

**'And Every Tongue Confess'**

As we recite the Creed, we confess Jesus Christ Crucified and risen with the church of all ages—past, present and future. By Lawrence R. Rast, Jr.

Paul Makes this striking statement in Rom. 10:9-10: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For by the heart you believed to righteousness, and by your mouth you confessed to salvation."

Paul makes it very clear to us: Christians confess. It is as simple as that.

We confess in many ways

Every day we confess what our hopes and dreams are by our words and our actions. How often have we made the statement, "I believe," about this or that?

As Christians then, to "confess" is to speak together, uniformly declaring with other Christians what it is that we believe. The Christian church has always had creeds—those concise statements that make known publicly what it believes.

The word "creed" underscores that I am not only intellectually aware of what a creed says. It means that I believe and accept that what it says is true. And because I believe that it is true, it shapes the way I think and act.

Early creeds

From the earliest times, the church has had creeds. Some of these are even in the Bible. For example, more than once in Paul's epistles the phrase "Jesus is Lord" appears (1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11), and this is certainly a short creed.

Certain needs and challenges drove the church to commit its confession to written form. When these creeds were written, they were not seen as being on the same level as Scripture. But because their contents were based on Scripture, the doctrines they taught were believed as true and necessary for all members of the church to confess.

Thus the earliest creeds were written for use in specific worship settings. For example, what we now call the Apostles' Creed began to develop as early as the first century. It formed the basis for Christian instruction by summarizing the Bible's teachings in an easily learned form. At the culmination of his or her instruction, the catechumen would confess the creed at Baptism, which was normally administered on Easter eve.

While it is unlikely that this Creed was written by the apostles, its teaching does capture faithfully the content of their preaching and teaching.

The creeds and their controversies

Not only do creeds teach us what to believe, they teach us what not to believe.

Early in the fourth century, a priest by the name of Arius taught that Jesus was God's first creation and inferior to God the Father—something less than truly God. This teaching threw the church into chaos and threatened, humanly speaking, to destroy it.

An ecumenical council was called and held in the town of Nicea (in modern Turkey). This council produced the first version of the Nicene Creed, which, after several additions, is the creed that we confess in the church today.

By confessing that Jesus is "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father," this creed clearly condemns the teaching of Arius. The creed goes on to confess that Christ came into the world "for us"—that is, He came specifically to pay for our sins—and that He will "come again."

The Nicene Creed became the means by which the confession of Christians was judged to be in harmony with the truth of the Scriptures. Today we generally use this creed in our celebration of the Lord's Supper.

A similar concern stood behind the writing of the Athanasian Creed. Though erroneously attributed to St. Athanasius, it captures his theology. The creed sums up in brief and very emphatic statements the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and, in particular, of the person of Christ as true God and true man in one person.

The "ecumenical creeds"

The Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian creeds are called the "ecumenical creeds." That means they are generally accepted by the church throughout the world. When the *Book of Concord* united Lutherans in 1580, the three ecumenical creeds comprised its first section.

What is more, as we confess the creeds today, we are confessing not only with those who are with us that day in church, we confess with all Christians around the world who hold to the orthodox faith.

But there is more! We confess not only with those of our time and world, we confess "with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven" (as the pastor says in the communion liturgy). As we confess our faith together, the barriers of time and space are overcome; we join our voices together with the whole church of all time!

The creeds do not carry the same authority as Holy Scripture. Scripture alone is the sole source, rule and norm for everything that we believe, teach and confess. The creeds, however, are formed by the Scriptures. They are applications of Bible teachings that emerged in specific settings. In fact, the three ecumenical creeds, in a very real sense, embody the unchanging Biblical witness in a concise and powerful way.

**DECEMBER ATTENDANCE
AND OFFICIAL ACTS**

Church Attendance

	Sat	8:00	10:30	Total
Dec 1-2	39	27	57	123
Dec 8-9	53	55	56	164
Dec 15-16	59	69	198	326
Dec 22-23	67	66	58	191
Dec 29-30	44	43	45	132
Comm				226

Transfers/Releases

None

Baptisms:

Funerals: Sheree Zuniga-December 23

LWML NOTES

LWML Board Meeting is Tuesday, February 5 at 1:00 pm.

Dorcas Circle will meet on Thursday, February 21 at 6:30 pm at the church. Please note the date change! Jana Baldwin is hostess and Carol Johnston will do the Bible study.

Financial Peace University will be offered at Good Shepherd starting Thursday, January 31st from 6:30-8:00 pm for 9 weeks. Through life-changing videos, online tools and resources, and group accountability, our church members will learn how to create and stick to a budget, save for emergencies, pay off debt, and plan for the future. Contact Jackie Johnson if interested 515-408-5874.

Don't forget to direct your Choice Dollars through Thrivent Financial. Call 1-800-847-4836 and choose, direct Choice Dollars. They will ask for your phone number and date of birth. They can be directed to Good Shepherd or other Lutheran non-profit organizations.

Newsorthy Notes

Movie and pizza night will be on Friday, February 8 at 5:30 pm.

The sign up sheet for catechism parents to provide dessert, and help in cleaning up is on the table in the church overflow. **All** parents need to pick a date or dates!

**C.I.A. Youth and
Sunday School**

CIA fundraiser at Pizza Ranch will be Monday, Feb 4 from 5-8pm

JR & SR Sledding and Activities @ Twin Lakes Sunday, February 17th 2:30-7:30pm. This is a reschedule of the January 6th event. All times and schedule of activities remain the same. If you were unable to attend in January but now wish to attend, see Michelle Hammersland for a permission form.

JR & SR CIA Twin Lakes Sledding and Gym Activities will be on Sunday, Feb 17.

The JR & SR NERF War previously scheduled for February 10th has been rescheduled to May 5, 2019. 5pm - 8pm (this was formerly Big Fun & Bonfire)

The annual Endowment and Legacy Committee fundraiser and talent show will take place on Sunday, February 10, 2019, at the Church. There will be a Chili Feed with multiple types of Chili being served from 4 to 6 p.m. with the talent show to immediately follow. There will be a free will offering to support our Endowment and Legacy Fund. There is a sign up sheet at the back of the church for anyone interested in participating in the talent show.

The cost for Lutheran Witness this year is \$22.68.

Sonshine Singers will be having their concert on Thursday, Feb 14, Friday, Feb 15 at 7 pm and Saturday, Feb 16 at 2 pm at First United Methodist. A freewill offering will be taken.

Cleaning Out or Downsizing? The General Store, 12 N 25th St, Fort Dodge is in need of gently used clothing. Proceeds go to provide needed revenue for Village services to people with disabilities in our area. Drop off on the south side of the building.

Christian Outreach Kids and Family Valentine's Party will be on Friday, Feb 22 at 6 pm. There will be a spaghetti meal along with a movie and craft. Please RSVP to the church by Monday, February 18.

February 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 8:15 am-LL Pre-school 12 pm-LL Preschool	2 5 pm-Divine Worship
3 8 am-Divine worship with HC 9:15 am-SS/ Adult Bible Study 10:30 am-Divine Worship	4 12 pm-LL Preschool 5-8-CIA Pizza Ranch Fund-raiser	5 8:15 am-LL Preschool 8:30 am-Pastor Winkle 9:00 am-Sewing 1:00 pm-LWML Bd. 6:30 pm-Bd of Ed.	6 8:15 am-LL Pre-school 12 pm-LL Pre-school 4:45-Children's Bells 5:15 -Praise Team 5:30-Meal 6 pm-CC Classes 6:15-Shep. Ringers 7:15 pm-Family Singers	7 7 am-Men's Bible Study 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool 5 pm-Beacon Meal 6 pm—Biblical Christianity Class 6:30 pm-Financial Peace	8 8:15 am-LL Pre-school 12 pm-LL Preschool 5:30 pm-Pizza & Movie Night	9 5 pm-Divine Worship
10 8 am-Divine worship 9:15 am-SS/ Adult Bible Study 10:30 am-Divine Worship with HC 4 pm—Endowment Fund Talent Show & meal	11 12 pm-LL Preschool 6:30 pm-Compassionate Friends	12 8:15 am-LL Preschool 9:00 am-Sewing 10 am-Mary Circle 12 pm-LL Preschool 1:30 pm-Fr. Haven Comm. 4 pm-Ch. Outreach 6:45 pm-Hannah Circle	13 8:15 am-LL Pre-school 12 pm-LL Pre-school 1:30 pm-Martha Circle 4:45-Children's Bells 5:15 Praise Team 5:30-Meal 6 pm-CC Classes 6:15-Shep. Ringers 7:15 pm-Family Singers	14 7 am-Men's Bible Study 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool 6 pm—Biblical Christianity Class 6:30 pm-Financial Peace	15 8:15 am-LL Pre-school 12 pm-LL Preschool	16 5 pm-Divine Worship with HC
17 8 am-Divine worship 9:15 am-SS/ Adult Bible Study 10:30 am-Divine Worship 2:30-CIA sled-ding/activities	18 LL possible snow makeup day	19 8:15 am-LL Preschool 9 am-Sewing 10 am-Memorial Meeting 11:30 am-JOY Group POTLUCK 6:15-Ch Mgmt 6:30-Trustees; 7:00-Council	20 8:15 am-LL Preschool 10:30 am-Lamplighters 12 pm-LL Preschool 4:45-Children's Bells 5:30-Meal 6 pm-CC Classes 6:15-Shep. Ringers 7:15 pm-Family Singers	21 7 am-Men's Bible Study 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool 6 pm—Biblical Christianity Class 6:30 pm-Financial Peace; Dorcas Circle	22 8:15 am-LL Pre-school 12 pm-LL Preschool 6pm-Ch. Outreach Valentine's Party Time	23 5 pm-Divine Worship
24 8 am-Divine worship 9:15 am-SS/ Adult Bible Study 10:30 am-Divine Worship	25 12 pm-LL Preschool	26 8:15 am-LL Preschool 9 am-Sewing 12-LL Pre-school 6:30 pm—Elders	27 8:15 am-LL Pre-school 12 pm-LL Pre-school 4:45-Children's Bells 5:30-Meal 6 pm-CC Classes 6:15-Shep. Ringers 7:15 pm-Family Singers	28 7 am-Men's Bible Study 8:15 am-LL Preschool 12 pm-LL Preschool 6 pm—Biblical Christianity Class 6:30 pm-Financial Peace		*Times & dates subject to change.

Good Shepherd
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We're on the web
www.goodshepfortdodge.org
Check us out on Facebook
Good Shepherd Fort Dodge

The season of Epiphany focuses on how God was made manifest in the flesh of Jesus. The church spends time hearing of the miracles, the signs and wonders, of Jesus in the world. And this made plain to all that Jesus was who He said He was: He was the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only-begotten Son of the Father, in the flesh. For “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

It is revealed for all the world to see that Jesus is God in the flesh. It is made manifest by His words and His work, by what He said and by what He did. And these belong together, for “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

Jesus is the Word and will of God in the flesh, that is, He is the walking, talking, enactment of God’s Word.

It is no different for us. We are called not just to believe in God in hearts, but also to trust in God in word and deed.

As James wrote: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22), and again, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? ... So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:14, 17–18, 26). Our faith is lived out in works for our neighbor. Our trust in the Word and will of God is lived out not in word only, but also in deed and in truth. In other words, the Epiphany of the Lord creates in us an epiphany of our faith in our works of obedience to God who commanded them. By this, our faith is made manifest to the world. It is, as Luther wrote of faith: “Faith is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1). It kills the old Adam and makes altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. “Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. And so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them. “He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words about faith and good works.

“Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God’s grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures.” And this is the work of the Holy Spirit in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace. “And thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate burning and shining from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of the idle talkers, who would be wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works, and yet are the greatest fools.” (*Preface to the Book of Romans*)

So, then, let our faith be active by God’s power in the Word through the Holy Spirit. And let then our faith be made manifest to the world by what this faith does: serving our neighbor — in church, in the family, and society — with the works of faith in time, talents, and treasures. *From LCMS Stewardship Ministry*