

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, Pr. Stuckwisch will continue the discussion of stewardship that we've recently been having. One and all, including youth and young adults, are encouraged to attend and participate. Summer catechesis class for the younger children will meet the same time.
- ◆ Those attending the Higher Things conference this month will be meeting after catechesis / Bible class this morning. Then, following lunch together, the Emmaus Youth will be having a regular business and planning meeting.
- ◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 9 JULY 2017: \$ 1,014.00
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 Pat Nering to the glory of God, in celebration of the birthdays of her grandson, great grandson, & Ella.
- ◆ IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY: (ELDER) Robert Rhein; (USHERS) Caleb Smith & Martin Horner; (ACOLYTE) Stefan Horner; (ORGANIST) Dcs. Sandra Rhein; (GREETER) Pat Nering.
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“Here you should learn that pious preachers have this lot in life. In addition to the persecution that they have to endure from the wicked and ungrateful world and the hard labor that they experience in planting churches, they are forced to see the quick overthrow of what they had taught for so long in its purity, at the hands of the fanatics, who thereupon lord it over them and get the upper hand. This causes more anguish for godly ministers than any persecution by tyrants.”

“Therefore let anyone who is reluctant to bear such contempt and reproach not become a minister of the Gospel; or if he is one, let him turn over his ministry to someone else. As you see, we today are despised and troubled — outwardly by tyrants, inwardly by those whom we have liberated with the Gospel, as well as by false brethren. But this is our comfort and glory: being called by God, we have a promise of eternal life, and we look for that reward which ‘no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived’ (1 Cor. 2:9). For when Christ, the chief Shepherd, is manifested, we shall obtain the unfading crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4); and even in this world He will not let us starve.

“Jerome raises an important question here: Why does Paul call ‘churches’ those that were not churches?

“For Paul, he says, is writing to the Galatians, who had been led astray and turned away from Christ and from grace to Moses and the Law. I reply: When Paul calls them ‘churches of Galatia,’ he is employing synecdoche, a very common practice in the Scriptures. Writing in a similar vein to the Corinthians, he congratulates them that the grace of God was given them in Christ, that is, that they were enriched in Him with all speech and all knowledge (1 Cor. 1:4f). And yet many of them had been perverted by false apostles and did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, etc. So today we still call the Church of Rome holy and all its sees holy, even though they have been undermined and their ministers are ungodly. For God ‘rules in the midst of His foes’ (Ps. 110:2), Antichrist ‘takes his seat in the temple of God’ (2 Thess. 2:4), and Satan is present among the sons of God (Job 1:6). Even if the church is ‘in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,’ as Paul says to the Philippians (2:15), and even if it is surrounded by wolves and robbers, that is, spiritual tyrants, it is still the church. Although the city of Rome is worse than Sodom and Gomorrah, nevertheless there remains in it Baptism, the Sacraments, the voice and text of the Gospel, the Sacred Scriptures, the ministries, the name of Christ, and the name of God. Whoever has these, has them; whoever does not have them, has no excuse, for the treasure is still there. Therefore the Church of Rome is holy, because it has the holy name of God, the Gospel, Baptism, etc. If these are present among a people, that people is called holy. Thus this Wittenberg of ours is a holy village, and we are truly holy, because we have been baptized, communed, taught, and called by God; we have the works of God among us, that is, the Word and the Sacraments, and these make us holy.

“I say this in order that we may distinguish sharply between Christian holiness and other kinds of holiness. The monks called their orders holy, although they did not dare call themselves holy; but they are not holy, because, as we said above, Christian holiness is not active but passive.

“Therefore let no one call himself holy on the basis of his way of life or of his works — fasting, prayer, flagellation, almsgiving, or the consolation of the sad and afflicted. Otherwise the Pharisee in Luke (18:11ff) would be holy too. Such works, of course, are holy, and God strictly demands them of us; but they do not make us holy. You and I are holy; the church, the city, and the people are holy — not on the basis of their own holiness but on the basis of a holiness not their own, not by an active holiness, but by a passive holiness. They are holy because they possess something that is divine and holy, namely, the calling of the ministers, the Gospel, Baptism, etc., on the basis of which they are holy.

“Therefore even though the Galatians had been led astray, Baptism, the Word, and the name of Christ still continued among them. Besides, there were still some good men who had not defected from Paul’s doctrine and who had a proper understanding of the Word and the Sacraments, which could not be defiled by those who did rebel. For Baptism, the Gospel, etc., do not become unholy because I am defiled and unholy and have a false understanding of them. On the contrary, they remain holy and exactly what they were, regardless of whether they are among the godly or the ungodly; men can neither defile them nor hallow them. By our good or evil behavior, by our good or evil life and morals, they are defiled or hallowed in the sight of the Gentiles (Rom. 2:24) but not in the sight of God. Therefore the church is holy even where the fanatics are dominant, so long as they do not deny the Word and the Sacraments; if they deny these, they are no longer the church. Wherever the substance of the Word and the Sacraments abides, therefore, there the holy church is present, even though Antichrist may reign there; for he takes his seat not in a stable of fiends or in a pigpen or in a congregation of unbelievers but in the highest and holiest place possible, namely, in the temple of God (2 Thess. 2:4). Thus our brief answer to this question is this: The church is universal throughout the world, wherever the Gospel of God and the Sacraments are present. The Jews, the Turks, and the fanatics are not the church, because they oppose and deny these things. Now there follows the salutation:

“‘Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Galatians 1:3). I hope that you are not ignorant of the meaning of ‘grace’ and ‘peace,’ since these terms occur frequently in Paul and are easy to understand. But since we are taking it upon ourselves to expound this Epistle — something we are doing, not because it is necessary or because this Epistle is very difficult but in order to confirm our consciences against future heresies — it should not bore you if we repeat here what we teach, preach, sing, and write at other times and places. For if we lose the doctrine of justification, we lose everything. . . .”

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

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.
 Higher Things Meeting 11:45 a.m.
 Lunch / Emmaus Youth Meeting 12:00 Noon

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

TUESDAY *Pastor's Writing Day (but do call in cases of emergency)*

WEDNESDAY *Evening Prayer* **6:00 p.m.**

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

SATURDAY *Eleanor Pettus Wedding in Chicago*

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:

***The Appointed Readings for next Sunday, the Fourth in Apostles' Tide:
Isaiah 44:6-8; Romans 8:18-27; and St. Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43***