



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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

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OCTOBER 2017

I JUST DON'T GET ANYTHING OUT OF CHURCH

We've all heard people say this, and maybe we've even thought it ourselves. But it depends upon what you expect to "get out of it." If you want to tell God how great and awesome He is, you can do that on the golf course or on the beach. If you want to get tips and advice on how to live, shop in the self-help section of the bookstore, or if you want to learn some facts about God, you can find all kinds of articles on the internet. But you'd be missing out!

So, what are we to expect from the Divine Service? What are we supposed to "get?" Becoming a Christian is not about your doing anything, but it is about receiving something. It is about Jesus doing something for you – giving you gifts that are eternal. It is about an encounter with Jesus. The pastor is the delivery man through whom the Holy Spirit works to give you the gifts of Jesus through preaching, absolving, baptizing, and feeding you Holy Communion.

Luther describes our condition something like this. We come to church before God with an empty sack. The first thing that happens is the confession and absolution, where grace, mercy, and forgiveness are poured into our sack. The hymns that we sing are full of the message of life and salvation, and more gifts are put into the sack. The Word is read and preached – more Law and Gospel gifts. Holy communion renders forgiveness, strength, joy, and peace. Finally, the benediction blesses us and pours more grace and mercy into the sack. We leave with a full sack, equipped with all that we need to live in this sinful world, strengthened to forgive all those who sin against us because we have been forgiven. By the next Sunday, our sack is empty again and waiting for the gifts of God through Jesus to fill us up.

So, when people say they can worship God on the golf course, that may be true – but Jesus is not on the golf course with His gifts. When people say, "I can read the Bible and online articles and learn all kinds of things about God and His Word" that may be true – but Jesus does not give you his Body and Blood online. You encounter Jesus in the Divine Service in a way that you cannot anywhere else. He has promised to give you eternal life in His Word and Sacraments. What more can we ask for? What more can we "get out of it?"

Deaconess Linda

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

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

Deaconess - Linda S. Kinnett, ext. 102

Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz

Associate Kantor - Bethany M. Johnson

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

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY COURSE LISTING: CURRENT

Children

Rhythm of Faith Choir (6 September – 9 May, 5:30-5:55 p.m.; Johnson)

Calling all 3rd – 8th graders! Join together in God's gift of music to confess the truth of God's Word in song. Rhythm of Faith develops life-long skills in singing, ringing, and reading music. You'll have opportunities to participate as a choir in Evening Offices at 7 p.m. and Sunday morning services and to appreciate the rich heritage of Lutheran hymnody and liturgy.

Jr. Lutherans (6 September – 9 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Sweet)

This fast-paced Bible, Catechism, and Lutheran history trivia game places Lutherans aged 4 – 12 yrs. in competition with one another and teams from other congregations in order to assist heads of the household fulfill their vocation to teach the Christian faith to their children. But the trivia is hardly *trivial*. Instead, it places in the minds and hearts of our children fundamental Christian knowledge that can be built upon in formal catechesis.

Adult Offerings

Dying the Lutheran Way (Six weeks; 6 September – 11 October, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss)

When does Christian death start? Ever wondered what a pastor does when he comes to the deathbed of a Christian? How about that white thing on top of the casket—what's that about? How in the world does a funeral service get planned? And what about cremation and burial? This class will address these and many more questions, culminating in an opportunity to work alongside the pastor and your fellow Christians as you think about what your own funeral might look like. For the dying.

COMING SOON! Heresies of the Early Church (Five weeks; 18 October – 15 November, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kerns)

There are five major heresies which have plagued the Church, and the same ones keep creeping in. The earliest one (1st century) is that of the Judaizers. We will look at that one discerning truth from error. We will then look at the Gnostic heresy, the Arian heresy, the Pelagian heresy, and the Socinian heresy. While these heresies arose centuries and millennia ago, they are by no means extinct.

Hebrews (Fall Term, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Hintz)

Luther describes Hebrews as a marvelously fine epistle. It discusses Christ's priesthood masterfully and profoundly on the basis of the Scriptures and extensively interprets the Old Testament in a fine way. Join this class for a wonderful look into the mysteries of God in Christ.

College Students and Young Adults Offerings 2017 – 2018

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Eleven weeks; 6 September – 15 November, 7:45-8:40 p.m.)

Mere Christianity is a classic work of apologetics that all Christians do well to encounter at least once in their life. In his winsome manner, Lewis defends and explains the Faith. Perennially relevant.

Adult Catechesis

Fall Adult Catechesis (Fourteen (or so) weeks; 6 September – 13 December; 7:45-8:40 p.m.)

Spring Adult Catechesis (Fourteen (or so) weeks; starting 3 January 2018; 7:45-8:40 p.m.)

Youth Catechesis

YCat I (6 September – 9 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kinnett)

YCat II (6 September – 9 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss & Kerns)

MORE ON ... JUNIOR LUTHERANS

Dear St. John's Parents:

Junior Lutherans have started training! These Lutheran trivia groups meet on Wednesdays during Sound Words Academy. The material contained in the Q&A quiz books cover Holy Scripture, Luther's Small Catechism, as well as understanding and application of this knowledge. The purpose is to prepare our children for catechesis while having healthy competitive fun!

We have coaches for each age group: “X Quizzers” are ages 4-5 and coached by Jami Geotz and Lorelei Humprey; “Novices,” ages 6-8, coached by Joe Robinson; and “Seniors,” ages 9-12, coached by Daniel Sweet. This Fall we will be working on memory skills as well as agility understanding the rules of the game. Teams have weekly goals and an ongoing memorization individual quest.

As I write, teams from *other congregations and schools* are already preparing for tournaments that will start at the beginning of 2018.

For parents whose children are already involved in Jr. Lutherans, I encourage you to quiz and discuss the material with your children. For those whose children aren’t yet involved, I encourage you to enroll your children in Jr. Lutherans and I welcome you as we ramp up the official Junior Lutheran program to include larger tournaments with other groups. Please let me know if you have any questions or helpful insights.

Daniel Sweet

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 voters assembly for 2017. We hope that you will find this information useful.

Through the month of August 2017

Budgeted Receipts through August	\$479,592.00
<u>Actual Receipts through August</u>	<u>\$443,770.60</u>
Shortfall through August	(\$35,821.40)

UPCOMING REFORMATION 500 EVENTS AT ST. JOHN’S AND AROUND

In Topeka (sponsored by St. John’s)

Saturday, October 28	Run, Martin! Run (See details in the article below)
Sunday, October 29	Circuit 6 (Topeka-Lawrence) Reformation 500 Celebration Joint Divine Service, TPAC, 10:30 a.m. (no Divine Service at SJELC that day)
Tuesday, October 31	Oktoberfest, Luther Hall, SJELC, 5:30-6:45 p.m.
Tuesday, October 31	Reformation Day Divine Service (with incense), nave, SJELC, 7 p.m.
Saturday, November 11	“Luther’s Other Discovery and How It Will Change Your Life,” Prof. Joel Biermann of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Courtyard, SJELC, 1:00-4:15 p.m.
Friday, November 10 or Saturday, November 11	Chili Cook-Off & Reformation Trivia to celebrate Luthers Geburtstag (Luther’s Birthday), Luther Hall, SJELC, 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, February 11	Reformation 500 Hymn Sing, nave, SJELC, 3 p.m.

Around

Sunday, October 15	Reformation 500 Hymn Festival, Helzberg Hall, Kaufmann Center for the Performing Arts, 7 p.m. Reservations are free by calling 816-994-7222 or by going to www.kauffmancenter.org
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RUN, MARTIN! RUN

The Inaugural Run, Martin! 5K Run will be held on Saturday morning, October 28, at Iliff Commons, located at 2413 NE 31st St. (7:30 a.m. registration; 8:00 a.m. run). The cost to run is \$15, and includes a Run, Martin! 5K t-shirt. This year's proceeds will go to support the Circuit 6 Reformation500 Feed My Starving Children Project. Sign up for the run/walk at sheet on church bulletin board by the Information Center. For further information contact Doug Lehmann at 379-9010 (leave a message) or Pr. Kerns at dkerns@stjlcms.org. (If you would like to help with this event, be on the lookout for a volunteer signup sheet or contact Pastor Kerns- we'll need people to watch corners and direct traffic; hand out T-shirts; collect race fees; and hand out water.)

ST. JOHN'S OFFERING FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29TH

Make sure to bring your St. John's offering for Sunday Oct. 29th, on Sunday Oct. 22nd or Sunday Nov. 5th. On Sunday Oct 29th, St. John's only Divine Service will be held in conjunction with the other Topeka-area LCMS congregations at the Topeka Performing Arts Center to celebrate the Gospel that was recovered in the Reformation 500 years ago. The offerings that will be gathered at TPAC will go toward funding a circuit-wide mercy project on March 3rd, when we will put together 100,000 food packets for the starving. We pray that in thanksgiving to the Lord on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation this offering will be generous and above and beyond your normal church offering. Again, your normal offerings can be given in the offering plate the week before or the week after.

NEW ADULT CLASS FOR SOUND WORDS ACADEMY

A new Adult Class will begin on Wednesday October 18 at Sound Words Academy. Pr. Kerns begins his 5-week study of Heresies of the Early Church. Each week will address a different heresy (which means that if you happen to miss a week you can pick right up the next). The class not only looks at the ancient form of these heresies, but where they can be spotted today in popular/folk American theology. In other words, this class isn't just about the ancient Christian Church, but about the Christian Church of 2017. This class meets in the 5:55 time slot in the Courtyard; Pr. Bruss' class Dying the Lutheran Way continues through October 11 (there's still time to take that in).

A SPECIAL ORGAN CONCERT

In the summer of 2005, my wife and I went to visit Pastor Ted and Carol Staudacher in Michigan (Pastor Staudacher was senior pastor of St. John's from 1979 until he retired in 1999). While there, I heard Steve Wurst, their pastor's son, play the piano and encouraged him to start taking organ lessons that Fall.

He did and graduated from high school with six years of organ instruction under his belt. He next studied organ at our Concordia University Wisconsin, from which he graduated in 2015. He then gave an excellent organ concert at our church on May 31, 2015. That fall he began graduate school at the University of Oklahoma where he earned his master's degree last spring and is now working there on his doctorate.

He is coming here to give another concert and will play music by Bach, Brahms, Widor, Kerll, Mussorgsky, Reger, and Debussy. This musical event is being cosponsored by St. John's and the Topeka Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. **The concert will be at St. John's on Sunday, October 15, at 3:30 p.m. The concert is free and open to the public. Come and bring a friend.**

2017 FLOWER CALENDAR

The following service is available if you would like to provide flowers: November 12

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A VOTING MEMBER?

The new constitution of our congregation 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. This means that, unlike in the past, communicant women age 18 and above are eligible to join the voters assembly. **We encourage all eligible St. John’s members to join the voters assembly.** You can contact the office to get instructions on how you can become a voter.

OCTOBER MONTHLY BREAKFAST

The Women’s League will graciously serve us biscuits and gravy and fruit on October 8.
No need for you to bring anything; just come for good food and fellowship!

CHICKEN/BEEF NOODLE DINNER

You are cordially invited to participate in the Annual Chicken/Beef Noodle Dinner hosted by the LWML of Faith Lutheran Church at 17th and Gage Blvd. The dinner will be held on Sunday, October 1 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Enjoy fellowship and a good meal for the price of \$7.00 for adults; \$3.50 for children 4-10. Children under 4 eat free.

CALLING ALL MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS

We would like to identify all members of our congregation who have served or are presently serving in the United States military. To date we know of 61 St. John’s members who are currently serving, or have served. We ask you to contact the church office or one of the Elders identifying your branch of service. Our plan is to maintain an up-to-date roster for recognition/support and remembrance for dedication to God and country. Also, if you know any of our dearly departed members who served in the military, please give us their name and branch of service. There is a bulletin board display for both categories.

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

“For I was hungry and you gave me food.” Matt. 25:35

We have been offered an opportunity to participate in a humanitarian project called “Feed My Starving Children,” a NGO which packs and sends nutritious food to children in 70 countries where starvation is rampant. The organization began in 1987, and has grown tremendously. Over the last thirty years, 99.9 percent of the food and 92.7 percent of the monetary donations go directly to the children who need help the most.

We all have seen pictures of skin stretched over bones and bloated bellies. These children do exist, and our church has been asked to make monetary donations and to volunteer **just two hours** to package food. FMSC appears to be a safe and efficacious way to answer Jesus’ mandate, *“for I was hungry and you gave me food.”*

In partnership with other churches in the Topeka area, the packaging of the food will take place on March 3, 2018 here at St. John’s in Luther Hall. Children as young as five and adults as young as 100 and everyone in between are welcome and encouraged to participate. No cooking is involved. The ingredients are shipped to the site ready to be packaged on an assembly line. Our church’s goal is **fifty (50) volunteers**,

but the more we have the more packages that can be sent. The reports from earlier volunteers from all over the country suggest that the experience is not only rewarding, but also enjoyable. For those who prefer, sit-down jobs are available.

Please consider helping as a team, as a family, or individually. If you even just think you might be able to help, please **sign up in the breeze way**.

ST. JOHNS WOMEN'S LEAGUE LWML

It's that time of year again, time for LWML activities to start back up. If you are not a member of a Women's league LWML group and would like to be, we have 2 groups, Sarah Circle meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:00 with a short business meeting, bible study and refreshments with fellowship, Dorcas Circle meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 1:00pm, also with a short business meeting, bible study and refreshments with fellowship. For more information on either circle contact Nancy Taylor, 785-221-3371 for Sarah and Denise Bitter, 785-232-0962.

LWML Sunday will be Sunday, October 8, 2017, our members will be providing the monthly breakfast. Remember to save your Best Choice labels and stamps. We also want to say thank you in advance for everyone who contributed to the Bargain and Bake sale in anyway. I will have the amounts in the next newsletter.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep's Fall Fundraiser is Tamales & Cinnamon Rolls again this year. They are taking orders September 30 through October 15, and **we will have a booth set up in the Courtyard on Sunday, October 1 to take orders**. The Cinnamon Rolls come with cream cheese icing and are \$9 for 6 rolls. They are perfect for the upcoming holidays! The Tamales come in pork or beef are \$13 for a pack of 6. They will be individually wrapped and frozen. You just have to heat and eat! You will be able to pick up your orders the weekend of November 3. Doorstep's Fall fundraiser helps with client needs, operating expenses in the last quarter of the year, and with their Christmas Store for adopted families.

Also, keep an eye on school supplies and back packs as they go on Clearance! Doorstep gives school supplies to the school aged children they adopt at Christmas. You can pick up some great bargains, and help them restock these for children for the second half of the school year! They are also low on toys for their Christmas Store, so if you can help out it certainly would be appreciated.

Doorstep is open for donations Monday – Friday from 8am – 3pm. They are located at 1119 SW 10th Avenue (10th & Buchanan). You can also drop items off in our Doorstep site outside Luther Hall.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR OCTOBER 2017

October 1	Elijah Is Taken to Heaven
October 8	Reformation Activity Sunday
October 15	Naaman and Elisha
October 22	Jonah
October 29	No Sunday School – Reformation Service at TPAC

In everything by prayer . . . let your requests be mad known to God.

Phil. 4:6

The Lord is my helper.

Hebrews 13:6

[God] is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Joel 2:13

He will command His angels . . . to guard you in all your ways.

Psalms 91:11

I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Jeremiah 31:33

Thank you, parents for bringing your children to Sunday school where they can be nurtured in the faith through the Word of God. Why not set a good example for them and attend one of the bible classes during the Sunday school hour.

YOU CAN IMPACT A CHILD’S LIFE BY BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT

The need for foster families in Kansas is ever-present. There are currently over 7,000 children in need of foster care. We are looking for compassionate families willing to open up their homes and hearts to children who are in need of a nurturing, supportive environment. FosterKansasKids helps you through the journey, making the process as smooth as possible, and providing your family the support you need through all of your questions and concerns. For more information call 1-844-380-2009 or visit the website: www.fosterkskids.org.



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)