

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, Pr. Stuckwisch continues our discussion and study of Dr. Luther's Lectures on the Book of Genesis.

Catechesis class for the younger and beginning catechumens meets with Dcs. Rhein at the same time. Nathaniel Rhein and Nicholai Stuckwisch are teaching the catechesis class for children of approximately eight through twelves years of age. And Dave Smith is resuming his class on various Old Testament figures for teenagers and others who may be interested.

◆ Pastor Stuckwisch will be leading a Higher Things retreat in Minnesota this coming weekend. He'll be speaking St. Mary and the saints in Lutheran theology and practice. He'll be leaving South Bend on Thursday, February the 1st, and returning on Monday the 5th. Please remember him in your prayers as he travels to and fro, and as he will be teaching and preaching.

◆ Pr. Osburn and First Lutheran Church in Hanna (15 E. Wheeler St., Hanna) will be hosting an Altar Guild Workshop this Saturday (3 February). We will begin at 8:30 CENTRAL with a brief spoken Divine Service, observing the Feast of the Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord (transferred from Feb. 2). The workshop will last until around Noon, followed by a potluck luncheon. Anyone interested in attending should see Dcs. Rhein. All are welcome, especially to the opening Divine Service.

◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 21 JANUARY 2018: \$ 2,105.00

In order to meet our financial obligations and commitments, an average of \$2400 is needed each week.

◆ IN THE LORD'S SERVICE THIS LORD'S DAY:
(ELDER) Dave Smith; (USHERS) Nicholai Stuckwisch & Egon Tribble;
(ACOLYTE) Frederick Stuckwisch; (ORGANIST) Dcs. Sandra Rhein;
(GREETER) Pat Nering.

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

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“Nor did I go up to Jerusalem, to those who were Apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again, I returned to Damascus’ (Gal. 1:17). That is: ‘Before seeing the Apostles or conferring with them I went to Arabia, and immediately I took upon myself the ministry of preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles; for I had been called to this and had also received a revelation from God.’ Therefore it is idle for Jerome to ask what Paul did in Arabia. What else was he to do but preach Christ? For, as he says, the Son of God was revealed to him for this purpose, that he might preach Him among the Gentiles. Therefore he travels from Damascus, a Gentile city, directly to Arabia, where there were Gentiles also; and there he carries out his ministry with vigor. He did not learn his Gospel from any human being or from the Apostles themselves, nor did he obtain permission from them; but he was content with his call from heaven and with the revelation of Jesus Christ alone.

“Therefore this whole passage is a refutation of the argument that the false apostles were using against Paul. They said that he was only a pupil and hearer of the Apostles, who lived according to the Law. They said, moreover, that Paul himself had also lived according to the Law, and that therefore it was necessary for the Gentiles to observe the Law and to be circumcised. To refute them, he narrates this long history: ‘Before my conversion I did not learn my Gospel from the Apostles or from any of the other believers; for I violently persecuted not only this doctrine but the church of God, and ravaged it. Nor did I learn it from them after my conversion; for at Damascus I immediately preached and did not confer with anyone. I had not even seen any of the Apostles as yet.’

“In the same way we can boast that we did not receive our doctrine from the pope. We do indeed have Sacred Scripture and the external symbols from him, but not the doctrine, which came to us solely by the gift of God, to which our own study, reading, and research have been added. Therefore the argument directed against us by our opponents today is vain, when they say: ‘You Lutherans, why should one believe your doctrine, since you do not occupy a public office? You should take your doctrine from the pope and the bishops, who are properly ordained and occupy a legitimate office.’

“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other Apostles except James, the Lord’s brother’ (Gal. 1:18–19). Paul does not deny that he was with the Apostles. Indeed, he concedes that he was with them, but not under orders but of his own accord, not to learn anything from the Apostles but to see Peter. Luke writes the same thing in the ninth chapter of Acts (9:26ff.): Barnabas brought Paul to the Apostles and told them that Paul had seen the Lord on the

road, that He had spoken to him, and that Paul had preached boldly in Damascus in the name of Jesus; Barnabas testifies to this about him. All of Paul's words are put in such a way as to prove that his Gospel was not from men. He concedes that he had seen Peter and James, the brother of our Lord, but none of the others except for these two; and from them he did not learn anything.

“Thus Paul concedes that he had been at Jerusalem with the Apostles, and to this extent the report of the false apostles is correct. He concedes also that he had lived in accordance with the Jewish manner of living, but he had done so only among the Jews. For Paul observed this rule: ‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do.’ This is what he says in 1 Cor. 9:19–22: ‘Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, etc. I have become all things to all men, that I might save all.’ Therefore he concedes to the argument of the false apostles that he was at Jerusalem with the Apostles; but he denies that he learned his Gospel from the Apostles, or that he was obliged to teach the Gospel as the Apostles had wished. Thus the whole point lies in the word ‘see.’ ‘I went,’ he says, ‘to see Peter, not to learn from him. Therefore Peter is not my master; nor is James.’ And so far as the other Apostles are concerned, he denies that he saw any of them.

“But why does Paul repeat so often, almost too often, that he did not learn his Gospel from men or even from the Apostles themselves? It is his purpose to persuade the churches of Galatia, which had been led astray by the false apostles, and to convince them beyond any doubt that his Gospel was the true Word of God. That is why he repeats it so vigorously. And if he had not made this point, he could never have refuted the false apostles; for they would have raised this objection: ‘We are just as good as Paul. We are pupils of the Apostles as much as he is. Besides, he is only one person, and we are many. Therefore we surpass him both in authority and in number.’ Here Paul was forced to boast, affirm, and swear that he had not learned his Gospel from anyone or received it from the Apostles themselves. Such boasting was extremely necessary and was not empty bragging, as Porphyry and Julian falsely assert; they did not understand Paul's point, and neither did Jerome.

“For his ministry was in great jeopardy here; so were all the churches that had had him as their teacher. Thus the necessity of Paul's ministry and of all the churches demanded that with a necessary and holy pride he should boast of his vocation and of the knowledge of the Gospel revealed to him by Christ. Then their consciences would be completely persuaded that Paul's doctrine was the Word of God. Here Paul was dealing with a great and serious issue, namely, that all the churches might be preserved in sound doctrine. . . .”

(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 / Catechesis 10:45 a.m.

MONDAY *Vespers* **6:00 p.m.**

TUESDAY *Pastor's Writing Day (but do call in cases of emergency)*

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

THURSDAY—MONDAY *Pr. Stuckwisch in Chatfield, MN
Leading a Higher Things Retreat*

SATURDAY Altar Guild Workshop at First Lutheran, Hanna

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

You may also want to keep in mind, in your observance of daily prayer at home:

*This Friday (2 February) is the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord
Readings: 1 Sam. 1:21–28; Heb. 2:14–18; and St. Luke 2:22–40*

*The Appointed Readings for next Sunday, the Fifth after the Epiphany:
Isaiah 40:21–31; 1 Corinthians 9:16–27; and St. Mark 1:29–39*