contact activities will be occurring, and everything will be wiped at the end of the day.

Who?

Children entering grades Kindergarten-8th grade

We welcome all those who are interested in singing, playing handbells, playing a percussion instrument, and wanting to learn more about music!

When?

Monday-Friday, July 13-17, 2020
9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Where?

St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church
901 SW Fillmore, Topeka, KS

What now?

Fill out the form attached and mail to the address above, or fill out the Google Form (<https://forms.gle/Lzgf4b3d7r5zb2G8A>) by July 1. Payments by cash or check can be made prior to or on the first day, July 13.

Cost?

\$10 per child

Questions?

Please contact Bethany Johnson

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
July 6-10, 9:00a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Ages 3 through those going into 6th grade

Stay tuned for more details through email or mail regarding registration and volunteering.
Contact Andrea Kosmicki for any questions.

All necessary precautions will be used, including non-contact activities, wiping down each area after use, spaced out chairs, rotating children in the same direction to avoid crossing each other, etc.

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. Upcoming available dates include: June 14, 21 & 28; July 5 & 26; August 23; September 20 & 27.

NO SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

For Now Until Next Fall

NO MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN JUNE

There will be no monthly breakfast in June as we continue to be under the pandemic.
We pray with the Lord willing, that come July, we can join together again for our monthly breakfast.

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.

HELP THEM CELEBRATE THIS SPECIAL OCCASION

Neil and Joy Firestone will be celebrating their blessed union in marriage **70** years ago on June 4. You can help them celebrate this milestone by sending them a card. They would love to hear from you. Their home address is 2040 SW Oakley Avenue, Topeka, KS 66604.

TLS NEWS

TLS is looking for 2-3 after school care workers who can be available from 3:15-6:00 on weekdays. The duties involved are supervision of students in K-8th grades, preparing a daily snack, and organizing/cleaning the rooms moved.

DOORSTEP NEWS

For June 2020

With the COVID-19 restraints on everyone, Doorstep has continued to provide services to our neighbors in need through phone intakes. They have been assisting with food, rent, utilities, prescriptions, dental and gas vouchers. Doorstep will continue to see more people in need as this continues, as we all try to get back to 'normal'. They appreciate those who have donated food and/or money during this time to help Doorstep. The staff and food room volunteers have continued working to help our neighbors.

Doorstep is working on opening the clothing room on limited days, and by appointment only, and taking donations. Once they have something in place they will update our volunteers, board members, coordinators, member congregations and the public through their *Facebook* page... *Doorstep Inc.* You can Like and Follow them for the most up-to-date information.

Save the date...

In July, Doorstep will combine their Summer Cash Bash to raise \$20,000 and matching funds; Christmas in July to collect donations for our adopted families; and the Envista Cares Challenge where Doorstep is the charity in July! They will have one food sale fundraiser this year! They plan to take orders for **Cinnamon Rolls and Tamales September 11th – 27th**, with delivery the weekend of October 16. You can mark your calendars to stock your freezers!

Doorstep's 3rd Annual Neighbor Helping Neighbor Walk/5K Run is Sunday, October 4 at 2pm at Lake Shawnee. Plan to join them in getting some exercise around the lake, and helping raise funds for Doorstep this October. The walk/run has been moved to a Sunday afternoon this year in the hopes of competing less with other events during that time of year. Again, mark your calendars.

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.

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 your 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.



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

A PRAYER

Lord God, Heavenly Father, our Maker and Redeemer. We come before you with hopeful hearts, asking for continued blessings on our school; the teachers, principal and staff who are dedicated and passionate about educating our students and to the students and their families for their support and commitment.

We pray that TLS will continue to flourish as we move through these uncertain times. All this we ask in our Lord and Savior's Name, Amen.

TOTAL COMMITMENTS

Capital Campaign

Total Amount Committed: \$811,243 Total Pledged
Gifts Received: \$407,917 Thank you for your generous support!

THANK YOU!

↴ TLS Teacher Appreciation was held May 8 with a drive-thru celebration. To show gratitude, students and families decorated their vehicles and shared gifts with staff. The dedication the TLS teachers, staff and volunteers have for their students is amazing. Thank you families for showing your support!

TLS UPDATES

- ◆ TLS Virtual Tour
 - Teachers continue to reach out to new students/families with the new TLS virtual tour! Check it out on the TLS website or Facebook to hear more about their classrooms, instruction style, and activities.
- ◆ First Grade Teacher
 - Ms. Rachel Weinhold has accepted the call to teach first grade at Topeka Lutheran School. She has a passion for first grade students and teaching the skills of literacy. Ms. Weinhold is young, enthusiastic, and a good fit for the Topeka Lutheran School staff.

SUPPORT TOPEKA LUTHERAN TODAY! CLICK TO DONATE.

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

LUKE SAVAGE MEMORIAL GOLF BENEFIT

Hole sponsorships and/or donations for raffle gifts are welcome for the June 20th Luke Savage Memorial Golf Benefit. This is an annual TLS benefit sponsored by Darrel and Kim Savage, their family and friends. To make a gift, call Kim at (785) 640-0092 or dkmsavage@yahoo.com.

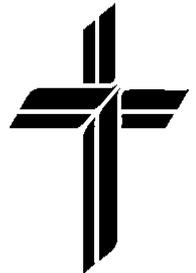
TLS BURGLARY UPDATE

TLS has received approximately \$30,000 insurance payment for damage and replacement of items from the March 5 burglary. TLS Foundation also received generous donations from many individuals to help with immediate expenses. Damaged doors have been replaced, and stolen Chromebooks have been replaced and were assigned to third and fourth grade students for on-line learning. On April 16 a second burglary attempt was made, resulting in arrest of one individual. TLS Board is in process of reviewing bids for security improvements for approval in June. Additional updates will be provided in upcoming weeks.

To
 God
be the
 GLORY



Great Things He Hath Done!



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)