



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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BOOTSTRAP THEOLOGY, WHERE'S JESUS, THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME, AND MORE

The Lord is near to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. He is near you, He will save you, for you are in Christ, whose blood cries out for mercy at all times for you. **+lsk**

That's the message of the First Sunday after Easter. The Resurrection of Jesus can seem so far removed from us—2,000 years and thousands of miles. That's why the resurrected Jesus comes to His disciples, breathes on them, says, "Receive the Holy Spirit," and then gives them a command: "Forgive sins." The presence of Jesus is never more real than when those Christ-commanded words are spoken: "I forgive you all your sins." That's how the Lord is near to the broken hearted and saves the crushed in spirit. **+jsb**

Because, after all, the way of God is the way of forgiveness. He keeps no record of how many chances He's given you. For in the end, it's not about how many times you've messed up, but how constant, how unwavering, is the Father's love for you in Jesus Christ. **+lsk**

And that's why Easter is filled with the joyful cry of "Alleluia! Praise be to God!" For my mess-ups, He gives me His perfection. He binds up my broken heart. He gives joy to my crushed spirit. All through the forgiveness of sins. **+jsb**

Which is entirely contrary to "bootstrap theology," as in "pull yourself up by your own bootstraps." That's the theology many Americans espouse

today: a positive attitude, a strong faith, a donation to a particular 'ministry'—that's what you need to thwart the darts of the devil, the world, and your sinful flesh. But the true joy that sustains you comes to you as a gift. It comforts you and prevents you from navel gazing as it lifts your eyes and your heart to the risen Christ our Savior. **+lsk**

Lutherans have a short-hand for that idea. *Christus extra nos*, Christ outside of us. That's a handy way of answering the question, "Where should I look for certainty of my salvation?" The answer is: "Outside of yourself, to Christ. *There's* your salvation." **+jsb**

In senior years it won't be memories of baseball, volleyball, days at the lake, and sleepy Sunday mornings that sustain us. The Word of God placed into us by the Holy Spirit (with a little effort of time and energy) will last. It will not return empty, but will accomplish that for which it was sent. **+lsk**

Which is all the more reason to start young. Children receive the same gifts that all believers receive from Christ: life, salvation, and the forgiveness of sins. And they get it where all believers get it, too, in Baptism and the Word, found in the assembly of believers called the Church. This fact is a cause for rejoicing (Alleluia!).

Parents are often hesitant to allow their infants to make any noise at all for fear of disturbing the worship of those around them. But children have

the same need for God's gifts as adults do, so we welcome a little noise for the greater good, that of passing on the faith to the next generation. Involve your children in the worship service. Stand and sit at the appropriate times. Teach them to say "Amen" at the end of the prayers. Sit where they can see "what's going on" in the chancel. Practice whispering instead of talking aloud. Help them listen to the sermon to hear the name *Jesus*. And greet the pastor at the end of the service. **+lsk**

Speaking of children, the Word, and the Easter season.

If you say "Quasimodo," everyone'll know what you're talking about—the hunchback of Notre

Dame, of course! The priest gave him that name because he found the deformed infant abandoned on the steps of the cathedral on the First Sunday after Easter. And *Quasimodogeniti* is the first word, in Latin, of the introit for that day, "Like newborn infants." The introit goes on, "Long for the pure spiritual milk of the Word. Alleluia!" That's an exhortation (see 1 Pet 2:2). The Easter response to the Easter Jesus isn't to pull a Doubting Thomas, but to find Jesus where He promises to be, i.e., in His Word & Sacrament: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." That's *Christus extra nos*. **+jsb**

Senior Pastor - Rev. J. S. Bruss, ext. 104

Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102

Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz

Visitation Pastor - Rev. Glenn R. Bitter

Day School Teachers - Ashley Jensema, Andrea Kosmicki,

ATTENTION: PARENTS OF SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Easter Sunday, March 27, there will be no official Sunday school classes; however, the teachers in preschool through grade 5 have planned an Easter activity (Resurrection Rolls) for those who will be present at 10:00. Meet in the Sunday school rooms.

PAID IN FULL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

- By now you'll have gotten in the mail your invitation to a Home Gathering. Please contact Dave Graversen at the church office if you did not. These small gatherings will be held in a member's home and will provide an opportunity to learn more about the three-year debt elimination campaign, to watch the campaign video featuring members sharing their thoughts and hopes for the campaign, and to participate in a short Bible study.
- The three-week Stewardship Phase of the campaign will begin April 3rd with member testimony after worship and a special stewardship Bible study led by Pastor Bruss. Hear more about how God works through our vocations and through stewardship so that we in turn may love and serve our neighbor.
- Mark your calendar for Sunday, May 1 for the *Paid in Full* pledge event with writer Gene Edward Veith, Jr., as the featured speaker. Dr. Veith is a well-known voice on Christianity and culture, has authored over 20 books, and served many years at Concordia University Wisconsin before moving to Patrick Henry College in Virginia. He also earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Kansas!

CONTINUING THE JOURNEY REQUEST

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we ask members to prayerfully consider continuing with their building fund payments with their yellow “Continuing the Journey” envelopes. We encourage you to continue to use these envelopes until the pledge date for the *Paid in Full* campaign, May 1, 2016. Any gifts received during this period will help toward our ultimate goal of raising enough to retire our debt in May 2019. The Board thanks you for your prayerful consideration of this request.

The Board of Christian Stewardship

2ND QUARTER VOTERS MEETING

The 2nd quarter Voters Assembly meeting is scheduled for April 17 at 2 p.m. in the Nave. Reports will be presented by the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and the Council and the various boards.

MONTHLY BREAKFAST

The monthly breakfast will be on April 10. It will be a potluck breakfast.

Be sure to bring your favorite breakfast food to share with others.

2016 FLOWER CALENDAR

Please check the Flower Calendar on the bulletin board outside of the church offices.

Many dates are still available. Some upcoming available dates are:

June 5 & 26; July 10, 24 & 31; August 21 & 28

THANK YOU’S

Dear Friend of the SLMS: On behalf of The Siberian Lutheran Mission Society, thank you for your continued generous support of our ministry. Your donation contributes to the vital work of the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church, which includes the ongoing provision of Word and Sacrament ministry to sustain present and new members. *Pastor Daniel Johnson, LCMS Catechist to Eurasia*

On behalf of the Doorstep staff, volunteers and clients, we would like to thank St. John’s for your charitable donation of \$50 in February 2016. *Lisa Cain, Executive Director*

A note of great appreciation to the St. John’s Women League for their gift of support towards St. John’s International Missions, including the Wittenberg Project. These funds will help us achieve our annual commitment of support to all of our International missionaries.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Many thanks to everyone who helped donate food and/or volunteered this past month for Doorstep. Our help in the clothing room was especially appreciated by the Doorstep staff. Even though March was the designated month for giving by St. John’s, we will continue to collect donations throughout the year. There will also be special requests for foodstuffs and volunteers that we will publish in the church bulletin and the newsletter. The staff is also very short on help in the clothing room on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Shifts between the hours of 8:45 and 2:00 can be arranged. If you are interested in volunteering, please call 235-9982. Again, thank you for your willingness to give of your time and resources as our congregation continues its outreach for our neighbors in need.

TLS NEWS

TLS 2nd Annual 5K Run/Walk is scheduled for Saturday, April 30, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. at the beautiful Iloff Commons Cross Country Course, Topeka. Registration is \$15, and the registration and waiver forms are available at www.topekalutheran.org. Plan now to attend and invite your family and friends to join you! Questions? Contact Marlene at the TLS Foundation office at 785-357-1468. All proceeds will go to the TLS Grant-in-Aid program to increase funding for tuition assistance. Thank you for your support of Lutheran education!

TLS Sunday at St. John's will be held May 1, 2016, with the Grades 3-5 choir sharing worship music at the 10:00 a.m. service. Take this opportunity to meet Principal Chris Francik and teachers as well as TLS Board and Foundation members

Topeka Lutheran School is pleased to announce plans for a new and exciting after-school enrichment program beginning fall 2016. We plan on offering a variety of enrichment activities throughout the year and need the congregations help to do so. Specifically, we need to know what talents we possess within the congregations and if you are willing to teach your talents to the students. We are open to any time commitment you are willing to provide. Would you be available for a 4 week beginners quilting class? Organizing a play? Or a year long orchestra program? Please call 357-0382 with any questions, talents, or ideas.

Camp Invention, a nationally recognized one week STEM program, is coming to Topeka Lutheran School June 6-10. In order to provide this program we need 2-4 licensed teachers (paid), up to 6 high school or college students looking for volunteer hours/resume builders (free STEM training provided), and multiple volunteers. If you are interested in becoming involved in this exciting STEM summer camp please call 357-0382. Registration details are still pending.

SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 18, 2016

St. John's Annual Golf Tournament this summer will be held at Forbes Field. This is a fundraiser for the youth group and their activities and their trip to Higher Things Conference in July. Plan to participate as a golfer, a sponsor, or as a volunteer. More details will be forthcoming.

FIRST FRIDAY ART WALK

We are reaching out to Lutheran artists in the Topeka area to invite you to be a part of our First Friday Art Walk event that is held in conjunction with Topeka's First Friday Art Walk. The event will be May 6, 5:30-8:00 p.m. at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 3625 SW Wanamaker Rd. This is a no-cost opportunity to share your art with the Topeka community. Questions and to register: Please contact Susan Thowe at srthowe@gmail.com or 785-969-4342. Sponsored by The Lutheran Fine Arts Council of Topeka.

LWML SPRING QUARTERLY

The first Sunday in April (right after Easter) will be the Lutheran Women's Missionary League Spring Quarterly at St. John's. There will be quilt tying in the undercroft, along with devotion and refreshments from 2-4 p.m. If you have a large-eye needle, please bring it with you, as embroidery floss is used for the tying. In addition, please bring a bar of bath soap for the LWML Health Care Kits and/or any used adult or child prescription glasses or nonprescription sunglasses. These will be taken to the LWML state convention for the MOST ministries in developing countries. Come and enjoy the fellowship, as

several quilts are ready for willing hands to tie. Even if you haven't done this before, it's a quick and easy process to learn. Hope to see you Sunday, April 3!

LWML SPRING SALAD SUPPER

SAVE THE DATE! Wednesday, May 4th is St. John's Women's Spring Salad Supper. Please mark your calendar and look for more information in the bulletins. Our program will be "Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord!" featuring the talented Bethany Woelmer. Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the dinner will be at 6. It's a wonderful time for ladies of all ages to enjoy an inspirational evening together with daughters, mothers, friends, and/or neighbors.

58TH ANNUAL SMORGASBORD FOR MISSIONS

What a meal deal for you! Chicken, Baked Ham, B-B-Q Meatballs, Baked Beans, Salads, plus Homemade Pie—all that for a \$10 Adult ticket, \$4 for Children 6-12, and Children under 6 are FREE. It's the 58th Annual St. John's Smorgasbord for Missions in Luther Hall on Tuesday, April 26 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at the door or on Sundays in April, beginning the 10th. Anyone is welcome to sell tickets to family, friends, and coworkers and may contact Chuck McMullen at 246-4337 with questions. Profits go to mission projects, Topeka Rescue Mission, Doorstep, Topeka Lutheran School Foundation, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Children's Christian Concern Society, LLL Rose Bowl Parade, and the Orphan Grain Train. Anyone wanting to volunteer to help prepare the food items or assist in the dining room would be welcome Monday, April 25 at 9:00 a.m. or Tuesday, the 26th after 11. Congregational members may be contacted for additional volunteer needs as this is a tremendous project and any assistance is greatly appreciated. The men of St. John's will be receiving a letter requesting dining room help for the night of the smorgasbord. Please contact Jim Simpson at 379-5703 with any questions.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE CARING & MISSION

Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief will be prepared April through May. Items needed are:

1. Light weight bath-size towels (approximately 52" x 27" or 20" x 40") dark colors
2. Bath-size soap bars, any brand in original wrapper
Total packages to equal 8 or 9 oz.
Example: two 4-oz packages equaling 8 oz. **OR** three 3-oz packages equaling 9 oz.
3. Sturdy combs
4. Metal nail clippers
5. Adult-size toothbrush in original wrapper

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR APRIL 2016

April 3:	<i>The Transfiguration</i>	<i>Matthew 17:1-9</i>
April 10:	<i>Jesus Sends the Seventy-Two</i>	<i>Luke 10: 1-24</i>
April 17:	<i>The Good Samaritan</i>	<i>Luke 10: 25-37</i>
April 24:	<i>The Good Shepherd</i>	<i>John 10: 1-18</i>

Bible Words for April:**Early Childhood**

- April 3: *The Word became flesh . . . and we have seen His glory.* John 1:14
- April 10: *[Jesus said,] “As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.”*
John 20:21
- April 17: *The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.* Mark 10:45
- April 24: *I am the good shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me.* John 10:14

Elementary Grades

- April 3: *[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* 1 Timothy 2:4
- April 10: *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.* John 3:16
- April 17: *For my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples.* Luke 2:30:31
- April 24: *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.* 2 Corinthians 8:9

Each Sunday morning at 9:45 in the regular Sunday School opening time, the children in grades 1 - 6 have the privilege of learning hymns and playing instruments under the direction of Bethany Woelmer, a graduate student in church music at KU. The Sunday morning sessions also serve as a rehearsal time for singing in the church service periodically. Encourage your children to participate.

Thank you, parents for bringing your children to Sunday School and church.

**THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH**

[Jesus said] *“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. The Augsburg Confession, Article 5.