

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.
- ◆ In Family Bible Class this morning, we'll begin a new study, looking at the Book of Genesis. Parents, children, youth, and adults are welcome.
Note that rehearsals for this year's Christmas Pageant are now being held during the usual catechesis time. The pageant will be December the 21st.
- ◆ Valpo Guild pecans are now available for sale in the downstairs social hall. Proceeds benefit students at Valparaiso University. The sale is handled by Marilyn Dulmatch. Thanks for your support.
- ◆ To wait upon the Lord in repentant faith throughout this Advent Season, beginning this week, we will be gathered for Evening Prayer each Wednesday in December (the 3rd, 10th, and 17th) at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ The 30th Annual "WEIHNACHTS VESPER" (that is, a Christmas Service in the German Language) will be at held today (November the 30th), beginning at 4:00 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 51490 Laurel Road in South Bend (at the corner of Auten & Laurel). A time of fellowship will follow the Service. Contact the St. Paul office at (574) 271-1050 for more info.
- ◆ New canisters are now available, by the church entrance and in the office, for the collection of Campbell's labels and box tops, which are used to the benefit of Resurrection Lutheran Academy. See Linda Levine for details.
- ◆ The Altar flowers this morning are provided by Dave & Debbie Smith to the glory of God, in celebration of their 25th wedding anniversary.
- ◆ When paying for Altar flowers, the checks should be made out to Emmaus LWML and then given to Diana Fish. Thanks!
- ◆ **COLLECTIONS FOR 23 NOVEMBER 2014: \$ 718.00**
In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2240 is needed each week.

- ◆ IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY:
(ELDERS) Robert Rhein; (USHERS) Matthew Horner & Tobias Tribble;
(ACOLYTE) Lucas Jindra; (ORGANIST) Deaconess Sandra Rhein;
(GREETERS) Marilyn Dulmatch & Lois Veen.
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

From the Lutheran Confessions

“Article XXI. The Invocation of the Saints: As I have said earlier, our whole knowledge of Christ disappears if we seek out other mediators besides Christ and put our trust in them. Let us look at this as it really is. It seems that when the saints were first mentioned, as in the ancient prayers, this was not done in a reprehensible way. Afterwards came invocation, with abuses that were enormous and worse than pagan. From invocation the next step was to images. Men venerated these and thought they contained some sort of magical power, just as sorcerers imagine that horoscopes carved at a particular time contain power. In one monastery we saw a statue of the blessed Virgin which was manipulated like a puppet so that it seemed to nod Yes or No to the petitioners.

“But all these marvelous tales about statues and pictures do not even compare with the fairy tales about the saints which are being taught in public on the highest authority. In the midst of her tortures, Barbara asks for a reward — that no one who calls upon her should die without the Eucharist. Another one recited the whole Psalter every day while standing on one foot. Some smart person painted Christopher in such a way as to symbolize that those who would carry Christ, that is, those who would teach or confess the Gospel, must be strong of soul because they have to undergo great danger. Then the foolish monks taught the people to call on Christopher, as though there had really been such a Polyphemus [a cyclops, a mythical creature].

“The great things that the saints have done serve as examples to men in their public or private life, as a means of confirming their faith and as an incentive to imitate them in public affairs. But these no one has sought out in the true stories about the saints. The saints administered public affairs, underwent troubles and dangers, helped kings in times of great danger, taught the Gospel, battled against heretics. It is truly worthwhile to hear of these things and to see some examples of mercy. Peter was forgiven for denying Christ; Cyprian was forgiven for having been a sorcerer; Augustine experienced the power of faith in sickness and constantly affirmed that God hears the prayers of believers. It would be useful to recall such examples as these which talk about faith or fear or the administration of public affairs. But the inventors of these fables, which

imitate the epics and bring only superstitious examples of certain prayers, fasts, and other profitable ceremonies, are clowns who know nothing about either faith or public affairs. There is no point in listing here the miracles they have invented about rosaries and similar ceremonies, or the legends, as they call them, and the mirrors and the rosaries, all of which contain many things that resemble the 'true stories' of Lucian [an ancient writer of satire and parody].

“Bishops, theologians, and monks applaud these monstrous and ungodly tales because they make money. And they refuse to tolerate us because we do not require the invocation of saints and condemn abuses in the worship of saints in order to emphasize the honor and the work of Christ. Good men everywhere have been hoping that the bishops would exert their authority and the preachers do their duty in correcting these abuses; but in the Confutation our opponents completely ignore even the obvious offenses, as though they intended, by forcing our acceptance of the Confutation, to compel us to approve of the most notorious abuses.

“At this point, and almost everywhere else, the Confutation is a deceitful document. Nowhere do they distinguish between their teachings and obvious abuses. Yet anyone in their party with a little sense would admit that the teachings of the scholastics and canonists contain many false opinions and that the ignorance and negligence of the pastors permitted many abuses to creep into the church. Luther was not the first to complain about public abuses. Long before, there were many learned and outstanding men who deplored the abuses of the Mass, the trust in monastic observances, the mercenary worship of the saints, the confusion in the doctrine of penitence which ought to be as clear and plain as possible in the church. We ourselves have heard excellent theologians ask for limitations upon scholastic doctrine because it leads to philosophical disputes rather than to piety. The earlier scholastics are usually closer to Scripture than the more recent ones, so their theology has steadily degenerated. Those who sided with Luther from the outset did so because they saw that he was freeing human minds from the labyrinthine confusions and endless disputations of the scholastic theologians and was teaching things profitable for godliness.

“Therefore it was dishonest of our opponents to ignore abuses when they required us to accept the Confutation. If they really had the good of the church at heart at this point, they would ask that our most gracious emperor take steps to correct the abuses, for clearly he is most anxious for the healing and improving of the church. Instead of supporting this most honorable and holy desire of the emperor, our opponents are doing everything to crush us. They give many indications that the state of the church does not concern them very much. They make no effort to provide a summary of the doctrines. . . .”

(From the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, 1530)

