



Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
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Rev. Dr. John Rickert, Pastor

OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE

MAY 2018

A MONTH TO CELEBRATE

May may not leap to your mind as a month of celebrations, but it is this year. On May 10 we celebrate the Ascension of our Lord. This happened forty days after Easter and so is always a Thursday. This year I'll be at the Southeaster District Convention in Hickory, North Carolina. I sure hope we do something special to mark the occasion. The Ascension is described in Mark 16:14-20, when Jesus also gave the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). Luke records it in 24:36-53 and again in Acts 1:6-11. These are basically views from earth. Revelation 5-6 gives us the heavenly happenings. The Revelation passage makes it abundantly clear what the creeds mean by the "right hand" of the Father. Jesus exercises full divine authority as the eternal God and man who died and rose for us.



On Sunday, May 13, our nation celebrates Mother's Day. This is not a Church holiday even though it began in churches. The lady who started the celebration grew discouraged by the over-sentimentalization of the day. Nonetheless, we will send cards, make phone calls, go out to dinners, and in general think of our mothers in glowing terms. It is a good day to remember the vocation of mother, pray for our mothers, and contemplate all the mothers in scriptures. Indeed, the first mother was blessed to be the first to receive the promise of the coming Messiah, and the virgin Mary was blessed to be the mother of that Messiah (to speak of just two of the mothers in the Bible).



Fifty days after Easter, Pentecost Sunday, is May 20. The accent falls on the Holy Spirit and his role. No single sermon can cover the Spirit. He was there at creation and he will be there when Christ returns. He was active in the incarnation and ministry of Jesus. Without his work none of us would be Christians. We will have a special service with special music. From a Church calendar point of view, this is one of the three major feasts of the year (the other two being Christmas and Easter).

The first Sunday after Pentecost is recognized as the Festival of the Holy Trinity (Trinity Sunday). This is one of those rare celebrations that focuses us on a teaching of the Bible instead of a person or event. The Trinity is one of the great mysteries of the Bible and cannot be fully understood this side of Glory (and maybe not even then; after all, we are talking about understanding God). We must limit ourselves to what the Scriptures teach, and not worry if we can't really understand how it works (how can there be three persons and yet only one Divine essence?). We will again have a special worship service, which will include the Athanasian Creed (which we will confess responsively).



Finally, the last Monday in May (May 28) is Memorial Day. Again, this is a national holiday (like Mothers' Day) and not an official Church day. Nonetheless, it is a good day to reflect on the vocation of the military and lift them up in our

prayers. We might also think of all the saints in the Bible who were military. King David leaps quickly to mind, and we remember how often David wrote about Jesus in his Psalms. Then, again, we might think of the Church Militant (yes, I know, that phrase is no longer "politically correct"). As the Church Militant, we are storming the gates of hell, rescuing the perishing from eternal damnation with the mighty Gospel of God's grace in Christ Jesus!

So, this May, we have much to celebrate, much for which we can be thankful. Let us then rejoice in the Lord, for he is good. Our May celebrations help us do this. Join us for our special celebrations, and, on the days we do not have a special celebration, let our thoughts still turn to God and his love.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor

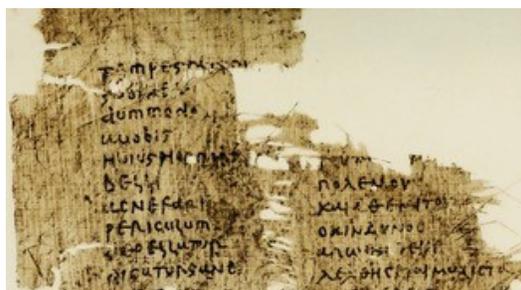


Digging In The Nicene Creed Introduction, Part 7

Politically, the Western Roman Empire had been under attack from the barbarians (Goths, Visigoths, Vandals, etc.) for over a hundred years when the Second Ecumenical Council convened. Some territory had been lost and reclaimed. Other areas had been permanently lost. In the Eastern Roman Empire, there was almost always war between the Romans and the Sasanian Empire.

At the time of the Council, both East and West were at high points. For the West, that wouldn't last long. From the chaos of barbarian and Moslem attacks would rise the Holy Roman Empire, but that was a few centuries away. The rise of the Moslem power in the 600s radically changed the East and it took just a hundred years. The Sasanian Empire would be completely conquered and most of the Eastern Empire, including all of North Africa and the lands where our Lord walked. The Moslem power also significantly impacted the West. They crossed over the Strait of Gibraltar into Europe and conquered most of modern Spain and Portugal, which was controlled by "barbarians." Most of these barbarian nations had adopted an Arian form of Christianity. However, the Catholic Franks (which become modern France), stopped the Moslems cold and over the course of the next 1000 years, the lone remaining "Spanish" kingdom (also Catholic) slowly drove the Moslems out of Europe.

All this is to say that the East and the West were already quite different culturally by the time of the Second Ecumenical Council, and it would only become more so as time went on. In the West they spoke Latin; they spoke Greek in the East. In the West there was only one great city, Rome, and so there was only one great bishop. In the East there were several great cities as well as places sanctified by holy history, making for several great bishops. The capital of Rome had been moved to Constantinople by Constantine, moving the heart of Roman political power east. This helps us understand why there was vying for permanence among the various bishops and their sees in the East, but not in the West. It also helps us understand why more heresies sprung up in the East while the West was not so troubled, having been blessed with a long series of solid popes. It also explains why the East, from time to time, turned to Rome as an unbiased arbiter when disputes arose in the East. (This, naturally, helped add to the prestige of Rome.)



The council decided that the see at Constantinople ranked first of the Eastern Bishops, and second to the Bishop of Rome. The line of reasoning was that Constantinople was the new Rome. This was more a ranking of prestige, but developed into contention for more. It also rejected the false teachings circulating in the East concerning Jesus and the Trinity.

The main accomplishment was the expansion on the original Nicene Creed. Today the creed comes in three forms (not counting the countless translations). There is the common form found in the Western Churches, the common

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα Θεὸν Πατέρα παντοκράτορα, ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων.

Καὶ εἰς ἕνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί· δι' οὗ τα πάντα ἐγένετο· τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοῦς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Παρθένου, καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα· σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ παθόντα, καὶ ταφέντα· καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τριτῇ

form found in the Eastern Churches, and the form used by the Armenian Apostolic Church. The shortest form is used by most Eastern Orthodox denominations. A slightly longer form is used in Western Churches (the words "God from God" in the Second Article and "from the Son" in the Third Article are not included in the Eastern Churches.) Variations between denominations due to translations are not intended to reflect different doctrines. The slightly longer Western form of the Creed, and the noticeably longer form in the Armenian Apostolic Church, are also not intended to introduce new teachings (though many contend for such a view). The least known form is the Armenian Apostolic Church's form, so I'm including it below. Differences

from the standard Eastern (and shortest) form are in bold:

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of God the Father, only-begotten, that is of the substance of the Father. **God from God**, light from light, true God from true God, begotten and not made; of the same nature of the Father, by whom all things came into being **in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible**; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, took body, became man, **was born perfectly** of the **holy** Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. **By whom he took body, soul and mind and everything that is in man, truly and not in semblance.** He suffered and was crucified [the word "crucified" is from the Apostles' Creed] and was buried and rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven **with the same body** and sat at the right hand of the Father. He is to come **with the same body** and with the glory **of the Father** to judge the living and the dead; of His kingdom there is no end.

We believe also in the Holy Spirit, **the uncreated and the perfect**; who spoke **through the Law and through the Prophets and through the Gospels; Who came down upon the Jordan, preached through the apostles and dwelled in the saints.** We believe also in only one catholic and apostolic holy Church; In one baptism **with repentance** for the remission and forgiveness [the word "forgiveness" is from the Apostles' Creed] of sins; In the resurrection of the dead, **in the everlasting judgment of souls and bodies, in the kingdom of heaven and** in the life eternal.

Many scholars feel the Armenian Apostolic Church's form of the Creed existed before the Second Ecumenical Council and might have been the baptismal creed of Constantinople. This will be the last time I refer to this form of the Creed. The differences between the standard form used in the East and West will be covered when we get to that point in covering the Creed itself. A point of debate is the translation of the Greek word that is translated into Latin as "*catholicam*" and into English as "catholic." This occurs in the third article and we will cover it when we treat that article in this series. For now we just need to know it means "universal" and, in the northern German areas where the Reformation began, they commonly translated it "Christian."

Next month we will actually begin looking at the first article of the Nicene Creed and what it is we confess when we use this Creed. Until then, may "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.

A Pentecost Devotion From LHM:

"When the day of Pentecost had come," the Bible says, "the followers of Jesus were all gathered together in one place. Suddenly from heaven, there came a loud noise like a violent wind. The noise," the Bible says, "'filled the whole house' where Jesus' followers were gathered."

Just as suddenly, there appeared on the heads of each person a little "tongue of fire," perhaps like the fire of a candle. But that's not all. Still another miracle occurred! The Bible says at this first Pentecost there were gathered many



people from different parts of the world. Yet, miracle of miracles, they could all understand each other's language.

Well, the Bible says, "as these people from many countries continued in amazement and great perplexity, they said to one another, 'What does this mean?'"

This is also the question you and I need to ask at this hour. What did the first Pentecost of 2,000 years ago mean and what does the Pentecost spirit mean today for teenagers in Atlanta; for senior citizens in Montreal; for grade school children in Boston; for baby boomers in Texas or California? What does the great Christian celebration of Pentecost mean in your life? What is God saying in a very practical way?

As you eagerly await to hear about the Pentecost blessings God has for you in your life, let's read briefly to what happened at the first Pentecost 2,000 years ago. Because what God gave Christ's followers 2,000 years ago, He wants to give you also today.

Next, St. Peter explained to this group of people how God had arranged for their salvation. Peter said: "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God, with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst just as you yourselves know - this Man [Jesus] was delivered up by the predetermined plan and the foreknowledge of God." But what Peter next told these folks hit them like a bombshell. He said, "This Jesus you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."

This is why Pentecost is so important to you. You see, there are many today who have pictured God in various ways. Maybe you see God this way -- as someone always watching and accusing.

On this Pentecost, let me invite you to see God in another way -- the way God has revealed Himself in the Bible. You see, God is a loving and concerned Divine Physician. This Divine Physician uses the medicine of His Word to first show you your sin, also to cleanse you from sin, and then to heal you from your sin. Your spiritual Physician, who revealed Himself and how He works in the first Pentecost, wants to heal you. Thus, Pentecost is the uncomfortable and painful reminder that it was your sins that nailed Jesus to the cross. The cross is a solemn and sobering reminder of what your sins have done to Jesus; Your sin of being moody in the morning instead of being friendly to other family members or acquaintances around you; your sin of receiving juicy bits of gossip and then passing it on from your mouth; the sin of not assembling with other Christians regularly every Sunday to permit your gracious God to apply to your heart His soap of His Law-centered Word to loosen the dirt of sin from your heart and the Word of His Gospel to cleanse and heal you.

Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador



THROUGH THE WORSHIP WINDOW

May Completes Easter With Pentecost:

Our Gospel readings start with the one calling Jesus the true vine and we the branches. A reminder of our position; linked to the Lord.

Later the message includes Jesus prayers for His disciples and then for all of those who follow Him.

The message continues to reveal our Lord's ascension and the promise of the coming Holy Spirit.

There is the event when Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and the Spirit to inherit eternal life.

The Epistle lessons teach us of the faith we must have in Christ to be certain of our salvation.

There is emphasis on the certainty we have due to the many promises in Scripture.

The final Sunday is Trinity Sunday with a focus on our triune God and what that means for lives and eternal future.

May is a good time for renewal of faith.

Arlen D. Besel – Worship

We Are Going! Are You Going, Too?

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.



1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7, 11

Pastor's sermon a couple of weeks ago reminded us all that faith is not stagnant; it is living & active; it does stuff! God gives us everything we need in order to further His kingdom goal of bringing the lost & erring into eternal fellowship with Him. Everything we have been given in this life is for the common good, not our personal splendor. God has equipped us & tasks us, but also provides the opportunities themselves ahead of time so we know how & where to serve! It's a win-win situation! So, we as the body of Christ go into our neighborhoods to find God's missing kids & bring them home again—here, to the Church, where we all receive love & forgiveness & restoration & growth!



My last month's article mentioned our partnering with CHECA and our outreach to our immediate neighbors. I also talked about the upcoming meeting & community yard sale. We at Our Redeemer are going out & meeting our neighbors, becoming involved in their activities & establishing relationships with them. This is our congregation's mission field & goal of our activities for the next calendar year & beyond. We as a church family are being about sharing the love of God in Christ Jesus with those around us—in our own places of living, working & playing, and where we worship. The question now is, "Am I going, too?" In other words, what are you—personally—doing?

Since last month, what have you done to involve yourself with your neighbors? Did you connect with anyone in a meaningful way, establishing a connection that God may be able to build on in the future for someone's salvation? Do you have a copy of our neighborhood prayer list & are you praying for our neighbors each day? What have you committed to do for the upcoming CHECA yard & bake sale? Will you be baking? Will you be sitting in a lawn chair & smiling at our visitors who come to see what we have at the sale? Will you be giving out free water & a tract about the love of God in Jesus, the Water of Life? Will you be attending the CHECA neighborhood meeting, becoming a recognizable face, the face of someone who cares?



We all have different gifts, but all are to be used; neither hoarded nor ignored. We are going out to find our neighbors as the body of Christ here at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church! Are you going, too?

Kitty Rickert, Evangelism Chair



Pastor on Vacation

Pastor and Kitty will be going on a two week vacation to San Diego, California. They will leaving Wednesday, May 30, and be back home Thursday, June 14. That means that the church office will be closed. Kitty's step-mother is moving from her large home into a retirement community, which means significant downsizing. Pastor and Kitty are going to help her out. Of course, there is other family in the area and they are hoping to see as many family and old friends as possible, while remembering the main reason for the trip.

Office Closed May 10-12

The Southeastern District is having its convention May 10-12. Kitty was elected to be our lay representative and pastor is our pastoral delegate. That means they will be in Hickory, North Carolina for those days. The only "office" day this will really impact is Thursday, May 10 (Ascension Day).



Meet and Greet (Bake/Yard Sale)

The Chestnut Hills Estates Community Association (CHECA) is sponsoring a community yard sale May 19 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Basically, this is simply an agreed-upon date for anyone in the community to have a yard sale. Those people who go to yard sales like such events because they can hit a lot of yard sales in one area on the same day.

Our Redeemer is seeking to make a stronger connection with our community and participating in this event is one way we are seeking to do that. Our members may bring yard sale items to church and use one of our tables for their items. The tables will be set up outside. All items you bring that do not sell should be taken back home by you.

You may also bake items to sell.

The church itself, will be handing out free water along with a handout about the church. The handout will make a connection with the free water and Jesus as the water of life.

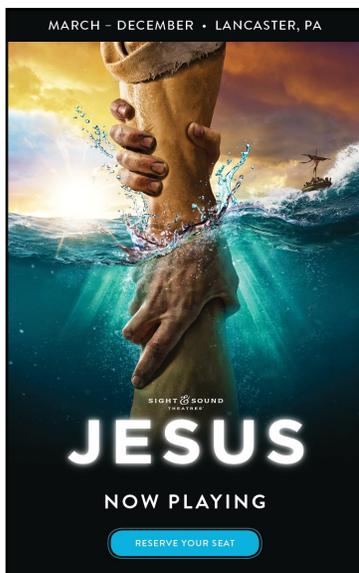
What if you don't have anything to sell? Come anyway! Our main objective is to meet the neighbors. Let them see our faces and see their faces. Walk the neighborhood and visit with the people who are having yard sales. Be sure to mention you are members of Our Redeemer and you heard about the yard sale from church. If someone says they have no church home, you can invite them to worship with us. Or you could just circulate among our tables and greet visitors.

If it is raining on the 19th, CHECA has a rain date of the 20th. That is Pentecost Sunday, and we will not be putting out any tables. However, if you want, you can still go to the various yard sales in the community.

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Sundays	8:45 a.m.	Book of James
Tuesdays	10:00 a.m.	Book of Revelation
Thursdays	10:00 a.m.	Great Hymns Study

Would you like to experience a Sight & Sound show? Now playing is "Jesus" and it runs till the end of the year. If you are interested in going as a group sometime between now and December, please speak with Ruth Hewlett.



Bulletin & Newsletter Information Dates

Please have all information for the bulletin into the office no later than Tuesday of each week. Newsletter info is due no later than the 20th of each month to ensure its inclusion. Thanks!

BIRTHDAYS

2 Jason Cooley
4 Linda Walter

&

ANNIVERSARIES

4 Walter & Lina Besteder
12 Milton & Mitzi Steltz

9 Christina Johnston
9 Dale Streets
9 Dale Allen Streets, Jr.
14 Juliana Johnston
21 Arlen Besel

If your birthday or anniversary is missing from this list, please email your information to me at:
secretary.orlcde@outlook.com.

