



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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JANUARY 2023

THE CONSOLATION OF CHRIST

During the Epiphany season, we are given glimpses of God revealing who Christ is as God in the flesh. These “theophanies” are often miracles whereby the glory of God is made known and seen in Jesus. It really is interesting to read, hear, and meditate on these accounts in the Scriptures as they show us who Jesus is and what this all means for us.

The Formula of Concord, one of the documents of the Lutheran Confessions, has a great deal to say about the Person of Christ in Article VIII. In this article, it faithfully confesses from the Scriptures that in the Person of Christ there are two natures, a human and divine, which are united in this Person without mixing or confusing the natures. Not only is there a union in the two natures, but there is a communication between the two and this is seen in various events in the life of Christ.

The Solid Declaration (SD) of the Formula of Concord states, by way of a citing a few examples how these two natures are revealed to us:

He [Jesus] did all His miracles by the power of this personal union. He showed His divine majesty, according to His pleasure, when and as He willed. He did this not just after His resurrection and ascension, but also in His state of humiliation. For example:

- a) At the wedding at Cana of Galilee [John 2:1–11]
- b) When He was twelve years old, among the learned [Luke 2:42–50]
- c) In the garden, when with a word He cast His enemies to the ground [John 18:6]
- d) In death, when He died not simply as any other man, but in and with His death conquered sin, death, devil, hell, and eternal damnation [Colossians 2:13–15]

The human nature alone would not have been able to do these miracles if it had not been personally united and had communion with the divine nature (SD VIII, 25)¹

As we think about this coming out of the Christmas season, into the Epiphany of our Lord, and heading to Transfiguration, it is worthy of our reflection to think about Jesus as he is fully God and fully man. There are many aspects or facets to the doctrine of Christ which the Formula of Concord addresses, I encourage you to study this more. Our redemption has been accomplished by Jesus and we see this great revealing of who he is for us.

Like anything in theology, there is a purpose in all of this, it is our consolation found solely in Christ. The doctrine of the two natures of Christ is no exception. Martin Chemnitz, one of primary writers and formulators of this document of Concord understood this purpose and it shows through in this great confession of faith given to the church. At the end of this article, SD VIII, the Solid Declaration makes

this important point about why this article of faith is important for us to know and faithfully confess over and above the errors that have arisen against it:

Since in the Holy Scriptures Christ is called a mystery upon which all heretics dash their heads, we admonish all Christians not to arrogantly indulge their reason in crafty investigations about such mysteries. With the beloved apostles, they should simply believe. They should close the eyes of their reason and bring their understanding into captivity to the obedience of Christ [2 Corinthians 10:5] and rejoice without ceasing in the fact that our flesh and blood is placed so high at the right hand of God's majesty and almighty power. In this way, we will certainly find constant consolation in every difficulty and remain well guarded against deadly error (SD VIII, 96).²

With this new year, God grant us a renewed zeal for learning his word and confessing it in our daily lives. May God also grant us to know the consolation of Christ and his work for us as we see this baby who was born in Bethlehem is the Word made flesh. His miraculous works make known and testify to who he is for us. His perfect life and sacrifice for us is our redemption and is proclaimed as he is risen from the dead.

Your brother and servant in Christ,



¹ Paul Timothy McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 585–586. ² *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, 596.

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY & MEALS RETURN JANUARY 11

Our Sound Words Academy returns Wednesday, January 11 beginning with a meal at 5:15 p.m. with youth Catechism classes and Adult Bible Study starting at 5:55 prior to our Evening Prayer Service at 7:00 p.m. Remember to sign up for the meal on Signup Genius by Monday evening each week. There are 4 SWA meals that need a “team captain” for the spring semester. The dates in need are February 1, April 12, April 19 and April 26. If you're interested, please sign up on the church website. Contact Erika Robinson in the church office for questions

ST. JOHN'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

St. John's will be celebrating its 150th Anniversary in 2024! We are reforming a committee to help with the planning of this joyous celebration. A committee was created in 2020, but the pandemic hit and the committee hasn't met in over two years. We are now forming a new committee and plan on having our first meeting in February. Please contact Andy Gritman (andy@grittman.com) or call the church office if you would like to be on the committee.

SPECIAL VOTERS ASSEMBLY

A special Voters Assembly will take place Sunday, January 15 at 9:45 a.m. for the purpose of extending a call to the partnership pastor for Trinity McFarland. The meeting will take place in the Nave.

BECOME 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 and approval of the voters of the assembly. **We encourage all eligible St. John's members to join the voters assembly.** If you would like to become a voting member of our congregation, you can contact the office, pastor, or any elder to get instructions on how you can become a voter.

HYMN OF THE MONTH
“O MORNING STAR, HOW FAIR AND BRIGHT” (LSB 395)

From Christmas, the church year flows right into Epiphany, which ends with Transfiguration before heading into the Pre-Lent and Lenten season. The hymn of the month, “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright,” is the designated “chief hymn” or “hymn of the day” for both Epiphany and Transfiguration, the “bookends” of this particular season of the church year. It is one of the greatest hymns ever written, and I encourage you to include this in your family devotions for the month and take it to heart by memorizing at least the first stanza.

Both text and tune were written by Philipp Nicolai, who was no stranger to intense suffering during his lifetime, particularly during the plague in 1597-1598. He provided pastoral comfort to many grieving families during this time. Nicolai’s reflections on the “joys of eternal life” are collected in his 1599 devotional book, from which the text of this hymn was found. It was given the heading “a spiritual bridal song of the believing soul concerning Jesus Christ and her heavenly bridegroom.” The rich poetry in this hymn wonderfully articulates the rich theology that captures the essence of who Jesus is and what He does for His bride, the Church.

Though it is in the Epiphany section of the hymnal, one might think that the “Morning Star” (Morgenstern) referred to in this hymn is the star that led the wise men to Jesus. Rather, it refers to Christ who is known as the “bright morning star” from Revelation 22:16 when Jesus says, “I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” Stanza 1 also describes Jesus as “of Jacob’s race, King David’s son.”

Even before we were created, God loved us and had a plan for our salvation to “live in Him here and above.” The imagery in this hymn gives us a picture of God’s mercy that shines forth to us and within our sinful hearts. He comes to us extra nos (outside us) as a “ray of purest pleasure” that falls from heaven to become flesh and blood for us. We as “living branches of a tree” are constantly fed with this “heavenly food” and are given life from Christ.

This hymn is similar to Nicolai’s other great hymn, the King of Chorales, “Wake Awake, for Night is Flying” (LSB 516). (“O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright” is the Queen of Chorales.) Both hymns provide a picture of the Heavenly Bridegroom seeking to save His bride. They reflect the imagery provided in Psalm 45, which is a song for a royal wedding and describes the bridegroom, bride, and the wedding procession. Christ will come again on the Last Day to transport us – His bride – to “that happy place, beyond all tears and sinning.” How glorious it will be to be with Jesus, our “crown of gladness,” our “King of Glory,” our “dearest treasure,” and our “Light divine.” He is the first and last, the end and the beginning, our eternal righteousness. May we continue to hold in joyful expectation the promise of our eternal life in Christ.

Bethany M Johnson

KANSAS DISTRICT LIFE CONFERENCE

We invite you to join us for the fourth annual Kansas District Life Conference here at St. John’s on Tuesday, January 24. There is no registration fee, but boxed lunches will be available for \$10 each. The keynote presentation, “A Time to Speak” will be presented in the morning by Rev. Dr. Jim Lamb, life advocate at Lutheran Family Service of Iowa. Deaconess Tiffany Manor, director of LCMS Life Ministry, will speak to the group in the afternoon after the Rally for Life in downtown Topeka. This is a perfect opportunity to learn from experienced life advocates and be encouraged in your own efforts to be an advocate FOR LIFE. For more information and registration, go to <https://kslcms.org/caring-ministry/life-ministry/2023-life-conference/>



ST. JOHN'S MUSIC ACADEMY

SJMA hosted its first Christmas recital, featuring students and faculty who played piano, violin, and trumpet. It was a wonderful presentation of talents. Thank you to all who attended.

In addition, two of our organ students played preservice music for the children's Christmas service. We look forward to adding more students next semester. Thank you for your ongoing support of music in the church!



Thank you for your support for St. John's Music Academy

Check us out on Facebook!

Interested in private lessons for piano, organ, trumpet, violin or flute? Contact Bethany Johnson (bjohnson@stjlcms.org)

MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN JANUARY

Our next monthly breakfast will be potluck on Sunday, January 8 in Luther Hall after our early Divine Service. The St. John's youth will be in charge of set-up and clean up. There will be no Adult Bible Study, but the children's Sunday School will be held. We look forward to food and fellowship with you.

ST. JOHN'S YOUTH

Youth in charge of monthly breakfast! Meet in the kitchen after the early service communion (around 9 a.m.) to help prepare the potluck meal. We also ask you to plan to stay and help clean up afterward.

Save the date for our St. John's youth ski trip – Sunday, January 22.

Meet upstairs in the high school class room at 9:45 a.m. We will carpool to Snow Creek in Missouri. Cost is \$20 per youth (includes lessons if you need). Make sure to sign up on the youth board for you, your siblings and friends that are planning to attend! Payment can be made by check (written to "St. John's LYF") or cash to Rachel Kathman. Registration and payments must be made in advance in order to reserve our spots. Contact Rachel for more information.



2023 FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2023 Flower Calendar is now up on the bulletin board in the church office. There are several dates available for this spring and summer. If you would like to provide flowers for a particular service this coming year, sign your name next to the date of your choice. The office will notify you a week in advance.

SHARE THE HARVEST

Thank you for your generous support to our community through “Share Your Harvest” and “Thanksgiving Envelopes”, \$2,526.55 was received. This will be distributed to Doorstep, Rescue Mission, Let’s Help, St. John’s Human Care, LCMS Disaster, LCMS World Relief and Lead A Child.

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 2022. We hope that you will find this information useful.

YTD Projected Receipts through November 2022	\$681,197.00
Actual Receipts through November 2022	\$631,977.86
Year to Date Receipts Over (Under) Budget	\$(49,219.14)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?

Volunteers are needed 1-2 times a month to assist in cleaning the Nave, bathrooms, and Sunday School rooms (wiping tables and chalk boards, etc.). Many hands make light work! Consider contacting the church office if you are willing to volunteer.

LARGE PRINT HYMNALS NOW AVAILABLE

If you are in need of larger print, the St. John’s office has a few new large print hymnals available. You are welcome to borrow one for services and return to the office or purchase one to keep. Contact Erika in the church office for more details.

Larger Text, Same Hymnal

All the LSB hymns, psalms, and services you love are included, with a 40% font increase. The Large Print Edition keeps the same page numbers and footnotes as the original, so worship can continue without needing to adjust for different hymnals.



FROM OUR MISSIONS

Thank you very much for your gift of \$900 for the Old Latin School last month. Blessings to you in this Advent Season from a snows white Wittenburg. – *Angelika and Wilhelm Weber*

Christmas greetings to you from Nairobi, Kenya! On behalf of the missionaries serving in Africa, we would like to thank you for your continued support for our Lutheran seminaries in Africa. Your gift is greatly appreciated. May God continue to bless you and keep you during this Advent Season!

– *Britt Odemba*



ST. JOHN’S WOMEN’S LEAGUE

Our circles resume in January. Ladies of all ages – We invite you to check out our circles, come and enjoy a good time of fellowship with bible study.

Sarah circle meets the 2nd Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. for bible study, a short meeting and fellowship.

Dorcias circle meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 1:00 p.m. for bible study, a short meeting and fellowship.

Quilting returns January 5. We will continue to meet the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. There will be a Women’s Day Out on Sunday, January 22, 2023 to meet from 2:00-4:00 pm in the Undercroft and work on quilts. Donations for quilt projects continue to be accepted. Items needed at this time are bed sheets of any size or color. Thank you in advance.

Our annual **Christmas Bazaar and Cookie Walk** took place Friday, December 2 and Sunday, December 4. There was no luncheon this year. We want to thank everyone who donated items for the sale, helped set up and clean up and helped make this year a wonderful success. Our total received was \$5,625.21. This includes the amount from the church match. Our only out of pocket expense was \$15.36 for the newspaper ad. We will be giving this amount for Mission projects this year. Discussion of these will take place during our January 3 meeting. They will then be presented to our circles during their meetings in January and also announced in the February newsletter.

The Spring LWML Topeka Zone Rally will be held April 2023 at St. John's LCMS in Topeka, Kansas. Registration and Servant Event will begin at 9:00 a.m. with the meeting following at 10:00 a.m.

Mission Statement *Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Lutheran Women's, Missionary League Kansas District will nurture, motivate, and prepare The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod women to serve the Lord with gladness.*

Dates to Remember

January 3, 2023	LWML Executive Board Meeting
January 9, 2023	Sarah Circle 7:00 p.m.
January 10, 2023	Dorcas Circle 1:00 p.m.
January 22, 2023	Women's Day Out Quilt Tying
April 2023	Zone Gathering, St. John's, Topeka
June 22-25, 2023	National LWML Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

DOORSTEP NEWS

Happy New Year! With the help of member congregations and the community, Doorstep provided over \$325,000 in assistance with all of the basic needs services offered. Doorstep adopted 260 households from the Christmas Bureau with over 800 individuals. Once again, member congregations and community members stepped up and donated the items needed along with money for the gift cards and food. Thank you to everyone who helped in every way to make Christmas nicer for those who are struggling during the holidays in our community.

SouperBowl Sunday is February 12 Collect soup and crackers and help stock Doorstep's pantry! You can bring your items to St. John's at our drop off location in the hall near Luther Hall.

Doorstep will begin the new year with their regular schedule on Wednesday, January 4 with phone intakes for services, and appointments for the clothing room. Hopefully, they will return to in-person intakes some time during the year.



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

PRAYER

Lord God, Heavenly Father, whose we are and whom we serve. As we begin a new year, we ask that You would guide and direct the Building Upgrade Committee as the work on the approved changes and improvements to Topeka Lutheran School begins. Also, be with our teachers and staff and enable them to continue to offer a Christian education in a safe and welcoming place as our children continue to learn about You and Your Son, Jesus Christ and His redeeming work on the cross that assures us of a home in Heaven with Him. All this we ask in Christ's Holy Name, Amen.

SUPPORT TOPEKA LUTHERAN TODAY!

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

TOTAL COMMITMENTS

Growing God's Children Capital Campaign

Total Amount Committed: \$846,943

Total Pledged Gifts Received: \$844,006

Total # of Pledges Received: 125

November 2022 Giving Tuesday Gifts Received: \$1,100

Thank you to the families who made a special gift for the Giving Tuesday on-line giving event and those who have extended their capital campaign gift giving even though their three-year commitment is now complete. Thank you all for your prayers and continued support for this campaign!

TLS GGC BUILDING UPGRADE COMMITTEE

The committee will meet January 23rd to determine next steps and implementation of the recently-approved upgrades to the TLS building and playground. TLS Boards approved these additions in early December, and as you may recall, include the recommendations made by KS Dept of Education to strengthen campus security, aesthetics, and visibility. Additional exterior fencing, lighting, cameras, and redesign of west entrance is planned, and all related costs will be covered by the balance of capital campaign gifts.

MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL JOHNSON

We wish you and your family and friends a happy 2023! Thank you to all who attended the students' Christmas caroling events and school concert. It was a blessing to know our students were part of sharing the good news of the birth of our Savior Jesus through hymns and carols to the many visitors at Atria, the Topeka Public Library, and several other locations! Our thanks to Mrs. Grass for the excellent work of overseeing the Music and Band programs. Classes resume on January 3rd from the Christmas break and National Lutheran School Week is later in January, so watch for announcements about special daily devotions and activities students will be doing to celebrate.

Last month, we welcomed Mrs. Mary Hoyt who is the new paraprofessional for the Grades 2 and 3 combined class and helping out in other classes as needed. They are members of Christ Lutheran and have two children attending TLS.

There had been a number of students out ill just prior to the Christmas break with minor illnesses (not COVID related), but please just a reminder to adhere to the school policy and keep your child(ren) home if they are not feeling well.

TLS UPCOMING EVENTS

- **January 3:** School Resumes from Christmas Break
- **January 9:** 4:00 to 8:00 pm TLS Fundraiser at Panera
- **January 16:** No School for Martin Luther King Jr. holiday
- **January 23-27:** Nat'l Lutheran School Week Celebration
- **January 27:** TLS PTL Annual Chili Feed, 5:00pm, TLS Gym

CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. GRASS!

TLS Teacher Josh Grass was selected Kansas Ass'n of Independent and Religious Schools (KAIRS) Distinguished Lutheran Teacher of the Year by the Kansas District LCMS Office. He will be recognized at the 2023 KAIRS Conference Banquet in Topeka on February 6, 2023. Congratulations Mr. Grass - thank you for all your contributions to TLS!

"Mr. Grass is a great teacher and a great person in general. I know this because he helps me and others during the day, and tutors me and others after school. He also helps me during math on things I don't understand or don't really know how to do. So that's why I would say that Mr. Grass is a good teacher.

Thank you for your time. A have a great Christmas Break!"
Oliver Snethen, 7th Grade TLS Student

January 2023 St. John's Lutheran Church - Topeka, Kansas

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
CIRCUMCISION & NAME OF JESUS 10am DIVINE SERVICE	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3 1pm LWML EXEC	4	5 6:15pm ECCLESIA BELLS 7pm TLS BOARD 7:15pm KANTOREI	6 EPIPHANY 7pm DIVINE SERVICE in Courtyard	7
BAPTISM OF OUR LORD 8am DIVINE SERVICE & INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS 9:15am MONTHLY BREAKFAST 9:45am SUNDAY SCHOOL 11am DIVINE SERVICE	9 6pm SARAH CIRCLE	10 1pm DORCAS CIRCLE	11 10am WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 2:45pm TLS CHAPEL 5:15pm SOUND WORDS ACADEMY 7pm EVENING PRAYER	12 6:15pm ECCLESIA BELLS 6:30pm ELDER CALLING 7pm ELDERS 7:15pm KANTOREI	13	14
15 8am DIVINE SERVICE 9:20am COFFEE & DONUTS 9:45am SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45am VOTERS ASSEMBLY 11am DIVINE SERVICE	16 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR	17 4pm PARISH ED 4:30pm TRUSTEES 5:30pm STEWARDSHIP 6:15pm MISSONS/EVANG	CONFESSION OF ST. PETER 18 10am WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 2:45pm TLS CHAPEL 5:15pm SOUND WORDS ACADEMY 7pm EVENING PRAYER	19 6:15pm ECCLESIA BELLS 7:15pm KANTOREI	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21
22 8am DIVINE SERVICE 9:20am COFFEE & DONUTS 9:45am BIBLE CLASS/SS 9:45am YOUTH SKI TRIP 11am DIVINE SERVICE 2:00 WOMEN'S DAY OUT	23	24 DISTRICT LIFE CONFERENCE 9:30am MATINS 6:30pm COUNCIL	CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL 25 10am WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 2:45pm TLS CHAPEL 5:15pm SOUND WORDS ACADEMY 7pm EVENING PRAYER	ST. TITUS 26 6:15pm ECCLESIA BELLS 7:15pm KANTOREI	27 5pm TLS CHILI SUPPER	28
29 8am DIVINE SERVICE 9:20am COFFEE & DONUTS 9:45am BIBLE CLASS/SS 11am DIVINE SERVICE	30	31	1 10am WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY 2:45pm TLS CHAPEL 5:15pm SOUND WORDS ACADEMY 7pm EVENING PRAYER	2 PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD 7pm DIVINE SERVICE 7pm TLS BOARD	3	4



901 SW Fillmore, Topeka, KS 66606-1445



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)