

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH LCMS
PASTOR JOSHUA HAYES

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

OUR MISSION Share the Joy of His News by growing inward through God's Word, Sacraments and fellowship and by growing outward through words, actions, and mission outreach.



VOLUME 30 ISSUE FEBRUARY 2016

THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD: JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH ALONE

We hear them telling in our own tongues the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11).

How do you know that you are saved? One might answer: "Because I believe in Jesus. I have faith in Him." That is a true and good answer. John 3:16 teaches as much.

But the Devil is sneaky. He comes in with questions like: "But do you really believe? Do you believe hard enough? Is your faith sincere enough, free enough from doubt?" On and on he goes, pointing us to the quality of our faith instead of to Jesus.

When the Bible teaches that we are saved by grace through faith apart from works (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9) it does not mean that we are saved because our faith is so great and awesome that God just has to save us because of it. Faith is not the one good thing you have to do. Nor is faith a sustained act of the will, so that it's up to you go out there, get faith, and keep your faith going.

Instead, faith itself is a gift. Faith means trust of the heart, such as infants and little children who trust and rely entirely on mom and dad to feed, clothe, and love them. Faith is entirely passive. It only receives. Faith is the empty hands which receive the gift. The greatest prayer of faith is the man who cried: "Lord, I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief!" That is a total reliance on Jesus, even for faith itself. The Lutheran reformers put it well: *For faith justifies, not for this cause and reason that it is so good a work and so fair a virtue, but because it lays hold of and accepts the merit of Christ in the promise of the holy Gospel (SD III, 13).*

Sometimes I use the analogy of a worthless bucket. If you fill that bucket with trash it has no use and no value. You would have to pay people to take it from you. But if you fill that same bucket with gold bars, now its use and value are almost priceless.

So it is with our faith. Everybody has faith—that is, everyone trusts and relies on something. Every human heart has a "god-shaped" hole in it. Without the Holy Spirit, sinners are bound to fill that hole with everything but the living God.

So if faith trusts in money, medicine, family, or government above all things, then it is useless to save like a bucket filled with trash. But if faith trusts in Jesus and his grace, then it saves no matter how weak and timid it feels. Indeed, often when our faith feels the weakest then it is the strongest because it has nothing to rely on but Jesus only: "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

Ultimately, the promises of God in Christ enable us to live by faith alone. We are saved because of God's grace which we receive through faith alone. Our faith is great because of its object: Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. "For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Peace to you,

PLEASE HAVE ALL INFORMATION OR ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER TO CATHY HOLLMAN BY 25TH, THANK YOU!

CLOTHING FOR ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN: We can once again send used clothing to Orphan Grain Train. When leaving clothes at the back door, please mark them for either OGT or PCM (People's City Mission).

THE LYF Valentine's Dinner is Sunday, February 14th. The last day to sign-up for reservations is Sunday, February 7th.

LENTEN SERVICE DUTIES

Ash Wednesday, February 10:

Pianist: Ellen Miller
Elder: John Reitz
Acolytes: Devon Reitz & Ashlyn Adam

Wednesday, February 17:

Pianist: Ellen Miller
Elder: Brent Wohl
Acolytes: Morgan & Maggie Wohl

Wednesday, February 24:

Pianist: Ellen Miller
Elder: John Reitz
Acolytes: Mersadies Kvasnicka & Aaron

LAMBS OF CHRIST PRESCHOOL NEWS

Annual Chili Feed and Raffle Sunday, February 28th. All new to the Chili Feed is a Chili Cook-Off. If you have a great chili you would like to enter into the Chili Cook-Off contact Michelle Wittstruck for more information. The traditional menu of chili, chicken noddle, cinnamon rolls, etc. will be served. We will begin serving at 10:00 – 12:30. You may also buy tickets for the raffle tickets at the chili feed. Lambs of Christ is looking for items to raffle off for their annual Chili Feed Fundraiser. If you have an item that you wish to donate please contact Michelle Wittstruck or Rhonda Beethe. Look for more information as the event draws closer.

Enrollment Begins February 15th or 20th. Enrolment will begin February 15th for Bethlehem and St. John's members, current students and alumni families. We will begin open enrollment on Saturday, February 20th. Teacher: Rhonda Beethe, teachers assistant: Kathy Oelschlager. Please contact Rhonda at (402)826-4375 or by email: lambsofchristcrete@gmail.com.

Mission Statement: Offering every child an opportunity to learn, play, create and socialize in a safe, and nurturing Christian environment!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS & BAPTISMS

BIRTHDAYS

3 Dan Murphy
4 Brad Davis
10 Kirk Johnson
11 Angie Louch
12 Jenna Keim
13 Olivia Pomajzl
14 Tory Dello
16 Jace Ourada, Melissa Persing, Allan Reetz
17 Jordyn Adam, Del Reiss
18 Ryan Meinke, Shari Melk
20 Susan Vosika

23 Camryn Adam

24 Randy Adams, Dolyn Meinke

25 Steve Schultz

26 Cierra Hensley, Megan Musil

27 Bonnie Bleich, Linda Eggert, Cindy Nitzel

28 Peggy Bojanski, Matt Ellingson

29 Gary Rezac

BAPTISMS

1 Joy Kouba

2 Arlin Pomajzl

4 Paul Beck

6 Angela Dello

9 Rev. Art Brinkmeyer

10 Dan Meinke

11 Matt Karl, Vivian Kirkpatrick

12 Beau Bachman, Ethan Eggert, Skye Hoyer, Irene Reiss,

Denise Slama

13 Kyle Shore

16 Mersadies Kvasnicka, Robert Kvasnicka

19 Ryan Lee

21 Nicole Reetz

22 Jessica McBride

23 Brad Davis

24 Jenna Keim

26 Deanna Eggert

**ST. JOHN LUTHERAN
CHURCH -MS**
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 4 miles East & 2 miles South of Crete

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CATHY'S E-MAIL:
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 www.stjohnkramer.org

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER GROWTH

Schedule at a Glance

| | |
|---|------------|
| Worship Service (Sundays) | 9:00 a.m. |
| Sunday School (Sundays) | 10:30 a.m. |
| Bible Class (Sundays) | 10:30 a.m. |
| Midweek Classes (Wednesdays) | 6:30 p.m. |
| Elder's Meeting (February 1) | 7:00 p.m. |
| Lutheran Women in Mission (February 16) | 7:00 p.m. |
| Ladies Aid Meeting (February 24) | 2:00 p.m. |

FROM THE ELDER'S

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It was recently announced that the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is establishing the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, located in Washington D.C.

The purpose of the Center is to monitor and protect our First Amendment rights in the public square. When the government, the culture, and our faith conflict; Lutherans can and must speak out in support of religious liberty.

The Center establishes an enduring, faithful Lutheran presence in Washington D.C. and fuels a uniquely Lutheran response to increasing in-

trusions, limitations, and challenges by the government and others in the life of the Church.

The Center will educate, encourage, and equip God's people in the LCMS to take informed and bold action in support of life, marriage, and religious freedom.

Almost 200 years ago, our Lutheran forebearers took on the challenge of religious persecution when they fled Europe for the United States, where religious freedom was guaranteed. Today we find ourselves at the same crossroads, under assault with same sex marriage, abortion, politically correct speech, government intrusion into church policy etc.

The very formation of the Center for Religious Freedom, speaks to how seri-

ously our church leaders view the dangers to our faith from our current political and cultural landscape.

Our prayerful, financial, physical support is much needed to make the Center a reality.

US Constitution 15Dec1791, Amendment 1 Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech,

".....and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved." Matthew 10:22, ESV

May God bless us all

THOSE SERVING DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

| DUTY | February 7 | February 14 | February 21 | February 28 |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Organist | Jayne VanAsperen | Jolene Reetz | Jayne VanAsperen | Jolene Reetz |
| Elders | Roger Koch | Tim McDermott | Tim McDermott | Roger Koch |
| Greeters | Mr. & Mrs. Todd Hoyer | Mr. & Mrs. Roger Koch | Mr. & Mrs. Mike Langfeldt | Mr. & Mrs. Glen Louch |
| Acolytes | Olivia & Hugo Pomajzl | Elliott Reitz & Colton Homolka | Mara & Skye Hoyer | Madison Persing & Devon Reitz |