

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 and refreshments this morning, our Family Bible Class will be an opportunity for questions and discussions about the ChristMass and other topics of interest and pertinence to the life of the Church on earth.
- ◆ In glad celebration of this joyful Christmas Tide, opportunity is being provided to receive the Holy Communion on each of the Twelve Days:

On **New Year's Day** (tomorrow), *the Eighth Day of Christmas*, we will be gathered for the Divine Service in celebration of **the Feast of the Name and Circumcision of Jesus, beginning at 10:30 a.m.**

There will be a brief spoken Divine Service on each of the other days of the ChristMass, as indicated on the monthly calendar. This week, those Services will be at 9:00 a.m. on *Tuesday (the 2nd), Thursday (the 4th) and Friday (the 5th)*, and at **6:00 p.m.** on *Wednesday (the 3rd of January)*.

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, there is no 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.

- ◆ **This Saturday, the 6th of January**, the Christmas cycle culminates in the Feast of **THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD**. Emmaus will be gathered, by and around the Word of the Gospel, to celebrate that glorious occasion in the **Divine Service at 9:00 a.m.** One and all are warmly encouraged to attend.
- ◆ Pastor and LaRena Stuckwisch express their sincere thanks to the members of Emmaus for the lovely cards and gracious gifts received in this season, and for all the loving support throughout the year. The Stuckwisch family is grateful for the kindness and care of their brothers and sisters in Christ.

◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 24 DECEMBER 2017: \$2,626.00

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 Elfrieda Kuespert to the glory of God, in loving memory of her husband, Clem.
- ◆ 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) Robert Rhein; (USHERS) Caleb Smith & Nicholai Stuckwisch; (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

“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. The sectarians will brag that they are bringing some strange new doctrine never before heard of by the world, and the papists will reestablish their old abominations. Therefore let everyone take care to be most certain of his calling and doctrine, so that he may boldly and surely say with Paul (Gal. 1:8): ‘Even if we, or an angel from heaven, etc.’

“So much, then, on the central proposition of this passage, which is: ‘I have not received my Gospel from a man, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ.’ Now he will prove this proposition at length by citing many historical events.

“For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people’ (Gal. 1:13-14). Nothing is needed here but word study. Paul is citing his own example: ‘I once defended Pharisaism and Judaism more vigorously and steadfastly than you and your false teachers did. Therefore if the righteousness of the Law were worth anything, I would have remained a Pharisee. For I, too, was a Pharisee, and I pursued the traditions of the fathers with greater zeal than the false apostles do today. And yet I regarded them and all Judaism as of little worth.’

“Thus I [Luther], too, suffered greater trouble in vigils and fasts when I was a monk than all those who persecute me today. I was superstitious to the point of delirium and insanity, and to the jeopardy of my body and its health. Whatever I did, I did with great zeal and for the sake of God. I adored the pope sincerely, not out of a desire for prebends or riches. And yet in comparison with the righteousness of Christ I threw away these [excrements]. But our blind and hardhearted opponents do not believe that I as well as others have had experience with such Pharisaism.

“‘So extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers’ (Gal. 1:14). Here Paul does not call the traditions of the fathers ‘pharisaical’ or ‘human’ traditions, as Jerome supposes. For in this passage he is not discussing the traditions of the Pharisees; he is discussing a much sublimer issue. Therefore he calls even the holy Law of Moses ‘the traditions of my fathers,’ in the sense that they were handed down and received as a legacy from the fathers. ‘For these,’ he says, ‘I was very zealous when I was a part of Judaism.’ He speaks the same way to the Philippians (3:5-6): ‘As to the Law I was a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the Law blameless.’

“It is as though he were saying: ‘Here I may brag openly and put myself against the entire Jewish people, even the best and holiest of all those who belong to the circumcision. Let them show me, if they can, a more zealous and earnest defender of the Law of Moses than I was! I was an outstanding zealot for the traditions of the fathers, a devotee of the righteousness of the Law. This in itself, you Galatians, should have persuaded you not to believe these deceivers, who lay great stress on the righteousness of the Law as an issue of great importance. For if there were any grounds for boasting in the righteousness of the Law, I would have more grounds for boasting than anyone else.’”

(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 & Donuts Downstairs 10:30 a.m.
Family Bible Class 10:45 a.m.

MONDAY **THE NAME AND CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS**
Divine Service of Communion **10:30 a.m.**

TUESDAY *The Ninth Day of Christmas*
Brief Spoken Divine Service *9:00 a.m.*

WEDNESDAY *The Tenth Day of Christmas*
Brief Spoken Divine Service **6:00 p.m.**

THURSDAY *The Eleventh Day of Christmas*
Brief Spoken Divine Service *9:00 a.m.*

FRIDAY *The Twelfth Day of Christmas*
Brief Spoken Divine Service *9:00 a.m.*

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

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

Emmaus Youth Taking Down the Decorations