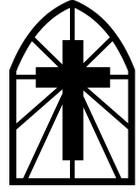


ST. JOHN LUTHERAN LCMS
11400 WEST PANAMA ROAD, CRETE, NE 68333



Come to the cross and learn of God's great love for all His people. There is friendship, fellowship, and the gift of God's word of forgiveness.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 32 ISSUE 1 JANUARY, 2018

LIFE

Psalm 139:13-16 (NIV)

*For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me
were written in your book
before one of them came to be.*

Life. There is nothing like living life. Sure, it can be hustle bustle at times. It has its challenges. Over time some things change. We experience all kinds of emotions and situations. But ... life is good. Life is to be lived in the joy of God's creation and in His grace.

God made life. God invented it. He gives it. It is His to take away. Jesus came to save our lives from hell. He came that we might have good lives now—that is, lives of peace knowing that we have a Savior who cares for us and wants us to have a good life. Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10 ESV).

The Gospel of John has a number of passages that proclaim to us that God loves life and gives life. It is sad, then, when there are those who want to destroy life. Some destroy it in the beginning with abortions. But what is in the womb is a human life. That life—that person—in the womb comes there by the wonderful process that God created in the beginning. We see that because we believe that God has made all things. Such life is to be protected and nurtured and served.

God cares for all life. The suffering and dying person with a terminal disease is a person with life that God cares for—one for whom Jesus died to save from hell. It is not for us to end life, but to serve that person with care and dignity until the Lord calls one out of this life.

But there are many who reject God and do not see that begins at conception. There are many who seek to end life on human terms, rejecting the Creator and failing to live according to the love God has for a person even in horrible and painful and difficult situations. It is the genuine love of God that overcomes all that is destructive in life.

So we commit ourselves to protecting life and serving others in their deepest needs. We speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves (Proverbs 31:8 NIV). We love with sacrifice. We love abundantly just as Jesus came to give us life and love in great abundance. God loves life. So do we. God grant us good life and help us to care for life and show His love to those struggling in life. Praise God who has given us life to the full and life everlasting through Jesus Christ our Savior. Rejoice that Jesus Christ gave His life sacrificially in suffering and death so that we might be forgiven and saved. To God alone the glory who gives us life in abundance.

In Christ's Love, Pastor Toensing

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

PLEASE JOIN US FOR QUILT DAYS on Thursday, January 4, 2018 from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm. Join us any time during those hours. Please bring something to share for lunch and bring a scissors. No sewing experience necessary. The quilts are donated to Orphan Grain Train and most go to the orphanages in Russia and the Baltic nations. Thank you for your help with this project.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER please consider receiving your monthly newsletter via email to conserve and save paper. Please contact Cathy Hollman at the church office 826-3883 or cathy-atchurch@hotmail.com with your email address. Thank you for going GREEN!

HEALTHY HABITS:

Act F.A.S.T! Does everyone know what this acronym stands for? This is an acronym that everyone should know. It refers to the signs and symptoms of a stroke. Stroke is the third leading cause of death in America and the leading cause of adult disability. Strokes occur when the blood vessel to the brain becomes occluded therefore cutting the supply of oxygen off to the brain. The longer this occlusion, the greater the damage. Every minute counts! You may have heard of the "golden hour" in regards to treatment. If you or a loved one is suspected to be having a stroke, it is imperative that specific treatment begins within a few hours in order for the "clot busting" medication to be successful, saving lives and reducing disabling effects of a stroke. This is where the F.A.S.T acronym comes in. F (Face): Does the Face look uneven? A (Arm): Does one Arm drift down? S (Speech): Does their Speech sound funny? T (Time): It's Time to call 911!. ACT FAST!

The quicker the treatment, the better the success is of preventing death and disability. However, there are risk factors that can be controlled in order to prevent a stroke.

Control your blood pressure. This is the number one cause of a stroke. Know your numbers! Are you diabetic? Treat this and control it. Do you smoke? Smoking increases your risk two to three times. Quit today! Are you overweight? Being 20 pounds over weight can increase your risk for a stroke or other cardiovascular event. Exercise and eat a balanced diet. Control your cholesterol. Having high cholesterol can cause build up and hardening of the arteries. Know your numbers and ways to reduce your cholesterol.

If you haven't had a physical in the last year, this is the year to do it! Make your appointment today. Your healthcare provider will assist you in controlling your risk factors for stroke and helping you towards your goals of a healthy you!

Resource: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/HDSP/Pages/actfast.aspx>

BIRTHDAYS & BAPTISMS

January Birthdays

1 Arlin Pomajzl
3 Blythe Dewey
4 Tom Nyhoff
5 Lyndsey Williams
6 Marilyn Nelson
7 Paul Beck, Patricia Prochnow, Julie Reetz, Jeana Rezac
9 Skye Hoyer
11 Denise Slama, Castyn Ziemann
13 Joy Kouba
15 Barb Hansmeyer
16 Jessica McBride, Estelle Reetz
17 Kristi Doiel
18 Logan Adam, Nick Hollman

19 Loren Beck, Matt Walker
20 Nick Ellingson
23 Anne Fletcher
25 Matt Karl
26 Angela Dello
27 Harry Meinke, Nicole Reetz, Kyle Shore
28 Savannah Hensley
29 Sherry Davis
30 Brian Persing
31 Dave Eggert

January Baptism

1 Steve VanAsperen, Fred Weidner
3 Tanna Nitzel
4 Aaron Meinke
7 Ellen Miller

8 Jayne VanAsperen
10 Lilian Underwood
12 Chris Williams
14 Joe Kalkwarf, Don Rejcha
15 Hannah Ochs
16 Melissa Gash, Kate [LaVerna] Kattau
19 Troy Henning, Barb Meinke
20 Marilyn Nelson, Lyndsey Williams
21 Doug Kattau, Scott Murphy
23 Jeana Scholz
27 Estelle Reetz
28 Matt Walker, Seth Brethouwer
29 Dan Meinke, Andrew Munro, Kent Nelson

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.

LIFE QUOTE

“Every life has value because every life is someone created by God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and someone He either has called or wants to call into an eternal relationship with Him. It doesn't have to be complicated! Amen.” Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, former executive director of Lutherans For Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life •
www.lutheransforlife.org

Greeters and Welcoming Guests—EVERYONE!

We thank everyone who has served as a greeter in these past years. Now we are looking to update and increase our opportunity for serving as a greeter. We are going to add in those of you who indicated your desire to serve as a greeter on the Time and Talent survey. And in conjunction with the Evangelism Board and the Board of Elders, we are going to increase the roll of our greeters. We are going to start assigning four greeters on Sunday mornings and special festival days. We would like two greeters as usual handing out bulletins and welcoming guests. The other two greeters would be near the south entrance door to welcome and look for guests and visitors. In that area greeters would invite our guests to sign the guest book and see if they would be interested in receiving our guest packet. We would also encourage our greeters (and anyone, really) to look for guests and greet visitors even in the parking lot—especially in warmer weather. There is also an idea to get some nice umbrellas with which we could assist guests and members from their vehicles to the entry way. If you have not signed up as a greeter, would you please consider doing so? It would be wonderful to have many members taking turns looking to welcome guests as well as fellow members. It would be awesome if St. John had a reputation of being a warm and welcoming congregation showing care to those who attend our worship services. Please pray about this and consider this opportunity of service to your church. Thank you.

ST. JOHN MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The St. John Men's Bible Study group continues with a Martin Luther based video series, “A Man Named Martin”. The men will begin the second part of this historical, interesting series: “Part II - The Moment”.

Martin Luther's Spirit-inspired grasp of justification through faith was the cornerstone of the Reformation. This second part of the series examines the errant teachings and wayward traditions of the Late Medieval Church that eventually sparked the Protestant Reformation, a theological overhaul set in motion most notably by Martin Luther's nailing of the 95 Theses to the church door at Wittenberg.

As a follow-up Bible study to the first, “A Man Named Martin-Part 1: The Man”, this three-session Bible study takes a close look at the widespread teachings of the late Medieval Church that were superfluous to the Bible or not scripturally grounded. Among them were purgatory, penance, celibacy, prayers for the dead, transubstantiation, the treasury of merits of Christ, devotion to Mary and the rosary, the institution of the papacy, and the one most often linked to the Reformation: the sale of indulgences. The men's group meets at 7:00 p.m. each 2nd Tuesday of the month. Our door is always open to new members, with guests equally welcomed. See you guys on Tuesday, January 9th!

BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Building Committee has been meeting on a monthly basis since its inception. The committee now focuses its attention on the upcoming Voters meeting to be held in late January. The committee will then use this meeting to summarize a 'bulleted outline' of the means by which a master plan could be created based upon membership feedback being collected. It is hoped much can be used by our voting members to direct the Committee further in a unified, purposeful direction. The next Building Committee meeting will then be arranged following the January, 2018 Voters Meeting – based upon direction received. Additional information relative to the Building Committee can be found on our church website.

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.

LYF NEWS

The LYF group will begin the new year in advanced preparation for the annual Valentine's Dinner here at St. John. There is discussion on an alternate menu from years past, yet the teens know that much help is needed from adult sponsors and providers of contribution & help in order for this event to continue. The tentative date for the Valentine Dinner is slated for Sunday, February 11, 2018 following Sunday School & Bible Class. The LYF kids are asking that those of you with any previous involvement, and/or desire to contribute time, talent or other such donations of food preparation ingredients, to contact Adam or LaShalle Hughes, adam_hughes93@yahoo.com.

The LYF also ask that church members keep our youngsters in "heartfelt" prayer, providing them with support and encouragement – thus keeping them engaged in church life and in the study

LADIES AID MINUTES

St. John Ladies Aid held their annual Christmas party on December 20, 2017. We had seven guests join us for a covered dish luncheon after the Advent Service. After the luncheon, the 2018 officers were installed. The rest of the afternoon was spent singing favorite Christmas hymns. We had a short program and then we played "bird" bingo. The prize for having a bingo was a package of bird seed. Thanks to Carol Brinkmeyer and Marilyn Nast for the entertainment.

The hostess for January will be Shirley Reetz.

Shirley Reetz, secretary

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

The January Evangelism Committee meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 2, 2018. Members of St. John are invited to attend as we continue working through the book, "5 Things You Can Do to Witness Christ", with reading and open discussion. This book encourages believers to realize what we have in Christ and to see that our witnessing is part of our daily walk in life. Witnessing is found when living out the gracious gifts God gives in our connections with others and in helping us build new relationships where we can share the love of Christ. There are several of these books still available when you join us. Books are currently \$8.00.

TRIP TO MISSION CENTRAL ON FEBRUARY 17, 2018

Missionaries Rev. Joe and Jennie Asher, who we support through Mission Central, will be speaking at the Mission Central location in Iowa on February 17. We would like to see if there is interest in a group trip that day to travel to Mapleton, Iowa, and hear and meet our supported missionaries. Mission Central is also assembling items in a Creation Theater. The Ashers are serving in Kaiserslautern, Germany. Please let the church office know if you are interested in this group trip. And please keep Rev. Joe and Jennie Asher in your prayers.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER GROWTH

Schedule at a Glance

Worship Service (Sundays)	9:00 a.m.
Bible Class-Sunday School (Sundays)	10:30 a.m.
Midweek Classes (Wednesdays)	6:30 p.m.
Elder's Meeting (January 3)	6:30 p.m.
Evangelism Committee Meeting (January 2)	7:00 p.m.
Quilt Day (January 4)	9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Men's Bible Study (January 9)	7:00 p.m.
Lutheran Women in Mission (January 16)	7:00 p.m.
Ladies Aid Meeting (January 31)	2:00 p.m.
Quarterly Council/Voter's Meeting (January 29)	7:00/8:00 p.m.

FROM THE ELDER'S

Another New Year! How time goes so quickly. The new year will bring MANY New Year's resolutions—some will be kept. Many will work for awhile and some will continue till 2019. Some of the big ones are to lose those extra pounds we put on, to get in better shape, quit that smoking habit, etc. Maybe something we need to look at and work on is our daily devotion with the Lord. Portals of Prayer is a good way to start your day off on the right track. Like any resolution, no one can do it for you! Have a safe New Year in 2018. God Bless.

The Elders

THANK YOU

Dear Friends in Christ: thank you all so very much for the gifts you have given us for Christmas. We have received some nice cards and well-wishes, generous cash gifts, fine food, and countless cookies—I think I have sampled a hundred and one different kinds! Yum! We appreciate your kindness and generosity. May God bless you all in this New Year and keep you always in Christ and growing in your faith in Jesus. Again, thank you and the Lord bless you all. Pastor, Shelley, and family

THOSE SERVING DURING THE MONTH OF JANUARY

DUTY	Jan 7	Jan 14	Jan 21	Jan 28
Organist	Jayne VanAsperen	Jolene Reetz	Jayne VanAsperen	Jolene Reetz
Elders	Terry Dittmer	Ken Tesar	Terry Reetz	James Walker
Greeters	Mr & Mrs James Walker	Mr & Mrs Darren Weber	Mr & Mrs Wally Wild	Carol Brinkmeyer & Marilyn Nast
Acolytes	Maggie Wohl & Jordyn Adam	Elliott Reitz & Kaitlyn Novak	Mara Hoyer & Madison Persing	Nick Hollman & Colton Homolka

LWML NEWS

The LWML has begun a new feature in the newsletter. Each month we will publish a recipe from one of our members for all to enjoy. If you'd like to submit a recipe just send it to the church secretary. Please use specific amounts and detailed instructions. Enjoy!

This month's recipe was served at the LWML Christmas dinner and was submitted by Judi Korte.

Chicken and Dressing Casserole

Precook two chicken breasts until tender or use two cans of canned chicken.

Butter a 9x9 pan and place a layer of Pepperidge Farm herb seasoned stuffing cubes on the bottom.

Combine 1 cup mayonnaise (do not use Miracle Whip) and chicken cut into bite size pieces.

Add 1/2 cup finely chopped onion. Add salt and ground pepper to taste. Spread this mixture over stuffing cubes.

Top with another layer of stuffing cubes on top. (Layers should be just one cube thick.)

Whisk together 2 eggs and 1 1/2 cups milk. Pour this over the casserole and cover. Place in refrigerator at least 1 hour or as long as overnight. Just before baking spread with 1 can cream of mushroom soup on top.

Bake at 325 degrees for 40 to 50 minutes.

ADDITIONAL PICTURE DIRECTORY ORDER

The Evangelism Committee would like to gauge interest expressed by members of St. John in obtaining a replacement, additional copy, or perhaps did not receive an earlier one, of the last 2015 Photo Directory. The Committee is also interested in any feedback in determining ideas for a future edition – it is learned that LifeTouch now has a process to develop an 'updateable' picture directory too. Please connect with any Evangelism Committee member or drop a note in the Evangelism mailbox relative to this subject.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

In January and February we will be taking a quick look through the Gospel of Mark. The current plan will be to use three Sundays for this study and interrupt one week a month with a one session topic of interest. January 7, 14, and 21 we will look at Mark. Then, on the 28th we will look at a requested topic: Cremation. Please join us for all these studies. Read up on Mark and come with your questions. And if you have any suggestions for topics of study or interest please let Pastor Toensing know.

LAMBS OF CHRIST PRESCHOOL

National Lutheran Schools Week – January 21 – 28 Each year we celebrate the gifts that Lutheran Schools provide to our children, families and churches. We are asking that you remember Lambs of Christ Preschool in your prayers. We thank you for your support of the preschool and for all your generous gifts.

Young 3's Class Lambs of Christ will be offering a class for children who turned 3 after August 1st, 2017. The class will begin on Tuesday, January 9th. The class will meet on Tuesday afternoons 12:30 – 3:30. Tuition for the class is \$50. per month with a \$20. enrollment / supply fee. Children are invited to join the class any time after their third birthday. Please contact the preschool office at 402-826-4375.

Enrollment for 2018 - 2019 School year We will begin to accept enrollment applications from members of Bethlehem and St. John's on January 22nd. Children currently enrolled at Lambs of Christ and families who have had a child enrolled at Lambs of Christ may also submit their enrollment on January 22. We will open enrollment to all other children on February 1st. Please contact Rhonda Beethe for enrollment information.

Prizes for Chili Feed Raffle Lambs of Christ will be hosting their annual Chili Feed and Raffle on Sunday, February 18th. We will be looking for donations to serve as raffle prizes. If you or your business would like to donate a prize please contact a Preschool Committee member. Committee members are Michelle Wittstruck, Margaret Ahola, Cindy Hoyer, Terri Kuss, Kathy Oelschlager and Rhonda Beethe.