

# ***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 will resume our study of the Old Testament Liturgy in Leviticus, looking at the rites and ceremonies of the means of grace, as well as the life of holiness that is to be lived by God's people. Parents and children, youth and adults are welcome.

Catechesis class for younger and beginning catechumens meets at the same time. Also, Mike Jindra and Kirsten Block are teaching a catechesis class for children of approximately eight through twelves years of age. And Dave Smith is teaching a catechesis class for teenagers (and others interested).

◆ **Ladies of Emmaus**: Today, the Women's Service League is receiving contributions for our own Emmaus Food Pantry. Thanks for your support!

◆ Pr. Stuckwisch will be attending a Call Meeting at Redeemer, Warsaw, this Monday evening, in keeping with his duties as Circuit Visitor. As such, we will not be having our usual Monday evening Vespers and Bible Class.

◆ Throughout Lent, there will be Vespers each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., as well as 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 2 MARCH 2014:**     \$ 1,760.00

In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2190 is needed each week.

◆ **IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY:** (ELDER) Robert Rhein; (USHERS) Matthew Horner & Nicholai Stuckwisch; (ACOLYTE) Joshua Jordan; (ORGANIST) Monica Stuckwisch; (GREETERS) Dorothy Rummel & Marilyn Dulmatch.

◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor                      Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

## From the Lutheran Confessions

*“Articles VII & VIII. The Church: We set forth this doctrine for a very necessary reason. We see the infinite dangers that threaten the church with ruin. There is an infinite number of ungodly within the church who oppress it. The church will abide nevertheless; it exists despite the great multitude of the wicked, and Christ supplies it with the gifts He has promised — the forgiveness of sins, answer to prayer, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Creed offers us these consolations that we may not despair but may know all this. It says ‘the church catholic’ lest we take it to mean an outward government of certain nations. It is, rather, made up of men scattered throughout the world who agree on the Gospel and have the same Christ, the same Holy Spirit, and the same Sacraments, whether they have the same human traditions or not. The gloss in the Decrees says that ‘the church in the larger sense includes both the godly and the wicked,’ and that the wicked are part of the church only in name and not in fact, while the godly are part of the church in fact as well as in name. The Fathers say the same thing in many places. For example, Jerome says, ‘Therefore the sinner who has been defiled by any spot cannot be called part of the church of Christ, nor can he be said to be subject to Christ.’*

*“Hypocrites and evil men are indeed associated with the true church as far as outward ceremonies are concerned. But when we come to define the church, we must define that which is the living body of Christ and is the church in fact as well as in name. We must understand what it is that chiefly makes us members, and living members, of the church. If we were to define the church as only an outward organization embracing both the good and the wicked, then men would not understand that the kingdom of Christ is the righteousness of the heart and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but would think of it as only the outward observance of certain devotions and rituals. Then, too, what difference will there be between the church and the Old Testament people? Yet Paul distinguishes the church from the Old Testament people by the fact that the church is a spiritual people, separated from the heathen not by civil rites but by being God’s true people, reborn by the Holy Spirit. Among the Old Testament people, those born according to the flesh had promises about physical well-being, political affairs, etc. in addition to the promise about Christ. Because of these promises even the wicked among them were called the people of God inasmuch as God had separated these physical descendants from other nations by certain outward ordinances and promises. Nevertheless, these evil people did not please God. But the Gospel brings not the shadow of eternal things but the eternal blessings themselves, the Holy Spirit and the righteousness by which we are righteous before God.*

*“According to the Gospel, therefore, only those are the true people who accept this promise of the Spirit. Besides the church is the kingdom of Christ, the opposite of the kingdom of the devil. It is evident, moreover, that the wicked are in the power of the devil and are members of the devil’s kingdom, as Paul teaches in Eph. 2:2 when he says that the devil ‘is now at work in the sons of disobedience.’ Certainly the Pharisees had an outward affiliation with the church (that is, with the saints among the Old Testament people), for they held high positions and they sacrificed and taught. To them Christ says (John 8:44), ‘You are of your father the devil.’ Thus the church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is, precisely speaking, the congregation of the saints. The wicked are ruled by the devil and are his captives; they are not ruled by the Spirit of Christ.*

*“But why belabor the obvious? If the church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is distinguished from the kingdom of the devil, it necessarily follows that since the wicked belong to the kingdom of the devil, they are not the church. In this life, nevertheless, because the kingdom of Christ has not yet been revealed, they are mingled with the church and hold office in the church. The fact that the revelation has not yet come does not make the wicked the kingdom of Christ. What He quickens by His Spirit is always the same kingdom of Christ, whether it be revealed or hidden under the cross, just as Christ is the same, whether now glorified or previously afflicted.*

*“Christ’s parables agree with this. He clearly says in Matt. 13:38 that ‘the good seed means the sons of the kingdom, the weeds are the sons of the evil one.’ The field, He says, is the world, not the church. Thus John speaks about the whole Jewish nation and says that the true church will be separated from it (Matt. 3:12). Therefore this passage is more against our opponents than for them since it shows that the true and spiritual people will be separated from the physical people. Christ is talking about the outward appearance of the church when He says that the kingdom of God is like a net (Matt. 13:47) or like ten virgins (Matt. 25:1). He teaches us that the church is hidden under a crowd of wicked men so that this stumbling block may not offend the faithful and so that we may know that the Word and the Sacraments are efficacious even when wicked men administer them. Meanwhile He teaches that though these wicked men participate in the outward marks, still they are not the true kingdom of Christ and members of Christ, for they are members of the kingdom of the devil.*

*“We are not dreaming about some Platonic republic, as has been slanderously alleged, but we teach that this church actually exists, made up of true believers and righteous men scattered throughout the world. And we add its marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments. . . .”*

***(From the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, 1530)***

