

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 and other refreshments downstairs following the Divine Service; and we ask that you please sign the guest book at the back of the church.

◆ Following coffee & refreshments, 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. (Catechesis class for the younger catechumens also meets during this same time.)

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.

◆ Sandra Rhein is in Kenya at this time, and for the next couple weeks, working on the Kenyan Lutheran Hymnal Project. Please remember her in your prayers while she is there, and as she is serving the Church in this way. Our sincere thanks to Nicole Koehler for serving as our organist this morning, in Sandra's absence.

◆ Throughout the sacred season of Lent, in addition to the usual Vespers on Monday evenings, we will be gathered for Lenten Vespers each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., and for a brief spoken Divine Service each Friday at 9:00 a.m.

As in past years, there will be soup supper served prior to the Wednesday evening Vespers, from 5:30 until 6:30 p.m. One and all are welcome to enjoy the good soup and to share that opportunity for fraternal fellowship.

◆ **COLLECTIONS FOR 21 FEBRUARY 2010: \$1237.01**

In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$1940 is needed each week.

◆ **IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS MORNING:**

(ELDER) Dave Smith; (USHERS) Nathaniel Rhein & Nicholai Stuckwisch; (ACOLYTE) Luke Harrison; (ORGANIST) Nicole Koehler; (GREETERS) Carrol McCarty & Pat Nering.

◆ 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

“Do not be deceived; God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7). It is as though Paul were saying: ‘Surely you have not deceived God, but only yourselves. You will not mock God, but God will mock you.’ There is a well-known verse that says: ‘You have not deceived me, your teacher, but yourself.’ But the headstrong nobility and the peasant class remain completely unmoved by this dreadful threat. When the death struggle comes, however, they will find out whether they have deceived themselves or us (though not really us but, as Paul says, God Himself). Meanwhile, because they arrogantly despise our warnings, we are saying these things for our own comfort, so that we know that it is better to suffer injury than to commit it; for patience is always innocent. Besides, God will not permit us, His ministers, to perish of hunger; but when the rich suffer need and are hungry, He will feed us, and in the days of famine He will provide for us.

“For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7). All this pertains to the topic of support for ministers. I do not like to interpret such passages; for they seem to commend us, as in fact they do. In addition, it gives the appearance of greed if one emphasizes these things diligently to one’s hearers. Nevertheless, people should be taught also about this matter, in order that they may know that they owe both respect and support to their preachers. Christ teaches the same thing in Luke: ‘Eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages’ (Luke 10:7); and Paul says elsewhere: ‘Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the Gospel should get their living by the Gospel’ (1 Cor. 9:13–14). It is important for us who are in the ministry to know this, so that we do not have a bad conscience about accepting for our work wages that accrue to us from papal properties. Although these things were acquired by sheer fraud, nevertheless God despoils the Egyptians (Ex. 3:22), that is, the papists, of their possessions and transfers them to a good and pious use. This does not happen when the nobles seize them and appropriate them for their own misuse; it happens when those who proclaim the glory of God and faithfully instruct the youth derive their livelihood from them. It is impossible that one man should be devoted to household duties day and night for his support and at the same time pay attention to the study of Sacred Scripture, as the teaching ministry requires. Since God has commanded and instituted this, we should know that we may with a good conscience enjoy what is provided for the comfortable support of our lives from church properties to enable us to devote ourselves to our office. Therefore no one should give himself any scruples about this, as though it were not permissible to make use of these properties.

“For he who sows to the flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:8). Now Paul adds a metaphor and an allegory. He applies the general statement about sowing to the particular case of providing for ministers, saying: ‘He who sows to the Spirit, that is, he who provides for preachers of the Word, performs a spiritual work and will reap eternal life.’ Now the question is whether we merit eternal life by good works, for that is what Paul seems to be asserting in this passage. Earlier (chap. 3) we discussed at sufficient length the passages that speak about works and rewards. It is extremely necessary, following Paul’s example, to exhort believers to do good works, that is, to exercise their faith through good works; for unless these works follow faith, that is the surest possible sign that the faith is not genuine. Therefore the Apostle says: ‘He who sows to his own flesh, that is, who does not share anything with the ministers of the Word but only feeds and takes care of himself, as the flesh wants him to do, will from the flesh reap corruption, not only in the life to come but even in the present life. The possessions of the wicked will collapse, and eventually they themselves will perish miserably.’ The Apostle was eager to exhort hearers to be generous and kind toward their preachers. It is a miserable business that the malice and ingratitude of men should be such that admonitions of this kind are necessary in the churches.

“The Encratites abused this passage to support their fanatical opinion against marriage and interpreted it this way: ‘He who sows to the flesh will reap corruption; that is, he who marries will be damned. Therefore a wife is something damnable, and marriage is evil, because in it there is sowing to the flesh.’ Those foul beasts were so utterly devoid of judgment that they did not see what the Apostle was talking about. I am warning you about this in order that you may see that the devil, through his agents, can easily divert simple hearts from the truth. He will soon have an infinite number of such agents. In fact, Germany already has many of them, because it persecutes and kills believers in some places and neglects them in others. Let us arm ourselves against these errors and others like them, and let us learn to grasp the genuine meaning of Scripture. As any man equipped with plain common sense can see, Paul is not speaking about marriage; he is speaking about support for the ministers of the churches. And although this support is material, he still calls it ‘sowing to the Spirit.’ On the other hand, he calls scraping for money and looking out for oneself ‘sowing to the flesh.’ He pronounces the former blessed both in this life and in the life to come, but the latter he pronounces accursed both in this life and in the life to come.”

(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 & Refreshments 10:30 a.m.
Catechesis / Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

MONDAY *Vespers* **7:00 p.m.**
Bible Class 7:30 p.m.

TUESDAY *Pastor's Writing Day (but do call in cases of emergency)*

WEDNESDAY Soup Supper 5:30—6:30
Lenten Vespers **7:00 p.m.**

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

FRIDAY *Brief Spoken Divine Service* **9:00 a.m.**

NEXT SUNDAY **Divine Service of Communion** **9:00 a.m.**
Coffee & Refreshments 10:30 a.m.
Catechesis / Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

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

*The Appointed Readings for next Sunday, the Third Sunday in Lent:
Ezekiel 33:7–20; 1 Corinthians 10:1–13; and St. Luke 13:1–9*