

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, Pastor Stuckwisch will conclude our current study and discussion of stewardship. One and all, including especially the officers of the congregation, as well as the youth and young adults, are encouraged to attend and participate in the study.

Regular Sunday morning catechesis class for the younger and beginning catechumens has resumed as of this month. Also, Ian Walsh, Nathaniel Rhein, and Nicholai Stuckwisch have begun teaching the catechesis class for children of approximately eight through twelves years of age.

◆ The funeral service for our brother in Christ, Robert Tharp, will be held at the Palmer Funeral Home on Cleveland Avenue, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

◆ This Saturday (23 September), Pr. Stuckwisch will be vested and available in the Emmaus Sanctuary for Individual Confession & Absolution from 5:00 until 7:00 p.m. This means of grace and forgiveness, by the authority of Christ our Lord, is freely offered to be freely received in repentant faith. Those with questions concerning this Christian practice are encouraged to review the Small Catechism and to visit with Pastor about it anytime.

◆ **COLLECTIONS FOR 10 SEPTEMBER 2017: \$1,926.75**

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 Anita Wright to the glory of God, in celebration of Mazzy's & Simon's September birthdays.

◆ **IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY:**

(ELDER) Eldon Knepp; (USHERS) Aaron Seyboldt & Caleb Smith;
(ACOLYTE) Frederick Stuckwisch; (ORGANIST) Dcs. Sandra Rhein;
(GREETERS) Marilyn Dulmatch & Lois Veen.

◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor

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On the Epistle to the Galatians

“To deliver us from the present evil world’ (Gal. 1:4). In these words, too, Paul summarizes the argument of this Epistle. By ‘the present world’ he means the whole world that has been, is, and will be, in order to differentiate it from the eternal age to come. And he calls it ‘evil’ because whatever is in this age is subject to the evil of the devil, who rules the entire world. Therefore the world is called the kingdom of the devil; for there is nothing in it but ignorance, contempt, blasphemy, hatred of God, and disobedience of all the words and works of God. We exist in this kingdom of the world and under it.

“Here you see again that by his own works or his own power no one can abolish sin; for the whole world, as John says, ‘is in the power of the evil one’ (1 John 5:19). All those who are in the world, therefore, are the slaves of sin and the devil, and are members of the devil, who holds all men by his tyranny as captives to his will. Then what was the good of establishing so many religious orders to get rid of sin, of inventing so many great and difficult works, wearing hair shirts, scourging the body to the blood, going on pilgrimages to Saint James in armor, and so on? Even if you do all these things, the definition still stands. You are still in the present evil age and not in Christ. If Christ is not present, it is certain that this evil age and the kingdom of Satan are. Therefore all the gifts of body and mind that you enjoy — wisdom, righteousness, holiness, eloquence, power, beauty, or wealth — are only the instruments of the devil’s infernal tyranny over you, by which he forces you to serve him and to advance his kingdom.

“In the first place, with your wisdom you obscure the wisdom and knowledge of Christ; and with your evil teaching you lead men astray, so that they cannot come to grace and to Christ. You present and preach your own righteousness and holiness; then you hate and condemn as evil and demonic the righteousness of Christ, by which alone we are justified and made alive. In short, you abuse your power to destroy the kingdom of Christ, to extirpate the Gospel, to persecute and kill the ministers of Christ and their hearers. Therefore if you are apart from Christ, this wisdom of yours is foolishness twice over, and your righteousness is sin and wickedness twice over; for it does not know the wisdom and righteousness of Christ but obscures, hinders, blasphemes, and persecutes it. Therefore Paul is correct in calling it the evil world; for when it is at its best, then it is at its worst.

“The world is at its best in men who are religious, wise, and learned; yet in them it is actually evil twice over. I shall not even speak of the crude vices with which the world is filled, such as adultery, prostitution, covetousness, stealing,

murder, slander, and other filth. These are minor compared with the other vices. This white devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14) — he is the real devil.

“Thus by the words ‘to deliver us, etc.,’ Paul shows what the argument of this Epistle is: that we must have grace and Christ, and that no creature, neither man nor angel, can deliver man from this present evil age. For this is a work that is appropriate only to the Divine Majesty and is not within the power of either man or angel — namely, that Christ has abolished sin and has delivered us from the tyranny and kingdom of the devil, that is, from this evil age, which is an obedient servant and a willing follower of its god, the devil (2 Cor. 4:4). Whatever the murderer and father of lies (John 8:44) does or speaks, that the world, as his most faithful and obedient son, loyally imitates and carries out. Therefore it is filled with ignorance, hatred, blasphemy, contempt for God, deceit, and error, as well as with overt sins like murder, adultery, fornication, theft, robbery, and the like. In short, where the world is at its best, there it is evil twice over. So also, until God enlightened us with the Gospel, we in the papacy were wicked twice over — all this, of course, under the guise of religion and the observances of a holy life.

“So let these words of Paul stand just as they are, true and accurate, not painted or counterfeit: this present age is evil. Do not be dissuaded because there are many fine virtues in many men or because hypocrites make a great pretense out of sanctity. But pay careful attention to what Paul says. Out of his words you may boldly and freely pronounce this sentence against the world: that the world, with all its wisdom, righteousness, and power, is the devil’s kingdom, out of which only God is able to deliver us by His only Son.

“Let us praise God the Father, therefore, and give Him thanks for His indescribable mercy, that when we were incapable of doing so by our own strength, He delivered us from the kingdom of the devil, in which we were captives, and did so by His own Son. And with Paul let us confess that all our works and righteousness, with all of which we could not make the devil stoop down one hairbreadth, are nothing but loss and refuse (Phil. 3:8). And let us tread underfoot and utterly abhor, as a polluted garment (Is. 64:6) and the deadly poison of the devil, all the power of ‘free will,’ all the wisdom and righteousness of the world, all religious orders, all [sacrificial] Masses, ceremonies, vows, fasts, hair shirts, and the like. On the other hand, let us praise and magnify the glory of Christ, who has delivered us by His death not only from this world but from this ‘evil world.’”

(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.

MONDAY Robert Tharp Funeral
 at Palmer on Cleveland 10:00 a.m.

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

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

THURSDAY *Pr. Stuckwisch at District Board of Directors Mtg*

SATURDAY Individual Confession & Absolution 5:00—7:00

NEXT SUNDAY Divine Service of Communion 9:00 a.m.
 Coffee & Refreshment 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:

*The Appointed Readings for next Sunday, the Seventh in Martyrs' Tide:
Isaiah 55:6–9; Philippians 1:12–30; and St. Matthew 20:1–16*