



# WE BELIEVE

*Daily scripture readings and reflections on the  
Apostles' Creed for the seasons of Lent and Easter*

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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at  
the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic\* Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*\* The word "catholic" does not refer to the Roman Catholic church,  
but to the universal church of all times and all places.*

## INTRODUCTION

*“I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand.”*  
—Anselm of Canterbury (11<sup>th</sup> century)

Christian belief is not just a series of stale doctrines or cognitive concepts. It is a way of being. Faith is a way of living that helps us understand the world. This is what Anselm was getting at when he wrote those words a thousand years ago. Christian faith makes sense of our world and gives meaning to our life.

Over the next several weeks, during the seasons of Lent and Easter, we are going to explore the basics of this faith together through our weekly worship and the daily scripture readings and reflections in this book. Let me offer a few words of introduction.

### *A Word about Lent and Easter*

Lent is a forty-day season that leads up to Easter Sunday. It may be strange and new to some or it may seem like an old ritualistic practice to others, but really ‘lent’ is just the Old English word for springtime. It has the same root as the word “length” and refers to the “lengthening of days” that we experience this time of year in the northern hemisphere.

In the early centuries of the church, the forty days of Lent became a season of preparation for new believers to be received into the community of the church through baptism on Easter. During this period, new believers would prepare for their baptism by learning the basics of faith, devoting themselves to prayer and fasting, and sharing life in community with each other. For the rest of the church, this season was a time to renew their faith by participating in the same things as they anticipated the coming celebration of the good news on Easter Sunday.

Easter itself is also a season. Lent is forty days, but Easter lasts for fifty. If the time of preparation and renewal is good, the season of celebration is better. This reminds us that no matter how much of God’s goodness we can experience in this life, there will always be more in the life of resurrection to come.

### *A Word about The Apostles' Creed*

In those early centuries of the church when new believers were preparing for their baptism, how did they go about learning the basics of faith? Should they have to read through the whole Bible? Many people were not even literate at that time. Therefore, a short oral summary of the apostles' teachings was formed to help people learn the basics of Christian belief. This summary came to be known as *The Apostles' Creed*. The word 'creed'—like the word 'lent'—can seem a bit strange or archaic, but it simply comes from the Latin word "credo" which means "believe." In fact, this is the first word in the Latin version of the creed ("I believe..."). So, the Apostles' Creed is simply a summary of the apostles' teachings on God, Jesus, and the church. We might think of it as a sort of CliffsNotes or SparkNotes for the Bible.

### *A Word about this Book*

Over the next ninety days—the forty days of Lent and fifty days of Easter—we are going to join with those who have gone before us in learning the basics of Christian belief. Each week we will reflect on a line from The Apostles' Creed in the following ways: **Weekly Prayers.** Every week has a written prayer (some from centuries ago) to return to throughout the week. **Daily Readings.** Monday through Friday include scripture readings on that week's theme to be sure we are staying rooted in the Bible. Every week includes a psalm and most weeks include readings from both old and new testaments. **Reflection Questions.** In addition to daily readings, there are also reflection questions and prompts to help us go deeper and practically respond. Saturdays and Sundays include space for extended reflection. **Community.** Throughout the book there are constant invitations to discuss and share with others. Consider, joining our Wednesday Group or find a discussion partner to journey with. Like the early church, this learning is best done with others. I hope the resources in this book and upcoming sermons and discussions can strengthen and renew our faith as we follow Jesus together!

—Drew Dixon, Minister

*I believe*

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;  
I believe in Jesus Christ,  
his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at  
the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, February 21, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

### **PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

Gracious and holy Father, please give me intellect to understand you, reason to discern you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you, a spirit to know you, a heart to meditate upon you, ears to hear you, eyes to see you, a tongue to proclaim you, a way of life pleasing to you, patience to wait for you, and perseverance to look for you. Grant me a perfect end, your holy presence, a blessed resurrection, and life everlasting. Amen.

Monday, February 22, 2021

I am the Lord, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.

Exodus 6:6-8

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*“You will be my people and I will be your God” is a recurring refrain throughout the Old Testament. (Leviticus 26:12, Jeremiah 31:33, 32:38, Ezekiel 37:27, Zechariah 8:8) This is not a statement of cognitive believe, but of belonging and trust.*

- *What does it mean for us to be God’s people today?*
- *How can we live in devotion to God?*
- *Where in your life do you need belonging and trust?*
- *Is there anyone you know who is looking for a place of belonging?*



*Tuesday, February 23, 2021*

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

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*The first two sentences of this passage is a prayer that the Jewish people would pray every time they gathered, much like we pray the Lord's Prayer. Once again, this is not a statement of cognitive believe, but of love and trust.*

- *What does it mean for the Lord to be our God?*
- *Are there any other things competing for worship in your life?*
- *Just as they recited and displayed these words, what are some practical ways you can remember God throughout your day?*
- *They did not only recite them to themselves, but also talked about them with others. Who can you talk about God or pray with today?*

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.  
O my God, in you I trust;  
do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.  
Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord;  
teach me your paths.  
Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.

Psalm 25:1-5

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*This is a psalm of trusting in God. Which words and phrases stand out to you? If you were to rewrite this psalm in your own words, what would you say? Use the space below to write out a few lines.*

Thursday, February 25, 2021

This is *God's* commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

1 John 3:23-24

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*John describes belief not as a mere intellectual exercise, but as love, action, and abiding.*

- *Notice how the whole Trinity is at work in this passage: Father, Son, and Spirit. As you reflect on each of these, which do you feel most familiar with? Which do you want to know more?*
  
- *Notice that belief is not only about relationship with God, but also relationship with others. Who in your life has influenced and encouraged your faith? Who can you love and share your faith with?*

Friday, February 26, 2021

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NIV)

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*Paul offers this blessing at the end of his second letter to the Corinthians. It shows that Christian belief is ultimately about life in community. Community with God (Father, Son, and Spirit) and community with God's people.*

- *What does it look like to live life in community with God?*
- *Where do you need grace, love, and fellowship from God?*
- *What does it look like to live life in community with God's people?*
- *What are some barriers that keep you from connecting with others?*
- *Pray this blessing over yourself today and seek to live it out. Who else do you want to pray these words over?*

*Saturday, February 27, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

*in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;*

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at

the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, February 28, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

**PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

O God our Father and Creator, you are both personal and powerful, lover and Lord of all. You hold us in your arms and hold all things together. Help us approach you with familiarity as your children and with wonder as your worshipers. Amen.

*Monday, March 1, 2021*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Genesis 1:1-5 (NIV)

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- *What does this passage tell us about God and about creation?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *Are there chaotic places in your life that need God's presence? Are there dark places that need light?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *Where can you see God's goodness today?*



*Tuesday, March 2, 2021*

Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.  
He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.  
Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;  
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:28-31

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- *How does God's identity as creator move you to worship him?*
- *Though scripture tells us that God created and sustains the world, we often live as if our effort keeps everything going. How does God's identity as creator encourage us to rest?*
- *What are some ways you can "renew your strength" in the Lord this week?*

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

As a father has compassion for his children,  
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.  
For he knows how we were made;  
he remembers that we are dust.

As for mortals, their days are like grass;  
they flourish like a flower of the field;  
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
and its place knows it no more.  
But the steadfast love of the Lord is  
from everlasting to everlasting  
on those who fear him,  
and his righteousness to children's children,  
to those who keep his covenant  
and remember to do his commandments.

Psalm 103:13-18

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*This psalm speaks of God as a father and shows our reliance on him as creator and sustainer. Which words and phrases stand out to you? If you were to rewrite this psalm in your own words, what would you say? Use the space below to write out a few lines.*

Thursday, March 4, 2021

Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:26-33

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*Throughout his “sermon on the mount” (Matthew 5-7), Jesus teaches the importance of seeing God as our father and how that transforms our prayers and actions and everyday life.*

- *Do you see God as a loving parent figure? What experiences help or hinder you from seeing God this way?*
- *What kinds of things are you anxious about today? How can you bring those worries before God in prayer?*
- *What would it look like for you to be a non-anxious presence in your interactions today?*

*Friday, March 5, 2021*

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

1 John 3:1-2

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- *Just as God speaks in creation and it happens, he calls us his children and we are! How does God's identity as both creator and father inform each other?*
  
- *Where do you find your identity in life? Do you believe that you are a beloved child of God? How does that identity transform your life?*
  
- *What are some ways that you can rest in the love of God today and share it with others?*

*Saturday, March 6, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

*I believe in Jesus Christ,*

*his only Son, our Lord.*

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at  
the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, March 7, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

**PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

O Lord Jesus Christ  
be near us to defend us,  
within us to refresh us,  
around us to protect us,  
before us to guide us,  
behind us to justify us,  
and above us to bless us.  
Amen.

*Monday, March 8, 2021*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it... And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-5, 14

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*The gospel of John introduces Jesus as "the Word," describing him as eternally existing from the beginning and participating in creation with God the Father, bringing light and grace and truth to the world.*

- *As the Word, how does Jesus communicate God to us?*
- *How has Jesus brought light and life to you? Where do you need light and life today?*
- *Have you have had an experience that you would describe as glorious? How does that experience point to Jesus and reveal his grace and truth?*
- *What can you do to shine the light of Christ today?*



*Tuesday, March 9, 2021*

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.”

Matthew 16:13-17

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*Midway through his ministry, after much teaching and many miracles, Jesus takes his disciples aside to ask them a crucial question. First, he filters out all the noise of what others are saying and then gets to the heart: “Who do you say that I am?”*

- *“Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” How would you respond to this question? What do your friends and coworkers, children and family members think about Jesus?*
- *“But who do you say that I am?” How would you respond to this second question? Apart from all the noise and external pressures, what do you believe about Jesus?*
- *Talk with Jesus about these answers. What words does he have to encourage you or challenge you today?*

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

I will proclaim the Lord's decree:

He said to me, "You are my son;  
today I have become your father.

Ask me,  
and I will make the nations your inheritance,  
the ends of the earth your possession.

You will break them with a rod of iron;  
you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

Therefore, you kings, be wise;  
be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear  
and celebrate his rule with trembling.

Kiss his son, or he will be angry  
and your way will lead to your destruction,  
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Psalm 2:7-12 (NIV)

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*This is a royal psalm that was historically used at the coronation of a new king in Israel, but in the New Testament it is applied to Jesus. (Acts 13:33, Hebrews 1:5) How does this psalm speak to you about Jesus? If you were to rewrite it in your own words about Jesus, what would you say? Use the space below to write out a few lines.*

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.  
Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

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*This passage is an early hymn that was either written or quoted by Paul in his letter to the Philippians. It describes the identity of Jesus through the narrative of his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation.*

- *What does it look like to “let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus” today?*
- *What are some ways you can worship and proclaim the name of Jesus today?*

Friday, March 12, 2021

*The Son* is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:15-20

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*This passage is another early hymn either written or quoted by Paul in his letter to the Colossians. It describes the divine identity of Jesus through his role in creation and redemption.*

- *Jesus is “the image of the invisible God.” When we look at Jesus, we see God. Write down a few characteristics of Jesus. How does he shape your understanding of God?*
- *This passage proclaims Jesus as having “first place in everything.” What other things compete for first place in your life?*
- *It says, “God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things.” Do you believe that God is pleased as he redeems the world? What would your life look like fully reconciled to God?*

*Saturday, March 13, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

*He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.*

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at

the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge

the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, March 14, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

**PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

Light of life, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy, and shattered the power of darkness. Be born in us with that same light, O Christ, that we may see your presence among us and join our lives with the song of the angels who celebrated your birth and worship you still. Amen.

*Monday, March 15, 2021*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38

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*This passage is traditionally called "The Annunciation," as it tells the story of the angel's announcement of Jesus to Mary.*

- *What does this passage tell you about Jesus?*
- *How does this passage describe Mary?*
- *What does this passage stir in you?*



*Tuesday, March 16, 2021*

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Matthew 1:18-25

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*Matthew's gospel tells the story of an annunciation from Joseph's perspective. It also shows how Jesus fulfills Isaiah 7:14.*

- *What does this passage emphasize about Jesus?*
- *What are some ways that God can be with us today? Pray about those things.*

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

For you, O Lord, are my hope,  
my trust, O Lord, from my youth.  
Upon you I have leaned from my birth;  
it was you who took me from my mother's womb.  
My praise is continually of you.

I have been like a portent to many,  
but you are my strong refuge.  
My mouth is filled with your praise,  
and with your glory all day long.

Psalm 71:5-8

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*Psalm 71 is a prayer of hope in the midst of trouble. The psalmist remembers God's faithfulness from birth and all throughout life. Imagine Jesus praying this psalm throughout his ministry or on his way to the cross. Try rewriting a few lines in your own words.*

Thursday, March 18, 2021

For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:6-7

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*This passage from Isaiah has long been understood as a prophecy of Jesus' birth and the promise of the coming Kingdom of God.*

- *“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Which of these titles stands out to you the most? Take a few moments to journal some thoughts about it.*
  
- *Think of a common place or event of your week (workplace, living room, grocery shopping, etc.). What would that place be like with “endless peace, justice, and righteousness”? Pray for that place and the people there.*

Friday, March 19, 2021

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Galatians 4:4-7

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*In this passage, Paul describes Jesus as both “God’s Son” and “born of a woman.” Jesus is fully God and fully human—not half and half, but completely both. This is why we praise Jesus in our worship and seek to imitate him in our lives.*

- *Write or say a brief prayer of worship to Jesus.*
- *Now imagine Jesus as an older brother. What do you want to say to him or ask him?*
- *This passage speaks of redemption and freedom. What parts of your life do you need God to redeem? What are some things you need to be free from? Pray about these things. Ask a trusted friend to pray with you and for you.*

*Saturday, March 20, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.*

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at

the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins

the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, March 21, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

**PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

O Lord Jesus, you entered history to carry the cross and walk the way of suffering. Help us to die to ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow you into the world to love and serve our neighbors and even our enemies. Amen.

*Monday, March 22, 2021*

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" They shouted back, "Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15:1-15

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*This passage tells the story of Jesus before Pilate. What parts of the story stand out to you? What emotions arise as you read it? Pray to God from your heart.*



Tuesday, March 23, 2021

He was despised and rejected by others;  
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;  
and as one from whom others hide their faces  
he was despised, and we held him of no account.  
Surely he has borne our infirmities  
and carried our diseases;  
yet we accounted him stricken,  
struck down by God, and afflicted.  
But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,  
and by his bruises we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have all turned to our own way,  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:3-6

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*This passage is from one of four “servant songs” in Isaiah. (42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-7, and 52:13–53:12) These songs are understood as prophesying the coming of the Messiah.*

- *In Jesus’ day, many people thought the Messiah would come in strength to defeat Rome. How does this passage challenge that? How does this passage challenge our understanding today?*
- *How does Jesus fulfill this passage?*
- *It says “he was wounded for our transgressions” and “by his bruises we are healed.” Take a moment to honestly confess your sins before God. What healing do you need God to bring in your life?*

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me,  
from the words of my groaning?

I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart is like wax;  
it is melted within my breast;  
my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me;  
a company of evildoers encircles me.  
My hands and feet have shriveled;  
I can count all my bones.  
They stare and gloat over me;  
they divide my clothes among themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

Psalm 22:1,14-18

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*Jesus prayed this psalm on the cross. Read through it and notice the number of parallels between this psalm and Mark 15:16-34. Have you ever felt Godforsaken? Join Jesus in praying this psalm. Use the space below to write a few lines in your own words.*

*Thursday, March 25, 2021*

Then *Jesus* began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?”

Mark 8:31-36

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*In this passage Jesus teaches his disciples that it is necessary for him to suffer and die on the cross. He then calls them to follow him in the way of sacrifice.*

- *What does Jesus’ teaching show us about his character?*
- *How did Peter respond to Jesus’ teaching? Why do you think he responded that way?*
- *What are some ways that you can deny yourself and follow Jesus today?*

Friday, March 26, 2021

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

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*In this passage, Paul describes how the cross is foolish and contrary to the way of the world.*

- *“Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom.” What does our culture demand and desire today?*
- *How does the cross challenge our culture's demands and desires?*
- *In what ways does following Christ look foolish today? How does following Christ show God's power?*

*Saturday, March 27, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

*He descended to the dead.*

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at  
the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, March 28, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

**PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

O Lord, so much speaks of death in the world: sickness and disease, division and destruction, depression and burnout, even our own hearts feel dead sometimes. Help us to remember that you descended to the dead and dwell with us still and help us hold on to hope that death is not the end. Amen.

*Monday, March 29, 2021*

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ...Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

Mark 15:33-34, 37-46

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*This passage describes the death of Jesus and the time that followed. What parts of the story stand out to you? What emotions arise as you read it? Pray to God from your heart.*



Tuesday, March 30, 2021

Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said,

“When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.”

When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.

Ephesians 4:7-10

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*In this passage Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18 to describe the descent of Jesus in birth and death and the ascent of Jesus in resurrection and glory.*

- *Elsewhere, Paul writes that “the last enemy to be destroyed in death.” (1 Corinthians 15:26) How is death an enemy?*
- *How does knowing that Jesus experienced death offer comfort?*
- *“He made captivity itself a captive” might be rephrased as, “he brought death to death.” What things speak of death in your life or in the world today? As you think of these things, reflect on the promise that death itself will someday die. Pray about this. Who can you share this good news with this week?*

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night,”  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

Psalm 139:7-12

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*In the Old Testament the word “Sheol” describes the realm of the dead, like Hades in Greek mythology or the grave in modern day. This psalm describes the pervasive presence of God—even in darkness and the realm of the dead! How does Jesus’ death fulfill this psalm? Reflect on the words of this psalm. Rewrite a few lines in your own words.*

*Thursday, April 1, 2021*

We see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone... Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

Hebrews 2:9, 14-15

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*This passage in Hebrews describes how Jesus' death makes redemption and freedom possible.*

- *In what ways does "the fear of death" influence our actions and attitudes? Where do you see this fear at work in the world?*
- *What challenges and struggles does your life and the world face today? Reflect on the line that Jesus has "shared the same things."*
- *Pray for freedom from the fear of death. Reflect on the power that Jesus has over death. Share this news with someone today.*

*Friday, April 2, 2021*

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39

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*Paul sees present trials reflected in Psalm 44:22 but is convinced that the love of Christ is greater than any challenge we could ever face—even death.*

- *Is there anything that you are afraid might separate you from the love of Christ?*
- *If Jesus faced death, can he face these things?*
- *How can you rest in the love of Christ today? Who can you share this love with?*

*Saturday, April 3, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

*On the third day he rose again.*

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at  
the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, April 4, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

### **PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ! You built your cross as a bridge over death, so that departed souls might pass from the realm of death to the realm of life. Glory to you! You put on the body of a mortal man and made it the source of life for all mortal human beings. You are alive! Your murderers handled your life like farmers: they sowed it like grain deep in the earth, for it to spring up and raise with itself a multitude! Raise us with you, we pray. Amen!

*Monday, April 5, 2021*

On the first day of the week, at early dawn, *the women* came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Luke 24:1-12

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*This passage describes the resurrection of Jesus and the disciples' response. What parts of the story stand out to you? What emotions arise as you read it? Pray to God from your heart. Share this story with someone this week.*



*Tuesday, April 6, 2021*

“Come, let us return to the Lord;  
for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;  
he has struck down, and he will bind us up.  
After two days he will revive us;  
on the third day he will raise us up,  
that we may live before him.  
Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord;  
his appearing is as sure as the dawn;  
he will come to us like the showers,  
like the spring rains that water the earth.”

Hosea 6:1-3

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- *How did Jesus fulfill these words these words of the prophet Hosea?*
- *What does it look like for us to “press on to know the Lord?”*
- *Look outside. Where do you see signs of springtime? Join with the earth in celebrating Jesus’ resurrection.*

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,  
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,  
and you have healed me.

O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,  
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

You have turned my mourning into dancing;  
you have taken off my sackcloth  
and clothed me with joy,

so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.

O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

Psalm 30:1-3, 11-12

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*This psalm celebrates deliverance from Sheol (the realm of the dead) and the Pit (the grave). Imagine Jesus singing this psalm in the days after his resurrection. When has God turned your mourning into dancing? Use the following space to write a few lines from this psalm in your own words.*

*Thursday, April 8, 2021*

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

1 Corinthians 15:1-5

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- *Notice how the verbs in the first sentence move from past (“proclaimed...received...”) to present (“stand...being saved...”) to future (“hold firmly...”). What does this show us about the nature of salvation?*
- *Notice Paul’s strong words “I handed on to you as of first importance...” The story of Jesus death, burial, and resurrection are at the center of Christian faith. What are some ways that you regularly remember this story?*

*Friday, April 9, 2021*

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:1-11

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- *The resurrection is not just a story about Jesus—it is also a story about us! What does it look like for us to be “united with him” in death and resurrection? How can you walk in “newness of life” today?*
- *Have you been baptized? If so, take a moment to recall or journal about the circumstances of your baptism. If not, are you interested in being baptized?*

*Saturday, April 10, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

*He ascended into heaven,*

*and is seated at*

*the right hand of the Father.*

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, April 11, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

**PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

Lord Jesus, you ascended into heaven and we worship you as king over all! Reign in our hearts and raise us with you as we seek your kingdom and proclaim your good news in word and deed. Amen!

*Monday, April 12, 2021*

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:6-11

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*This passage describes the ascension of Jesus. What parts of the story stand out to you? What questions and emotions arise as you read it? Take a moment to pray or journal about these things.*



*Tuesday, April 13, 2021*

We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.

Acts 5:29-32

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*Peter boldly speaks these words to Jewish leaders after they sought to imprison him and ordered him to stop preaching.*

- *How does Jesus' ascension display his power and authority?*
- *What kinds of things compete for authority and influence in your life?*
- *Reflect on the words "Leader," "Savior," "repentance," and "forgiveness." What do these words say about Jesus? What do they say about us?*
- *What does it look like to trust in Jesus' power and authority today?*

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

The Lord says to my lord:  
“Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet.”

The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying,  
“Rule in the midst of your enemies!”  
Your troops will be willing  
on your day of battle.  
Arrayed in holy splendor,  
your young men will come to you  
like dew from the morning’s womb.

The Lord has sworn  
and will not change his mind:  
“You are a priest forever,  
in the order of Melchizedek.”

The Lord is at your right hand;  
he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.  
He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead  
and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.  
He will drink from a brook along the way,  
and so he will lift his head high.

Psalm 110 (NIV)

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*This psalm is quoted multiple times throughout the New Testament in reference to Jesus. (1 Corinthians 15:25, Ephesians 1:20-22, Hebrews 1:13, 7:17) How does this psalm speak of Jesus’ victory over evil and his ongoing rule? Rewrite a few lines in your own words.*

*Thursday, April 15, 2021*

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:17-23

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*Paul offers this prayer at the beginning of his letter to the Ephesians.*

- *Jesus did not only conquer death on the cross, but now reigns in life on the throne. Take a moment to rest in the truth that Jesus reigns.*
- *In the same way, God does not only call us to die to sin, but to live in his power. What does this look like in your life?*
- *Pray the first paragraph over your life today and over the life of the church.*

*Friday, April 16, 2021*

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Romans 8:31-34

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*This passage in Romans tells us what Jesus is doing at this very moment: at God's right hand, he is interceding for us.*

- *In all that we do, Jesus prays for us. How does this encourage your life?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *In all of our prayers, Jesus prays with us. How does this encourage your prayer practice?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *What do you need Jesus to pray for today?*

*Saturday, April 17, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at

the right hand of the Father.

*He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.*

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, April 18, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

**PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

O God, you have given us the sure promise that Jesus will return to judge the earth. Make us ready, we pray, for his royal coming, that we may consider daily what sort of people we ought to be, and be found faithful servants waiting and working for our Master's return. Make us bold in our witness until that day when he comes at last to make all things right. Amen.

*Monday, April 19, 2021*

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide by what his ears hear;  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.  
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

Isaiah 11:1-5

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*This passage has been understood as a prophecy of the coming Messiah.*

- *Read these words in light of Jesus. How does he fulfill them? How do they shape your understanding of him and his character?*
- *Throughout scripture the word “judge” has very different connotations than today. Rather than punishing the guilty, it is about defending the innocent. Who are the “poor” and “meek” in need of justice today?*
- *Notice that justice is not brought about by the sword but by the “rod of his mouth.” How does the word of the gospel bring justice?*
- *Pray for justice, righteousness, and transformation.*



*Tuesday, April 20, 2021*

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

Matthew 25:31-40

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- *How does this passage help us understand judgement and justice?*
- *Who are the “least of these” that we can serve today?*
- *How would your actions be different if you treated every interaction as if it were with Christ?*

*Wednesday, April 21, 2021*

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;  
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
let the field exult, and everything in it.  
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy  
before the Lord; for he is coming,  
for he is coming to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with his truth.

Psalm 96:11-13

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*This psalm rejoices at God's coming judgement. How is this judgement good news? Reflect back on Monday's definition of "judge." Another way of putting it is that God's judgement is not primarily about punishing the wrong but rather making things right. What things do you long for God to make right? How will you feel when they are made right? Reflect on these things and try rewriting a few lines of the psalm in your own words.*

*Thursday, April 22, 2021*

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.

Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

John 5:24-27

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- *In this passage, Jesus speaks of judging the dead and the living. What questions and emotions arise as you read it?*
  
- *Do you trust Jesus to “execute judgement”? As you read, do these words feel like good news or bad news?*
  
- *Rest in Jesus’ promise of eternal life. Pray for God to make things right. Share this good news with someone today.*

Friday, April 23, 2021

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell with them;  
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them;  
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away.”

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Revelation 21:1-5

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- *Take some time to slowly read through this passage again. Let yourself really imagine these images. Perhaps draw or journal about them.*
- *What tears do you need God to wipe from your eyes? How do these words give you hope today?*
- *Do you know anyone in need of comfort today? How can you reach out to them to offer support?*

*Saturday, April 24, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at  
the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,*

the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, April 25, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

**PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

O Holy Spirit, as you hovered over the waters in the beginning, hover over us now by your abiding presence. Comfort us with your company, fill us with your fruits, grow us in your gifts, and unite us in your love. This we ask, O blessed Spirit, with whom the Father and the Son we worship and glorify, one God, world without end. Amen.

*Monday, April 26, 2021*

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability... This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

‘In the last days it will be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,  
    and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
    and your old men shall dream dreams.  
Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
    in those days I will pour out my Spirit;  
    and they shall prophesy.  
And I will show portents in the heaven above  
    and signs on the earth below,  
    blood, and fire, and smoky mist.  
The sun shall be turned to darkness  
    and the moon to blood,  
    before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.  
Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Acts 2:1-4, 16-21

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*This passage describes the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the early church.*

- *Read through the passage again and imagine yourself in the room with them. What is that like? What stirs in you?*
- *Read through the quotation from Joel 2:28-32. Pray these words over your life and over the life of the church.*



*Tuesday, April 27, 2021*

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Romans 8:9-11

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- *In this passage, Paul describes the tension between “the flesh” and “the Spirit”—between death and life, sin and salvation. How do you experience this tension?*
- *Paul writes that the same Spirit who “raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you.” Do you believe that the Spirit can give you life today?*
- *Where do you need life today? What do you think it looks like to live in the life of the Spirit?*

Wednesday, April 28, 2021

How many are your works, Lord!  
In wisdom you made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
There is the sea, vast and spacious,  
teeming with creatures beyond number—  
living things both large and small.  
There the ships go to and fro,  
and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

All creatures look to you  
to give them their food at the proper time.  
When you give it to them, they gather it up;  
when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.  
When you hide your face, they are terrified;  
when you take away their breath,  
they die and return to the dust.  
When you send your Spirit,  
they are created,  
and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;  
may the Lord rejoice in his works—  
he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,  
who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord all my life;  
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.  
May my meditation be pleasing to him,  
as I rejoice in the Lord.

Psalm 104:24-34 (NIV)

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*This psalm celebrates the life that God gives to the earth. The same Spirit that hovered over creation in the beginning (Genesis 1:2) hovers over it still, bringing life to all. Where do you see life today?*

*Thursday, April 29, 2021*

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-25

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*In this passage, Paul lists the "fruit of the Spirit" as a description of the kind of character that God creates in us as we live by the Spirit.*

- Where are there barriers to these in your life?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Where are there opportunities for these in your life?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Pray to be "guided by the Spirit" today.*

Friday, April 30, 2021

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

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*This is one of several passages in the New Testament which lists gifts that the Spirit equips God's people with. (Romans 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:28, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 4:10-11)*

- *As you look through the list, which gifts do you resonate with?*
  
- *Are there any gifts that remind you of someone?*
  
- *Pray for God to equip the church with spiritual gifts. Encourage someone who you have seen these gifts in.*

*Saturday, May 1, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at  
the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

*the holy catholic Church,*

*the communion of saints,*

the forgiveness of sins

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, May 2, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

### **PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

Lord God, thank you for uniting us with those in other times and places who trust in Christ and seek to obey his will. You have made us strangers no longer but pilgrims together on the way to your kingdom. Guide us closer to you and to one another in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, and strengthen your Church in mission and service to your world, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*Monday, May 3, 2021*

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47

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- *This passage describes the life of the early church. What stirs in you as you read it? What do you think it was like to belong to a community like this?*
- *What does it look like to be devoted to “the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” today?*
- *The early church met both in the temple for large gatherings and in homes for small gatherings. Which of these are you most comfortable with? What are ways you can participate in both?*



*Tuesday, May 4, 2021*

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:20-23

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- *In this passage Jesus prays for the unity of everyone who will come to believe in him. How have you seen or experienced division in the church?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *Is there anyone who you have felt divided from that you could reach out to? Do you know someone from a different kind of church who you could learn from and share with?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *Pray for the unity of the church; for church leaders and church members; for churches in our city, our nation, and the world.*

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

How good and pleasant it is  
when God's people live together in unity!

It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron's beard,  
down on the collar of his robe.

It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.

For there the Lord bestows his blessing,  
even life forevermore.

Psalm 133 (NIV)

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*This psalm rejoices in unity among God's people and illustrates it with images of the anointing of Israel's high priest, the flourishing of the natural world, and the blessing of God. What images come to your mind when you think of the unity of God's people? Write out your own version of this psalm.*

Thursday, May 6, 2021

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2

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*This passage describes the communion of saints as a “great cloud of witnesses” that surround us.*

- *Apart from Jesus, who is a person in scripture that encourages your faith? What conversation would you like to have with them?*
- *Is there anyone from church history or someone you have known who passed away that encourages your faith? What would you like to ask or say to them?*
- *Is there anyone alive today who encourages your faith? Reach out to them and thank them today!*
- *Thank God for the gift of those who have gone before us. Pray for God to continue raising up people of faith.*

*Friday, May 7, 2021*

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Ephesians 2:19-22

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- *This passage offers a description of the church. How would you define church?*
- *This passage uses the images of a country, a family, and a building to illustrate God's people. Which of these images resonates the most with you? What other images would you use to illustrate?*
- *Many of these images speak of belonging. Do you feel like you are able to belong in the community of the church? What barriers are there to belonging? Is there anyone you can help to welcome in the church?*
- *Pray for the local church.*

*Saturday, May 8, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at  
the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,

*the forgiveness of sins*

the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Sunday, May 9, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

**PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Monday, May 10, 2021

The LORD, the LORD,  
a God merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger,  
and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,  
keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation,  
forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,  
yet by no means clearing the guilty,  
but visiting the iniquity of the parents  
upon the children  
and the children's children,  
to the third and the fourth generation.

Exodus 34:6-7

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*When God revealed himself to Moses, he proclaimed these words as the essential content of his character. References to this description occur dozens of times throughout the rest of scripture. (Numbers 14:18, Deuteronomy 4:31, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 51:1, 103:3, Romans 2:4, 1 John 1:9)*

- *Reflect back on this list of attributes. Which ones stand out the most to you? Journal a few thoughts about one or two of them.*
- *Is there a difference between the forgiveness of sin and the effects of sin? Is it possible to forgive and still feel the pain of consequences?*
- *Notice how sin's effects last "to the third and the fourth generation" but God's love lasts to "the thousandth generation." What effects of sin have you experienced in your life? Pray for God's healing love.*



*Tuesday, May 11, 2021*

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord.

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

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*In this passage God promises to make a “new covenant” with his people where he will dwell in their hearts and forgive their sins.*

- *How is this promise fulfilled in Jesus?*
- *What sins do you need forgiven? What guilt are you remembering that God has promised to forget?*
- *What are some ways you want to grow in knowing God? Pray for God to grow you in the knowledge of him.*

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Blessed is the one  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one  
whose sin the Lord does not count against them  
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

When I kept silent,  
my bones wasted away  
through my groaning all day long.  
For day and night  
your hand was heavy on me;  
my strength was sapped  
as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
and did not cover up my iniquity.  
I said, "I will confess  
my transgressions to the Lord."  
And you forgave  
the guilt of my sin.

Psalm 32:1-5 (NIV)

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*This psalm describes the experience of forgiveness. Have you ever had an experience like this? Are there any sins that you have not acknowledged to God? Rewrite a few lines of this psalm in your own words.*

Thursday, May 13, 2021

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

Matthew 18:21-22

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*In this passage Jesus describes the importance of forgiving others. Throughout scripture, the number seven often represents completeness (like the days in a week). So, Jesus is not telling us to keep count until seventy-seven, but rather to forgive as much as it takes until that person is completely forgiven.*

- *What do you think it would feel like to experience complete forgiveness both with God and in relationship with others?*
- *Is there anyone in your life who you need to forgive?*
- *Is there anyone who you have wronged and need to apologize to and ask forgiveness from?*
- *Pray for God to set you free from bitterness and sin and help you practice forgiveness.*

Friday, May 14, 2021

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 1:8-2:2

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- *Confessing sin is not a sign of weakness, but an opportunity for forgiveness. What makes it hard for you to confess sin?*
- *This passage describes Jesus as an advocate and an atoning sacrifice. Meditate on these images. How have you experienced Jesus in these ways? How do you want to experience him in these ways?*
- *Believing in forgiveness means believing that transformation is possible. Do you believe the whole world can be transformed? Pray for God to transform the world and bring his kingdom!*

*Saturday, May 15, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at

the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins

*the resurrection of the body,*

*and the life everlasting. Amen.*

*Sunday, May 16, 2021*

Use this page to journal some thoughts about this week's line in the creed or to take notes from the sermon.

### **PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK**

Almighty and everlasting God, who has given us grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the unity; we pray that you would keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities until the day of resurrection when we will live forever with you, O Father, Son, and Spirit, world without end. Amen.

*Monday, May 17, 2021*

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”

I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.”

Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ Therefore prophecy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put



my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.”

Ezekiel 37:1-14 (NIV)

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*In this passage, Ezekiel has a vision of resurrection and new life.*

- *If the world we are living in is like the dry bones, what do you think it will be like when God breathes life into it? Journal some thoughts or draw some images.*
  
- *Are there places in your life that feel like dry bones? How does the word of the gospel offer life and hope?*
  
- *Are there places in the world in need of hope? How can you offer a word of life to those places?*

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:24-31

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*This passage describes Thomas’s experience with the resurrected Jesus.*

- *Imagine that you are in this scene. In what ways do you resonate with the “other disciples”? In what ways do you resonate with Thomas?*
- *How does Jesus respond to Thomas? Does this surprise you? Encourage you?*
- *How does Jesus’ resurrection surprise and encourage your faith today?*

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;  
he heard my cry for mercy.  
Because he turned his ear to me,  
I will call on him as long as I live.

The cords of death entangled me,  
the anguish of the grave came over me;  
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.  
Then I called on the name of the Lord:  
“Lord, save me!”

The Lord is gracious and righteous;  
our God is full of compassion.  
The Lord protects the unwary;  
when I was brought low, he saved me.

Return to your rest, my soul,  
for the Lord has been good to you.

For you, Lord, have delivered me from death,  
my eyes from tears,  
my feet from stumbling,  
that I may walk before the Lord  
in the land of the living.

Psalm 116:1-9 (NIV)

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*This psalm celebrates God's power over death. Imagine Jesus singing this song after his resurrection. Imagine all of God's people singing this song on the day of resurrection. Imagine yourself singing this song when God raises you on that day. What is that like? Write out your own psalm for the day of resurrection.*

Thursday, May 20, 2021

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

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- *In this passage, Paul describes the day of resurrection. Imagine the “cry of command,” the “sound of God’s trumpet,” the arrival of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. What does that moment feel like? Take a few moments to journal about it.*
  
- *How do these words encourage you? Who can you encourage with these words?*

Friday, May 21, 2021

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

“Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

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- *In this passage, Paul offers another description of the day of resurrection. How do you imagine the “imperishable body”? Think of Jesus’ resurrected body.*
- *Reflect on the quotation from Isaiah 25:8. What will it be like to sing these words and see them fulfilled?*
- *Give thanks to Jesus who gives us victory over death!*

*Saturday, May 22, 2021*

Use today to reflect back over the theme and readings from the past week. What have you learned? Who might you share it with? What questions do you still have? Write out a prayer.



## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe

in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ,

his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the  
power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at  
the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge  
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.



Reflect back over the whole Apostle's Creed. What have you learned?  
What would you like to learn more about? How has your faith grown?  
How would you like to continue growing? Who can you share with?

## RECOMMENDED READING

Are you interested in learning more? Check out the following books to continue learning about the Apostle's Creed, Christian faith, and spiritual growth.

- **The Apostles' Creed for Today** by Justo González
- **The Basics of Christian Belief** by Joshua Strahan
- **Simply Christian** by N. T. Wright
- **Sacred Rhythms** by Ruth Haley Barton
- **Streams of Living Water** by Richard Foster

## WEEKLY PRAYER SOURCES

- Sunday, February 21, 2021*..... *Benedict of Nursia (6<sup>th</sup> century)*
- Sunday, February 28, 2021*..... *Drew Dixon*
- Sunday, March 7, 2021*.....*Traditional Celtic Prayer (10<sup>th</sup> century)*
- Sunday, March 14, 2021*..... *adapted from RCL Prayers*
- Sunday, March 21, 2021*.....*Drew Dixon*
- Sunday, March 28, 2021*.....*Drew Dixon*
- Sunday, April 4, 2021*..... *Ephrem the Syrian (4<sup>th</sup> century)*
- Sunday, April 11, 2021*..... *Drew Dixon*
- Sunday, April 18, 2021*..... *adapted from The Worship Sourcebook*
- Sunday, April 25, 2021*..... *adapted from BCP 2019*
- Sunday, May 2, 2021*..... *adapted from The Worship Sourcebook*
- Sunday, May 9, 2021*..... *BCP 2019*
- Sunday, May 16, 2021*.....*adapted from the Gregorian Sacramentary*  
*(8<sup>th</sup> century)*



30012 Military Road South  
Federal Way, WA 98003

[www.fedwaycc.org](http://www.fedwaycc.org)