

Announcements

- ◆ A warm welcome to all our visitors and guests, friends both old and new. We pray that God has blessed your time among us with His Word and Holy Spirit. We cordially invite you to join us this morning for coffee & donuts downstairs following the Divine Service; and we ask that you please sign the guest book at the back of the church.
- ◆ Following coffee & donuts, our Family Bible Class continues a study of First Samuel. Parents and children, youth and adults are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in this class together.

Care for the younger children (under four years of age) is provided in the nursery downstairs, so their parents and families are able to attend the class.
- ◆ Our Emmaus Youth are having a final **BAKE SALE** this morning to raise funds for their travel to and from the Higher Things conference in the Poconos of Pennsylvania this week. With the price of gas these days, any help that you may be able to provide would be most appreciated. THANKS! The Youth and their chaperones will be leaving South Bend tomorrow.
- ◆ Emmaus will be gathered for the Divine Service in celebration of the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist this Tuesday (24 June) at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ Although our usual lineup of Monday evening activities will *not* be taking place this week, we *will* be gathered for Vespers on Wednesday, 25 June, at 7:00 p.m. to commemorate the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession.
- ◆ The Altar flowers this morning are provided by Dorothy Rummel & Dawn Smith to the glory of God, in loving memory of their mothers birthday.
- ◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 15 JUNE 2008: \$1628.61
- ◆ IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS MORNING:
(ELDERS) Dave Smith & Robert Rhein; (USHERS) Rick Saenz & Nathaniel Rhein; (ACOLYTE) Caleb Smith; (ORGANIST) Sandra Rhein; (GREETERS) Marilyn Dulmatch & Betty Saenz.
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574
- ◆ Rev. Gifford Grobien, Assistant Pastor Home Phone: (574) 231 – 9572

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“Let us learn from the very name of the devil as ‘father of lies and murderer’ (John 8:44) that as long as the Gospel flourishes and Christ reigns, it is necessary for such sects of perdition to arise and for everything to be filled with the raging of murderers who persecute the truth. Anyone who does not know this will be very easily offended; he will forsake the true God and true faith and will return to his old god and to his old faith.

“Therefore Paul is fortifying the godly here, so that they are not offended by those persecutions, sects, and scandals. He says: ‘As at that time he who was born according to the flesh etc.’ (Gal. 4:29); as though he were to say: ‘If we are sons born according to the spirit, we must certainly expect persecution from our brother who was born according to the flesh. That is, it is not only the obviously wicked enemies who will persecute us. But even those who were our dear friends at first, with whom we lived as a family in the same house, who received the teaching of the Gospel from us — they eventually become our bitterest enemies, who persecute us ruthlessly because they are our brethren according to the flesh, who must persecute their brethren born according to the spirit.’ So Christ complains about Judas: ‘Even my bosom friend, in whom I trusted, who ate of My bread, has lifted his heel against Me’ (Psalm 41:9). But our comfort is that we have not given our Ishmaelites any reason to persecute us. The papists persecute us on account of our godly teaching; if we recanted this, they would stop persecuting us immediately. Similarly, if we were to approve the wicked errors of the fanatics, they would applaud us. But because we detest the ungodliness of both parties, they cannot do anything but hate and persecute us bitterly.

“But it is not only Paul who fortifies us against this persecution and these offenses, as I have said; but Christ Himself comforts us very sweetly. ‘If you were of the world,’ He says, ‘the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you’ (John 15:19). It is as though He were to say: ‘I am the cause of all the persecutions that you bear; and if you are killed, the responsibility for your death will be Mine. For if you did not preach My Word and confess Me, the world would not persecute you. Nevertheless, you are being treated properly. A servant is not greater than his master (John 13:16). If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also, because of My name.’

“With these words Christ transfers all the guilt to Himself and sets us free from every fear, as though He were to say: ‘The reason why the world persecutes you with violence and with craft is not you yourselves but My name, which you preach and confess. But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world’

(John 16:33). We are sustained by this confidence; and we have no doubt that Christ is powerful enough not only to sustain us but to conquer all the power of the oppressors and the wiles of the heretics. He gave ample evidence of this in the case of the Jews and the Romans, whose fierceness and persecution He once bore. He had to bear the wiles of the heretics also; but in time all of them were overthrown and destroyed, and He remained the King and the Victor. Regardless of how much the papists rage today or of how the sectarians distort and corrupt the Gospel of Christ, Christ will remain King forever, and the Word of the Lord will stand forever (1 Peter 1:25); and all His enemies will be annihilated. In addition, it is very comforting that the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael will not last forever but will continue only for a short time, at the end of which the sentence will be pronounced, as follows:

“But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the slave and her son; for the son of the slave shall not inherit with the son of the free woman’ (Gal. 4:30).

“This statement of Sarah’s was certainly distressing to Abraham. Undoubtedly when he heard it, his fatherly feeling for his son Ishmael was aroused; for he had been born of his body. Scripture testifies to this when it says: ‘The thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son’ (Gen. 21:11–12). But God confirmed the sentence pronounced by Sarah and said to Abraham: ‘Be not displeased of the lad and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you; for through Isaac shall your descendants be named.’

“Here the Ishmaelites hear a sentence pronounced against them that overthrows the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, etc., who persecuted the church of Christ. It will also overthrow the papists and all other self-righteous people, whoever they may be, who boast today that they are the people of God and the church; they hope that they will surely receive the inheritance, and they judge that we who depend on the promise of God are not only barren and desolate but heretics who have been cast out of the church and cannot be sons and heirs. But God turns this judgment of theirs upside down and pronounces the sentence on them that because they are sons of the slave woman and persecute the sons of the free woman, they are to be cast out of the house and are not to share the inheritance with the sons of the promise, to whom, as sons of the free woman, the promise belongs exclusively. This sentence is legitimate, and it is irrevocable; for ‘Scripture cannot be broken’ (John 10:35). Therefore it will most certainly happen that our Ishmaelites will not only lose the authority they have in both church and state but eternal life as well. For Scripture has foretold that the sons of the slave woman are to be cast out of the house, that is, out of the kingdom of grace, because they cannot inherit with the sons of the free woman.”

(From Dr. Martin Luther’s Lectures on Galatians, A.D. 1535)

Walking with Our Savior this Week

TODAY **Divine Service of Communion** **9:00 a.m.**
Coffee & Donuts Downstairs 10:30 a.m.
EMMAUS YOUTH BAKE SALE
Family Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

MONDAY Emmaus Youth traveling to the Poconos
for the Higher Things conference this week

TUESDAY THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
Divine Service of Communion **7:00 p.m.**

WEDNESDAY PRESENTATION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION
Vespers **7:00 p.m.**

THURSDAY *Pastor's Family Day (but do call in cases of emergency)*

SATURDAY Emmaus Youth returning from Pennsylvania

NEXT SUNDAY **Divine Service of Communion** **9:00 a.m.**
Coffee & Donuts Downstairs 10:30 a.m.
Family Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

You may also want to keep in mind, in your observance of daily prayer at home:

*This Tuesday (24 June) is the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist
Readings: Isaiah 40:1-5; Acts 13:13-26; and St. Luke 1:57-80*

*The Readings for next Sunday, the Feast of Sts. Peter & Paul, Apostles
Acts 15:1-21; Galatians 2:1-10; and Saint Matthew 16:13-19*