



St. John Lutheran Church Newsletter

Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

Conducting Services at:

Holiday Inn Express
3400 Parkwood Blvd
Frisco, Texas 75034

Mailing Address:

St. John Lutheran Church
4760 Preston Rd, Ste. 244-222
Frisco, TX 75034

www.stjohnfrisco.org

972-802-0444 (pastor) 9:30 a.m. Sunday Divine Service & 10:45 Bible Study

February 2018 A.D.

Baptism is Central in the Lives of Christians

What about liturgical furniture and space?

If you have ever read through the New Testament, you see that Christian Baptism is sprinkled liberally throughout. Baptism is central in the lives of Christians. Baptism delivers to us individually what Jesus won on the cross for the whole world. "Baptism now saves you." (I Peter 3 & Mark 16:16). Baptism makes us a believer or disciple of Jesus (Matt. 28). Baptism clothes us with Christ (Gal. 3). Baptism washes us clean and gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3 & Acts 2). *It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare. (Rom. 6)*

We *are*, not *were*, baptized. This is a daily gift and reality that our Lord never wants us to forget. It is the living fount of our Christian lives. This is why we have this explanation in our catechism: *It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.* This is also why I, like Luther in our catechism, encourage you to make the sign of the cross in the morning and night each day to remember your baptism. This is also why we begin every Divine Service remembering our baptism and making the sign of the cross. If you haven't already, read the red words (rubrics) in the hymnal at the beginning of the service. Also note each time you see the little red cross sprinkled into the words through the service; these are times when it is appropriate to make the sign of the cross and remember what Jesus did on the cross—died for sins—is given to me in Holy Baptism. Yes, Baptism is central in Scripture and in the lives of Christians. It isn't some minor event to put off in the corner in our daily lives.

The centrality of baptism can also be well symbolized in church architecture (someday) and baptismal font placement. If you visit our LCMS seminaries in St. Louis and Fort Wayne, you will notice large baptismal fonts that are centrally located so that you pass them every time you walk in and out of the nave/sanctuary. The seminaries actually leave fresh living water in them so students can dip their fingers in and make the sign of the cross each time they come and go from daily chapel services. Yes, I said LCMS, not Roman Catholic, seminaries. This is a Christian or catholic practice, not Roman.

Additionally, having the baptismal font centrally located and not off to the side reflects our teaching about baptism being central to our lives. Passing by the font every time you are in the nave reminds us of theological truths. *Nave* means ship and is the part of the church where the pews/chairs are. This is a reminder of the ark; how the ark saved God's people. Baptism is our ark; it saves us.¹ Baptism brings us into the nave/ship/ark—as to say, baptism is entrance into the Church (believers). Like our LCMS seminaries, this is why many LCMS churches place their font in the narthex (back of the church before entering the nave) or front and center in the nave, like we have at St. John. This is the historic Christians practice. It was the Reformed

¹ [1Pe 3:20-22 ESV] because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Churches, not-Lutheran, who placed their fonts off to the side next to the pulpit.² They did this because they denied that baptism was central in the lives of Christians. If you turn on Joel Osteen, what you will see front and center is Joel Osteen on a stage with a glass pulpit wearing a thousand-dollar suit. You won't see a font, altar, cross, crucifix, candles or vestments.

Of course, where a church places the font and other liturgical furniture isn't commanded by God, but it often reflects what they believe is important. Joel Osteen's sin is denying the power of baptism not in lousy church architecture. However, his architecture reflects his false teaching that baptism isn't important or regenerating. Therefore, we should always ask, "Why do we do the things like we do?" "Does this or that best reflect what we as Confessional Lutherans (Sola Scriptura) really believe?" If you walk into a church and see no cross or crucifix, no altar, no font—you might wonder what they believe is important. You should certainly question if it is a Lutheran Church, especially if the word Lutheran was intentionally left out of the church name. Thankfully, you walk into St. John Lutheran (even in our current location) and you see front and center a cross, font and altar. We use vestments to hide the man in the office of pastor, and our 'organ' is in the back to serve the words and not to detract from them. True Lutheran worship is not about personalities, performances, or emotional highs. Maybe someday at St. John Lutheran, you will see beautiful stained-glass retelling God's story of salvation, a building in the shape of a cross with a nave resembling the ark, a raised pulpit and lectern, indicating that Jesus still comes and preaches to us today, and other such things. These types of things can be wonderful reflections, not substitutions, of what we believe. Even now, you walk into our church service and you don't see front and central a stage and a band, but a cross, font, altar, and lectern/pulpit, as the Divine Service is about Jesus. Lutheran/Biblical doctrine takes on a certain form, just as those who have errant teachings have forms and worship that reflect their doctrine. Or, to say it a bit differently, every church has tradition.

I write this to give you some food for thought in how we use our freedom in setting up our worship service, and what we may do once we reach a more permanent location (no building in this world is permanent). While doctrine is of first and foremost importance, practice is still important too. The doctrine of baptism is a central Christian doctrine, and how blessed we are to have a nice font that is central to our worship setting too.

Baptized into Christ,

Pastor

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

First

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.

² It was Calvin not Luther who stressed Baptism as a public act before the gathered community "'at the time of the Sermon'" so the "'the font is to be near the pulpit.'" (795) "a location long favored by Lutherans" is the font closely linked in space to pulpit and altar-table. (*Oxford History of Worship*, 797)

Which is that word of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28:19)

Second

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are these words and promises of God?

Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16)

Third

How can water do such great things?

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God’s word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three: “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.” (Titus 3:5–8)

Fourth

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Rom. 6:4)

The Season of Lent is Upon Us!

Ash Wednesday, 2/14, at 7 p.m. with the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion (both offered and not required) It is called **Ash Wednesday** because churches since the Middle Ages, in Christian freedom, have placed ashes in the shape of a cross on their foreheads as a reminder of the curse of sin, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” They are made in the shape of a cross to also remind us that Jesus was made to be the curse for our sin on the cross. The ashes are typically made by burring the palm leaves from the previous year’s Palm Sunday procession. Ash Wednesday is the beginning of the penitential season of Lent. Lent is penitential because we focus on the reason why Jesus came to earth—our sin. He came to die on Good Friday to save us from our sins, death, and the power of the devil. Because it is a somber season of the church year, you will also notice some liturgical changes. There are some joyous parts of our liturgy (as noted in the hymnal), like singing the Alleluias, that are buried during Lent and then resurrected on the joyous occasion of Easter. (For more on Ashes visit <http://gottesdienstonline.blogspot.com/2012/02/try-2-response-to-rev-cwirla-on-ashes.html>)

Wednesday Midweek Lenten Vespers Services at 7:00 p.m. I will continue preaching through *The Holy 10 Commands*, which I began in Advent. This is the Lutheran tradition—to review the Catechism during Lent.

Holy Week: Holy Thursday with Holy Communion at 7:00 p.m. & Good Friday Tenebrae at 7:00 p.m.

Lenten factoids

(Trinity Te Deum, The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church Austin, Texas Jan 31, 2016 Volume 18 Issue 1)

The original period of Lent was 3 days: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. By the 3rd century, it was extended to 6 days and called Holy Week which is the week before Easter. Around 800 AD during the reign of the great Christian emperor, Charlemagne it was increased to 40 days. The Sundays in Lent are **not** included. The 40 days correspond to the 40 days in which Jesus fasted in the wilderness in preparation for His battle with Satan...a battle He won by the way. The earliest Lent can begin is February 5. That last happened in 1818. The latest that it can begin is March 10. That will not happen again until 2038. The day before Ash Wednesday is called Shrove Tuesday. The word “shrive” means to cut off, and it means to forgive sins. It was the custom on Shrove Tuesday to go to confession and have one’s sins forgiven in preparation for Lent. The day was also one of “saying farewell to meat,” which is the meaning of the Latin word ‘carnival.’ So the custom was to use up all the fat in the house by making jelly rolls or pancakes, and to feast on a roast of fat meat. “Mardi Gras” is the French name for the day, and it means “Fat Tuesday.” Originally, no meat was eaten during Lent, but this was gradually reduced to only Fridays and Wednesdays when fish was eaten instead. “Giving up something for Lent” is not done to do something for Jesus, the One who did it all for us, but to purposely focus on spiritual things more than on physical things. The most important thing about Lent is that it is the time we consider more closely the last week of Christ’s life, actually the last two days, where He suffered the most intensely for our sins. This time in Christ’s life is called the Passion. Every year for Lent we read the account of Jesus’s Passion. By following Christ on His way to the cross, we identify closely with His suffering. When Easter comes we celebrate with great joy His Resurrection.

**Sunday Divine Service at 9:30 a.m. followed by Bible Study and
Sunday School at 10:45!**

Connecting the Dots: Before service, try reading through the Gospel lesson and see if you can link it to the other lessons, Introit, Gradual, and Collect. (Hint: Start with the Collect as it usually summarizes the theme of the day)

Christian Education, Human Care & Evangelism

Sunday School: We have Sunday school in the conference room after service for the little ones. Older children are welcome to attend the Family Style Bible Study. We ordered new curriculum from *Concordia Publishing House*, which will provide more activities and learning for the children.

FYI: Sunday morning Adult Catechesis should wrap up in the next few weeks. We look forward to Adult Confirmation!

Wednesday Morning Bible Class – 10:00 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Conference Room. We just finished Ephesians. We have started a new study on Apologetics (defending the faith). This will help strengthen our faith, and prepare us to give a reason for the hope that we have to the dying world (evangelism). Please RSVP.

Youth Catechesis leading to confirmation on Wednesday Evenings.

Private Confession and Absolution offered all-week upon request.

Gents, let's continue get together **EVERY Thursday** at 6:30 AM for a **Men's Study and Breakfast at IHOP** (2480 Preston Rd, Frisco, TX 75034). We'll start the day off right with good food and fellowship as we read through our Lutheran Confessions. **YOU CAN JOIN ANYTIME! Come learn about our Lutheran Confessions from Scripture Alone!**

Issues, Etc. is a radio talk show hosted by LCMS Pastor Todd Wilken and produced by Lutheran Public Radio in Collinsville, IL. You can listen at your convenience at www.issuesetc.org and on the Lutheran Public Radio mobile app. You can **listen to Lutheran music** at www.lutheranpublicradio.org

Children's Bulletins Available: *Lessons for Lambs* is not meant to serve as a way to keep kids busy and quiet during the service, but rather to involve them in what's going on in the service so they can begin thinking about it. The bulletins are geared toward kids in 2nd through 6th grades with varying degrees of independence. They could certainly be used with younger kids, in part, with help from their parents.

Got questions? Check out the rotating tracts/pamphlets on the table in the narthex each week by former LCMS President Berry. Take one for yourself or a friend. Doctrinal questions are timeless! You may also download them for free here: <https://www.michigandistrict.org/about/beliefs/whatabout>

Home Devotional Resources: <http://mlchouston.org/about-us/memorial-moment> & <http://steadfastlutherans.org/2017/02/lambs-at-pasture-daily-devotions-for-the-family/>

Sermons on our website: If you miss a sermon, you can always hear it on our website. This is also a great way to reach out to family and friends: "Hey, check out my pastor's sermon. I think you would appreciate it. It comforted me." Then it might make it easier to invite them to come to church with you in the future.

Evangelism: Sharing our website with others is a great way to let others to learn about us. **Church Business Cards** still available for you to take. Let's get our name out there and invite others to hear the sweet Gospel! **Evangelism Tracts using the Small Catechism AVAILABLE!**

Service opportunities: Helping to plan activities outside and inside of our congregation: Would you like to help plan outreach opportunities for our congregation—from service events to simply participating in community events? Would you like to help plan and organize fellowship opportunities for our congregation—anything from potlucks to polka? If you have an interest in serving, please speak with an elder.

Thanks for supporting this great local organization!



Bring your donations to Church or drop them off directly to the food pantry, located at 9085 Dogwood (next to Frisco Resale) which is open Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Wed. from 9-6 p.m.

Click [HERE](#) to see a list of the most needed items to help those in need here in our community.

Christian Stewardship -Time, Talent, and Treasure

Weekly Stewardship bulletin sentences from synod our in our bulletin most weeks—check them out.

Amazon Smile: Don't forget you can support our church by designating St. John through *Amazon Smile*.

Prayer: Please continue to pray for our congregation as we establish ourselves and plan for 2018, looking for a new venue. Also, please take home your bulletin and pray during the week for those who have requested our prayers.

Interested in serving as a Church Greeter? Please speak to an elder.

Building Fund: As reported at the last Voters' meeting, we have started a building fund, for our long-term goal of a permanent location. If you would like to contribute to the fund, please write, "Building Fund" on your check/envelope along with the amount. If the check is more than the designated amount, it will post to weekly offering.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Newsletter Article – February 2018

“I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:8-9).

Without commands or even arm-twisting, St. Paul encourages, even challenges, the Church in Corinth to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith by their generosity in giving. He does this because giving generously is a gift of the Spirit given to us through the Gospel.

St. Paul wrote: “But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving” (2 Corinthians 8:7). In other words, just as we grow in faith and speech and knowledge of eternal things by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, so also do we grow in giving from the same Spirit through the same Word.

The problem is that the grace of generosity often grows cold in us. It’s not so much that we stop giving, but we don’t put it first. We treat it like all the other bills that must be paid. It becomes a chore, just one more thing to check off a list of things to do. That empties it of its spiritual power and robs us of the joy that Christ and the Scriptures assign to it.

On top of that, since this generosity is linked to faith and knowledge of divine things, a lack of excelling in giving is a sure sign that our faith and knowledge of God are under attack as well.

Thus St. Paul points to the foundation of generosity: the generosity of Christ Himself. Even though He was rich, He became poor so that we who are poor might become rich. Thus, the incarnation, suffering, and death of our Lord on the cross is the reason, source, and driving force for our generosity in giving to the church.

And since Christ who was rich became poor so that we might be rich in His grace—of which generous giving is part—so we also who are rich in His grace can excel in pressing His grace into service toward the gracious work of the church.

Pay attention to what you give to the church so that you may excel at it. And if you find that your heart has grown cold or indifferent toward it, immerse yourself in God’s Word. Read it at home. Attend Bible Class. Hear and listen to it preached in the Divine Service.

Be reminded of what Christ has done for you in His incarnation, suffering, and death. For this will strengthen your faith and knowledge. And where that excels, so will the grace of giving excel also.

What should I be doing as a steward of the gifts the Lord has given me? Our *Small Catechism*, from Scripture, shows us our duties in our God-given vocations. Each month, I plan to cycle through parts of the *Table of Duties*:

Table of Duties Monthly Review: To Workers of All Kinds

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. **Eph. 6:5–8**

Table of Duties Monthly Review: To Employers and Supervisors

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him. **Eph. 6:9**

Other News

For current events, please visit our website or see the church calendar. You can sync our calendar to your computer or smart phone. <http://stjohnfrisco.org/st-john-church-calendar/> & <http://stjohnfrisco.org/category/events/>

St. John Shooting Club (SJSC): If you'd like to join the mailing list for details, please contact Mike Troncalli, 214-274-5215 (voice or text), president@sjlcfisco.com.

We thank *The Roy D. and Ingaborg G. Randolph Memorial Endowment Fund* for its continued support in 2018. We received a generous gift of 25K. Praise the Lord!

Men's Retreat **(Hosted by Faith LCMS in Plano, but inviting us)**

Topic: Real Men Follow Jesus

When: February 16-17

It begins on Friday at 7:15 pm and finishes at noon on Saturday

Where: Camp Shiloh Lutheran Retreat Center
3335 FM 21, Pittsburg, Texas

Sessions:

- Why do men stay away from Church?
- What is Biblical masculinity?
- How has the Church been identified with femininity?
- What does a "real man" look like?
- How can the Church help men?

Who are invited: All men and high school age boys

Cost: \$50/person (includes food, housing and speaker's honorarium)
Register by calling 972-423-7447 or email: church@faithplano.org

What to bring: Sleeping bag or bedding, Bible, hymnal, beverages and snacks

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Gary W. Zieroth

He is a Professor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne since 2016. He has done numerous seminars on the topics of marriage, parenting, masculinity, and catechesis. He recently served on the LCMS synodical task force, "God's Gift of Sexuality." He has been married to his wife JoAnn for 34 years. They have four children.

Other Articles

<https://steadfastlutherans.org/2018/01/listening-to-the-scriptures-in-a-little-over-40-weekdays/>

<https://steadfastlutherans.org/2018/02/lambs-at-pasture-for-quinquagesima/>

To God be the Glory!