

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, following Dr. Luther's Lectures on that book. A summer catechesis class for the younger children meets at the same time.
- ◆ Family and friends of Emmaus are invited to the Stuckwisch home for an open house between 2:00 and 4:00 this afternoon, to celebrate Ariksander's high school graduation. Check with LaRena for more information.
- ◆ Emmaus Family Biking Day! Next Sunday (9 July), each and all are invited to meet at the YMCA parking lot on Northside Avenue at 2:00 p.m. We will bike the bike path along the river. Looking ahead: Our annual Rum Village Picnic will be on Sunday the 13th of August.
- ◆ As was discussed at our last Voter's Meeting, plans are underway to replace one row of cabinets in the church kitchen. Seed money for this renovation and improvement is being provided by the Women's Service League — LWML. Donations of both time and money are of course welcome. Please contact Mr. Lester Shankle or Dcs. Rhein for more details.
- ◆ **COLLECTIONS FOR 25 JUNE 2017: \$ 2,797.00**
In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2400 is needed each week.
- ◆ The Altar flowers this morning are provided by Nathaniel & Sarah Rhein to the glory of God, in celebration of their sixth wedding anniversary.
- ◆ **IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY: (ELDER) Eldon Knepp; (USHERS) Erik & Matthew Horner; (ACOLYTE) Gerhardt Stuckwisch; (ORGANIST) Deaconess Sandra Rhein; (GREETER) Pat Nering.**
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“The [divine] call [to the Office of the Ministry] is not to be despised. For it is not sufficient if a man has the Word and the pure doctrine. He must also have the assurance of his call, and whoever enters without this assurance enters only in order to kill and destroy (John 10:10). For God never prospers the work of those who are not called. Even if they teach something good and useful, it does not edify. Thus in our time the sectarians have the vocabulary of faith in their mouths, but they do not produce any fruit. Their chief aim is to attract men to their false opinions.

“To remain in their saving task, those who have a sure and holy call must often bear many severe conflicts, as must those whose teaching is pure and sound, against the devil with his constant and endless wiles and against the world with its attacks. In these conflicts what is one to do whose call is unsure and whose doctrine is corrupt?

“Therefore we who are in the Ministry of the Word have this comfort, that we have a heavenly and holy office; being legitimately called to this, we prevail over all the gates of hell (Matt. 16:18). On the other hand, it is dreadful when the conscience says: ‘You have done this without a call!’ Here a man without a call is shaken by such terror that he wishes he had never heard the Word he preaches. For by his disobedience he sullies all his works, regardless of how good they are, so that even his greatest works and deeds become great sins.

“Thus you see how necessary it is [for us preachers of the Gospel] to boast and glory in our ministry this way. In the past, when I was only a young theologian and doctor, I thought it was imprudent of Paul in his Epistle to boast of his call so often. But I did not understand his purpose, for I did not know that the Ministry of the Word of God was so weighty a matter.

“I did not know anything about the doctrine of faith and a true conscience. In the schools and churches no certainty was being taught, but everything was filled with the sophistic trifles and nursery rhymes of the canonists and commentators on the Sentences [of Peter Lombard]. Therefore no one could understand how forceful and powerful is this holy and spiritual boasting about a call, which serves first to the glory of God, secondly to the advancement of our own ministry, and also to our own benefit and to that of the people. When we [pastors] boast in this way, we are not looking for prestige in the world or praise from men or money, or for pleasure or the good will of the world.

“The reason for our proud boasting is that we are in a divine calling and in God’s own work, and that the people need to be assured of our calling, in order that they may know that our word is in fact the Word of God. This, then, is not a vain pride; it is a modest holy pride against the devil and the world. And it is a true humility in the sight of God.

“Paul writes: ‘And through God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.’ So passionate is Paul’s zeal here that he cannot restrain himself until he comes to the issue itself, but here in the very title of his Epistles he erupts and speaks what he has in his heart. His purpose in this Epistle is to discuss and to defend the righteousness that comes by faith, and to refute the Law and the righteousness that comes by works. He is filled with thoughts like these, and out of this marvelous and overflowing abundance of the excellent wisdom and knowledge of Christ in his heart his mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34). This flame, this raging fire in his heart, cannot be hidden; and it will not let him be silent. Therefore he says: ‘through God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.’

“The addition of these words, ‘and through God the Father, etc.,’ seems to be superfluous. But because, as I have said, he is speaking from the abundance of his heart, his mind is aflame with the yearning to express, even at the very beginning of his Epistle, the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8) and to preach the righteousness of God, which is called the resurrection of the dead. Christ, who lives and has been raised from the dead, is speaking through him and prompting him to speak this way. Therefore he calls God ‘the Father, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.’ It is as though he were to say: ‘I have to contend with Satan and with those vipers, Satan’s instruments, who are trying to rob me of the righteousness of Christ, who was raised from the dead by God the Father. By this righteousness alone we are justified, and by it we shall also be raised from death to eternal life on the Last Day. But those who are trying to undermine the righteousness of Christ are resisting the Father as well as the Son and the work of both of Them.’

“Thus at the very outset Paul explodes with the entire issue he intends to set forth in this Epistle to the Galatians. He refers to the resurrection of Christ, who rose again for our justification (Rom. 4:25). His victory is a victory over the Law, sin, our flesh, the world, the devil, death, hell, and all evils; and this victory of His He has given to us. Even though these tyrants, our enemies, accuse us and terrify us, they cannot drive us into despair or condemn us. For Christ, whom God the Father raised from the dead, is the Victor over them, and He is our righteousness. . . .”

(From Dr. Martin Luther’s Lectures on Galatians, A.D. 1535)

