



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

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MUSINGS ON THE WEEKLY USE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

I came into the Lutheran distinctives rather late in life. Maybe that is why I get so excited about them.

My religious heritage taught me that the Sacraments are nothing more than ordinances: pious expressions of one's religious devotion that deliver nothing to the individual; no life, no salvation, and certainly no forgiveness of sins. Gratefully, I was led to study what the Early Church taught about the Sacraments as well as what Luther taught. I was dumbfounded by what I read. After months of study I remember telling my wife, "If this [referring to the Sacraments] is true, it changes everything." Indeed, it did.

After a failed attempt to bring my non-denominational church to a correct understanding of the Sacraments, I resigned my position and colloquized into the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. During my vicarage I was able to serve at a lovely church in Newark, Delaware. They taught me a tremendous amount, especially when it came to the liturgy.

If there was anything odd about this LCMS congregation it was their practice of providing communion every other week. If Lutherans truly believe what the Bible says about the Sacrament of the Altar—that it is efficacious to the individual—why would one not ask, even demand that it be given every Lord's Day? I kept these thoughts to myself, until speaking with a retired ELCA pastor. He joined our LCMS congregation because he had become sickened by ELCA's increasing unfaithfulness. His question to me was, "Why is the Sacrament of the Altar so infrequent here?" I could only repeat what I was told: "If we serve communion every week it will lose its significance." Hearing this my pastor friend rolled his eighty-seven-year-old eyes and exclaimed, "No man says this about eating steak or being with his wife." He had obviously heard the same excuse before. We laughed because what he said was true. Truth be told, I have never heard this loss-of-significance rationale at St. John's, yet I wonder how many Lutheran churches make the decision to withhold the Sacrament of the Altar because of it. Regardless, it's a weak line of reasoning.

Something else that happened during my vicarage was being handed the following historical account about the persecution under Diocletian.

"These Persons, being Christians, have held an assembly for the Eucharist, contrary to the edict of the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian." So read the charge made by the magistrates of the town of Abitina in North Africa, before the court of the Roman proconsul in Carthage, on the twelfth day of February, A.D. 304.

"What is your rank?" inquired the proconsul Anulinus of the first prisoner presented to him.

"I am a senator," replied Dativus.

"Were you present in the assembly?"

“I am a Christian and I was present in the assembly.”

Straightway the proconsul ordered him to be suspended on the rack and his body torn by the barbed hooks.... Then Saturninus, the priest, was arraigned for combat.

The proconsul asked, “Did you, contrary to the orders of the emperors, arrange for these persons to hold an assembly?”

Saturninus replied, “Certainly. We celebrated the Eucharist.”

“Why?”

“Because the Eucharist cannot be abandoned.”

As soon as he said this, the proconsul ordered him to be put immediately on the rack with Dativus...

Then Felix, a son of Saturninus and a reader in the Church, came forward to the contest. Whereupon the proconsul inquired of him, “I am not asking you if you are a Christian. You can hold your peace about that! But were you one of the assembly; and do you possess any copies of the Scriptures?”

“As if a Christian could exist without the Eucharist, or the Eucharist be celebrated without a Christian!” answered Felix. “Don’t you know that a Christian is constituted by the Eucharist, and the Eucharist by a Christian? Neither avails without the other. We celebrated our assembly right gloriously. We always convene at the Eucharist for the reading of the Lord’s Scriptures.” Enraged by the confession, Anulinus ordered Felix to be beaten with clubs...

Last of all, the lad Hilarion, son of Saturninus, remained to be tried. The proconsul said to him, “Will you follow your father and your brothers?”

“I am a Christian,” he confessed in his youthful voice. “Of my own free will I joined the assembly with my father and my brothers.” The proconsul then tried to terrify the boy by threatening torments – (he was so unaware that he was fighting not against men, but against God in his holy martyrs) – and said, “I shall cut off your hair and your nose and your ears, and then let you go.”

To this Hilarion replied clearly, “Do what you please. I am a Christian.” The proconsul ordered him to be returned to prison. And all heard Hilarion’s voice crying with great joy, “Thanks be to God.”

(from *The Martyrdom of St. Saturninus* in Ralph N. McMichael, *Eucharist: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), p. 93)



Senior Pastor - Rev. J. S. Bruss, ext. 104
Associate Pastor – Rev. D. M. Kerns, ext. 101
Kantor - Bethany M. Johnson
TLS Teachers - Andrea Kosmicki, Edith Kerns, Rachel Kathman

PASTOR GOETZ’ RETIREMENT POTLUCK LUNCHEON

There will be a Special Retirement Potluck Luncheon **honoring Pastor Goetz** on Sunday, October 21 after the late service. Please bring a main dish, or a side dish to share. Dessert will be provided. Join the celebration of the many years St. John’s has enjoyed the ministry of Pastor Goetz.

**501ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION CELEBRATION
WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2018**

On Wednesday evening, 31 October, our congregation will celebrate the 501st Anniversary of the Wittenberg Reformation. The evening begins with an Oktoberfest meal of brats (option of hamburger) (with all the good German fixins), German potato salad, wedge salad, and dessert, served from 5:30 till 6:45.

At 7:00 p.m. we'll have our Second Annual Reformation Evening Divine Service (with incense) using Luther's *German Mass*, which is Divine Service Setting 5 in our hymnbook. This festival Divine Service will be held in the nave with special music. See flyer in this Newsletter. \$7 tickets for the Oktoberfest meal must be purchased by Wednesday, 23 October. Proceeds from the Oktoberfest meal will support Lutheran missions internationally.

We hope everyone will be able to join us in celebrating and giving thanks for the Lord's gracious provision of 501 years in which His Word is proclaimed and taught in its truth purity and His Sacraments rightly administered. That evening all of our regular Sound Words Academy classes will be suspended.

**FEAST OF ALL SAINTS DIVINE SERVICE AND COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL
DEPARTED, 7:00 P.M., THURSDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2018**

On the evening of Thursday, 1 November 2018, we will gather in the Courtyard to celebrate the Feast of All Saints and for our annual Commemoration of the Faithful Departed. The Commemoration will take place at the start of the Divine Service and the names of those from our parish will be read whom the good Lord in His mercy has called from this valley of sorrows to Himself in heaven since last All Saints' Day. We want everyone to know that this is the only time that we will be celebrating the Feast of All Saints and commemorating the faithful departed, and we encourage those who have lost loved ones in the last year to attend.

SOUND WORDS ACADEMY OCTOBER 2018

Children

Rhythm of Faith Choir (Wednesdays – 8 May, 5:00-5:40 p.m.; Johnson) Rhythm of Faith uses God's gift of music to confess the truth of His Word in song. Develop life-long skills in singing, ringing, and reading music. Participate as a choir in Wednesday Evening Offices and Sunday services. Learn the rich heritage of Lutheran hymnody and liturgy. Enroll after Sunday services now through 9 September or contact Bethany Johnson.

Jr. Lutherans (Wednesdays – 8 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Sweet) This fast-paced Bible, Catechism, and Lutheran history quiz game places Lutherans aged 4 – 12 yrs. in competition with one another and teams from other congregations—with "trivia" that is hardly *trivial*. Enroll after Sunday services now through 9 September or contact Daniel Sweet.

Adults

Martin Luther and the Reformation of Worship (17 – 24 October, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss) Luther...translated the Bible, wrote a Catechism, reformed theology. But what about the worship of the church? How did Luther's reforms play out on a Sunday-to-Sunday basis? This class takes a quick look at several key writings of Luther. Time permitting it will also take up the "lived reality" after Luther's reforms.

The Resurrection of the Flesh (7 November – 12 December, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss): Yup. That’s how the creed actually puts it. Flesh. Raised incorruptible to immortality. The Resurrection of the Flesh picks up where Dying the Lutheran Way left off last year and examines what the Bible says about the body’s rest in the grave, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to “raise up me and all the dead,” and the everlasting life He has promised all His believers.

College Students and Young Adults

Martin Luther, *The Antinomian Theses* (Wednesdays – 12 December, 7:45-8:40 p.m.; Bruss) Luther fought it, too—the impulse to think that all of God’s Word could be summed up just in the Gospel and that the only thing worth proclaiming was just that (aka Gospel-reductionism). After all, if Christ has abolished the Law, of what use is it to believers in Christ? Should a Christian regard the Law as friend or foe? Does the Law do anything else than condemn? Answers to these questions and many more.

Adult Catechesis

Adult Catechesis (Wednesdays – 8 May 7:45-8:40 p.m.; Kerns through December; Bruss January through May) The central teachings of the Christian faith. What does God say *about* me in His Law? What does God say *to* me in His Gospel? How am I to relate to God? And where can I find Christ and what He wants to give to me? This September through May course, with breaks scattered throughout those 8 months, weaves together the teachings of Scripture and *The Small Catechism* and shows how God encounters you in the Divine Service. For those interested in becoming members of St. John’s or those seeking a refresher in the guts of Lutheran theology.

Youth Catechesis

YCat I (Wednesdays – 8 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Kinnett) Typically for 6th graders. 1 year long.

YCat II (Wednesdays – 8 May, 5:55-6:50 p.m.; Bruss & Kerns) Typically for 7th and 8th graders. 2 years long.

HYMN OF THE MONTH FOR OCTOBER

“Lord, Thee I Love With All My Heart” (LSB 708)

Background & Text

“Lord, Thee I Love With All My Heart” is another beautiful hymn full of comfort in the promise of Christ’s resurrection. The text of this hymn was written by Martin Schalling (1532-1608), a Lutheran pastor and theologian who was a student Philipp Melanchthon, the author of the Augsburg Confession. Schalling lived during the time shortly after the Reformation as Lutherans continued to move forward with their confession. It was a time of much suffering because of the religious wars throughout Germany and its small kingdoms and principalities.

The first stanza of this hymn points to Christ as our true treasure. Earth’s pleasures will never match the eternal life we have in Christ, and it is because of our eternal life that we have everything. The second stanza includes the meaning of the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed, in which Luther writes that “God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul...etc.” We also pray in this stanza that God would keep us safe from the temptations and deceptions of the devil, while we also bear our cross and follow Christ. The third stanza is the heart and soul of this hymn, the prayer most applicable to us as Christians as we prepare for death throughout our entire earthy life, that we may “die unfearing,” resting in the comfort of Christ’s resurrection.

You may ask, “How can we possibly love the Lord with all of our heart?” Only by Christ can we love with the heart of faith He has given to us. Though we will never keep the commandments perfectly, we still ought to love God and our neighbor. Ask the preschoolers why we love, and they will sing this to you, “We love, because God first loved us.” But how did God love us and how does he love us still? “He

sent forth Jesus, our dear Redeemer” (LSB 392), and through His Word and Sacrament God still comes to us to deliver his gifts of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

We love our neighbor not only because they need it, but also because God has given us everything in this earthly life and, most importantly, eternal life. We love our neighbor by receiving His Word and Sacrament together with our fellow saints, forgiving others, helping each other in time of need, and even by singing these beautiful hymns of the faith to each other for comfort and peace. May God continue to keep us in the true faith until we, like Simeon, see Jesus with our own eyes and taste the eternal joys of heaven where we will praise Him without end.

Catechism: First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Bethany M Johnson

NEW ADULT CATECHESIS CLASS

Began on September 12. Interested in becoming a member of St. John’s, or know anyone who’s interested? How about a refresher on the guts of Lutheran teaching? Our 2018/2019 Adult Catechesis class is forming right now. Please contact Pr. Bruss at jbruss@stjlcms.org if you’re interested in joining. Class runs from September 12 through April, with an anticipated confirmation and first communion date in May. Mid October is the latest date to join the class for the year.

MINUTE MAN TALK ON STEWARDSHIP (FROM SUNDAY, 9 SEPT.)

- On average, 350 members receive God’s Word and Sacraments here in the nave weekly.
- Almost forty home-bound members receive sermons weekly and a communion visit from the pastors at least once per month.
- For the third year in a row, Sound Words Academy resumes next Wednesday evening; we anticipate that well over 170 people both from the congregation and the neighborhood will be here to hear and learn God’s Word.
- Twenty-six children from St. Johns are enrolled at Topeka Lutheran School.
- Our pastors are also innovating new ways to spread God’s Word in our community and beyond.
 - There are over 15 podcasts, most created by Pastors Bruss and Kerns, explaining the theology of the of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod on thepluckedchicken.com website.
 - A new season of Jr. Lutherans will be starting in conjunction with Sound Words Academy with the vision of spreading this learning opportunity to all the Missouri Synod churches in northeast Kansas and beyond.

The Lord has truly blessed His ministry here at St. John’s, but it costs money. One of the responsibilities of the Board of Christian Stewardship is be a steward of the contributions the church receives from its members. We are currently working with the rest of the Church Council on the 2019 operating fund budget.

While the *Paid in Full* building campaign is on track to have the entire loan retired by June 2019, the 2019 operational budget is another story. The proposed expense budget for 2019 will be over \$10,000 less than the 2018 budget primarily due to staff retirements. Unfortunately, pledged and projected non-pledged giving for 7/1/2018 through 12/31/2019 is \$37,465 less than last year. This is largely due to

congregational deaths and retirements. The 2018 budget was funded with \$69,836 of reserve funds which are not available for the 2019 budget which gives us a projected 2019 budget shortfall of over \$107,000. This is a very serious concern.

As we hear in the Gospel, our “heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:32-33). Growing up in a Lutheran home I do not recall conversations at home regarding giving. However, both my grandfather, Leo Grittman, and father, Dean, taught by example. I remember my grandfather and father putting offering envelopes in the plate as it was passed and serving the congregation in many roles like treasurer, financial secretary, trustee, and congregational president.

In order to meet the 2019 operation budget the Church Council needs your help. If it is possible for you to make a new, or revise your existing, 2018 – 19 commitment please contact Yvonne Berry in the church office. If you have any questions on the church budget please contact one of the members of the Board of Stewardship, Dakota Sorensen, Rachel White, or myself. Most importantly, the church council asks for your prayers during the budgeting process.

Andy Grittman, Chair
Board of Christian Stewardship

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.

Budget through August 31	\$502,709.33
Budget Receipts through August 31	\$451,863.00
Over (Under) Budget YTD	(\$50,846.33)

OCTOBER MONTHLY BREAKFAST

Come join the monthly breakfast on Sunday, October 14, as LWML serves up biscuits and gravy, fresh fruit, pastries, and all the fellowship you can take in. No need to bring anything except a healthy appetite.

ENGAGING YOUR CHILDREN IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

Keep your eyes out for some helpful teaching tools at church. This month we are introducing a new bulletin format. This new format includes a cover picture that captures the Gospel lesson, an excellent way for you to help children to understand what’s going on. The bulletin also includes an explanation of all the readings for that Sunday. You can use this when you talk to your children about what they heard in church—and even use it to help them anticipate what they’ll hear about. At the ends of the pews there’s also now a laminated card that has two sides. On one side are some suggestions for parents to help their young children participate in the Divine Service. On the other side is a guide for everyone for getting the most out of the sermon. Coupled with our new Sunday School curriculum whose lessons are on the Gospel for each Sunday, we hope that these things will help you and your family grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOLF SCRAMBLE FUNDRAISING RESULTS

Thanks to the hard work of Jim and Linda Simpson, all our golfers, our generous sponsors (see youth bulletin board for sponsor list) and various youth and their parents, we raised a total of **\$3,129.09** for the St. John’s Youth Group!! This will be used toward supplementing youth activities and service projects during the 2018-19 school year as well as subsidizing the next trip to Higher Things.

THANK YOU'S

St. John's LWML wants to thank the congregation for their generous contributions to the Bargain & Bake Sale. Also thanks to all who helped in any way. In addition to our sales, we were able to provide items for Findables, Doorstep, and the Rescue Mission. We are pleased to report proceeds of a little over \$2,900. Our LWML voted to add additional funds so that our donation to the Paid In Full Campaign will be \$3,500. Thank you so much.

2018 FLOWER CALENDAR

The following services are available this year if you would like to provide flowers
November 11 & 18; December 2.

DOORSTEP NEWS

Doorstep has had a busy summer. They have been busy helping with food and clothing, but also with the monetary services they offer. From rent and utilities, where they get more calls than they have money to help, to dental, prescriptions, gas vouchers and local bus tickets. They are fortunate to receive several grants which make providing these funds possible. Particularly, United Way of Greater Topeka Basic Needs, City of Topeka and Shawnee County Social Services. But still, the need exceeds the ability to accommodate those requests. This is why they continue to need the support of their member congregations.

DOORSTEP'S NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR WALK/5K RUN!

Doorstep's New Fall Fundraiser, Neighbor Helping Neighbor Walk/5K Run is Saturday, October 6th at Lake Shawnee. Registration is at Shelter Houses 1 and 2 from 8:30-9:15am. The Walk/Run starts at 9:30am with Chris Fisher from WIBW as our celebrity starter. To get everybody warmed up, the Topeka High School Drum Line will play prior to the start! If you haven't already signed up, you can register at www.DoorstepTopeka.org or at the Walk/Run on October 6th. \$30 per person, children 10 and under can walk for Free with a paid adult!

Keep an eye on school supplies and back packs as they go on Clearance! Doorstep gives school supplies to the school aged children we adopt at Christmas. Pick up some great bargains, and help us restock these children for the second half of the school year! We also need toys for all ages for the Christmas Store, if you can help out we would appreciate it!

TLS NEWS

Join us **Friday, October 5 for Family Movie Night/Open House** at the TLS main campus. All families from the community are welcome to stop by to check out the students' projects and stay for a family movie under the stars! Open House and Scavenger Hunt are scheduled for 7:00pm, followed by concessions and seating at 7:30pm, and "Wreck-It Ralph!" movie begins at 7:45pm. Bring a blanket and/or lawn chair and join us!

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

The Topeka Zone LWML fall meeting will be October 13, 2018 at Trinity Lutheran Church, 902 Kennedy, Burlington, Ks. Registration and coffee begin at 9 a.m. Cost for lunch is \$5.00. Opening devotion is at 10 a.m. Ingathering items for God's Storehouse in Burlington are: canned fruit, canned meat and dish soap. Please contact Ruth Scott (272-4971) if you plan to attend or have questions.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FOR SEPTEMBER 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.

October 7:	The 19th Sunday after Trinity	Jesus Heals the Paralytic Matthew 9:1-8
October 14:	The 20th Sunday after Trinity	The Parable of the Wedding Banquet Matthew 22:1-14
October 21:	The 21 st Sunday after Trinity	Jesus Heals the Nobleman’s Son John 4:46-54
October 28:	The 22 nd Sunday after Trinity	The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant Matthew 18:23-35



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*)

FOR
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