Whoever receives one such child

in my name receives me, and whoever receives me,

receives not me but him who sent me.



-- Mark 9:37

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost September 19, 2021 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM



As we gather this morning, please take time to fill out the fellowship pad located near the center aisle in your pew. If you have any prayer requests, feel free to use a prayer request card from the pew rack in front of you, and place it in the offering plate after the sermon. (For those joining us online, please contact the church office.) We will include these requests in our prayers during worship, and share them with our prayer chain (if desired).

547 The Lamb LSB 547 sts. 1, ref, 2, 4-5 6 Lamb. 1 The the Lamb. Fa - ther, where's the sac - ri - fice? 0 2 The Lamb, the Lamb, One per - fect of - fer - ing. fi nal _ 4 He sighs, He dies. He takes my sin and wretch - ed - ness. 5 He He My heart with thanks now o - ver-flows. rose, rose. Faith sees. be - lieves God will pro-vide the Lamb of price! The Lamb. the Lamb. Let earth join heav'n His praise to sing. He lives. for - gives, He gives me His own righ-teous - ness. His pro - long Till ev - 'ry heart to Him be - long. song Refrain Wor - thy is the Lamb whose death makes me His The His throne! Lamb own! is reign-ing on Text and tune: © 1987 and 1997 MorningStar Music Publishers. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110002199

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Stand

Divine Service Setting One, page 151

+ Confession and Absolution +

Confession, to confess to God our sins and sinful nature. Absolution, "To absolve of sin and wrongdoing," more specifically, to affirm God's forgiveness to all who sincerely confess their sins to Him.

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

- In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- **C** Amen.

Exhortation

1 John 1:8–9 151

Matthew 28:19b: 18:20

- **P** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- **G** But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination. Consider: Have you loved God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength? Have you loved your neighbor as yourself?

Confession of Sins

- **P** Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.
- C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Absolution

[John 20:19–23] LSB 151

- P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- **C** Amen.

Service of the Word

LSB 151

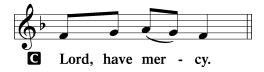
Introit

- **P** Delight yourself in the LORD,
- **C** and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- **P** Commit your way to the LORD;
- **C** trust in him, and he will act.
- **P** He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,
- **C** and your justice as the noonday.
- **P** Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;
- **C** fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
- **P** Delight yourself in the LORD,
- **C** and he will give you the desires of your heart.



A Greek phrase meaning, "Lord, have mercy!" A brief prayer not only imploring God's mercy but rejoicing in it through Jesus Christ.

P In peace let us pray to the Lord.



P For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.



P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.



P For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.



P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



Kyrie

Gloria in Excelsis

P Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth.



Salutation and Collect of the Day

"Salutation" is a word from Latin meaning, "to greet." "Collect" (KAH-lekt), a brief structured prayer, usually consisting of five parts: address to God, basis for the prayer, petition, desired benefit or result, and trinitarian conclusion. The Collect of the Day also "collects" the message of the day's Gospel reading.

P The Lord be with you.



P Let us pray.

O God, whose strength is made perfect in weakness, grant us humility and childlike faith that we may please You in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Sit

Old Testament Reading

Jeremiah 11:18-20

A The Old Testament Reading is from Jeremiah, chapter 11.

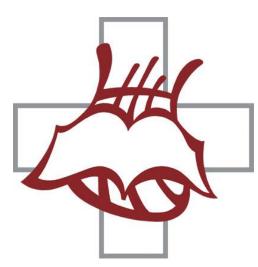
¹⁸The LORD made it known to me and I knew; then you showed me their deeds.
¹⁹But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter.
I did not know it was against me they devised schemes, saying,
"Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more."
²⁰But, O LORD of hosts, who judges righteously, who tests the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause. **A** This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Follow Me to Jordan

Follow Me to Jordan Follow Me on home Follow Me to Jordan Follow Me all the way home Follow Me to Jordan Follow Me on home Follow Me to Jordan Follow Me all the way home I will follow King Jesus I'll wait for His command Ev'ry day He will (Until I reach the promised land He said) Show Me the way He said Follow Me to Jordan Follow Me on home Follow Me to Jordan Follow Me all the way home I will follow King Jesus For now and ever more (Now and ever) Ev'ry day He will show Me the way Until we reach that heavenly shore He said Follow Me to Jordan (Follow Me) Follow Me all the way home He said Follow Me to (He said Follow Me I'm going home) Jordan Follow Me on home Follow Me to Jordan Follow Me follow Me (Follow Me all the way follow Me) I'm going home, I'm going home

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Choir

A The Epistle is from James, chapter 3.

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

¹What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. ⁴You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? ⁶But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

A This is the Word of the Lord.C Thanks be to God.

Stand



Epistle

Holy Gospel

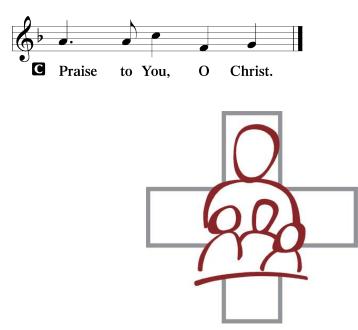
P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the ninth chapter.



³⁰[The disciples] went on from there and passed through Galilee. And [Jesus] did not want anyone to know, ³¹for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." ³²But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

³³And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" ³⁴But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. ³⁵And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." ³⁶And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me."

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Nicene Creed

Creed comes from the Latin "credo" which means "I believe." We confess our Christian faith in one of the three creeds (short statement of belief) agreed upon by the ancient church.

C]	[be]	lieve	in	one	God,
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the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

the only-begotten Son of God,

begotten of His Father before all worlds,

God of God, Light of Light,

very God of very God,

begotten, not made,

being of one substance with the Father,

by whom all things were made;

who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary

and was made man;

and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,

whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord and giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,

who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,

and I look for the resurrection of the dead

and the life + of the world to come. Amen.

Children's Message

Matthew 19:14; Mark 13:13-15; Luke 18:16

Children are invited to join Amanda Adams, our Director of Christian Education, at the front of the sanctuary for the Children's Message.



Sermon

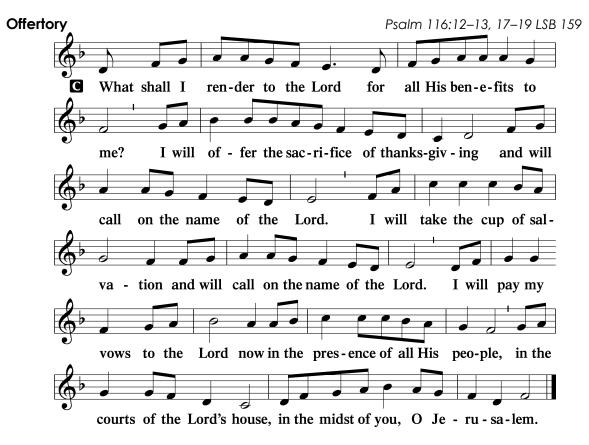
Offering

If you brought your gift, tithe, or offering with you today, you may place it in the offering plate as it passes. We also have multiple options for electronic giving. You can sign up for online giving at pushpay.com/pay/christlcms for a one-time or recurring gift. Direct links with more information are available on the church website (christlcms.org/giving).

For those joining us remotely, you may use the electronic giving methods listed above, or you may mail your offering to the church office (3509 SW Burlingame Rd, Topeka, KS 66611).



Stand



Prayer of the Church

1 Timothy 2:1-4

At the end of each petition, the pastor will say, "Lord, in Your mercy," to which the congregation will respond, **"Hear our prayer."**

■ ...through Jesus Christ, Your son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

2 Timothy 4:22; [Colossians 3:1]; [Psalm 136] LSB 160

P The Lord be with you.



P Lift up your hearts.

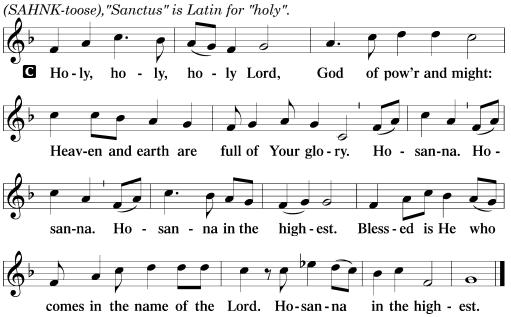


P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



Proper Preface (Full)

▶ It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who, out of love for His fallen creation, humbled Himself by taking on the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, even death upon a cross. Risen from the dead, He has freed us from eternal death and given us life everlasting. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:



Prayer of Thanksgiving

161

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.



Lord's Prayer

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

 Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Words of Our Lord

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My + body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

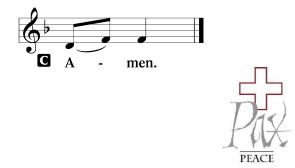
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My + blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

John 20:19 163

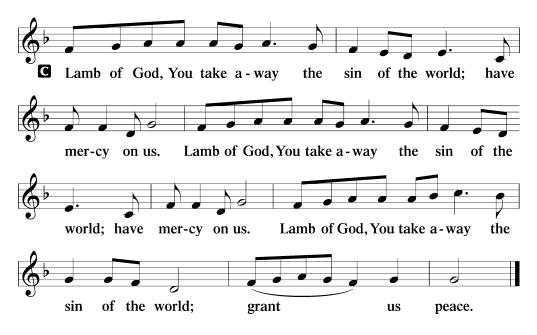
(PAKS DOH-mee-nee), Latin for "peace of the Lord" (John 20:19).

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.



Agnus Dei

(AHG-noose DAY-ee). Latin for "Lamb of God."

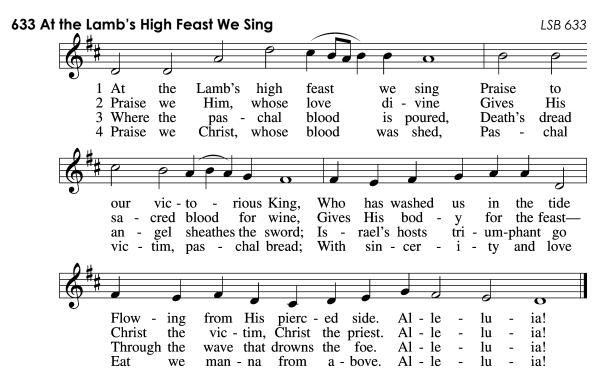


Sit

Distribution

Communion is reserved for those who are members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod or members of a church body in fellowship with the LCMS unless special arrangements have been made with the pastor. The pastor and those who assist him receive the body and blood of Christ first. Then they will distribute it to those who cannot come up to the altar rail due to physical ailments. Following that the ushers will dismiss the people from their pews to go to the altar rail. The congregation will be ushered down the middle aisle to go up to the rail and when dismissed from there will use the side aisle to return to their seats. All are invited up to receive a blessing.

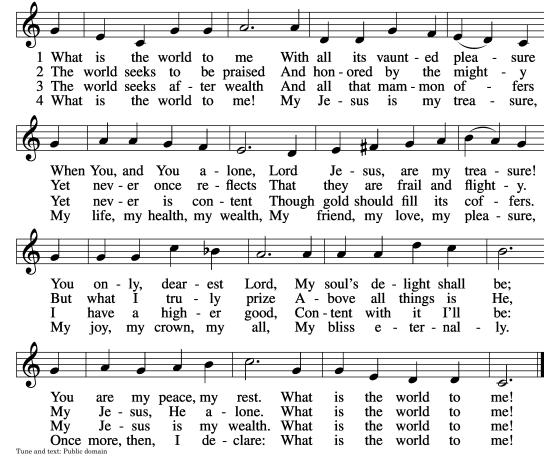




- 5 Mighty Victim from the sky, Hell's fierce pow'rs beneath You lie; You have conquered in the fight, You have brought us life and light. Alleluia!
- 6 Now no more can death appall, Now no more the grave enthrall; You have opened paradise, And Your saints in You shall rise. Alleluia!
- 7 Easter triumph, Easter joy! This alone can sin destroy; From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free, Newborn souls in You to be. Alleluia!
- △ 8 Father, who the crown shall give, Savior, by whose death we live, Spirit, guide through all our days: Three in One, Your name we praise. Alleluia!



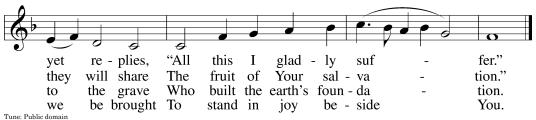
730 What Is the World to Me





438 A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth

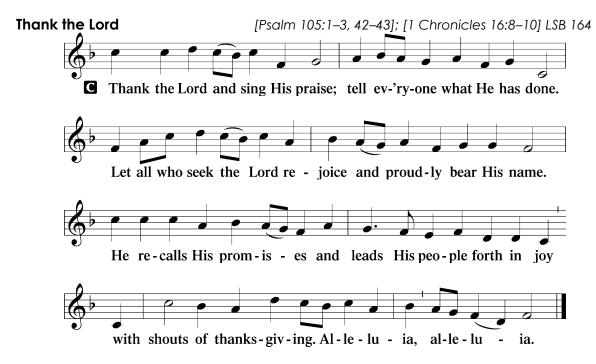




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605 Father Welcomes LSB 605 Refrain Fa - ther wel-comes all His chil - dren To His fam - 'lv 6 through His Son. Fa - ther giv - ing His sal - va - tion, Life for ev er has been won. chil-dren. 1 Lit - tle come to Me. For Mv king - dom 2 In the wa - ter, in the Word, In His prom-ise, 3 Let us dai - ly die to sin; Let us dai - ly of these. Life and____ love Ι have is to give, as - sured: Those who are bap - tized be - lieve be and rise with Him, Walk in the love of Christ our Lord. Refrain 0 for Mer your sin. cy_ gain. Shall born be. а God. Live in the peace of Tune and text: © 1986 Kevin Mayhew Ltd. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110002199

Stand



Post-Communion Collect

P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.





Luther's Morning Prayer

 I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Benediction

Numbers 6:24-26 166

A final blessing from God this morning before we leave.

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.



Sit

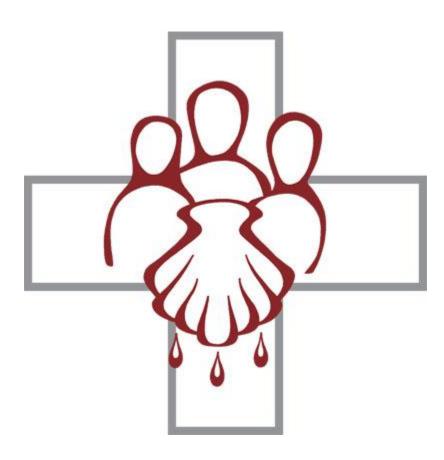


594 God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It





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-- Week at a Glance --

Sunday September 19th		Worship Service w/ Communion Sunday School (Children & Adults)
Monday September 20th		
Tuesday September 21st		
Wednesday September 22nd	5:30 pm	Confirmation WWF – potluck & game night Choir Practice
Thursday September 23rd	7:00 pm	Pastor's Bible Class
Friday September 24th		
Saturday September 25th		Men's Bible Study (via Zoom) TLS Carnival
Sunday September 26th	9:15 am 3:00 pm 4:15 pm 5:00 pm	Worship Service w/ Communion Sunday School (Children & Adults) Jr. Youth (4 th -5 th) Middle School Youth (6 th -8 th) High School Youth (9 th -12 th) College/Young Adult Group (ages 18-25)
		LWML Sunday

Celebrating

Birthdays: Mara G., Nicholas H., Tagen K., Taryn L. (19th); Jayme H., Micah J., Tevan W. (20th); Emma C., Annette H., Rhonda H., Conrad J., Jerry M., Kayli M., Charles P. (21st); Ginger C., Melissa F., Shane H. (22nd); Margaret B., Jacob L., Dana N., Kimberly S. (23rd); Camden C., Jana C., Tava K., Melissa L. (24th); Colby B., Madison F. (26th) **Baptism Birthdays:** Damion B., Kerry D. (19th); Beau H., Gary M. (20th); Addelynn M., Charles P., Ronnie W. (21st); Harper D., Conrad J., Aaron W. (23rd); Jana C., Mara G., Kalyn S. (24th); LaJean R. (25th)

Anniversaries: Jason & Megan K. (21st); Luis & Tracie C., Willard & Stella M. (23rd)

-- Announcements --

Adult Sunday School Hour (9:15 am)

Journey through Psalms with Pastor Ben – Schemm Family Life Center (Gym) God's Word for Today: Acts – Basement A Walk Through the Bible (Women's Group) – Pastor's Office

Children/Youth Sunday School Hour (9:15 am)

Children (Pre-K through 6th grade) – Upstairs Education Wing Youth (7th-12th grades) – Basement Youth Room

Pastor's Midweek Bible Study

The Epistles – Thursday at 7 PM – Basement and Zoom Our class is now Thursdays at 7 PM, but will NOT meet on the first week of each month.

Mask Information

Face masks are still optional throughout the church building. Disposable masks are available at all church entrances for those who would like one. Children's size masks are located by the main entrance. Reusable cloth masks are available by the church office. For more information regarding masking, please visit <u>www.cdc.gov</u>.

Bible Reading Challenge

We will be beginning a new Bible Reading Challenge in September! From Sept. 12th through Oct. 23rd, we will read our way through Paul's Epistles. Pick up a reading sheet in the coffee lobby or look for it in your e-mail inbox with our September newsletter. It is also available to download on our church website. Everyone who completes the challenge will win a fun new prize (different from our precious prizes of coffee mugs and chocolate).

September is Missions Month!

The Schumachers have accepted a call to a new position with the International Lutheran Council, so it is time to direct our support to another LCMS missionary or missionary family. Please read through BOTH SIDES of the bulletin insert, and prayerfully consider supporting missions both globally and locally!

Gary's Berries

Join your church family for a fun evening at Gary's Berries on Friday, October 8th. Come and go as you please between 5-10 pm. Advance tickets are \$10 each (cash, check, or PushPay) and include a campfire meal with hot dogs and s'mores.

Pray for our Soldiers

Pick up a toy soldier from the back of the sanctuary to remind you to pray for our troops!

-- Announcements --

Not One More

TODAY (September 19th) at 2 PM, St. John Lutheran Church (Alma, KS) is hosting author and speaker Rev. Peter Preus for a conversation about life, hope, and suicide. People are encouraged to learn about how to prevent the tragic loss of life. The forum is open to the public, our schools, and local churches. Please join us as we make clear our commitment to accept "Not One More" untimely death in our community.

TLS Carnival – Bakers and Volunteers Needed

The Topeka Lutheran School Carnival will be on Saturday, Sept. 25th. The PTL is hosting a bake sale fundraiser at the event, and hopes to have at least 10 baked goods from each congregation. If you would like to bake and donate goodies to the sale, please sign up on the bulletin board in the coffee lobby. If you would like to volunteer to help set up for this event, please contact Nancy Crago or the church office.

Joining Jesus on His Mission

It's time for a quarterly mission meet-up! We'll share a potluck dinner with WWF on Wednesday, Sept. 29th at 5:30 pm. Then be prepared to tell us where you've been seeing Jesus on the loose! (Didn't read the book with us during Lent? Borrow it from our Lending Library in the coffee lobby!)

Hunger Action Month

LWML WILL BE COLLECTING NONPERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS FOR HARVESTERS THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER. THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND FOR HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED.





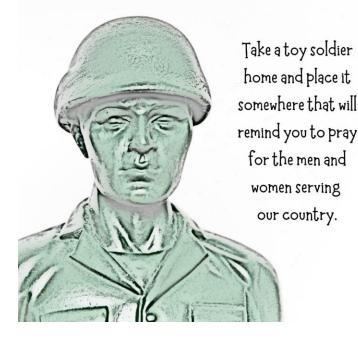


-- Announcements --

Remembered in our Prayers

Charlie P., Alice M., Luke H., Julie J., Don L., Brittian K.(Sondra K.'s grandson), Lance L., Jerry M., Jean B. (sister Pauline C.'s sister), Judy (Colleen B.'s neighbor), Noel (Colleen B.'s brother), Kathy (Brenda Z.'s sister-in-law), Shirley (Frank J.'s grandmother), Melanie (Sharon L.'s daughter), Ella (Marsha S.'s granddaughter), Kent B., Jeanette W., Lisa (Judy K.'s sister), Randy (Carol J.'s son), Jeanette B., Kendra M., Madison L., Steve (Rachel M.'s father), Vikki N., Matt N., Lynn M., Virginia C., Avrynn (infant daughter of friends of Mel L.), Leonard (brother of Jeanette B.), Rene A. for a speedy adoption process for Barbara, and others named in your heart. Pray for the Topeka Rescue Mission, the Schumachers and their ministry in Ghana, and missionaries around the world. We pray especially for those around the world being persecuted for their faith in the one, true God and the suffering they endure. Please continue to pray for Pastor Ben, DCE Amanda, our staff and their families as they do our Lord's work here at Christ Lutheran. We pray for the staff and students of Topeka Lutheran School and the Center for Young Children. We also pray for those who serve in the armed forces, first responders, and for our country and government. Prayers of thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior and the new life we have in Him.

PRAY FOR OUR SOLDIERS



TLS CARNIVAL

SEPTEMBER 25 4-7 PM

Games - Bounce Houses - Cake Walk Vendors - Raffles - Concessions Hamburger & Hotdog Meals & More!

> \$10 Game & Bounce House Bracelet \$1 Tickets for Cake Walk & Raffles



TOPEKA LUTHERAN SCHOOL -- 701 SW ROOSEVELT ST.



Our Father Cares for His Children with the Gospel of His Son

The sinful heart is filled with "bitter jealousy and selfish ambition" (James 3:14), which causes hostility, quarrels and conflicts, even among those who are fellow members of the Body of Christ. This should not be so! Rather, God "opposes the proud" with His Law, in order to humble them unto repentance; He "gives grace to the humble," in order to exalt them by His Gospel of forgiveness (James 4:6–10). This true "wisdom from above" is found in the gentleness, mercy and peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who humbled Himself and sacrificed Himself for the salvation of sinners (James 3:17). He was "like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter," committing Himself to God, His Father, "who judges righteously, who tests the heart and the mind" (Jer. 11:19–20). Therefore, "after three days," His Father exalted Him by raising Him from the dead (Mark 9:31). In Holy Baptism, He takes disciples of all ages into His arms like little children. In receiving Him through repentance and faith in His forgiveness of sins, they receive from His Father a share in the glory of His cross and resurrection (Mark 9:36–37).

Worship Attendance – Sunday, September 12th

8:00 AM -- 73 10:30 AM -- 81

Stewardship Corner

Budgeted Weekly Needs: Offerings Received – Week of 9/12	\$ \$	7,878 9,008
Debt Retirement Gifts Received – Week of 9/12	\$	3,176
Budgeted Needs (Jan - Aug 2021) Offerings Received (Jan - Aug 2021)	•	73,136 36,785

Mark 9:32 – "But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him." The disciples really do hold up a mirror to our faces and force us to see ourselves. We are misunderstanding, afraid, confused. But the Word of God is clear if only we will listen with open ears. What was blocking the disciples' ears? The Gospels tell us time and again. The disciples did not expect a suffering Christ. So when Jesus spoke of suffering, they plugged their ears and didn't listen, and they ended up confused and scared. What about us? What's in the Word of God that we find hard to hear and contrary to our desires and expectations? That might just be exactly what we need to hear!