

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.
- ◆ Pastor Stuckwisch is leading a Higher Things retreat in Minnesota this weekend. He'll be returning to South Bend tomorrow evening (5 Feb). Please remember him in your prayers as he travels to and fro.
- ◆ Following coffee & refreshments this morning, Dcs. Rhein will be giving a presentation on the work that she is doing on various hymnal projects for the Church in various parts of the world. And then she'll be leaving for the next trip, heading to Ethiopia for the next couple of weeks.
- ◆ Next Sunday (11 February) is not only the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, but also our next **Emmaus Family Day**. Bring your favorite baked potato toppings for lunch together after Family Bible Class, and then we'll be making Valentine's Day Cards for our shut-ins and other friends.
- ◆ Looking ahead to next week, the Sacred Season of Lent will begin with **Ash Wednesday** on February the 14th. There will be two opportunities for the imposition of ashes on that day, both in the morning (9:00 a.m.) and again shortly before the Divine Service that evening (6:30 p.m.). As in past years, there will be opportunities throughout Lent for the Word of God and prayer, and for the celebration of the Sacrament (each Friday morning).
- ◆ **COLLECTIONS FOR 28 JANUARY 2018:** \$ 3,163.00
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:**
(ELDERS) Eldon Knepp & Rob Rhein; (USHERS) Matthew Horner & Egon Tribble; (ACOLYTE) Gerhardt Stuckwisch; (ORGANIST) Deaconess Sandra Rhein; (GREETERS) Lois Veen & Marilyn Dulmatch.
- ◆ Rev. D. Richard Stuckwisch, Pastor Home Phone: (574) 233 – 0574

On the Epistle to the Galatians

“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. In short, the issue in the controversy was a matter of eternal life and death. For once the pure and certain Word is taken away, there remains no consolation, no salvation, no life. Thus the reason Paul recites all this is to keep the churches in true and sound doctrine. He is not battling to defend his own glory, as Porphyry insults him. By this history he seeks to show that he did not receive his Gospel from any man, and that for quite some years — namely, for three or four years — in both Damascus and Arabia — he had preached by divine revelation the very same Gospel that the Apostles had preached, and that before he had seen any of the Apostles.

“Here Jerome plays around with the mystery of the fifteen days. He says that in those fifteen days Paul was taught by Peter and inducted into the mystery of the Ogdoad and the Hebdoad. But this has nothing to do with the facts. For Paul says in plain words that he came to Jerusalem to see Peter, and that he stayed with him fifteen days. If it had been his purpose to learn the Gospel from Peter, he would have had to stay there several years! In the course of fifteen days he could not have become such a great Apostle and teacher of the Gentiles — not to say that in these fifteen days, as Luke testifies in Acts 9:28ff., he spoke with boldness in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed with the Greeks, etc.

“In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!” (Gal. 1:20). Why does Paul add an oath? Because he is narrating a history. He is obliged to swear, in order that the churches may believe him. Otherwise the false apostles might say: ‘Who knows whether what Paul is saying is true?’ Here you see that such a great Apostle of Christ was held in such great contempt among his own Galatians, to whom he had preached Christ, that it was necessary for him to swear that he was telling the truth. If this happened to the Apostles then — that they had despisers, in fact, big men who dared accuse them of lying — it is no wonder that a similar thing happens to us, who are not worthy of comparison with the Apostles in any way. He is swearing to what seems to be a trivial matter, namely, that he is telling the truth when he says that he stayed with Peter to see him, not to learn from him. But if you consider the matter more carefully, it is very weighty and grave, as is clear from what has been said earlier. We follow the example of Paul and swear: ‘God knows that we are not lying!’

“Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia’ (Gal. 1:21). Syria and Cilicia are provinces situated close together. Throughout Paul is trying to convince them that before and after he had seen the Apostles, he was always a preacher of the Gospel, which he had received by the revelation of Christ, and that he had never been a pupil of any of the Apostles.

“And I was still not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea; they only heard it said: He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy. And they glorified God because of me’ (Gal. 1:22–24).

“Paul adds this to fill in and complete the story, that after seeing Peter he went into Syria and Cilicia and preached there, indeed preached in such a way that he won the testimony of all the churches in Judea. It is as though he were saying: ‘I appeal to the testimony of all the churches, also of those that are in Judea. For the churches testify — not only those in Damascus, Arabia, Syria, and Cilicia but those in Judea as well — that I preached the same faith I once persecuted and opposed. And they glorified God because of me, not because I taught that circumcision and the Law of Moses were to be observed, but because I preached faith and built up the churches by my ministry of the Gospel. Therefore you have the testimony not only of the people of Damascus and Arabia but also of the whole catholic church of Judea.’”

(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.

Dcs. Rhein leaving for Ethiopia

MONDAY *Pr. Stuckwisch returning to SB from Minnesota*

TUESDAY *Circuit Pastors Meeting at St. Luke in Winamac*

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 5:00 p.m.

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.

Emmaus Family Day: *Valentines for Shut-Ins*

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

*The Appointed Readings for next Sunday, the Transfiguration of Our Lord:
Exodus 34:29–35; 2 Corinthians 3:12—4:6; and Saint Mark 9:2–9*