

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, we are counting on the Emmaus Youth to decorate the church in preparation for the ChristMass, which commences with **Lessons & Carols at Evening Prayer** (6:00 p.m.) and continues with the **Midnight ChristMass** (beginning at 11:00 p.m.).
- ◆ In joyful celebration of the Holy Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, there will be opportunity to receive the Holy Communion of His Body and His Blood on each of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

On Christmas Day in the Morning, the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord will be celebrated in the Divine Service beginning at 9:00 a.m.

This *Tuesday, the 26th*, Emmaus will be gathered for the Divine Service in celebration of the Feast of St. Stephen, the Martyr, at *9:00 a.m.*

This *Wednesday, the 27th*, we will be gathered for the Divine Service in celebration of the Feast of St. John, Apostle & Evangelist, at *6:00 p.m.*

This *Thursday, the 28th*, we will be gathered for the Divine Service in celebration of the Feast of the Holy Innocents, at *9:00 a.m.*

There will be a brief, spoken Divine Service on each of the non-festival days of Christmas, as indicated on the monthly calendar. This week, those Services will be at *9:00 a.m.* on *Friday the 29th* and *Saturday the 30th*.

Next Sunday (the 31st) we will be gathered for the usual Divine Service.

And on New Year's Day, we will be gathered for the Divine Service in celebration of the Feast of the Name & Circumcision of Jesus, at *10:30 a.m.*

Obviously, there is no expectation that everyone will come to each and all of these Divine Service opportunities. But for those who are able and so inclined, what better way to rejoice in the Incarnation of the Son of God than by receiving His true Body and Blood, conceived and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. These are the most precious gifts of all, which the True Love of the Holy Triune God gives to us on each of the Twelve Days of Christmas and all year long.

- ◆ Note that Dcs. Rhein will be taking a group Christmas caroling to some of our Emmaus shut-ins. Members and friends of all ages are welcome!
- ◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 17 DECEMBER 2017: \$15,636.00
In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2400 is needed each week.
- ◆ Offering envelopes for the Year of Our Lord 2018 are now available in the glass room at the book of the Church, for those members who so desire.
- ◆ The Altar flowers this morning have been provided by Shawn & Elizabeth McGrath to the glory of God, in celebration of their thirteenth anniversary.
- ◆ Please note that a new flower chart for the Year of Our Lord 2018 is now available on the bulletin board at the back of the church. You are welcome to sign up to provide flowers for the Lord's Altar to the glory of God, in memory of loved ones, or in honor of special people and events.
- ◆ IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY:
(ELDER) Eldon Knepp; (USHERS) Ariksander Stuckwisch & Matthew Horner; (ACOLYTE) Frederick Stuckwisch; (ORGANIST) Dcs. Sandra Rhein; (GREETERS) Marilyn Dulmatch & Lois Veen.
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“ my movement first began, Dr. Staupitz, a very worthy man and the vicar of the Augustinian Order, said to me: ‘It pleases me very much that this doctrine of ours gives glory and everything else solely to God and nothing at all to men; for it is as clear as day that it is impossible to ascribe too much glory, goodness, etc., to God.’ So it was that he consoled me. And it is true that the doctrine of the Gospel takes away all glory, wisdom, righteousness, etc., from men and gives it solely to the Creator, who makes all things out of nothing. Furthermore, it is far safer to ascribe too much to God than to men. For here I can declare boldly: ‘Let the holy church, Augustine and other fathers, also Peter and Apollos, yes, even an angel from heaven, teach an opposing doctrine! Still my doctrine is one that preaches and worships God alone, and it condemns the righteousness and the wisdom of all men. Here I cannot go wrong, for both to God and to man I ascribe what properly and truly belongs to each.’

“But ‘the church is holy, the fathers are holy!’ Granted. Nevertheless, even though the church is holy, it still has to pray (Matt. 6:12): ‘Forgive us our debts.’ Similarly, even though the fathers are holy, they are still obliged to believe in the forgiveness of sins. Therefore if we teach anything contrary to the Word of God, neither I nor the church nor the fathers nor the Apostles nor even an angel from heaven should be believed. But let the Word of the Lord abide forever (1 Peter 1:25), for without it this argumentation of the false apostles would have prevailed altogether against Paul’s doctrine. For it was really something tremendous to line up the whole church and all the company of the Apostles on one side before the Galatians, and on the other side just Paul, a newcomer with very little authority. Thus this was a cogent and nearly conclusive argument. For no one likes to say that the church is in error; and yet, if the church teaches anything in addition or contrary to the Word of God, one must say that it is in error.

“Peter, the prince of the Apostles, lived and taught contrary to the Word of God. Therefore he was in error. And because he was at fault, Paul ‘opposed him to the face’ (Gal. 2:11), attacking him because he was not in conformity with the truth of the Gospel. Here you see that Peter, the most holy Apostle, erred. Thus I will not listen to the church or the fathers or the Apostles unless they bring and teach the pure Word of God.

“Today, too, this argument makes quite a telling point against us. For if we are to believe neither the pope nor the fathers nor Luther nor anyone else unless they teach us the pure Word of God, whom are we to believe? Who will give our consciences sure information about which party is teaching the pure Word of God, we or our opponents? For they, too, claim to have and to teach the pure Word of God. On the other hand, we do not believe the papists, because they neither teach nor can teach the Word of God. They again hate us bitterly and persecute us as the vilest heretics and seducers of the people. What is to be done here? Is every fanatic to have the right to teach whatever he pleases, since the world refuses to listen to or to tolerate our teaching? With Paul we boast that we teach the pure Gospel of Christ. Not only should the pope, the sectarians, the fathers, and the church submit to this Gospel; they should receive it with open arms, accept it gratefully, embrace it, and propagate it to others. But if anyone teaches otherwise, whether the pope or St. Augustine or an Apostle or an angel from heaven, let him and his gospel be accursed. Still we do not make any progress but are forced to hear that our boasting is not only vain, brazen, and arrogant but blasphemous and demonic. And yet, if we lower ourselves and yield to the ravings of our opponents, both the papists and the sectarians will become proud. . . .”

(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 & Refreshments Downstairs 10:30 a.m.

Emmaus Youth Decorating the Church for the ChristMass

Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols **6:00 p.m.**
THE MIDNIGHT CHRISTMASS **11:00 p.m.**

MONDAY **THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD**
Divine Service of Communion **9:00 a.m.**

TUESDAY THE FEAST OF SAINT STEPHEN, THE MARTYR
Divine Service of Communion **9:00 a.m.**

WEDNESDAY THE FEAST OF ST. JOHN, APOSTLE & EVANGELIST
Divine Service of Communion **6:00 p.m.**

THURSDAY THE FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS
Divine Service of Communion **9:00 a.m.**

FRIDAY *Brief Spoken Divine Service* *9:00 a.m.*

SATURDAY *Brief Spoken Divine Service* *9:00 a.m.*

• ***Christmas Caroling with Deaconess Rhein***

NEXT SUNDAY **Divine Service of Communion** **9:00 a.m.**
Coffee & Refreshments Downstairs 10:30 a.m.
Family Bible Class / Catechesis 10:45 a.m.