



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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JULY 2020

RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO PRESS IT



If there were a button like this somewhere, I'd certainly be tempted to push it. My bet is, you would too. No one in their right mind wants to repeat A.D. 2020. (Yet, you would not know this from the chorus of American Evangelical preachers, who back in January, proclaimed A.D. 2020 as the best year of our lives.)

What if there were a button like the one pictured? What if when you pressed it, it would actually reset the world? What would that "reset world" look like?

For starters, everyone on earth would be eliminated. Gone without a trace—no bones, no teeth, no artificial knees or hips to be found. The current population would be reduced to only two people: one man and one woman. I know you think you might be one of the two—but this man and this woman are without sin. Pressing this button means you eliminate yourself, for you were born with sin. Second, to push this button means everything ever made by Mankind would disappear, without a trace of ever existing. Future archaeologists would never discover the buildings, roads, restaurants or monuments that we currently see.

Everything we use and enjoy all vanish instantly. Moreover, every field that has ever been cleared would reconstitute back to wilderness. All fields become forests. So, to press this button, though tempting given our present situation, would instantly bring two people (neither of which are you), who stand in a vast, uncharted wilderness, alone, with God. Being alone with God might be the worst part. But these two would discover a compassionate God, who would graciously meet with them and give instruction—instruction as to what to do, and what not to do.

Wait a minute! Does this sound familiar? It should. Resetting the world takes us back to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden with God who walked with them on a regular basis. This may sound idyllic, but if this button were pressed and the world reset, everything would end up *exactly as we have it right now*. Nothing would be different. After pressing it, the time of tranquility and peace would eventually give way to wars, rumors of war, nation rising against nation, kingdoms against kingdoms, famines, pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places, just as the Bible says. All of these calamities would come about, exactly as history records it now, all because of sin. So, for the love of Lassie, **DO NOT PRESS THIS BUTTON!** It is the most foolish thing one could ever do, for it would be a waste of time, bringing us back to precisely where we are now, with a tumultuous government, the fear of pandemic, and the chaos of unchecked lawlessness in our cities in A.D. 2020.

There is only One who gets to push this button. It is Christ Jesus, our Lord—who longs to do so. And when He does, it will not reset the world back to the Garden with Adam and Eve. Rather, it will thrust all of the dead out of their graves, and those who happen to be alive at the time it is pressed will be instantly transformed. Both the

newly raised and the newly transformed will stand in glorified bodies (a body without sin and disease) upon a new Earth under a new Heaven. Everything *will be* transformed. Even the wicked will experience a transformation, briefly...before being separated from God's flock, and thrown into Hell with the Devil and his angels.

As a baptized child of God, this is your future. The button, metaphorically speaking, will be pressed. I do not say this because I am a prophet prognosticating on the future, but because I have read the end of the book. When Jesus pushes the button it will be better than Adam and Eve starting all over in the Garden. For it includes you. Sinless. In a new earth. Where Christ meets with you, and all the saints.



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, Andrea Kosmicki

HYMN OF THE MONTH FOR JULY

LSB 696 “O God, My Faithful God”

By *Bethany Johnson*

The Holy Spirit desires to work and accomplish conversion and renewal in us. Through preaching and meditation on His Word God kindles faith and other godly virtues in us. They are the Holy Spirit's gifts and works alone. Therefore, this teaching directs us to the means that the Holy Spirit desires to begin and do this. It also teaches us about how those gifts are preserved, strengthened, and increased. It warns us that we should not let God's grace be bestowed on us in vain, but diligently use it and ponder how great a sin it is to hinder and resist such works of the Holy Spirit. (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration II 71-72)

The hymn, “O God, My Faithful God” (LSB 696), is a prayer that God would continue to guide us in our daily life as a Christian. Sanctification, which includes holy living, is God's will for us. He accomplishes this in us by giving us His Holy Spirit to create faith in our heart and to produce good works that flow from it. Therefore this life of holy living is a gift that is given through the means of grace: Word and Sacrament. Our life of sanctification is not to gain salvation; rather, it is a response of love and thanks for God's gift of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Johann Hermann, who penned this text, wrote it during the most difficult time of his life. Not only was the Thirty Years War going on, but he was also stricken with various bodily afflictions, including a throat infection that prevented him from preaching. Hermann's prayer to God and cry of faith in this hymn is founded upon God's faithfulness to him through Christ. Stanza 1 acknowledges this faithfulness, where he calls out to “God, my faithful God” who continually bestows gifts of a “healthy frame,” a “conscience free from blame,” and a “soul unstained by sin.” While sin brings illness, trouble, and sinful deeds, the forgiveness of sins strengthens and restores us.

Stanza 2 is a prayer that God would give us strength in our vocations. Our greatest success in life is not determined by the world's standards of fame, wins, or monetary gains; rather, it is accomplishing that which He calls us to do in our vocations. We then pray in stanzas 3-4 that we would not hurt our neighbor with our words but instead use our words to serve and strengthen our neighbor. There are times, however, when we “must and ought to speak” with words of rebuke when it is our place to do so, followed then with God's grace.

Stanzas 5-6 focuses on our mortality, as we pray to be faithful unto death with the hope for the resurrection and eternal life. As Christians we view death as a “quiet resting place” where we will “sleep in peace.” This hymn ends with the joyful message of “all the dead” waking when we will hear God’s voice and follow Him into the eternal joys of heaven.

Our life of holy living will never be perfect, as we are in need of daily repentance. But it is to be founded upon God’s faithfulness to us in His Word as He gives to us salvation and set us apart as God’s people fulfilling His will with love and service to the neighbor. This “fountain ever flowing” through Word and Sacrament is our source of life, and we pray that we would not resist these gifts but continue to receive them and use them in our daily vocations.

JULY VOTER’S MEETING

The Church Council determined that we plan to have the July Voter’s Meeting in the Courtyard. We will comply with all county guidelines. More details to come.

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

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

VBS is quickly approaching. We are just about a week away! Our theme for this year is Let Us Pray for elementary aged students and Noah’s Ark for preschool aged students. We are planning on having in-person VBS with precautions. VBS is for all children age 3 through those entering 6th grade. Please join us July 6-10 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Registration can be completed through the following link or contacting the church office.

Volunteers are still needed. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Andrea Kosmicki (akosmicki85@gmail.com) or complete information on the VBS Mate website by following this link. <https://vbsmate.com/events/stjohnstopeka/19613>

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: July 5 & 26; August 23; September 20 & 27; October 31; November 22 & 26.

NO MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN JULY

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

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 July 2020

This July Doorstep is taking all of their summer events and rolling them into one month! They have Christmas in July collections for their adopted families this December, their 2nd Annual Summer Cash Bash, and this year Doorstep is the Envista Cares charity for July!

Last December Doorstep assisted 277 households involving 883 individuals with Christmas gifts and food. Each year they celebrate "Christmas in July" to get a jump start on collecting new items for our 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 800+ individuals this December through the Christmas Bureau. 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 are in need of basic items. They are so happy to receive a new set of dishes, new sheets, pots and pans, or a crockpot! They give every family a blanket or quilt.

Each school aged child they adopt receives school supplies and a backpack, and each household 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.

You can bring your Christmas donations to worship in July (if your congregation is open), or to Doorstep, Monday – Friday, 8am – 3pm.

Doorstep's 2nd Annual Summer Cash Bash has the same anonymous donor offering up \$8,000 in match money if we can raise \$20,000 during the month of July in donations! To make it even better, Envista Credit Union is making Doorstep the Envista Cares charity in July and will match \$2,500 in donations!

During this rough year of COVID-19, help Doorstep have a great July and push them on through to the end of the year. Please support the Christmas Store with your generous donations!

Save the date...

Doorstep plans to take orders for **Cinnamon Rolls and Tamales September 11 - 27**, 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.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FOR JULY 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.





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

A PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, whose we are and whom we serve. As the troubled times continue in our lives, we are so thankful that You never change and that You always love us. You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ to die in our place and for our sins. As we start gearing up for another school year at TLS, we ask that You continue to watch over us, guide and bless our principal, teachers, and staff as they prepare for another year of schooling our children that You have entrusted to us. And continue to be the source of hope to our TLS students and their families as they look forward to a new year of classes.

All this, we ask for Christ's sake, Amen.

TOTAL COMMITMENTS

Capital Campaign

Total Amount Committed: \$811,243 Total Pledged

Gifts Received: \$420,020

Thank you to those families who made a new gift to the campaign!

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

- ◆ Three *new* water fountains have been installed. Thank you to
 - PTL and the 8th grade class for this improvement!
- ◆ New classroom doors have been installed.

TLS UPDATES

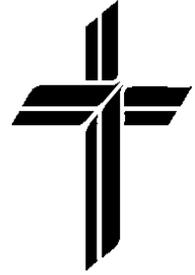
- ◆ Keeping kids engaged this summer!
 - Camp Invention July 6-10
 - July 20-24 & July 27-31 TLS
 - Reading Camp
 - July 20-24 & July 27-31 TLS
- ◆ Virtual Tour
 - Teachers continue to reach out to new students/families with the new TLS virtual tour! Check it out on the TLS website or Facebook to hear more about their classrooms, instruction style, and activities.
- ◆ First Grade Teacher
 - Ms. Rachel Weinhold, the new 1st grade teacher, will be arriving in Topeka late June. Ms. Weinhold is young, enthusiastic, and a good fit for the Topeka Lutheran School staff.

SUPPORT TOPEKA LUTHERAN TODAY! CLICK TO DONATE.

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

LUKE SAVAGE MEMORIAL GOLF BENEFIT

The Luke Savage Memorial Golf Benefit was on held on June 20th. This annual TLS benefit is sponsored by Darrel and Kim Savage, their family and friends. The event was a huge success with over 30 teams attending! Stay tuned to the August newsletter for the grand total that was raised. Thank you to the Savages and all the teams that supported this event!



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)