



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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

VOL. 119 NO. 7 MONTHLY

JULY 2018

STEWARDSHIP WRAP-UP

Of all the things that pastors least like to talk about, money probably ranks up there highest—especially money as it pertains to the support of the work of the church. When you talk to pastors about their reluctance, they'll say things like, "It makes me sound like a club manager hounding people for their annual dues." I get it. I've been in the same position and had the same thoughts.

My own reluctance in the past had to do with what I thought were rather ham-fisted "stewardship programs." By ham-fisted I mean something like jumbled theology—the Law used where the Gospel should be and vice versa, the Gospel used like a guilt-trip ("Jesus *died* for you. What are you willing to do for Him?"), and the Law like the Gospel ("Remember, the Lord's shovel is always bigger than your spoon"—as if you should expand the size of your spoon so that the Lord's shovel will magically grow).

Another part of the reason was that I didn't think stewardship education was important because I thought everyone had the same upbringing and habits I had. I'm now sure I was wrong about that. As a kid, 1/10th of our allowance was to be set aside for church, 1/10th of our lawnmowing earnings, etc. By the time I got to be an adult "the missing 10%" had never been there anyway, and it's tough to feel bad about parting with what you never thought was yours in the first place. (Hint hint, parents. This is a *great* way to teach your children a godly habit. And just remember, we don't always need to understand godly habits as we gain them; that understanding can and will come later.)

But over time I've come to appreciate stewardship education far more—and to understand stewardship far better as I've grown in my knowledge of God's Word and my understanding of scriptural, Lutheran teaching. That's what we spent much of the June adult and high school Bible class studying. And though what we covered in just 3 weeks only scratched the surface, permit me to take a few moments to try to the scratch the surface of just those 3 weeks and give a recap.

The first point is this: stewardship is a foreign concept to Lutherans. The concept we should be talking about is *vocation*—your calling in life. And that raises the question "How do I know what my calling in life is?"

Well, first figure out where the Lord has placed you. That's your "station in life." You are a child, father, or mother, and sometimes two of those three things at once. You're an employee or employer or student. And all of you are baptized believers in Christ, members of a Christian congregation.

Second, with your station in life in mind, look to God's Word. What does the Lord expect a father, mother, child, employer, employee, congregation member, pastor, etc., to do?

Now, this whole business about what the Lord expects of you makes sense *only when you realize two further things.*

First, as far as your salvation goes, what you do doesn't matter. Christ has already done it. That's the message of the Gospel. The *curse* of the Law is lifted. But that doesn't mean the Law is gone. It's gone as far as your salvation is concerned (where it's only a curse). But under the Gospel, the Law is turned into a blessing that the Lord has given for your benefit and your neighbor's. In other words, there are *two kinds of righteousness*. There's the kind God gives (through Christ by grace alone through faith alone in the Gospel apart from works—that's the righteousness of the Gospel). And there's the kind God expects of you (for your happiness in life and the well-being of your neighbor—that's the righteousness of the Law—of the 10 Commandments and Table of Duties). And the Christian life is a life of both kinds of righteousness. You can boil it down to this: before God, the righteousness of the Gospel; before men, the righteousness of the Law. Your righteousness of the Law doesn't mean you don't need the righteousness of the Gospel; and the righteousness you have before God in the Gospel doesn't mean you don't need to strive for the righteousness of the Law. You need them both.

The second thing to realize is that the Lord wants to use you His "mask." Just as He uses the Means of Grace to give you the righteousness of Christ, so does He use your hands, feet, mouth, talents, smarts, skills, time, money to do good on earth. That's called "serving your neighbor." It's changing your kid's diaper, respecting and honoring your parents, loving your spouse not only in thought, but in word and deed, etc., etc., etc.

And it's there that we finally get to the idea of "stewardship," of "giving to church." It's not really stewardship. It's just living in your vocation, doing one of the things the Lord expects you as a redeemed child of His to do *for the sake of your neighbor*—supporting the ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Even if you don't do it for yourself, you do do it for your neighbor—whether you're supporting our work at St. John's, the work of LCMS missionaries, the works of Christian charity in our congregation and synod, and so on (see 1 Cor 9:14, Gal 6:6-7, 1 Tim 5:17-18, Gal 6:10).

There are other good reasons to do it, too. So let's put them all together. (1) God expects it of you as an important element of your righteousness before men. (2) It's a blessing to your neighbor and the very mask of God. (3) It's a tangible way of demonstrating your thankfulness for the gift of salvation in Christ. (4) It exercises your trust in the Lord's gracious provision. And (5), my favorite, it mortifies your flesh. It puts to death your old sinful nature. And it begins in the here and now the work of turning you into what you will be in the there and then in the New Creation (and already are through your Baptism), a sinless child of God. That's living in your vocation.

As you live in your vocation, the Lord will use you as His mask to do good things for your neighbor, and He'll use your neighbor to do good things for you—a true blessing, indeed. And something every pastor can delight in talking about.



Senior Pastor - Rev. J. S. Bruss, ext. 104
Associate Pastor – Rev. D. M. Kerns, ext. 101
Kantor - Rev. Roger M. Goetz
Associate Kantor - Bethany M. Johnson

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

THE ORDINATION AND EARLY MINISTRY OF PASTOR GOETZ

Pastor Goetz was ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry at Memorial Lutheran Church and Student Center in Ames, Iowa, fifty years ago on Sunday morning, July 7, 1968.

His upcoming ordination was reported the week prior in the Ames and Des Moines newspapers and afterwards in the July 22, 1968, issue of the *Chemical and Engineering News*:

Roger Goetz, who received a B. S. in the honors program in chemistry at Iowa State University in 1962, has been ordained as a Lutheran minister and will be assistant pastor of the Gethsemane Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod), St. Paul.

It was also announced in the September 1968 issue of the Iowa District West Edition of *The Lutheran Witness* and the October 1968 issue of *The Iowa State Alumnus*.

He was ordained by Pastor W. J. Fields, who also preached the sermon that morning. The first part of his sermon follows:

Muck Which the Lord Uses

Text: John 9:5-7 – “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay from the spittle and anointed the man’s eyes with the clay, saying to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.”

I was most pleased, Roger, when a few months ago you wrote asking that the service of your ordination into the ministry be conducted in your home church. I was even more pleased, and felt very privileged, when you asked me to be ordinator and to preach the sermon for this service, because our relationship with one another has covered a span of over eighteen years.

Those years included two years of confirmation instruction in which you evidenced a probing mind into the truths of the Christian message. They included years of observing you through high school as you were active in the Walther League, in teaching Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.

They included working with you through your college years, both as you were active in our student program, and especially also as your very special talent for music began to unfold and as you used it very frequently in our services. They included seeing you make a sharp turn in the road from graduate studies in chemistry to the seminary to study for the ministry. They included many cherished hours in the years after that decision talking about theology and the challenge of the church in the world today. Those years included too a growing appreciation of knowing you as a friend. And now it is my very real joy to welcome you, whom I think of as a spiritual son, as a brother in the ministry of our church.

For the sermon this morning I have chosen an incident in the life of our Lord which at first glance might seem about as far removed from an ordination service as you could imagine – the healing of a blind beggar. But there are some very pointed thoughts that we can glean from it for this important event in your life, as well as under the theme “We are muck that the Lord uses.”

After this introduction came the body of the sermon which had the following three parts:

1. You are only muck.
2. You are only muck which the Lord uses.
3. You are only muck which the Lord uses for a purpose.

After Pastor Goetz was ordained, he took over the service as celebrant of the Lord's Supper.

Regarding his back ground in music, he took piano lessons at Iowa State University from age eight through age fourteen and organ lessons from age thirteen through twenty-two, when he gave his senior organ recital. At Iowa State, Drake University, Valparaiso University, and the University of Wisconsin, his courses included organ, music theory, harpsichord, history of Christian art and architecture, history of Christian drama, and Protestant church music.

Pastor Goetz earned the following four degrees:

1962 - Bachelor of Science in the honors program in chemistry from Iowa State University.

1967 - Bachelor of Science in mathematics from Iowa State University (with a third major in modern symbolic logic).

1967 - Master of Divinity in systematic theology from Concordia Theological Seminary. While he was a student there, the seminary hired him to serve as Assistant to the Dean of the Chapel and Seminary Organist.

1972 - Master of Sacred Theology in church music from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

From 1968 until he came to St. John's, Topeka, in 1980, he was assistant pastor (later associate pastor), organist, and choirmaster at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in suburban St. Paul, Minnesota, and oversaw the music program of its elementary parochial school. He also served as visitation pastor, bringing Holy Communion to those unable to attend church.

At the same time, he was a quarter-time teacher at Walther Lutheran Junior High where he taught eighth-grade religion and was director of Walther's seventh-grade boys choir, seventh-grade girls choir, eighth-and-ninth-grade mixed chorus, and its annual eighth-and-ninth-grade operetta. After some years, he also taught German.

During those years, he founded and was director of the East St. Paul Lutheran Kantorei, an adult mass choir of members of four congregations, which gave an annual spring concert accompanied by its own chamber orchestra.

Pastor Goetz

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF PR. GOETZ'S ORDINATION

Our congregation is blessed to have the opportunity to celebrate with Pr. Roger and Mrs. Betty Goetz the 50th Anniversary of Pr. Goetz's ordination. Our celebration will take place both during the Divine Services on Sunday, 15 July, as well as between services, with a cake and punch reception in honor of Pr. Goetz. Above all, this is celebration of the Lord's continuing fulfillment of His promise that His Word will be proclaimed to the ends of the earth and that He will provide faithful pastors who will teach and preach with boldness and administer His Sacraments according to His command. It's also a celebration of the Lord's gift of music and gifted musicians who edify the worshipping congregation through their work. Our thanks and praise be to the good Lord, who has given Pr. Goetz to St. John's as a true and gracious gift for the vast majority of his ministry and granted him long life. And our thanks to Pr. Goetz for the many positive ways he has faithfully fulfilled his ministry and call in our midst—and to Betty, who has selflessly supported his work. *Soli deo gloria!*

JULY MONTHLY BREAKFAST

There will be no monthly breakfast in July as we will be celebrating on Sunday, July 15 the 50th Anniversary of Pr. Goetz's Ordination with cake and coffee between services.

WELCOME PAM HARMS, PARISH ASSISTANT

We are delighted to welcome Pam Harms to our St. John's support staff. Pam serves as parish assistant, doing a lot of the behind-the-scenes things that support the ministry of the Word and Sacraments here and keep things running smoothly. She brings diligence, good organization, and a winsome Christian demeanor to this position. Among other things, Pam will be responsible for coordinating many of the volunteer "jobs" we have in our congregation. We hope that you'll welcome her calls and the opportunities for service within the Body of Christ that she'll be asking you about. Pam is married to R.J. and has two grown sons, Jacob and Eric. She recently retired from public education after 31 years as a speech/language pathologist. We are now thankful that the Lord can use her good gifts and efforts in our congregation.

SUMMER VICAR CHRISTIAN STRAEULI

Our congregation is blessed to receive a summer vicar this year, Christian Straeuli. Vicar Straeuli has recently completed his theological studies at our partner seminary in Oberursel, Germany, where the SELK trains its future pastors (SELK = Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church = *Selbstständige evangelisch-lutherische Kirche*, with whom we in the Missouri Synod enjoy full altar and pulpit fellowship). Vicar Straeuli hails from Pretoria, South Africa, where he and his family are members of FELSiSA (=Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa/*Freie evangelisch-lutherische Synode in Südafrika*), a German-speaking synod of Lutherans, also in fellowship with LCMS, descended from missionaries sent to South Africa in the 19th century. Vicar Straeuli's installation will take place on the 5th Sunday after Trinity, 1 July, and he will continue to serve his vicarage through the 11th Sunday after Trinity, 12 August, after which he and his new wife, Kristin (née Lange) Straeuli will move to South Africa. There he will serve a full-length vicarage in the FELSiSA parish in Wittenberg, South Africa. During his vicarage with us, Vicar Straeuli is interested in observing how a larger LCMS parish functions, getting some additional preaching and teaching experience, serving as a leader in the VBS, and helping alongside our pastors with all manner of pastoral duties during the week. He will be directly involved on at least a weekly basis in the conduct of the Offices and Divine Services. We pray that his time with us will be a blessing both for him and for our congregation, and we give thanks to the Lord who raises up laborers for His plentiful harvest.

2018 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

June 24 was our Stewardship Sunday, where we received pledges for our July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 pledge year. If you were not able to turn in your pledge on June 24, you may still do so. Additional pledge cards can be picked up in the office and are also available at the end of each pew in the church.

If you have not yet pledged, we only ask that you give prayerful consideration to how best to use the gifts we all receive from God. St. John's is truly blessed with a giving congregation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Andy Gritman, Stewardship Chair.

HEADING TO COLLEGE?

Do you have someone in your family who's at college or going off to college? St. John's would love to help the college-bound find an LCMS church and LCMS-U chapter near their school. Please contact Pr. Bruss (jbruss@stjlcms.org or 354.7132) with their email address and cell number so we can get a pastor near their school in touch with them. Remember, too, that for those who attend Washburn, St. John's is the local LCMS-U chapter, serving Washburn students on Sound Words Academy evenings with Evening Prayer and our Young Adults and College Students Bible Study afterwards.

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 2018. We hope that you will find this information useful.

Through the month of May:

Budget through May	\$314,193.33
Actual Receipts through May	<u>\$251,255.82</u>
Surplus (Shortfall) through May	(\$ 62,959.51)

Plan to be a part of...

THE NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 6-8 PM

(Hosted by the Neighborhood Care Team and many additional St. John's volunteers)

**Signup sheets to volunteer at the block party will be posted on the
Human Care bulletin this month!**

JULY QUARTERLY VOTERS MEETING

There will be a quarterly voters meeting **on Sunday, July 22 at 2 p.m. in the Nave**. Quarterly financial reports will be presented, as well as reports from the various boards. If you desire to become a voting member, you will need to pick up a copy of St. John's Constitution and By-Laws from the church office to read and let Pastor Bruss or your Elder know that you desire to become a member. Once members are approved by the voting members, they are eligible to vote at the next scheduled voter's meeting.

WORSHIP CONFERENCE

St. John's will be hosting our second annual Worship Conference to provide continuing education and conversation for pastors and church musicians, along with congregation members who might also find it useful. Our keynote speaker will be Pastor Richard Resch, a treasured pastor and musician of the LCMS who spent most of his ministry as Director of Chapel Music at Concordia Theological Seminary and as the Kantor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He is now retired but is serving a vacancy at The Lutheran Church of the Triune God in Minneapolis, Minnesota. One of his many contributions to the Church is the production of the DVD, "Singing the Faith: Living the Lutheran Musical Heritage." We are delighted that he will share with us what it means to be "singing the faith."

"Singing the Faith" Worship Conference

Saturday, August 25, 2018

9:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church (901 SW Fillmore, Topeka, KS)

Cost: \$25, lunch included

More information on the schedule and workshops for pastors and musicians is found on our website at <https://www.stjohnlcmstopeka.org/worship-conference-2018.php>.

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

August 4, 2018

Forbes Golf Course

Registration begins at 7:00 with coffee and donuts

Shotgun start at 8:00 a.m.

Lunch and prizes will be provided

Cost: \$250 per team or \$65 per person

Registration deadline: Sunday, June 29

Registration forms are in the breezeway.

Support St. John's Lutheran Youth Fellowship

ST. JOHN'S SECRETARY MARILYN BREMER RETIRES

Marilyn Bremer, who has faithfully served as St. John's secretary for the last 9 1/2 years, has announced her retirement effective July 31 this year. Both the called and support staff of St. John's have enjoyed the many years the Lord has given us to work with Marilyn, and will miss her cheerfulness, her excellent organization skills, her positive outlook on things, and her effectiveness in her work. She will be sorely missed. Please stop by in the next month to thank Marilyn for her many years and to wish her and her husband Steve the Lord's blessings in their retirement.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

It's that time again. The Women's League of the LWML will be having a **Bargain and Bake Sale Thursday August 23 (8 a.m. -5 p.m.) & Friday, August 24 (8a.m.-1 p.m.)** in Luther Hall. For the 3rd year in a row our profits will be given to the Paid in Full campaign. So clean out those closets, drawers and cupboards and bring your items on over to the church. There is some room to store items in the basement. We would ask that you not bring any electronics, which includes TV, computers, DVD or VCR players.

With this being a project sponsored by Women's League, but for the benefit of St. John's, it would be appreciated for as much help as we can gain from members of the congregation. If you are willing to help in set up, clean up and/or work the event, please contact Ruth Scott, 272-4971 or Nancy Scheurman, 246-0912. Ruth or Nancy will be glad to give you the details.

2018 FLOWER CALENDAR

The following services are available in the next few months if you would like to provide flowers for any of them: July 22; August 12; September 16 & 30; October 7 & 28.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep assisted 259 households in 2017, involving 824 individuals with Christmas gifts and food. Each year they celebrate "Christmas in July" to get a jump start on collecting new items for their annual Christmas adoption! Their goal is to help alleviate some of the strain during the holidays by collecting some items mid-year. Doorstep will again adopt 250 households with 750+ individuals this December through the Christmas Bureau. By having items donated in July, Doorstep has a better idea what items they are lacking in November and December.

Doorstep has started to focus donations for Christmas in July to only include items that are not seasonal. Therefore, **they are requesting no clothing at this time.** Instead, they need sheets and blankets,

health kit items, household items, gifts for adults, school supplies and toys. These items should be new. Last year they were short 100 blankets and had to purchase them the week of the Christmas Store, so each household could receive a blanket or quilt.

Please look over the Christmas in July flyer in this issue and posted at the Doorstep display and see how you can help. Doorstep continues to be successful in helping people in need because of member congregations who are working together to provide for their neighbors in need. If everyone pitches in just a little, big things will continue to happen!

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FOR JULY 2018

We recently discovered an exciting new Sunday School curriculum for grades 1 through 8 entitled “The Acceptable Year of the Lord,” which follows the one-year lectionary. This means that the children will be studying the same Scripture lessons that the pastors will use for the texts of their sermons. This reinforces the Gospel lesson and encourages the children to listen more carefully to the sermon.

- July 1: The Fifth Sunday after Trinity Jesus Calls His First Disciples - Luke 5:1-11
- July 8: The Sixth Sunday after Trinity The Fulfillment of the Law - Matthew 5:20-26
- July 15: The Seventh Sunday after Trinity Jesus Feeds Four Thousand – Mark 8:1-9
- July 22: The Eighth Sunday after Trinity Beware of False Prophets – Matthew 7:15-23
- July 29: The Ninth Sunday after Trinity The Parable of the Shrewd Manager – Luke 16:1-9

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IS COMING

July 16-20, is the week of learning, fun, and worship in Vacation Bible School, for children age 3 through those going into the 6th grade. All kinds of helpers are needed, so prayerfully consider your gifts and talents and share them with the children. Please note the registration form below and contact Andrea Kosmicki if you can help with any of the volunteer opportunities shown on the enrollment form. You can also register online at www.vbsmate.com/stjohnstopeka.

**VBS ENROLLMENT FORM
JULY 16 – 20, 2018**

**9:00 A.M. TO 11:30 A.M. "FIVE WORDS OF UNDERSTANDING" (ELEMENTARY)
"NOAH’S ARK" (PRESCHOOL)**

Children’s classes are available to children age 3 years through those entering the 6th grade this fall.

Name _____ age ____ grade (in the fall) _____

Name _____ age ____ grade (in the fall) _____

Name _____ age ____ grade (in the fall) _____

Parent/Guardian _____ Phone _____

“I will be **volunteering and** will need child care for these children under age three:”

I would like to volunteer to help with:

Crafts _____ Kitchen _____ Preschool _____ Registration _____

Games _____ Small group guide _____

Decorations and set up _____ Infant/childcare _____

Place place the completed form in the blue box at the Information Center soon!

Even if you have never done so before, please consider helping with VBS! You'll be tired but glad you did! Contact Andrea Kosmicki.



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)