

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 ask that you please sign the guest book at the back of the church, and we pray that our Lord would guard and keep you in His grace, mercy, and peace throughout the Days of Christmas and the New Year of Our Lord.

◆ Dcs. Rhein will be traveling home from Ethiopia tomorrow. Please keep her in your prayers and intercessions as she is returning to South Bend.

◆ Following coffee & refreshments, our Family Bible Class continues a study of Genesis, making special use of Dr. Luther's commentary on that book.

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 teaching a catechesis class for teenagers and others who are interested.

◆ Throughout Lent, we are gathered for Vespers on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m., and for a brief, spoken Divine Service on Fridays at 9:00 a.m.

As in past years, soup suppers are served prior to the Wednesday evening Vespers, from 5:30 until 6:30 p.m. All are welcome and encouraged to enjoy the good soup and to share that opportunity for fraternal fellowship.

◆ The new Emmaus picture directories are available downstairs in the church hall. There should be a copy for each household. Pick yours up today.

◆ Please note this new address for **Herta Johnston**, as of this past week:
3602 S. Ironwood Drive, Apt. 211W, South Bend, Indiana 46614

◆ **COLLECTIONS FOR 12 MARCH 2017: \$ 2,245.00**

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) Dave Smith; (USHERS) Caleb Smith & Ariksander Stuckwisch;
(ACOLYTE) Timmy Jindra; (ORGANIST) Monica Stuckwisch;
(GREETERS) Marilyn Dulmatch & Lois Veen.

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

On the Church Year

“Like Easter, the English word ‘Lent’ got its name from the folklore of the Germanic tribes. ‘Lencten’ is from the same root as ‘lengthen,’ and stands for that time of the spring when the daylight does in fact lengthen.

“Even within the season of Lent there are distinct moods and accents. Laetare, the Fourth Sunday in Lent, breaks into the general mood of self-denial in the same way that Gaudete, the Third Sunday in Advent, breaks into the season of Advent. On this Sunday the Roman church permits rose as a liturgical color. The historic Epistle for the day speaks of Jerusalem as ‘the mother of us all,’ and from this reading the Sunday was often known as Mothering Sunday. Originally this was a day when children returned to their home churches and to their families.

“Historically, the Fifth Sunday in Lent, also known as Judica, was ‘Passion Sunday — marking the beginning of Passiontide. This season is older than Lent and focuses on the Passion. The chants for these days contain many ancient hymns that describe Christ’s suffering, such as Vexilla regis, Pange lingua, and O Sacred Head, Now Wounded .

“The Scripture readings also began to take up the theme of the crucifixion. Traditionally this was also the day when the cross disappeared beneath a veil, together with all statues and pictures, not to reappear until Easter.

“The feeling of awe that surrounds Lent influenced even church architecture. Massive rood screens of stone and wood began to hide the mystery of Christ’s sacrifice from the eyes of the faithful. In the East the screen became a solid wall, and the priest was as effectively sealed off as if he had been officiating within the holy of holies.

“Holy Week largely reflects what the church at Jerusalem once did. In the first two or three centuries Jerusalem was the most ancient and most influential of the ancient bishoprics, and citing the example of the place where Christ suffered and died was the strongest argument one could raise for imitating it.

“Pilgrims who made the sacred journey to Jerusalem were often of high rank, and once they had experienced these customs in Jerusalem, introduced them into their own areas. The rites and ceremonies involving Palm Sunday, the veneration of the cross, the procession of candles from out of the tomb, and so forth, all stemmed directly from Jerusalem.

“Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem is a preliminary high point at the beginning of Holy Week. Almost universally it bears the name Palm Sunday, though in parts of central Europe it was also once known as Blossom Sunday or Willow Sunday, probably because palms were unknown there.

“What those who welcomed Christ into Jerusalem once waved were probably palm and olive branches, together with a sprinkling of spring flowers. Exactly this same kind of pathway — flowers and leaves — is still often laid in Spain and Portugal not only for a Palm Sunday procession but for any parade, such as one in honor of a visiting head of state. To a Semite the palm has always been a tree of honor. It marked the place where he could find water for his flocks. Its very name in Hebrew, ‘Tamar,’ was a favorite one for a firstborn daughter.

“In Jerusalem the practice had been to accompany the bishop into the city with palms and marching songs. One famous hymn that developed in Europe from the Palm Sunday parade is ‘All Glory, Laud, and Honor.’ This was written down by Bishop Theodulf of Orleans, who lived at the time of Charlemagne.

“Sometimes these primitive songs were rather funny, at least to modern tastes. A stanza of one such hymn that we no longer use has been translated in this fashion: ‘Be Thou, O Lord, the Rider, And we the little ass; That to God’s holy city, Together we may pass.’

“In the rural backwaters of Europe the Palm Sunday parade is still traditional, in part because it happens to come at the time of the year when nature is awakening and the sun is warm and people are in a festive mood. In some places a wooden figure of Christ and the donkey were once mounted atop a cart or wagon and drawn to the market square by all the young men.

“After the services and pilgrimages of Palm Sunday, the housewives of the parish set about spring cleaning. In the oldest rites this appears not so much a house-cleaning as a church-cleaning. In the country parishes of England one can still see the village women wash the walls, wipe off the cobwebs, and scrub the floors — that God’s house may sparkle for Easter.

“Although an annual spring cleaning is not so much a part of our life now as it was in the days of our grandmothers, when coal fires made it almost a necessity, the custom does have religious roots. The Mosaic code demanded that the house had to be perfect for the Passover, and many Christian women kept up the pattern set by the Ruths and Marthas and Marys.”

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

