

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. Catechesis class for younger and beginning catechumens meets at the same time. Also, Mike Jindra and Ian Walsh are teaching a catechesis class for children of approximately eight through twelves years of age. And Dave Smith is teaching a class for teenagers and others who may be interested.
- ◆ Pastor Stuckwisch will be in Syracuse on Monday and Tuesday of this week for the District Pastors' Conference. (No Vespers on Monday this week.)
- ◆ Deaconess Rhein and her husband, Rob, are on vacation until the end of May. Please remember them in your prayers as they travel to and fro. Our thanks to Hannah Stuckwisch, Monica Stuckwisch, and Sarah Osburn for serving as our organists while Dcs. Rhein is away.
- ◆ Looking ahead, we will be gathered for the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord on Thursday, May the 25th, the Divine Service beginning at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 7 MAY 2017: \$ 2,425.00
In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2400 is needed each week.
- ◆ The Altar flowers this morning have been provided by Pastor Stuckwisch to the glory of God, with thanksgiving for his mother, Sandra Stuckwisch; for his wife, LaRena, the mother of his children; and for DoRena, Rebekah, and Hannah, the mothers of his grandchildren.
- ◆ IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS EASTER DAY:
(ELDER) Eldon Knepp; (USHERS) Ariksander Stuckwisch & Martin Horner; (ACOLYTE) Timmy Jindra; (ORGANIST) Monica Stuckwisch;
(GREETERS) Marilyn Dulmatch & Lois Veen.
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“Human weakness and misery are such, that in the terrors of conscience and in the danger of death we look at nothing except our own works, our worthiness, and the Law. When the Law shows us our sin, our past life immediately come to our mind. Then the sinner, in his great anguish of mind, groans and says to himself: ‘Oh, how damnably I have lived! If only I could live longer! Then I would amend my life.’ Thus human reason cannot refrain from looking at active righteousness, that is, its own righteousness; nor can it shift its gaze to passive, that is Christian righteousness, but it simply rests in the active righteousness. So deeply is this evil rooted in us, and so completely have we acquired this unhappy habit!

“Taking advantage of the weakness of our nature, Satan increases and aggravates these thoughts in us. Then it is impossible for the conscience to avoid being more seriously troubled, confounded, and frightened. For it is impossible for the human mind to conceive any comfort of itself, or to look only at grace amid its consciousness and terror of sin, or consistently to reject all discussion of works. To do this is beyond human power and thought. Indeed, it is even beyond the Law of God. For although the Law is the best of all things in the world, it still cannot bring peace to a terrified conscience but makes it even sadder and drives it to despair. For by the Law sin becomes exceedingly sinful (Rom. 7:13).

“Therefore the afflicted conscience has no remedy against despair and eternal death except to take hold of the promise of grace offered in Christ, that is, the righteousness of faith, this passive or Christian righteousness, which says with confidence: ‘I do not seek active righteousness. I ought to have and perform it; but I declare that even if I did have it and perform it, I cannot trust in it or stand up before the judgment of God on the basis of it. Thus I put myself beyond all active righteousness, all righteousness of my own or of the divine Law, and I embrace only that passive righteousness which is the righteousness of grace, mercy, and the forgiveness of sins.’

“In other words, this is the righteousness of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, which we do not perform but receive, which we do not have but accept, when God the Father grants it to us through Jesus Christ. As the earth itself does not produce rain and is unable to acquire it by its own strength, worship, and power but receives it only by a heavenly gift from above, so this heavenly righteousness is given to us by God without our work or merit.

“As much as the dry earth of itself is able to accomplish in obtaining the right and blessed rain, that much can we men accomplish by our own strength and works to obtain that divine, heavenly, and eternal righteousness. Thus we can obtain it only through the free imputation and indescribable gift of God.

“Therefore the highest art and wisdom of Christians is to not know the Law, to ignore works and all active righteousness, just as outside the people of God the highest wisdom is to know and study the Law, works, and active righteousness.

“It is a marvelous thing and unknown to the world to teach Christians to ignore the Law and to live before God as though there were no Law whatever. For if you do not ignore the Law and thus direct your thoughts to grace as though there were no Law but as though there were nothing but grace, you cannot be saved. ‘For through the Law comes knowledge of sin’ (Rom. 3:20).

“On the other hand, works and the performance of the Law must be demanded in the world as though there were no promise or grace. This is because of the stubborn, proud, and hardhearted, before whose eyes nothing must be set except the Law, in order that they may be terrified and humbled. For the Law was given to terrify and kill the stubborn and to exercise the old man. Both words must be correctly divided, according to the apostle (2 Tim. 2:25ff.).

“This calls for a wise and faithful father [that is, a teacher of the Word] who can moderate the Law in such a way that it stays within its limits. For if I were to teach men the Law in such a way that they suppose themselves to be justified by it before God, I would be going beyond the limit of the Law, confusing these two righteousnesses, the active and the passive, and would be a bad dialectician who does not properly distinguish [between the Law and the Gospel].

“But when I go beyond the old man, I also go beyond the Law. For the flesh or the old man, the Law and works, are all joined together. In the same way the spirit or the new man is joined to the promise and to grace. Therefore when I see that a man is sufficiently contrite, oppressed by the Law, terrified by sin, and thirsting for comfort, then it is time for me to take the Law and active righteousness from his sight and to set forth before him, through the Gospel, the passive righteousness which excludes Moses and the Law and shows the promise of Christ, who came for the afflicted and for sinners. Here a man is raised up again and gains hope. Nor is he any longer under the Law; he is under grace, as the apostle says (Rom. 6:14). . . .”

(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.

Deaconess Rhein on vacation with her husband until the end of May

MONDAY—TUESDAY *District Pastors' Conference in Syracuse*

WEDNESDAY Catechesis Class 4:30 p.m.
 Evening Prayer **6:00 p.m.**

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

FRIDAY Catechesis Class 4:30 p.m.

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 Sixth Sunday of Easter:
Acts of the Apostles 17:16–31; 1 Peter 3:13–22; and St. John 14:15–21*