



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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JULY 2021

DOES DOCTRINE MATTER?

While in Charlotte, I saw that Gwen Shamblin Lara had died in a plane crash. The plane went down in Percy Priest Lake, just outside of Nashville. Shamblin's husband (Joe Lara) was piloting the private plane, and on board with them were several staff members from their church. Sadly, everyone on board the plane died.

I recalled Shamblin's name from the late 1990's. As a trained dietician, she was the author and presenter of a wildly popular dieting philosophy called "Weigh-Down Workshop." This small group study found its way into tens of thousands of churches in America.

As I read of her death, I did not know that she founded her own church, called Remnant Fellowship Church. Originally, Shamblin's husband was the pastor, but after their divorce, she became the pastor. I couldn't resist. With an online video archive of her sermons, I started watching.

I cannot explain how bizarre they are. First, the congregation stands and applauds when she steps on the stage. While she preached, soft organ music would constantly play in the background. Pastor Bruss and I call this "mood music." The music played from the time she walked out till the time she was finished.

Regardless of her theatrics I was interested in her doctrine. How could a woman who advocates a simple approach to food and health form her own church? What was she teaching these little lambs? Gratefully, one does not have to do a deep dive to find out. Gwen Shamblin was unashamedly against the doctrine of the Trinity. I viewed a half-dozen of her sermons which all reference her claim that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is not only a false teaching, but that it is "disgusting and distracting." She once stated in a weekly e-mail communiqué, "As a ministry, we believe in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. However, the Bible does not use the word 'trinity' and our feeling is that the word 'trinity' implies equality in leadership, or shared Lordship. It is clear that the scriptures teach that Jesus is the Son of God and that God sends the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not send God anywhere. God is clearly the Head." Every sermon she preached had some swipe at Trinitarian belief, leading Don Veinot Jr., president of the apologetics ministry Midwest Christian Outreach to say, "Shamblin's views are closer to that of Jehovah's Witnesses than anything resembling the historic biblical faith."

As her views became more publicized, Shamblin received considerable backlash. Future book deals and projects were cancelled, along with her popular radio broadcast in many different outlets. But this did not stop her from repeatedly teaching this heresy. Notice what Shamblin said about the Nicene Creed:

Three hundred years past the death of Christ, a council met in Nicea, and they started developing a totally new concept that was both foreign to the Jews and the early Christians. There were not books written on the essence of God, nor were there any controversies, for everyone knew that God was God and that a Messiah would come. There was no discussion of three heads, three “persons” or three anything. God had never been referred to as a person or a “triune being.” There was no need for debate, given that this concept never crossed anyone’s mind until 325 AD. Since then, there have been volumes to explain this new creed. Why would it take volumes? The reason is because it is inexplicable in the light of the Word of God.

Understanding the essence of God is deemed a “mystery” by Trinitarians because, again, there are so many contradictions in the Word of God to what they are trying to teach. However, the most hypocritical practice of all is that a man-made mystery and creed (created in 325 AD and not included in the Word of God) is the “critical doctrine” for deciding who is “in” or “out” of Christianity.

She even warned Trinitarians,

“Repent now from believing that God and Jesus are the same being. This is an abomination. What has happened to the New Testament teaching? Why have we let over 17 centuries go by without putting a stop to this madness?God cannot bless such false teachings.”

In the sermons I viewed, no mention was given to passages such as Matthew 28:19, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit . . .*” Or, 2 Corinthians 13:14, “*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.*” Moreover, there are plenty of other passages to choose from.

Investigating this from a simple headline about Shamblin’s tragic death made me recall the last portion of the Athanasian Creed, which we at church confessed recently:

Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man. He is God, begotten from the substance of the Father before all ages; And He is man, born from the substance of His mother in this age: Perfect God and perfect man, composed of a rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father with respect to His divinity, less than the Father with respect to His humanity. Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ: One, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, Ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead. At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds. And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire. This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.

So, does doctrine matter? It does. Now, due to her sudden death, Gwen Shamblin Lara stands before her Maker (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) to answer for her heretical beliefs and teaching.

David M. Keens

Senior Pastor - Rev. J. S. Bruss, ext. 104
Associate Pastor – Rev. D. M. Kerns, ext. 101
Kantor - Bethany M. Johnson
TLS Teachers - Andrea Kosmicki, Joshua Grass, Erin Grass

BACK TO NORMAL[-ISH]

St. John's has returned to normal[-ish] for our Divine Services since May 30. We welcome everyone, as we continue to have respect for our neighbors as we worship our Lord. Below is what we are now conducting during our services.

- restored the normal Sunday schedule of 2 Divine Services—one at 8:00 and one at 11:00—with Sunday School and Bible classes starting at 9:45. Note that the early Divine Service is no longer at 8:15, but 8:00. This allows a nice bit of time for socializing prior to the start of Sunday School. Coffee and donuts are offered in the Courtyard at 9:15.
- both the chalice and individual glasses are offered on Sundays and festivals. We plan ultimately to restore the pre-C-19 usage of reserving 3 Divine Services per month for individual glasses alone, with 5 (or 7) for chalice only, but that will come later.
- begin kneeling again to receive the Sacrament at all Sunday and festival Divine Services in the nave.
- have masking optional for all Sunday and festival Divine Services and other activities at church. If you want to wear your mask, please do. If not, have regard for your neighbor. Smaller groups and board meetings in enclosed spaces or close proximity will be left to determine by majority vote whether they'd like everyone to mask for their meetings or not.
- no longer require social distancing.
- drop the use of SignUpGenius for Sunday and festival Divine Services

Let's work together on this. "Let each of you look not only to his own interests,
but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4).

HYMN OF THE MONTH FOR JULY

“Sing Praise to God the Highest Good” (LSB 819)

While we live on this earth, we may put much value and “good” in earthly gain and glory. However, our “highest good” as Christians is Christ Himself and living in Him as we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation through Him alone. We live as God's baptized children, who, as a result of what He has done for us, can't help but sing aloud the wondrous story of salvation for all to hear. In Psalm 92:1, the psalmist extols us to “sing to the Lord a new song...tell of His salvation from day to day.” This “new song” is the good news of salvation for sinners, and we are called to sing this joyful song with thanksgiving and praise.

“Sing Praise to God the Highest Good” (LSB 819) was written by Johann Jacob Schutz, a devoted lawyer in 17th century Germany. He was what you may call a “lay theologian” who wrote this hymn to express the wondrous works that God has done in creation and on the cross for us. This hymn was very well-received and regularly sung by congregations. Its repeated phrase at the end of every stanza is delightful to hear and to sing over and over again: “To God all praise and glory.”

Stanza 1 attributes this praise to God and acknowledges Him as the “highest good,” the “author of creation,” and the “God of love.” To praise God is to proclaim who He is and what He has done, and this stanza begins the hymn by doing just that. It points to God as both our Creator and Redeemer who not only gave us earthly life, but also heals our souls by giving us eternal life. Stanza 2 expounds on

God's power and might in creation. God continues to sustain what He has created and orders it according to what is just, good, and right, all while "His eye is never sleeping." He does all of this for the just and the unjust, for the evil and for the good, because He has compassion on all.

Stanzas 3-4 provides a wonderful imagery of God as our merciful Savior, our refuge and rock, and our peace and salvation. Like a tender mother, He guides us as we call to Him in times of distress, helplessness, and sadness. These stanzas speak of God's kingdom of grace and the blessings He gives to those who belong to Him in Christ. We have comfort in God's promises that He hears us and gives to us His peace and salvation.

Stanza 5 ends the hymn with an exhortation to all who confess Christ to praise and glorify God because of what He has done for us. We want all to hear the Gospel and know of God's power in the "wondrous story" of salvation for sinners. We also want all other idols in our lives cast aside, for God is the one true God who gives us everything we need. And, most importantly, He gives us His righteousness and salvation that He won for us on the cross and delivers to us through His Word and Sacrament. "To God all praise and glory!"

Bethany M Johnson

ADULT CATECHISM STARTING THIS FALL

Plans are underway for our next Adult Catechesis class, beginning in September, and running through early May, with a few weeks in between. Taking place Wednesday evenings from 7:45 till 8:40, this class introduces those interested in membership at St. John's—or those just interested—to the basics of our Scriptural, Evangelical-Lutheran faith, and provides a wonderful review for those who are long-time Lutherans. If you'd like to join the class or have questions, please contact Pr. Bruss (jbruss@stjlcms.org).

JULY VOTER'S MEETING

The July Voter's meeting will be held 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 26 in Luther Hall.

2021 FLOWER CALENDAR

There are available dates to provide flowers for a service. To sign up, locate the flower chart in the church office above the printer, sign your name next to the date of your choice. You may take the flowers home after the 11:00 service or by Thursday of that week. Upcoming dates available: July 11 & 18; August 22 & 29.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORK CENTER #31

Invite all who would like to be a part of our group to join us as we begin our mission work again after the COVID shut down. We have not met since 2019 but will be starting again soon. Our mission has changed somewhat, and we are still in the change mode. We were strictly tasked with distributing large print Spanish Version Bibles all over the world. But now we will also be printing and binding English Version Large Print Bibles and devotionals. Many hands make light work and good fellowship. We have short meetings with coffee and treats on our workdays. The frequency of our workdays, which typically last 4 hours or less, is uncertain and guided by the demand for the large print bibles. I anticipate a workday no more than about once every 5-6 weeks. If you are interested please contact Eileen Klumpp. **Note:** We do not need any more toilet rolls or paper towels rolls at this time.

STIMULUS FUNDS

For those individuals who have received a stimulus fund check and are in a good financial position, please consider donating a portion of the funds to charity. If you would like to donate some of your stimulus money to St. John's, the following funds (in no specific order) would be excellent choices; International Missions, Eagle Foundation (Building and Enhancement Fund), Eagle Foundation (No Specific Fund), St. John's Music Academy, Sound Words Academy, Welfare (assistance for members), Human Care (assistance for non-members) or The TLS Foundation. - The Board of Stewardship

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP: BUDGET AND RECEIPTS REPORT

In an effort to keep our congregation informed about our financial situation, the Board of Stewardship has agreed to publish monthly budget reports. These reports are designed to give you a snapshot of our congregational support of the budget adopted by the voter’s assembly for 2021. We hope that you will find this information useful. Several annual pledges have already been received in full – giving a very good financial picture to date.

YTD Projected Budget Receipts through May 2021	\$304,744
<u>Actual Receipts through May 2021</u>	<u>\$347,587</u>
Year to Date Receipts Over (Under) Budget	\$ 42,843

SUPPORT OF THE EAGLE FOUNDATION

Support of the Eagle Foundation “Building Maintenance and Enhancement Fund” that was established to address large, specific, and known future building maintenance, repairs and Capital Enhancements to the church are always welcome. If needed this fund can also be used to supplement the general operating budget. Use your Building Maintenance and Enhancement, “Eagle Foundation” envelope or write BM&E on the memo line of your check. Donations directed toward this fund are highly beneficial to the longevity of St. John’s Ev. Lutheran Church. Thanks in advance for your support.

2021 SJELC WORSHIP CONFERENCE

Saturday, August 21, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
“History and Theology of Lutheran Liturgy”

Dr. Christopher Boyd Brown, keynote speaker

Schedule, registration, and other details on our website:

<https://stjohnlcmstopeka.org/learning/worshipconf/>

This conference is for lay people, musicians, and pastors, so we encourage you to attend!

Questions? Contact Bethany Johnson (bjohnson@stjlcms.org)

HYMN FESTIVAL AT ST. JOHN’S

“Cross and Comfort” Saturday, August 21, 3:00 p.m.

Featuring hymns and choral pieces accompanied by organ, choir, trumpets, strings and timpani

Join us in singing together and proclaiming God’s Word through song!

ST. JOHN’S WOMEN’S LEAGUE

The Women’s league will be cleaning the kitchen on Wednesday, July 7 at 10 a.m. Many groups and events are returning and now using the kitchen more often. Volunteers are welcome to help.
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All women of the congregation are invited to attend our next Women’s Gathering, Sunday, July 18 at 2 p.m. at St. John’s. Meet in the undercroft (downstairs under the office) and enter through the tower doors. Quilt tying and get to know the other women of St. John’s. To make the quilts, cotton fabric and embroidery floss is needed. Thank you in advance to anyone who is able to donate.
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The Women’s League continues to collect **Best Choice labels**. Best Choice products may be purchased at Apple Market in Topeka. Ask your friends and family to save them for you. Place them in the box labeled stamps **along with any stamps you collect**. Please do not leave stamps in the church office. Money received from the labels is used for our special projects.
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Join us at the Lutheran Women in Mission Christian Life Retreat Featuring *Patti Ross, past LWML President 2015-2019* as the speaker. **“Keeping the focus on Jesus” Let us fix our eyes on Jesus...**

Hebrews 12:2. The date is November 12-13, 2021, Double Tree by Hilton, 2098 Airport Road Wichita Kansas. Registration forms are now available. Contact Nancy Taylor by email: ntaylor713@aol.com. This is open to all women of the congregation and friends. Early registration ends September 28.

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The Annual Bargain and Bake sale will take place Thursday, August 19, 7:30-5 p.m. and Friday, August 20, 8-1 p.m. Our project this year has been chosen for half toward St. John's Women's League funds for projects and missions, and the other half sent to Topeka Lutheran School general fund. You may bring your items starting Monday, August 16, 6-8 p.m., Tuesday, August 17, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Wednesday, August 18, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. You may bring baked items on Wednesday or early Thursday morning. We ask that you do not bring any electronic items, and all donations be clean and gently used items. Volunteers are greatly accepted and welcome to come to any of the above times to help.

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The Women's League, Caring Mission committee, (LWML), is collecting the following items for personal care kits that will be sent to Lutheran World Relief. We are collecting until the end of June: Light weight dark colored bath towels (sizes 52" x 27" or 20" x 40"), 2-3 bath size bars of soap, (4-5 ounces, and any brand in original wrappers) totaling 8-9 ounces, sturdy large combs, metal nail clippers, adult size toothbrushes in original wrappers. If you would rather let us do the shopping, monetary gifts will be accepted by: *Geri Tate (785-271-0886) Marcia Wade (972-839-6682)*.

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Caring Mission Committee, (LWML) will be collecting the following items for school kits: 40-70 page spiral note books (4 for each kit), plastic rulers, #2 lead pencils, blue or black ink pens (no gel), 24 box crayons, pink erasers, small pencil sharpeners and blunt end scissors. Bags for these items have been provided. We will collect these items July through September 2021. The LWR truck will arrive October 8 to pick up the items. This is our last year we will be giving to LWR.

LUKE SAVAGE MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The tournament will be held on Saturday, July 10, at the Great Life Shawnee Country Club at 913 SE 29 Street. Registration begins at 8:00 am with a shotgun start to follow at 9:00 am. Hole sponsorships and silent auction items are gratefully accepted! For questions or donations, email dkmsavage@yahoo.com.

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Save the date! This year's tournament will be October 23 at Forbes Field. Stay tuned for more details coming later this summer. This tournament supports our St. John's Lutheran Youth Fellowship.

MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN JULY

Join members on Sunday July 11 for a potluck breakfast between services. Bring your favorite breakfast dish to share and join in the fellowship. This is a great opportunity to meet with other SJELC members who you may have not seen in a while, and to put names and faces together and welcome them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

THANK YOU

With grateful hearts for all the support, prayers, pastoral visits, kind wishes, meals, and yard work assistance provided during and following my heart by-pass surgery, Kathy and I wish to express our thanks to all. We especially give praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for His never-ending care, comfort, healing and forgiveness. *Dennis Hintz*

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep is celebrating its 55th Anniversary all year long, starting with a ‘Kick-Off Reception’ on Sunday, June 27 from 2 – 3 p.m. Light refreshments will be available as you learn how Doorstep began, take a tour of the food and clothing rooms, and learn more how you can support Doorstep. As part of its 55th anniversary, they have created an “Anniversary Fund”. Doorstep owns the building they are in and have been making upgrades and improvements. However, the building’s HVAC system is the original, meaning it’s been there since the late 50’s. Some parts are no longer made for the system when it breaks, and a new more efficient system would save money overall. The goal of the Anniversary Fund is to raise enough in the next year to start Doorstep’s HVAC replacement, provide extra funds for services and operating expenses. They are asking each of its supporters to donate a minimum of \$55 towards the Fund goal.

TLS NEWS

Positions available: Do you have a passion and desire to share God’s Word with a group of children on a daily basis? Would you like to work with a group of passionate people who desire to challenge students to use their God-given abilities? If your answers are yes, Topeka Lutheran School has openings in the following positions: 4th grade (full time or part time), and two month substitute position for K-8 music. Please contact Mr. Francik, TLS principal, at 785-357-0382 or francik@topekalutheran.org for the necessary requirements for these teaching positions.

2021-2022 Enrollment Still Available

Have you considered enrolling your child at Topeka Lutheran? At TLS, students receive instruction from God’s Word and see a Christian lifestyle modeled every school day in smaller class sizes. Enrollment for the 2021-2022 school is ongoing at TLS for students entering K – 8th grade. Please communicate with Mr. Francik, TLS principal, at (785)357-0382 or francik@topekalutheran.org, or visit topekalutheran.org for more information about Topeka Lutheran School and how to enroll.



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

PRAYER

Lord God, Heavenly Father, whose we are and whom we serve. We are so thankful that You daily forgive our sins. As we continue our break from attending school at Topeka Lutheran, we ask that you would guard, bless and direct our principal, teachers, all the workers and families who daily put their time and talents to work to keep TLS running smoothly and efficiently. Jesus Christ whom You sent to save us from our sins.

SUPPORT TOPEKA LUTHERAN TODAY! CLICK TO DONATE.

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

TOTAL COMMITMENTS

Growing God's Children Fund

Total Amount Committed: \$834,743

Total Pledged Gifts Received: \$656,653

Total # of Pledges Received: 124

GET THE WORD OUT!

- Did you know there is \$500 grant per family if a student is referred by a current Topeka Lutheran family? That's \$500 grant for the referring family and a \$500 grant for the referee family! Help us get the word out about enrollment for next year.
- TLS is still in need of teachers! Please contact Principal Francik for details.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING TLS!

- The April and May GGC campaign events were a success, as an additional \$34,000 was received!
- The Luke Savage Memorial Golf Benefit for TLS is July 10. Watch for updates!
- Dakota and Christy Sorensen provided the May 28 Field Day outdoor games and equipment for the students! And to all the teachers, staff and volunteers who made the day possible. What a great way to end the school year.
- An anonymous TLS donor and alum read in a June Wall Street Journal editorial page about a donor in Green Bay, WI, who gave a \$1,000 gift to a number of teachers from a local faith-based school. The TLS donor has done the same for the TLS teachers! The donor was pleased that in-person classroom teaching was available this past year and wanted to show appreciation to our teachers for persevering through the recent challenging months. So teachers you have quite a fan club! Thank you for all you do for TLS! And thank you to the generous and thoughtful TLS donor and family.

TLS ALUMNI - MEMORIES SHARED

Mrs. Helen (Schlodder) Holt, Class of 1950, of Topeka recently shared memories about her and her sister attending TLS. She wrote that her sister Wilma Schlodder Keim (Class of 1955) then returned to teach at TLS! She described her mother's determination and hard work to send their daughters to a Lutheran school, in spite of her father's lingering illness. Also her grandchildren Jennifer (TLS 1999) and CJ (attended until 2003), and great-granddaughter Ava (attended one year) are all part of the Schlodder/Holt family history at TLS. Thank you Mrs. Holt for sharing your memories with us. And thank God for guiding your parents and extended families to recognize the importance of a Lutheran education and academic excellence that is provided at TLS.

July 2021

St. John's Lutheran Church - Topeka, Kansas

8:00	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

INDEPENDENCE DAY 9am - DIVINE SERVICE 9:20am - COFFEE & DONUTS 9:45am - BIBLE CLASS/S 11am - DIVINE SERVICE	OFFICE CLOSED	FRISKY THINGS			FEAST OF THE VISITATION	
9am - DIVINE SERVICE 9:15am - MONTHLY BRKFEST 9:45am - BIBLE CLASS/S 11am - DIVINE SERVICE	6:30pm - STEWARDSHIP 6:15pm - MISSIONS/IEVANG 6:30pm - TRUSTEES	6:30pm - ELDER CALLING 7am - BOARD OF ELDERS				
9am - DIVINE SERVICE 9:20am - COFFEE & DONUTS 9:45am - BIBLE CLASS/S 11am - DIVINE SERVICE	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 4:45pm - PARRISH ED 6:30pm - COUNCIL					
ST. JOHN'S TRUSTEES 9am - DIVINE SERVICE 9:20am - COFFEE & DONUTS 9:45am - BIBLE CLASS/S 11am - DIVINE SERVICE 12:30pm - VOTERS MTG	9:30am - MATINS					



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)