



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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NOVEMBER 2020

AND GOD SAID, “LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS.”

From this we know Adam was made in the image of God (Lat.: *imago dei*). Eve was too. This is the first state, of which Luther wrote, “Therefore the image of God, according to which Adam was created, was something far more distinguished and excellent, since obviously no leprosy of sin adhered either to his reason or to his will. Both his inner and his outer sensations were all of the purest kind. His intellect was the clearest, his memory was the best, and his will was the most straightforward—all in the most beautiful tranquility of mind, without any fear of death and without any anxiety. To these inner qualities came also those most beautiful and superb qualities of body and of all the limbs, qualities in which he surpassed all the remaining living creatures. I am fully convinced that before Adam’s sin his eyes were so sharp and clear that they surpassed those of the lynx and eagle. He was stronger than the lions and the bears, whose strength is very great; and he handled them the way we handle puppies. Adam would not have known Eve except in the most unembarrassed attitude toward God, with a will obedient to God, and without any evil thought. Therefore my understanding of the image of God is this: that Adam had it in his being and that he not only knew God and believed that He was good, but that he also lived a life that was wholly godly; that is, he was without the fear of death or of any other danger, and was content with God’s favor. In this form it reveals itself in the instance of Eve, who speaks with the serpent without any fear, as we do with a lamb or a dog” (*Commentary on Genesis*, AE 1:62-63).

Furthermore, Adam had a blissful knowledge of God, with perfect righteousness and true holiness of life. There was no evil. Adam and Eve were innocent, hence, not ashamed of their nakedness. Both knew the will of God and were fully able to conform to it in thought, word, and deed.

Yet, as you know, something drastic happened. As Mueller points out in his *Christian Dogmatics*, “Therefore we declare on the basis of Scripture that man through the Fall has entirely lost the image of God in its proper sense, that is, his concrete wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, so that his intellect now is veiled in spiritual darkness, (1 Corinthians 2:14), and his will is opposed to God (Romans 8:7).” (J.T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, 207).

The second state of Man is being made in the likeness of his father. For instance, Genesis 5:1-3 states, *This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, **after his image**, and named him Seth.* Seth is not made in the image of God. Seth is made in the image of Adam. Another genealogy, from Luke 3 records, *Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli...* The conclusion of Jesus’ genealogy states, *the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.* Only Christ and Adam are said to be in the image of God, and not an earthly father like the others. Though human life has dignity, all are in Adam’s fallen likeness.

Book of Concord: Formula, Solid Declaration on Original Sin. “Original sin (in human nature) is not just this entire absence of all good in spiritual, divine things. Original sin is more than the lost image of God in mankind; it is at the same time also a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, mysterious, and unspeakable corruption of the entire human nature and all its powers.”

Many insist that the *imago* is still intact, citing certain attributes of the human as being clear testimonies of it, such as rationality, creativity, and intellect, *etc.* They argue, the *imago dei* is partially intact but grievously damaged, saying as well that that even though Man's moral power and ethical strength received a blow from Adam's example; they have not been seriously endangered.

Supporting the *imago dei* remaining in Mankind after the Fall reference is made to Genesis 9:6 and James 3:9. However, of these verses, Mueller states, "Luther and other dogmaticians (Phillip, Hofmann) explain these verses as describing Man as he was originally and as he should again become through faith in Jesus Christ" (Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, 207).

Even though Mankind possess certain attributes that God has does not mean we are made in the image of God, for even Satan displays rationality and intellect. Surely, Satan is not made in the image of God. Luther states, "I am afraid that since the loss of this image through sin we cannot understand it to any extent. Memory, will, and mind we have; indeed, but they are most depraved and most seriously weakened, yes, to put it more clearly, they are utterly leprous and unclean." (*Commentary on Genesis*, AE 1:61).

The third state of Mankind is the restoration of the divine image through regeneration. As Dr. Jeff Gibbs writes, "... the image of God was completely lost to humanity in the fall and is only restored in Christ, who himself is the image of God (Col. 1:18)." (*Concordia Journal*, Winter 2020, 49) Note the following verses:

2 Corinthians 3:18—*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

Colossians 3:10—*...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.*

Ephesians 4:24—*...and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Luther states, "In this manner this image of the new creature begins to be restored by the Gospel in this life, but it will not be finished in this life. But when it is finished in the kingdom of heaven, then the will will be truly free and good, the mind truly enlightened, and the memory persistent. Then it will also happen that all the other creatures will be under our rule to a greater degree than they were in Adam's Paradise. *LW, Genesis*, 65.

The fourth state of Mankind is the consummation of all things, not fully realized until the Last Day. This is the glorified state we yearn for. Note the following verses:

1 John 3:2—*Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

Psalms 17:15—*As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.*

Romans 8:18-23—*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

These are the four-fold states of Mankind, of which we respond with thanks and praise. Thanks be to God for sending Jesus Christ to forgive our sins, give us eternal life and restore us to the image of God.

If you are interested in hearing more about this subject go to www.thepluckedchicken.com and look for the episode entitled, *Imago Dei*.

Pastor D. M. Kerns

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

ONGOING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS AT ST. JOHN’S

- Congregants and pastors are masked
- Communion ware is sanitized after every use
- Pastors wash their hands in rubbing alcohol immediately before administering communion
- Seating observes social distancing
- Seating in nave is staggered from one Divine Service to the next to reduce surface contamination; seating in courtyard is sanitized between uses
- The hymnbook you use in the Divine Service you attend hasn’t been touched for an entire week; COVID dies after 72 hours
- Courtyard uses only bulletins
- SignUpGenius and multiple Divine Services ensure attendance at each Divine Service at or below social-distancing maximum
- Divine Service is shortened
- Ingress and egress is expedited—no gathering in confined spaces

By God’s providential grace, these measures have prevented a single instance of the spread of COVID at St. John’s. God be praised!

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY AND YOUTH & ADULT CATECHESIS 2020-2021

For the foreseeable future we’ll have to continue to focus on just core functions—and that has an impact on Sound Words Academy. We are with regrets presently unable to have our regular dinner, Rhythm of Faith, Jr. Lutherans, the adult Bible study and Young Adults & College students (YACS / LCMS-U).

That said, we continue to use Wednesday evenings for Youth and Adult Catechesis. The schedule for Wednesday evenings begins at 5:55 and ends around 7:35. In the 5:55-6:50 period YCat I meets separately, YCat II meets separately, and Adult Catechesis meets separately. From 7:00 till 7:35 catechesis for all catechumens (YCat I, YCat II, and Adult Catechesis) will meet together in the nave for Evening Prayer. Evening Prayer is also open to other members of the congregation who’d like to attend. With a six-foot-social-distancing capacity of 72, we hope that others in the congregation will look forward to this opportunity to gather with all the catechumens.

Catechesis and Evening Prayer began on Wednesday evening, 16 September, but it is still not too late to sign up for these sessions. Please enter by the south / aka glass / aka Luther Hall doors and arrive by 5:50 so that we can start classes on time.

We look forward to seeing catechumens at 5:50 and other congregation members at 7:00 for Evening Prayer.

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. Thank you for showing compassion to your brothers and sisters in Christ. If you would be willing to deliver poinsettias during the Christmas season, please contact the church office.

2021 BUDGET HEARING

A budget hearing is planned for Sunday, November 15 between services at 10 a.m. in Luther Hall. The purpose of this meeting is to hear what is being proposed to bring before the Voters for final approval on Sunday, November 22. Questions are encouraged, but no formal action will be taken at the hearing.

NOVEMBER VOTER'S MEETING

There will be a Voters Meeting Sunday, November 22. Items of business will include:

- Reports from Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Board Chairs
- Presentations of the Proposed 2021 Congregational Budget for voter approval.
- Presentation of nominees for congregational officers and board members for 2021.

The Church Council in their October meeting will determine the optimal meeting time, location and type of meeting to provide optimal safety to attendees due to the on-going corona virus pandemic. Options being considered include an electronic Zoom-type meeting as was done in April; an in-person meeting like we did in July or a combination of in-person and an electronic meeting. Even having a meeting outside, weather permitting, is on the table. We may even choose to change the time to the 10 am Sunday School hour and hold the meeting in Luther Hall in an attempt to increase attendance. Protecting congregation members from exposure to the COVID-19 virus while also involving as many as possible in the decisions of the congregation will be weighed. Anyone is welcome to attend the meeting, but only voting members will be permitted to vote. The SignUpGenius will likely be used if we need to limit attendance for compliance with coronavirus health restrictions. An electronic meeting will use an email link for sign up like we did in April.

Look for the final decision of the meeting time and location in your email prior to the meeting.

WOMEN'S GATHERING

Please attend the upcoming Women's Gathering November 8 at 2 pm. Come and enjoy an afternoon of Christian fellowship with other Lutheran women in mission, working together as one to do some Card Making for Shut

In's. It is fairly simple and we are in need of many happy hearts and hands to make this happen. Please also bring a can good or two to donate to Doorstep. We hope to see many women for a delightful afternoon together. Snacks will be provided. We will meet in Luther Hall and please use the South Church entrance. We will be practicing Social Distancing so don't forget you mask.

LUTHERAN FINE ARTS COUNCIL

The Lutheran Fine Arts Council of Topeka (LFACT) programs have, like most everything else, been put on hold due to the highly contagious virus that has been affecting every part of our lives.

Since 1980, LFACT has been proclaiming the Gospel through the fine arts, with more than 100 events. These offerings have included choirs and instrumental groups from Lutheran colleges and universities, small groups and individual musicians along with art shows and various workshops for children and adults. Although this work has been supported by the Shawnee County Lutheran congregations, a change was recently made to include Lutheran churches outside of the county to reach more people. For these past 40 years, these events have been free, funded by free-will offerings and generous donations.

As soon as we can safely hold events, we will do so. Even though we are not currently active, we welcome your donations for the future. Brochures have been shared with your church with donation information in them. We are continuing to share posts of music from our colleges, and information about artists on the Lutheran Fine Arts Council of Topeka Facebook page. Please like us, and invite others to do so.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Looking ahead, winter will be here before we know it. Ugh! (if you're Pr. Kerns) Hurray! (if you're Pr. Bruss) St. John's is looking for volunteers to help shovel snow on Sunday mornings if needed. If you would be willing to help contact the church office at 354-7132.

HYMN OF THE MONTH FOR NOVEMBER

By *Bethany Johnson*

“The Day Is Surely Drawing Near” (*LSB* 508)

As the end of the Church Year draws to a close, we spend the last three Sundays learning what it means to be “vigilant and ready” for when the Last Day will arrive. What does it mean to “be ready”? Simply put, it means to remain in the faith to which you were baptized. The Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the Christian church on earth. Those who receive this faith where God has promised to sustain it through Word and Sacrament will receive the crown of life. On the other hand, there is a solemn warning for those who have not yet come to faith or who have rejected this faith given to them.

“The Day Is Surely Drawing Near” is the hymn of the day for the Second Last Sunday of the Church Year. The Gospel reading for that Sunday is Matthew 25:31-46, where we learn that God “will set the sheep (righteous) on His right hand, but the goats (unbelievers) on the left.” The hymn reflects this as it describes what will happen on Judgment Day, issues a warning to those who despise God’s Word, and offers comfort to those who live in Christ.

The text of this hymn was written by an anonymous hymn writer in 1565, but Bartholomous Ringwaldt, a Lutheran pastor, recovered it in 1586. This hymn is based on a sequence from a medieval Mass for the Dead. The sequence, “dies irae, dies illa” means “day of wrath, that day,” and it reveals the solemn warning for those who despise God’s Word and live in unrepentant sin, and thus receive eternal separation from Christ on the Last Day.

Stanzas 1 and 2 describe “that day” (Judgment Day), when Christ will come in all His power, with flames ravaging earth, the earth shaking, and the trumpet sounding to all those who are “sleeping” beneath the ground. Those who are dead in Christ will rise first, and then all Christians who are living will be changed and given the crown of life. Stanza 3 describes the “books” as human activity, “what each has done, both great and small,” meaning the good works that Christians have accomplished by Christ alone. Though these good works do not merit their salvation, they reflect the faith we have in Christ that produces works of love toward the neighbor.

Stanza 4 reveals the hard truth – God’s law – to those who despise God’s Word and “scorned the Lord,” while idolizing their carnal pleasures and earthly treasures. They will stand in fear and trembling before Christ and then be delivered to Satan. Stanzas 5-7, on the other hand, bring the comfort of the Gospel and the confidence we have Christ’s death and resurrection for us. While we are baptized children in Christ, Satan cannot threaten us. We will have the joy of seeing Christ face to face with all the saints in heaven. The hymn ends with a fervent prayer that Christ would “hasten our salvation” and “make us free from death and every evil.” Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

ST. JOHN’S FINANCIAL REPORT THRU SEPTEMBER 2020

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
YTD Income	\$545,687	\$505,359*	-\$40,328
YTD Expense	\$559,040	\$540,351	-\$18,689
YTD Income-Expense (\$13,353)		(\$34,992)	

*Does not include the Payroll Protection Loan the church received

ST. JOHN’S WOMEN’S LEAGUE

The Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML) is an official auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. For over 77 years, the LWML has focused on affirming each woman’s relationship with Christ, encouraging and equipping women to live out their Christian lives in active mission ministries and to support global missions.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League is to assist each woman of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world.

Vision Statement

The LWML is the leading group for LCMS women where each woman is welcomed and encouraged to use her unique God-given gifts as she supports global missions and serves the Lord with gladness.

The Lutheran World Relief annual report this year includes only quilts that were made, as there were no collections from congregational members for Health or School Kits, due to the coronavirus. Twenty-five quilts were sent to LWR (only 5 less than last year!), thanks to the diligent efforts of Rose Addington, Linda Frye, and Andrea Miller, and several ladies who generously give their time to help tie the quilts. Additional blankets will be given to Doorstep, Topeka Rescue Mission, and Haskell Light Ministries. If you are interested in this mission effort, please contact *Nancy Scheuerman*.

Due to Covid 19 and the uncertainty in the next few months, St. John's Women's League will not have our annual Christmas Bazaar Luncheon. This past year we were able to distribute over \$9,300.00 to charities and missions from Bazaar proceeds. We would like to be able to support some of these causes again this year even though we can't have a luncheon. We are asking our church members for monetary donations to our non-luncheon to help us fund these needs. If you bought tickets, provided a pie, or donated in the past, please consider contributing the cost of the pie or tickets to help us fund worthy causes. All contributions will be given to a charity or mission.

We also plan to have a smaller version of the Bazaar on Sunday, December 6 in Luther Hall. To help us prepare, we are asking our church members to let us know what craft or baked items they expect be able to bring for the bazaar. If you can offer to bring items for the Bazaar, please contact Nancy Taylor 221-3371, Ruth Scott, 272-4971 or Marcia Wade 972-839-6682 as soon as possible. We thank you for your generous support in the past and for whatever contributions you can make this year. St. John's members will be able to shop after each worship service. We will have items available for sale. *Watch for more details in the next newsletter and inserts in the bulletins.*

It is with gratitude to God and the members and friends of St. John's LCMS that St. John's Women's League were able to share the profits from our 2019 Bargain/Bake Sale and Christmas luncheon/Bazaar. From both we profited \$13,300. Of this amount \$4,500.00 was given to Topeka Lutheran School and the remainder was divided among 25 other Missions, both local and abroad. We also sent \$1,573.06 in mites to the Kansas District and National LWML's for other missions projects. "We pray that God will continue to bless and guide our members." Our mission focus for the Mini-Bazaar proceeds be directed to: Church Worker Fund (Joint Seminary Fund), Topeka Lutheran School, Topeka Rescue Mission, and Lutheran World Relief.

ADULT AND HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDIES: THE BIG BIBLE BRUSH UP

The Big Bible Brush-Up is well under way. We are taking adults and high school students through every major story and event of the Bible, tracing the work of God from beginning to end in chronological order. The adult class meets in Luther Hall while High School students meet in Rm. 202.

OTHER SUNDAY CLASSES:

Middle School students meet in the Undercroft as they continue working through their curriculum that follows the church year. This class is taught by Kathy Bartels.

Dennis Hintz continues his study of Romans, which meets in the elevator vestibule on the lowermost level. If you are looking for a smaller class which allows more discussion, this is the class for you!

Know that middle and high school students plus two adult classes are not the only things we offer. Classes extend to all children as well.

Sunday School for all ages is held at the 10:00 a.m. time slot.

If you have any questions, contact the church office or speak with Pastor Bruss, Pastor Kerns, or Dennis Hintz, or Mrs. Kosmicki.

2020 FLOWER CALENDAR

All dates are filled for the 2020 Calendar. We will let everyone know when we have the 2021 calendar up. Thanks to everyone who provided flowers for all our services in 2020.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2020 AT 2 A.M.

Set your clocks back before you go to bed Saturday evening, October 30

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, \$1244 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

DOORSTEP NEWS

This year has certainly been a different one! Doorstep's 3rd Annual Neighbor Helping Neighbor Walk/5K Fun Run became a virtual event. They had half the number of participants as previous years. Still they made \$5,900 thanks to their sponsors, and those who did participate. However, they did not meet their goal of \$9,000, and they also had to cancel the cinnamon rolls and tamales sale, losing more event income for 2020.

Doorstep appreciates everyone and their member congregations who have continued to bring in food to stock the pantry and sending monetary donations to keep their doors open and helping even more people in need during this time of COVID-19.

Their focus now is this year's version of the Christmas Store. It will not be a Store this year where the clients they adopt through the Christmas Bureau come in and shop for the families. This year Doorstep is working even more closely with the Christmas Bureau, United Way, Topeka Rescue Mission and the community by streamlining how they are approaching Christmas adoptions. Doorstep will still adopt the 260 households and 800+ individuals like before, but what and how they provide food and gifts will change. In 2020, adopted families will receive a \$15 gift card for each family member, our regular Christmas food order, a health kit, and a blanket or quilt.

What they need for Christmas this year is: Towel sets (bath, hand, washcloth), Shampoo/Conditioner, Combs, Bar Soap, Toothbrushes, Toothpaste, Full/Queen and King Blankets only, **and money**. They need money to purchase the gift cards, the food, and any of the above items not donated. Where they have asked for items in years past, please send a check or go to their website (www.doorstoptopeka.org) to donate by credit card.

All the items they have collected to date will be saved for next year. This is the best way to reduce the number of people they need, and the number of people who are working together at one time. They know it is not ideal, but with COVID, nothing is normal this year, and unfortunately, the Christmas Store process will not be either. Please help where you can.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES HAVE RESUMED

We have worked hard and used out-of-the-box thinking in order to create a schedule that would allow Sunday School to resume in person. We are offering our regular Sunday School classes through 8th grade in the 10:00 – 10:45 period. If you have any questions, contact the church office or speak with Pastor Bruss, Pastor Kerns, or Mrs. Kosmicki

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

This only applies to members who are at least 70 ½ and are required to withdraw funds from their retirement accounts. **However**, because of the Covid situation, the **IRS** is not requiring individuals to make these withdrawals for 2020. But for those of you who have used these withdrawals as a way to fulfil part or all of your charitable gift to the church, **you can still do so.** Typically, 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

Campaign Newsletter November 2020



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

A PRAYER

Dear Father in Heaven, as we work to double the number of participants in our Grow God’s Children Campaign in the coming weeks, we ask for your blessings on our effort to do so. We are so thankful that classes at TLS are going well and the children and staff are staying healthy and safe as we continue to bring the message of salvation to them. Continue to direct and guide all the families connected to TLS. All this we ask in Jesus’ name, Amen



SUPPORT TOPEKA LUTHERAN TODAY! CLICK TO DONATE.

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

TOTAL COMMITMENTS

Capital Campaign (GGC) Fund

Total Amount Committed: \$818,963 Total Pledged Gifts Received: \$479,641 Thank you to all who faithfully continue to make your pledged gift to this important campaign! To those who have not yet submitted your gift, we would love to hear from you! Thank you to all who sent in gifts for the Grant-in-Aid Fund, as a total of \$43,500 has been received which will provide additional funds to TLS families for tuition assistance.

TLS UPDATE

TLS Sunday November 8 at Christ Lutheran Church and November 15 at Faith Lutheran Church.

Outdoor Classroom We are excited for another TLS edition with an outdoor learning space. This special outdoor classroom is just getting started and we could use your help! Contact Principal Francik for details and donation inquiries.

Picnic Tables The outdoor tables are installed! Thank you to everyone who has contributed funds for this project. Thank you to Byron Jones, Matt Caleb and Curt Loupe for installing.

Time To Come Back To Church!



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)