

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 this morning, our Family Bible Class will continue our study of Genesis, making special use of Dr. Luther's lectures. Catechesis class for younger and beginning catechumens meets at the same time. Older children, especially between the ages of eight and twelve, will meet with Mike Jindra and Ian Walsh. And Dave Smith is also teaching a catechesis class for teenagers and others who are interested.
- ◆ The Wednesday evening services of this Advent Season will commemorate a number of those saints who have gone before us in the hopeful expectation of Christ Jesus. To begin with, this Wednesday, the 30th of November, is the Feast of St. Andrew, the Apostle, which Emmaus will be gathered to celebrate in the Divine Service beginning at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ The 32nd Annual "Weihnachts Vespers" {Christmas Service in the German Language} will be held today (November the 27th) at 4:00 p.m., at St. Paul Lutheran Church, 51490 Laurel Road in South Bend. {Corner of Auten & Laurel} Rev. Dr. Roland Ziegler from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne will share the message. A time of fellowship will follow the Service. Contact the church office at (574) 271-1050 for more information.
- ◆ The Altar flowers this morning are provided by Dave & Debbie Smith to the glory of God, in celebration of their 27th wedding anniversary.
- ◆ **COLLECTIONS FOR 13 NOVEMBER 2016: \$ 1,609.00**
In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2360 is needed each week.
- ◆ **IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY: (ELDER) Robert Rhein; (USHERS) Aaron Seyboldt & Tobias Tribble; (ACOLYTE) Frederick Stuckwisch; (ORGANIST) Dcs. Sandra Rhein; (GREETER) Pat Nering.**
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

On the Church Year

“Though the early church gave distinct honor to all who gave good testimony to their faith, it had a special place of honor for those who gave up their lives — the martyrs. Others who kept the faith under imprisonment or torture were known as confessors. Another category, as the listing of the saints developed, was that of the apostles. And after the period of the persecutions, any good Christian of remarkable life and faith could be declared a saint.

“Except for festivals of major saints like John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary, saints’ days normally recall the day of death, not the day of birth. This was called the saint’s ‘natalitia,’ or heavenly birthday.

“At first the reverence for saints may have been nothing more than a pious recollection, not unlike what a mother does when she visits the grave of her son and places flowers there, though it eventually consisted of a service over the tomb. Generally the recollection of martyrs was local. St. Martin, for example, was highly thought of in France, and St. Nicholas, in Asia Minor. Only with the passing of several centuries did the observance of local saints’ days begin to spread throughout the empire, and then almost always from East to West, with very few of the Western saints ever making the calendar in the East.

“With the passage of time, of course, many of the stories about a given saint turned to legend. In fact, saints like St. Margaret, St. Blaise, and St. Nicomede may be completely legendary, without any historical prototype at all.

“The veneration of saints spread rapidly after Constantine’s Edict of Toleration in 313. With the building of new basilicas and with the church no longer in the catacombs, the relics of the martyrs were often transferred. Frequently, as was probably the case of St. Peter and St. Paul, their new name day came from the date of the reburial, especially when the date of their death was in doubt.

“The church festivals that center on the life of the Virgin Mary are not typical of those of other saints or of martyrs, but they do show how saints’ days multiplied. Right down through the centuries the poor Virgin has been both praised and maligned, as pious legends began to grow into doctrines.

“Both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theologians are the first to admit that although in the early church the Virgin was highly revered, her place of honor was somewhat less than that of Paul, Peter, or John.

“In the early centuries the church was so often referred to as Mother Church or the Virgin Mother or the Bride of Christ that there was sometimes a confusion in terminology between the church and Mary. France, ‘the oldest daughter of the church,’ and the one that supplied the greatest number of holy days, was especially fond of the term ‘Mother Church,’ and scholars have noted it in letters from Lyons and Vienne within a hundred years after Christ’s death.

“Already at the end of the second century the church fathers were concerned with the Virgin Mary. Tertullian denied the legend that she had never consummated her marriage with Joseph, arguing against the Gnostics that her physical relationship with Joseph was an added proof of Christ’s human nature. Origen cited the Biblical reference to Jesus’ ‘brothers’ against the Docetists, again emphasizing Christ’s human nature.

“On the other hand, little more than a century later both Augustine and Jerome upheld the doctrine that she was perpetually virgin, though Augustine would not go so far as to say she was without original sin.

“The church’s honor of Christ’s mother received its main formulation at the Councils of Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451. There Mary was formally declared to be ‘theotokos,’ that is, the ‘Mother of God.’

“Today there are as many as 17 days in the Roman calendar dedicated to Christ’s mother. Five are major, the rest, minor. Two of the major ones, though long ‘held in pious hearts,’ did not become a part of Rome’s official calendar until the 20th century. The five major Marian festivals are: the Purification, the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

“The festivals of the Purification and the Annunciation give few Protestants any trouble when they are properly understood. At first these holy days seem to have been celebrated more as events in the life of Christ than of His mother.

“In point of development the last of the great Marian feasts is the Assumption, or as it is called in the Book of Common Prayer, The Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In pious tradition, as distinct from doctrine, the Assumption is one of the older festivals of the church, but as an official day of obligation it is by far the youngest. Along the Eastern Mediterranean the celebration of St. Mary’s entrance into heaven seems to have been a common holy day by the sixth century. There it was known as the Falling Asleep, or Dormition, of the Blessed Mother of God, or sometimes as the Transference.”

(From THE YEAR OF THE LORD, by Theodore J. Kleinhaus, CPH 1967)

Walking with Our Savior this Week

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

MONDAY **Vespers** **6:00 p.m.**

TUESDAY Board of Elders 6:00 p.m.
Emmaus Church Council 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY **THE FEAST OF ST. ANDREW, THE APOSTLE**
Children’s Choir Rehearsal 5:10 p.m.
Divine Service of Communion **6:00 p.m.**

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

NEXT SUNDAY **Divine Service of Communion** **9:00 a.m.**
Coffee & Refreshments Downstairs 10:30 a.m.
Voters’ Meeting / Catechesis 10:45 a.m.

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

*This Wednesday (30 November) is the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle
Readings: Ezekiel 3:16–21; Romans 10:8–18; and St. John 1:35–42a*

*The Appointed Readings for next Sunday, the Second Sunday in Advent:
Isaiah 11:1–10; Romans 15:1–13; and Saint Matthew 3:1–12*