



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

901 SW Fillmore | Topeka, Kansas 66606-1445 | 785.354.7132 | www.stjohnlcmstopeka.org

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DECEMBER 2016

JR. LUTHERAN QUIZ

As I investigated the Lutheran distinctives, I was relieved to see the emphasis Luther placed on fathers teaching the Christian faith to their children. Each Chief Part of the Small Catechism declares, “As the head of the family should teach his household...” It echoes my own conviction about what Scripture teaches. Indeed, during my time as a non-denominational church pastor I was constantly teaching our fathers how to teach the Christian faith to their little ones by the use of various catechisms. We even stepped it up a notch when our parents and children participated in a Bible Trivia match, utilizing competition against other churches. Other churches in our area memorized the same questions and answers, allowing us to compete on both the State and National levels. This ministry was an important piece in teaching the faith to our children.

After discussing my experience with Pr. Bruss, we are creating something similar specifically for those children ages, 6 to 11. We want to instill in them the Bible knowledge as well as highlighting the Lutheran difference so that when Pr. Bruss, Deaconess Linda and I have those same children in catechism class, there is plenty to build upon.

HOW IT WORKS:

First, children and their parents (parents are key to success with this!) begin working on memorizing the questions and their answers. These are simple questions, with many answers containing only one word. When my children were little we reviewed questions at meals, throughout the day and at bed time. Some examples of the questions include:

10. **How many books are in the New Testament?** 27
11. **What language is the New Testament written in?** Greek
12. **Who wrote most of the books in the New Testament?** St. Paul
13. **What is the common name given to the first four books of the New Testament?** The Gospels
262. **What are the Sacraments and the Word of God?** The Means of Grace
264. **Who was the principal author of the Augsburg Confession of 1530?** Philipp Melancthon
265. **How old was Luther when he died?** 63

Once time is given to study and memorize, quizzes are held. During the quiz itself, correct questions are awarded with 10, 20, or 30 points. So far Pr. Bruss and I have created a list of just under 300 10-point questions. Our questions span the Old and New Testaments, as well as contain Lutheran history. We have also begun working on more challenging questions with point values of 20 and 30. However, we want to begin simply.

Each team has a coach. The size of the team may vary, but only four quizzers can play at a time. Substitutions can be made throughout the match. One team of four (GREEN TEAM) competes against another team of four (RED TEAM). Twenty questions are randomly selected and a quiz master reads each question to the two teams. Specially designed quiz boxes indicate which quizzer buzzed in first and keeps track of the time allowed for the answer to be given. If the answer given is correct, points are awarded to that team and the quiz master moves to the next question. If the answer given is incorrect, points are subtracted and the question automatically goes to the other team. One of the things that makes the match more competitive is that the children learn where the “cut off” of a question is. Look again at the sample questions above. Do you notice the portion of the question in bold-face type? This is the “cut off.” If a quiz master asks question 13, a quizzer can buzz in at the cut off and thereby interrupt. However, if a quizzer interrupts, he or she has to finish the question accurately, and then give the answer. If anything is incorrect, question or answer, the team loses points and the quiz master repeats the same question for the other team. It is hard to do it justice, but this is a fast-paced competition. The coach is there to call time-outs, make substitutions and give guidance as his/her team competes.

EXPANSION:

Pr. Bruss and I believe all of our Missouri Synod churches would benefit from something like this. As mentioned previously, it assists the heads of the household fulfill their vocation to teach the Christian faith to their children, and it places in the minds and hearts of our children a great deal of knowledge that can be built upon in formal catechesis. Once we have developed the game and ironed out the wrinkles, we intend to export it to other LCMS churches this summer hoping they incorporate it. That has the added benefit of giving St. John’s someone to compete against through the Fall/Winter, 2017.



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

Associate Pastor – Rev. Devin M. Kerns, ext. 101

Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102

Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz

TLS Teachers - Ashley Jensema, Andrea Kosmicki, Edith Kerns, Rachel Kathman

WEDNESDAY ADVENT SERVICES

Why did the Son of God come to earth and take on human flesh in the Blessed Virgin’s Womb? To purchase and win me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. This is the entire point of Advent—that we observe how the Lord Jesus redeems us through His coming. This Advent, Pastor Ross of Christ Lutheran Church joins Pastor Kerns and Pastor Bruss in a round-robin series of sermons on Wednesdays titled **Purchased and Won**. Wednesday Advent services at St. John’s are scheduled for 30 November, and 7 and 14 December at 12:15; and again at 7:00 p.m. the same days (Evening Prayer). Sound Words Academy continues during this time, as well. However, at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, 21 December, the Sunday School will put on its Christmas Program, **From Heav’n Above to Earth I Come**. That evening Sound Words Academy will not meet, but resumes on 4 January 2017.

CALVARY VACANCY

Calvary Lutheran Church has asked Pastor Bruss and Pastor Kerns to help out during their vacancy. For the foreseeable future and until the Lord calls a new pastor to Calvary, our own pastors will provide that assistance. One of the pastors will be at Calvary on Sunday morning, and the other here at St. John’s. Calvary wishes to thank St. John’s and the St. John’s board of elders for the help.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER – JANUARY 2016

St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church - 901 SW Fillmore - Topeka, KS

November 30	12:15 PM	Advent Service
	5:00 PM	Sound Words Academy
	7:00 PM	Advent Service
December 2	10:30 AM	LWML Bazaar
	11:00 AM	LWML Luncheon
December 7	12:15 PM	Advent Service
	5:00 PM	Sound Words Academy
	7:00 PM	Advent Service
December 10	2:00 PM	Caroling
	4:00 PM	Chili Supper
December 12	6:30 PM	Sarah Circle will meet at McFarland’s Restaurant Note: All women are welcome to attend.
December 14	12:15 PM	Advent Service
	5:00 PM	Sound Words Academy
	7:00 PM	Advent Service
December 17	10:00 AM	Final Children’s Christmas Program Rehearsal
December 18	9:00 AM	Bible Study on the Divine Service
	10:00 AM	Divine Service (<u>NOTE: ONE SERVICE ONLY!</u>)
December 21	6:30 PM	Children’s Christmas Program
December 24	7:00 PM	Christmas Carol Service
	10:00 PM	Christmas Candlelight Service
December 25	10:00 AM	Christmas Day Divine Service
January 1	9:00 AM	Bible Study on the Divine Service
	10:00 AM	Divine Service (<u>NOTE: ONE SERVICE ONLY!</u>)

FROM THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

It hardly seems possible, but only a month remains in the “Year of Our Lord” 2016. At this time, the Church Council and the Board of Stewardship wish to remind and encourage everyone to bring your year 2016 contributions up to date. The congregation’s financial books for 2016 will be closed for the year on December 31, 2016. As per Federal regulations, contributions intended for 2016 must be received (or postmarked) on or by 12/31/16 in order to be credited in 2016. 4th Quarter/Year-end contribution statements will be mailed near the middle of January 2017. Thank you for your regular and continued support of your congregation’s work!

A Reminder! *Please do not use your 2017 contribution envelopes before January 2017.* This will ensure that your contribution statements will be credited accurately. Thank you!

2017 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES

Contribution envelopes will be available to be picked up in the breezeway early in December. Please use the instructions on the clipboard located on the tables with the contribution boxes to locate your box of contribution envelopes. If you have any questions regarding contribution boxes/envelopes, please speak with Yvonne Berry in the church office.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10 AT 2 PM

All members and friends of St. John's are invited to join together for an afternoon/early evening of Christmas caroling and fellowship. We will share the joy of Christmas with our shut-in members (at nursing homes only).

Both adults and children are welcome, and lots of voices are needed. Please consider joining us this year. It is truly a joyful and rewarding experience!

After caroling, we will return to the church for a chili supper and fellowship.

Please sign up at the Information Center so we can adequately plan for transportation and chili preparation.

NO MONTHLY BREAKFAST IN DECEMBER

The Coffee Hour will include pastries, breads, and doughnuts in the Courtyard.

ADULT CATECHESIS CLASS FORMING FOR LATE JANUARY

A new Adult Catechesis Class is forming to begin in late January/early February, running for 14-18 weeks and anticipating a late May or early June confirmation. Catechesis gives a systematic overview of the chief teachings of Scripture using Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*. This class is for anyone interested in learning more about the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the teachings of the Scripture, from those who know nothing to long-time Lutherans. All are welcomed. Please contact Pr. Bruss if interested. jbruss@stjlcms.org

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

It still is not too late to get involved

"Hold fast the pattern of sound words," Paul instructs Timothy (2 Tim 1:13). St. John's **Sound Words Academy** offers mid-week educational opportunities every Wednesday evening, including:

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|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5:30-6 | Lite dinner (Luther Hall; supported by free-will donation) |
| 6:-6:50 | The Rhythm of Faith (grades 1-5) (Woelmer)
Youth Catechesis I (Kinnett)
Youth Catechesis II (Bruss)
Philippians (Kerns; high school and adults)
Lifelight (Hintz) |
| 7-7:45 | Evening Prayer (Nave; open to everyone) |
| 7:50-8:45 | Adult Catechesis (Kerns)
Women's Bible Study on Jesus' "I AM" statements in John, 7 weeks (Kinnett)
Young Adults/College Students (Bruss) |

At the core of each evening during December is the Office of Evening Prayer, which also serves as this year's Wednesday Advent services (sermon series: "Purchased and Won," with Pastors Bruss, Kerns,

and Ross (Christ Lutheran) preaching). A lite dinner is served beginning at 5:30, supported by a free-will donation. Serving time will be extended during December so that those coming for the Advent service alone will be able to eat at a convenient time. It is our sincere hope that you will find at least one study to join in and attend the 7 p.m. Office of Evening Prayer, Vespers, or Compline. Bring along friends and family. Earlier than 6:40 p.m., please enter by the south, aka glass, aka Luther Hall doors. All other doors will be locked until then. Keep your eyes open for different and additional Sound Words Academy offerings coming in January.

2017 FLOWER CALENDAR

Please check the Flower Calendar on the bulletin board outside of the church offices. The *2017 Flower Calendar* is now posted. If you would like to provide flowers for a particular service this coming year, please sign your name and phone number by the date of your choice.

HUMAN CARE TEAM

Each December, volunteers from the congregation assist the Human Care Team in delivering poinsettias to the homebound members of St. John's. This year we have thirty-five such members. Would you consider helping deliver Christmas blessings to these dear people who no longer can come to church? We need about twenty couples or singles to get the task completed, beginning December 15, when the flowers will be delivered to the church. Please contact Deaconess Linda if you can be of service in this way. 354-7132 or lkinnett@stjlcms.org.



TLS NEWS

TLS Band/Choir Christmas Performances. The TLS band and choirs will be performing the “Sounds of the Season” at these locations in December. You are invited to stop by as the students share this musical treat with residents and shoppers:

1. Grades 4-8, Thursday, December 1, 1:15 to 1:45 pm at Lexington Park Residence;
2. Grades K, 1 & 2, Thursday, December 8, 1:15 to 1:45 pm at Atria Hearthstone East;
3. Grades 4-8, Thursday, December 15, 1:15 to 1:45 pm at Westridge Mall.

TLS Christmas Pageant will be held Tuesday, December 13, at 7:00 pm at the TLS gym, grades K-8. The bands will play prelude music preceding the pageant. We hope you can join us!

Thank you from the TLS Foundation for your faithful prayers and support of TLS. In follow-up to the recent Foundation mailing, you may still make a tax-deductible gift for 2016! To make a secure on-line gift, go to www.topekalutheran.org and look for the “Donate” tab at top, or you may make your gift payable to the TLS Foundation and mail to 701 SW Roosevelt St., Topeka KS, 66604. Feel free to call the Foundation office at 785.357.1468 if you have questions, or if you did not receive the November 18 mailing.

LEADER FOR LUTHERAN BRAILLE WORKERS

WC #31 here at St. John's is looking for a new leader. If you are passionate about spreading Holy Scriptures to the sight impaired in Spanish speaking countries and America then this job is for you. It is such a rewarding volunteer job. A person or couple that can organize the workings of the Center is

needed. Currently Braille Workers volunteer on Thursdays once or twice a month, depending on how much work is sent from headquarters.

I am in my 16th year and feel it is time for someone with new creativity and ideas to reach those sitting in darkness. I have enjoyed working with the most enthusiastic group of volunteers in town. They all know their job and are eager to help. I will also continue to volunteer and work side-by-side with the new leader. If interested, call the church office.

ATTENTION: PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS THROUGH KINDERGARTEN

Beginning Wednesday, November 30, the preschool teachers will lead the children in rehearsals for the Christmas Service from 6:15 – 6:45 p.m. in the preschool Sunday school room. Families may enjoy a light supper beginning at 5:30 p.m.

ATTENTION: PARENTS OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 1 – 5

In addition to the Sunday morning rehearsals at 9:45, it is strongly encouraged that your children attend Rhythm of Faith on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. to prepare for the children's Christmas Service to be held on Wednesday, December 21, at 6:30 p.m.

Don't forget the supper opportunity each Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. now through December 14, and resuming January 4, 2017.

ATTENTION: PARENTS OF TWO-YEAR OLDS

The class led by Wendy Humphrey will begin anew on January 8, at 9:45 a.m. in Room 208. This is an excellent opportunity for your child to become accustomed to Sunday school, and for parents to network regarding parenting issues. Don't miss this special time for your toddler.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE MOVING

If you're moving in town and plan to remain a member of St. John's, please let the church office know your change of address (you can also fill in your new address on the attendance cards). If you're moving out of town, please contact Pastor Bruss or Pastor Kerns so they can provide you some help in finding a solid congregation near your new home and help you arrange a transfer. If you already have moved, please also the contact Pastors, as well. You can also use the link on the bottom of the St. John's homepage that says "Evangelical-Lutheran Liturgical Congregations" as a good guide.

LUTHERAN HOUR RADIO PROGRAM

A question was raised recently regarding when the Lutheran Hour radio show was on local radio. So here you go:

Station KCVT 92.5 FM – Sundays @ 8:00 a.m.

Station WIBW 580 AM – Sundays @ 7:30 a.m.

FROM HEAVEN ABOVE TO EARTH I COME

Is the title of this year's Children's Christmas program. The program will take place **Wednesday, December 21 at 6:30 p.m.** and the program is set within the Evening Prayer.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

LWML Bazaar & Luncheon: It's that time of year again. Please mark Friday, December 2, 2016 on your calendar for the St. John's LWML Bazaar and Luncheon. It's time to think about what you can bring to this event to insure we have another successful bazaar. The ticket price for an adult is \$8.00 and \$3.00 for a child. Booths open at 10:30 a.m. and the Luncheon is from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. In addition, we also will have one of the largest "Cookie Walks" in Topeka. The price for the cookies is \$6.00 a pound. As in the past few years, we will be selling woodworking items, homemade craft items, gift items, paintings, quilts, etc. We will again be offering a baked goods area and the Sweet Shop. The proceeds will be divided among many different local and national missions. Items may be brought to church on Wednesday, November 30 and Thursday, December 1, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The match for this year's bazaar will come from St. John's using funds St. John's receives from Thrivent Choice Dollars. Proceeds will be distributed among 30 different local and national mission groups. Without the contributions from St. John's members and the participation from the general public, this would not be possible. We thank you in advance for your help.

Sarah Circle will meet at McFarland's Restaurant at 6:30, December 12. We invite all ladies to join us for dinner, fun and fellowship. If possible, we are asking anyone attending to bring a pair or package of socks that can be donated to Doorstep. If you would prefer you may give a cash donation for these and we can shop for you.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep is planning for their Christmas Store for the 250 households they have adopted from the Christmas Bureau. Doorstep relies heavily on volunteers all year long, but especially during the week of our Christmas Store. They need your help with gifts, money to purchase the food, and your time! All of these are equally important, and they ask that you help where you can!

The Christmas Store is the week of December 11th – 15th at First Nazarene Church. They need help on Sunday from 2pm – 5pm to move all of the items they have collected throughout the year, over to the church. Trucks and strong backs are needed, and this is a great opportunity for kids and teens who need service hours! On Monday & Tuesday the 12th & 13th, they need volunteers who will help unbox and sort all of the collected items.

One of their greatest needs for volunteers is during the actual Store when our adopted families come to shop. Each family is sent around with an escort who helps them shop and bag their items. They schedule 18-20 households each hour, and each one needs an escort. They had a real shortage of volunteers last year particularly on Thursday. However, they need volunteers on Wednesday, December 14th from 8am – 8pm and on Thursday, December 15th from 8am – Noon. They ask that you sign up for a minimum 2 hour shift, but stay as long as you like. This will be one of the most rewarding, and feel good things you can do for yourself this holiday season. Please call the Doorstep office (357-5341) to reserve your spot!

They still need to provide Christmas for 700+ individuals in these 250 households. They ask that items be new for the Christmas Store. You can bring donations for the Doorstep Christmas Store, Monday – Friday from 8am – 3pm. We are located at 1119 SW 10th Avenue (10th and Buchanan), or to your congregation. Please consider helping Doorstep provide for our neighbors in need this Christmas by giving of your time and resources!

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR DECEMBER 2016

December 4	John the Baptist	Luke 1: 26-56
December 11	Jesus Is Born	Luke 2
December 18 and 25 & January 1:	No Sunday School	

*Come to the children's Christmas service on Wednesday,
December 21, at 6:30 p.m. followed by a reception in
Luther Hall*

Sunday school is one important tool for parents to nurture the faith given to your children in Baptism. Don't let your children miss out on this opportunity to grow spiritually and to get the life-giving Word into their ears, in their hearts, and on their lips. Parents, be an example for your children by attending Bible class while the children are in Sunday school.



IMPORTANT: COMING IN JANUARY

It has been five or more years since St. John's produced a **Church Pictorial Directory**, so January is the time for photographs for the booklet. Life Touch Photography will be on hand to take family and single photographs for this directory **January 9, 10, and 18 – 23** by appointment in Luther Hall. The hours for **weekdays are 2 – 9 p.m., and for weekends 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.** Beginning December 4, you will have the opportunity to make an appointment for a slot during those times. Signing up on-line is an option this year also. We would like as many people as possible to participate. Everyone will receive a free 8 x 10, and no one is obligated to purchase any more photos; however, the opportunity to do so is available. Watch for more information in the newsletter and on the bulletin board in the breezeway.



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.