

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 our study of Genesis, relying especially on Dr. Luther's extensive commentary on that sacred text. Parents and children, youth and adults are welcome.

Catechesis class for younger and beginning catechumens will meet at the same time. Also, Mike Jindra and Ian Walsh 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).

◆ Pastor Stuckwisch will be attending the Northern Indiana District Spring Pastors' Conference in Syracuse this week, Monday through Wednesday. Please keep him and the others pastors of our district in your prayers as they are met together for the study of God's Word.

We will not be gathered for our usual Vespers or Bible Class this Monday.

◆ Emmaus will be gathered for the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord this Thursday, the 14th of May, Divine Service beginning at 6:00 p.m.

◆ The Altar flowers this morning have been provided by Pastor & LaRena Stuckwisch to the glory of God, in celebration of their daughter Monica's birthday, and with thanksgiving for their granddaughter Gianna Wirgau.

◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 3 MAY 2015: \$ 1,667.00

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:

(ELDER) Robert Rhein; (USHERS) Matthew Harrison & Matthew Horner;
(ACOLYTE) Joshua Jordan; (ORGANIST) Deaconess Sandra Rhein;
(GREETERS) Carrol McCarty & Pat Nering.

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

From the Lutheran Confessions

“Article XXVII. Monastic Vows: The discerning reader will easily conclude [from what has been said about justification] that we do not merit the forgiveness of sins by monastic works. Hence it is also an intolerable blasphemy when Thomas says that a monastic profession is equal to Baptism. It is madness to put a human tradition, which has neither a command of God nor a promise, on the same level with an ordinance of Christ which has both a command and a promise of God and contains a covenant of grace and eternal life.

“Second, obedience, poverty, and celibacy, provided they are not impure, are non-obligatory forms of discipline. Hence the saints can use them without sinning, as did Bernard, Francis, and other holy men. They used them for their physical advantage, to have more leisure for teaching and other pious duties, not because the works themselves are services that justify or merit eternal life. Finally, they belong to the class of which Paul says, ‘Bodily training is of little value’ (1 Tim. 4:8). It is likely that here and there in the monasteries there are still some good men serving the ministry of the Word who follow these observances without wicked ideas. But the notion that these observances are services because of which we are accounted righteous before God and through which we merit eternal life conflicts with the Gospel of the righteousness of faith, which teaches that for Christ’s sake righteousness and eternal life are given to us. It also conflict with Christ’s statement, ‘In vain do they worship me with the precepts of men’ (Matt. 15:9). It also conflicts with this statement: ‘Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin’ (Rom. 14:23). How can they maintain that these are services which God approves as righteousness before Him when they have no proof for this from the Word of God?

“But look at the impudence of our opponents! Not only do they teach that these observances are services that justify. They also say that they are more perfect services than other ways of life, that is that they merit forgiveness of sins and justification more than the others. To this they add many other false and wicked ideas. They imagine that they observe both precepts and counsels. Since they imagine that they have merits of supererogation, these liberal men then sell them to others. All this is full of pharisaical vanity. It is the height of wickedness to believe that they satisfy the Ten Commandments in such a way that there are merits left over, when these Commandments accuse all the saints, ‘You shall love the Lord you God with all your heart’ (Deut. 6:5), and again, ‘You shall not covet’ (Ex. 20:17). The prophet says, ‘All men are liars’ (Ps. 116:11); that is, they do not think correctly about God, they do not fear Him enough, they do not believe God enough. Therefore it is false for the monks to boast that the observance of a monastic life satisfies the Commandments and does more than the Commandments.

“It is also false that monastic observances are the works of the counsels of the Gospel. For the Gospel does not counsel distinctions among clothes or foods, nor the surrender of property. These are human traditions, about all of which it has been said, ‘Food does not commend us to God’ (1 Cor. 8:8). Hence they are neither justifying services nor perfection. Indeed, when they are proposed under the cover of these titles, they are ‘doctrines of demons’ (1 Tim. 4:1).

“Virginitly is recommended — but to those who have the gift, as has been said above. However, it is a most wicked error to believe that evangelical perfection is to be found in human traditions. If it were, even the monks among the Mohammedans could boast that they have evangelical perfection. Nor is it to be found in the observance of other things which are called ‘adiaphora.’ Because the kingdom of God is righteousness (Rom. 14:17) and life in the heart, therefore perfection means to grow in the fear of God, in trust in the mercy promised in Christ, and in devotion to one’s calling. Paul also describes perfection thus: ‘We are changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord’ (2 Cor. 3:18). He does not say, ‘We are constantly receiving another hood or other sandals or other girdles.’ It is terrible to read and hear such pharisaical and even Mohammedan expressions in the church, finding the perfection of the Gospel and of the Kingdom of Christ, which is eternal life, in these silly observances of vestments and similar trifles.

“Now listen to the unworthy verdict our judges have rendered in the Confutation. This is what they say: ‘It has been stated in the Sacred Scriptures that the monastic life merits eternal life if it is maintained by a due observance, as by the grace of God any monk can maintain it. Indeed, Christ has promised this in abundance to those who have forsaken home and brothers (Matt. 19:29).’ These are our opponents’ words in which, first of all, they make the impudent claim that according to the statement of the Sacred Scriptures the monastic life merits eternal life. Where do the Sacred Scriptures talk about the monastic life? That is the way our opponents argue their case; that is the way these good-for-nothings quote the Scriptures. Though everyone knows that monasticism is a recent invention, they still cite the authority of Scripture and even say that this decree of theirs is stated in the Scriptures.

“In addition, they insult Christ when they say that by a monastic life men merit eternal life. God does not even give His own law the honor of meriting eternal life, as He clearly says in Ezekiel (20:25), ‘I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not have life.’ In the first place, it is sure that the monastic life does not merit the forgiveness of sins but that we receive this freely by faith, as has been said. In the second place, eternal life is given by mercy for Christ’s sake. . . .”

(From the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, 1530)

Walking with Our Savior this Week

TODAY	Divine Service of Communion	9:00 a.m.
	Coffee & Refreshment Downstairs	10:30 a.m.
	Catechesis / Family Bible Class	10:45 a.m.

MONDAY—WEDNESDAY *Northern Ind. Dist. Pastors' Conference*

WEDNESDAY	Catechesis Class	4:30 p.m.
	Children's Choir	6:10 p.m.
	Evening Prayer	7:00 p.m.

THURSDAY **THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD**

Divine Service of Communion **6:00 p.m.**

FRIDAY	Catechesis Class	4:30 p.m.
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NEXT SUNDAY	Divine Service of Communion	9:00 a.m.
	Coffee & Refreshment Downstairs	10:30 a.m.
	Catechesis / Family Bible Class	10:45 a.m.

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

*This Thursday (14 May) is the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord
Readings: Acts 1:1-11; Eph. 1:15-23; and St. Luke 24:44-53*

*The Appointed Readings for next Sunday, the Seventh Sunday of Easter:
Acts of the Apostles 1:12-26; 1 John 5:9-15; and St. John 17:11-19*