

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.

- ◆ Ladies of Emmaus, please note: LWML mites are being gathered this morning (4 March), and money for our own Emmaus Food Pantry will be collected next Sunday (11 March). Thank you!

Also, the LWML South Bend Zone Spring Bible Break will be held on Saturday, March 17th, at St. Paul's in Bremen. Registration will begin at 9:00 am. A study on "God's Timing" will be led by Rev. Roger Rohde.

- ◆ Following coffee & refreshments, our Family Bible Class continues a study of Genesis, making special use of Dr. Luther's commentary on that book.

Catechesis class for younger and beginning catechumens meets at the same time. Older children, especially between the ages of eight and twelve, have class with Nathaniel Rhein & Nicholai Stuckwisch. And Dave Smith is teaching a catechesis class for teenagers and others who are interested.

- ◆ Throughout the Season of Lent, there will be Vespers each Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., and a brief, spoken Divine Service each Friday at 9:00 a.m.

As in past years, there will be soup supper served prior to the Wednesday evening Vespers, from 5:30 until 6:30 p.m. One and all are welcome to enjoy the good soup and to share that opportunity for fraternal fellowship.

There is a sign-up sheet for those who are willing and able to contribute to the soup suppers or to assist in serving, cleaning up, and so forth. Thanks!

- ◆ Emmaus will be serving another meal at Hope Rescue Mission on Friday, March the 16th. Volunteers are needed to provide cookies, to help prepare the meal, and to assist in serving the meal. Talk to Betty Shankle for info.

- ◆ COLLECTIONS FOR 25 FEBRUARY 2018: \$ 3,227.16

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) Eldon Knepp; (USHERS) Daniel Bliese & Nicholai Stuckwisch;
(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

“Paul did not condemn circumcision in the sense that it was sinful to accept or retain it, for this would have been deeply offensive to the Jews. But the decree stated that circumcision was not necessary for justification and that therefore it was not to be forced upon the Gentiles. Thus they found this moderation, that out of reverence toward the fathers and out of charity toward the weak in faith the Jews were to observe the Law and circumcision for a time but were not to try to be justified by this. In addition, the Gentiles were not to be burdened with the law, both because it would have been something novel for them and because it would have been an unbearable burden, as Peter says in Acts 15:10. In other words, no one should be forced to be circumcised, and no one should be prevented from being circumcised.

“Jerome and Augustine engage in a bitter controversy over this passage. The term ‘was not compelled’ supports Augustine’s case. But Jerome did not understand the issue. The issue here is not, as Jerome supposes, what Peter or Paul did about circumcising or not circumcising. Therefore Jerome is amazed that Paul had the audacity to denounce in Peter what he himself had done; for, he says, Paul circumcised Timothy and lived as a Gentile among Gentiles but as a Jew among Jews. Jerome imagines that what is at issue here is not very important; therefore he concludes that neither Peter nor Paul had sinned, but he imagines that both had covered things up with a ‘white lie.’ As a matter of fact, however, this entire controversy of theirs was, and is, serious business; it deals with the gravest of issues. Therefore it was not a matter of covering things up.

“The basic issue was this: Is the Law necessary for justification, or is it not? Paul and Peter are in controversy here over this particular theme, on which the whole of Christian doctrine depends. Paul was too responsible a person to launch such a public attack on Peter in the presence of the entire church of Antioch on account of some trivial issue. He is attacking him on account of the basic doctrine of Christianity. For when there were no Jews present, Peter ate with Gentiles; but when the Jews arrived, he withdrew. Paul rebukes him because by his pretense he was compelling the Gentiles to do as the Jews did.

The whole emphasis lies on the phrase ‘you are compelling.’ But Jerome did not see this.

“Therefore Paul did not require that anyone who wanted to be circumcised should remain uncircumcised, but he did want him to know that circumcision was not necessary for justification. Paul wanted to remove this compulsion. Therefore he allowed the Jews to observe the Law as an obligation; but he always taught both Jews and Gentiles that in their conscience they should be free from the Law and circumcision, just as the patriarchs and all the Old Testament saints were free in their conscience and were justified by faith, not by circumcision or the Law.

“In fact, Paul might have permitted Titus to be circumcised; but when he saw that they wanted to compel him, Paul refused. For if those who were demanding circumcision had had their way, they would have jumped to the conclusion that circumcision was necessary for righteousness; and thus, because of Paul’s permission, they would have prevailed against him. In the same way we grant freedom to everyone to put on a cowl or to take it off, to enter a monastery or to leave it, to eat meat or vegetables. Only let him do these things freely and without offense to conscience, as an example of charity. And let him know that none of these things avails anything to atone for sins or to win grace. But just as at that time the false apostles refused to leave circumcision and the observance of the Law as matters of indifference but demanded them as something necessary for salvation, so in our day our opponents stubbornly insist that human traditions cannot be dropped without putting salvation in jeopardy. Thus they change a demand of charity into a demand of faith, even though there is only one demand of faith, which is to believe in Jesus Christ. And since this demand is all that is necessary for salvation, it also applies to all men. Yet our opponents would be willing to worship the devil ten times as much as God before admitting this. Day by day they become more obdurate. They use violence and oppression to reestablish and defend their wickedness and blasphemy. They refuse to budge a fingerbreadth. Let us go forth bravely in the name of the Lord of Hosts. Let us set forth the glory of Jesus Christ and do battle against the kingdom of Antichrist with the Word and with prayer, in order that the name of God alone may be hallowed and His kingdom come (Matt. 6:9–10). Amen.

“Therefore Paul achieved a glorious victory. Although Titus, the Gentile, was in the midst of the Apostles and of all the faithful, where this question was being vehemently debated, he was not compelled to undergo circumcision.”

(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 *South Bend & LaPorte Circuit Pastors' Meeting*

WEDNESDAY Soup Supper 5:30—6:30

Children's Choir Rehearsal 6:10 p.m.

Lenten Vespers ***7:00 p.m.***

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

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

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

***The Appointed Readings for next Sunday, the Fourth Sunday in Lent:
Numbers 21:4–9; Ephesians 2:1–10; and Saint John 3:14–21***