



St. John's

Ev. Lutheran Church

VOL. 123 NO. 11 MONTHLY

NOVEMBER 2018

REFLECTIONS ON ENTERING THE LAST QUARTER OF *THE YEAR WITH THE BIBLE*

Sola Scriptura. “Scripture alone.” The first and last word belongs to God. For this life and the next. We all know that. We’re Lutherans after all, right?

We believe, teach, and confess both that God’s Word is the “only source, rule and norm of faith and life” and that it’s powerful and does what it says. So if God says, “Let there be light,” light there is. And if God tells us that faith in Jesus is the only way to be saved from our sinful lives and death and hell, well, that’s the way it must be. Because God said it.

And so we gladly receive that word in the lessons from Scripture and preaching on Sunday morning and in Bible class. Even more, we gladly carry that word around with us—sometimes in the 1,000-plus bound pages of our Bible—but even more importantly in our mind and heart.

That’s the ultimate use of the Holy Scriptures: not only that we read and mark it, but even *learn* it and *inwardly digest* it, so that what’s written on the page gets written on the mind; and what’s written on the mind gets written on the heart. Because when the word is there, it transforms us inside out into the creatures God is making us through Jesus Christ. Call it an extreme makeover.

This is what the Scriptures themselves teach about that all that:

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (1 Timothy 3:14–17)

If you remain in My Word, you are My disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. (John 8:31–32)

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand sin the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1–2)

How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your word.... Let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You.... I will meditate on Your precepts and fix my eyes on Your ways. I will delight in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word. (Psalm 119:9-16)

Incline my heart to Your testimonies. (Psalm 119:36)

I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life. (Psalm 119:93)

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. (Psalm 119:97)

Your word is lamp to my feet and a light to my path.... I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget Your law. (Psalm 119:105, 109)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. (Colossians 3:16)

This is hardly an exhaustive list (on purpose—there isn't enough space!). For the month of November, up to the 20th of the month, though, send me (jbruss@stjlcms.org) any other such passages you find in your reading or have learned, and we'll publish them in the December newsletter.



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

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. Tickets for the meal have already been sold, but we do have a *little* extra if you want to try your luck.

At 7:00 p.m. we'll have our Second Annual Reformation 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.

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. During the Commemoration 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

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 NOVEMBER

LSB 516 “Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying”

As we approach the end of November, we are also approaching the end of the Church Year. The end of the Church Year is an important time to focus on the return, or “reappearing,” of Christ. This is also known as “Judgment Day,” when Christ will appear for judgment, raise the dead, give eternal life to those who believe, and condemn those who do not believe.

The hymn of the day for the Last Sunday in the Church Year is “Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying” (*LSB 516*), also known as the “King of Chorales.” Both text and tune were written by Philipp Nicolai, a pastor in Germany who lived during a terrible plague in 1597 that took the lives of 1,300 of his parishioners during the span of seven months. Surrounded by death and suffering, he sought to bring the comfort of

the Gospel to terrified consciences. His collection of meditations on this comfort was called “Mirror of Joy of Eternal Life.”

In “Wake, Awake,” Nicolai focuses on the joy that awaits us in eternal life and the future glory in heaven when we will partake in the wedding feast of joy with our bridegroom, Christ. We, Christ’s Bride, are also referred to as “Zion” and “Jerusalem,” meaning that we are the Church. We are God’s people here and in eternity. Stanza two of this hymn describes the coming of Christ but also focuses both on our feasting at the Lord’s Supper and on the “feast to come” in heaven. Stanza three describes the glorious celebration of all God’s people in heaven, not only in the future but also in the present as we sing with the choirs of saints and angels during the Divine Service each Sunday.

This hymn reflects the Gospel reading for the Last Sunday, Matthew 25:1-13, which is about the Wise and Foolish Virgins. The wise virgins were those who prepared their lamps with oil and remained steadfast despite the delay of the Bridegroom. The foolish virgins were not prepared and looked for oil when it was too late. The first stanza urges us to prepare to meet Christ. And how do we prepare? How do we fill our lamps with oil? We receive God’s gifts of forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation through His Word and Sacraments. We pray that God would absolve us from our offenses so that we “may be delivered by [God’s] bountiful goodness” and be led home to the eternal wedding feast in heaven. (Collect for One-Year Lectionary, Last Sunday).

Catechism: 3rd Article of the Apostles’ Creed

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. **On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.** This is most certainly true.

Bethany M Johnson

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2016 AT 2 A.M.

Set your clocks back before you go to bed Saturday evening, November 3.

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 September 30	\$565,548.00
<u>Budget Receipts through September 30</u>	<u>\$515,535.99</u>
Over (Under) Budget Year to Date	(\$50,012.01)

NOVEMBER MONTHLY BREAKFAST

Come join us for a potluck monthly breakfast on Sunday, November 9th. Bring your favorite breakfast dish to share and join in the fellowship with your fellow St. John's members.

ENGAGING YOUR CHILDREN IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

Keep your eyes out for some helpful teaching tools at church. Last month we introduced 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 young and old alike 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.

2019 BUDGET HEARING

A budget hearing will take place Sunday, November 4 between services at 10 a.m. in the nave. The purpose of this meeting is to hear what is being proposed to bring before the Voters for final approval on Sunday, November 18. Questions are encouraged, but formal action will be taken at the hearing.

NOVEMBER VOTER'S MEETING

There will be a Voters Meeting Sunday, November 18 at 2 p.m. in the church nave. Items of business will include:

1. Reports from Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Board Chairs
2. Presentation of the Proposed 2019 Congregational Budget for voter approval
3. Presentation of the ballot of nominees for congregational officers and board members for 2019

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A VOTING MEMBER?

Our constitution 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. **We encourage all eligible St. John's members to join the voters assembly.** You can contact the office, a pastor, or your elders to get instructions on how you can become a voter.

QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS

We have mentioned this before, but since it is getting close to tax time, we are providing it again. This only applies to members who are at least 70 ½ and are required to withdraw funds from their retirement accounts. As those who must do this know, these withdrawals are taxed as income. A way to defer part or all of those taxes is through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (Contribution). If you have been giving to St. John's with your charitable gifts each year, or are seeking a way to contribute, we would advise you to look into this option with your financial advisor if you meet the above-mentioned criteria. We believe you will be glad you did.

Board of Stewardship

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SEEKING VOLUNTEER(S)

Anyone interested in a Fall through Winter project of renewing, repairing, and painting the window putty on the Breezeway windows and the lower portions of the stained-glass windows on the Courtyard side of the nave is asked to contact Jeff LaCrone, chair of the Trustees or Dennis Hintz. Jeff can be contacted at 785.969.1387 or Dennis at 785.235.9684. Please leave a message to return your call.

SHARE THE HARVEST

This year, St. John's members will again have the opportunity to "Share their Harvest." This donation goes to local agencies to assist the needy in the Topeka area. The Harvest will be gathered at services on Thanksgiving Day and the following Sunday. Please use the "Share the Harvest" Designated Offering envelope from your contribution envelopes. Additional "Share the Harvest" envelopes and canisters are available in the narthex. Through "Share the Harvest" we direct those in need of assistance to a local agency that we support. Last year, \$1145 was distributed in support of Topeka Rescue Mission (25%), Let's Help (25%), Doorstep, Inc. (25%), and St. John's Human Care (25%). We deeply thank you for your contribution to this human care effort. "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His love endures forever." Psalm 107:1

2018 & 2019 FLOWER CALENDAR

Please check the Flower Calendar on the bulletin board outside of the church offices. A couple dates for this year are still available: November 18 and December 2. The *2019 Flower Calendar* will be posted soon. 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.

THANKSGIVING/CHRISTMAS BASKETS & POINSETTIA DELIVERY

The Welfare Fund provides monetary assistance to members who have special needs. If you wish to contribute to this cause, please make your check payable to St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church with "**Welfare**" on the memo line. In addition to monetary gifts, The Crisis Response Team, under the Human Care Team and The Board of Missions, prepares and delivers meals and purchases groceries and gift certificates at Christmas time and for members in need of assistance throughout the year.

If you would be willing to assist in providing meals and/or delivering poinsettias during the Christmas season, please contact Pam Harms pharms@atjlcms.org or call the office at 354-7132. This is an immediate need.

DOORSTEP NEWS

First, Doorstep wishes to thank everyone who helped to make their inaugural Neighbor Helping Neighbor Walk/5K Run a success. They were able to raise \$6,000 to help with agency expenses going into the last quarter of 2018! Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 5, 2019 for their 2nd annual event!!

Doorstep is already making plans for their Christmas Store for adopted families and individuals. This year, Doorstep will again adopt 250 households from the Christmas Bureau. There are over 775 individuals within these households, and they provide a Christmas for all.

This year the Christmas Bureau will take applications for 7 days between October 22nd and November 2nd. Sign up is for our neighbors in need who cannot afford to provide a Christmas for their families. These are families and individuals who meet the federal poverty guidelines. They are working, but not making a living wage; they are disabled, they are struggling to provide the most basic of needs for their families, and need a little extra help at Christmas.

Doorstep's Christmas Store is a unique experience and different from anything else they do at Doorstep! They need your help with gifts, monetary donations to purchase the food, and volunteers to help during the five day process. Please mark your calendars for December 9th – 13th and watch for our flyers on specific days and times for volunteering. Doorstep's Christmas Store is possible each year in large part because of the generosity of our member congregations and their members. Neighbors helping neighbors is what Doorstep was founded on, and what we continue to do today!

TLS NEWS

We are pleased to share the enclosed TLS Success Story from Ms. Tatiana Schafer, TLS Class of 2009. She shares how attending TLS has impacted her life, especially now as a young adult and teacher/coach of high school students. Tatiana lives in Topeka and she and her family are members of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church.

Veterans Day will be celebrated at TLS with area veterans and spouses on Friday, November 9 at 2:00pm. Students and faculty have a special program planned to recognize these special guests, followed with a reception hosted by the TLS Foundation. Please watch for your invitation and RSVP request; and call the TLS Office at 785.357.0382 if you have not received by November 5.

You are invited! TLS 4/5 Grades choir and band will be performing at the Festival of Trees on Thursday, Nov 29, from 12:15 to 12:45. This event will again be held at the Ag Hall, adjacent to the Maner Conference Center at 17th and Western. Admission fee is \$5 as this is an annual benefit for Sheltered Living Inc. We hope you can join us!

INVITATION TO 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, November 4, 2018 from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Enjoy fellowship and a good meal for the price of \$7.00 for adults, children ages 5-10 are \$3.50, and children under 5 are free.

When you attend dinner on November 4, you will also have the opportunity to win 1 of 2 beautiful handmade quilts, which will be on display prior to and during the noodle dinner. Proceeds will be used to help with shipping quilts to World Relief.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE NEWS

LWML Bazaar & Luncheon: It's that time of year again. Please mark Friday, December 7, 2018 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. 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. Items may be brought to church on Wednesday, December 5 and Thursday, December 6 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional information will be available in the Sunday bulletins.

We would like to ask for 4-6 volunteers for the congregation to help serve the Luncheon. Our ladies work hard and never have time to eat or shop and with more volunteers this would give them a short break. We would also like to emphasize that all the money received, less expenses, from this Christmas Luncheon

and bazaar, will be given to Missions, both locally and abroad. Watch the newsletter in January or February and you will see where these funds were sent for this year.

Thank you in advance for your support, by volunteering, contributions, attending and purchasing items and enjoying the wonderful luncheon.

Women's League Caring Mission Yearly Report 2018

Our Lutheran World Relief (LWR) projects are completed for this year. We are happy to report we sent 80 Personal Health Kits, 68 School Kits, and 20 lbs. of soap. This year Marge Gehrt made 8 school backpacks and Nancy Taylor donated 60 school backpacks that were purchased from Oriental Training for our 68 school kits.

We are happy to report that 25 quilts were donated to LWR, 9 to Doorstep, 8 to Haskell Light Ministries in Lawrence, and 8 to the Topeka Rescue Mission. Of those 50 quilts, Barb Porter made 25 of them completely by herself and we appreciate her dedication and generosity. Thanks to all the women who donate material and supplies, cut, sew, tie and bind the quilts that are distributed to those in need. These projects were taken to the LWR pick-up truck at Christ Lutheran Church on October 12, 2018. This LWR truck takes project to the LWR warehouse in Baltimore, MD, and from there LWR quilts and kits are shipped to different countries where they are needed most.

In comparing 2018 to 2017, our report shows that we increased in all our giving. Our thanks to all St. John's members and all the ladies who worked or donated to make this a success. Again, these ladies have taken St. Paul's word, "*Do not grow weary of doing good,*" to heart.

OUR YOUTH NEED YOUR HELP!

The pastors are in the beginning stages of creating a more cohesive and coherent curriculum for our high school youth Sunday School class. Our vision? A comprehensive curriculum, regularly repeatable (every 2 or 3 years) that works through the critical questions Christians face as they mature from childhood to adulthood. Our goal? To apply the Word of God faithfully to these questions to keep our young people in the Faith and to give parents additional incentive to make sure their kids regularly attend the high school youth Sunday School class. Here's where you come in. We'd like you to send us your "critical questions"—the questions every Christian needs an answer to. You can communicate them to us orally, via email (jbruss@stjlcms.org and/or dkerns@stjlcms.org), via text, on the phone, in writing—whatever. We'll amass those questions that need a solid, biblical answer, and use them, along with many of our own, as the spine of our curriculum. To get the juices flowing: The answer to what question would have made a difference to you as you matured in the Faith? What have you only recently discovered that would have made a big difference to you as you grew up? What do you know today that you wish you knew years ago? What killer question has plagued you for a long time?

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS FOR NOVEMBER 2018

As we near the end of this year, we are concluding our first year of Sunday School using the curriculum based on the one-year lectionary. This has been an exciting year seeing the kids really grow in their understanding of the Gospel reading for the Sunday. It really helps them understand what the sermon is about each Sunday. We continue to incorporate this across the grades.

November 4:	The 23rd Sunday after Trinity	The Two Kingdoms	Matthew 22:15-22
November 11:	The 24th Sunday after Trinity	Jesus Raises the Ruler's Daughter	Matthew 9:18-26
November 18:	The 25th Sunday after Trinity	The End Times	Matthew 24:15-28
November 25:	The Last Sunday after Trinity	Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins	Matthew 25:1-13



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)