



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

## **OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE**

### **JANUARY 2019**

#### **Israel Vacation**

As most who read our newsletter already know, Kitty and I will be taking a vacation in January. We will be taking a train to Newark, NJ, on January 7 and fly out of Newark on January 8, to spend ten days in Israel. We have never been to the land of Jesus' birth before, so we are really looking forward to it. We will see places like Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives. I'm especially looking forward to seeing the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and gazing into its empty cavern. There will also be many sights that relate to Old Testament events.



I have spoken to many people who have visited Israel and they have all said it has had a major positive impact on their faith. When they think of Jesus walking along some road, something concrete comes into their mind. When they think of Jesus teaching the Sermon on the Mount, something concrete comes into their mind. When they think of the angels appearing to the shepherds, something concrete comes to their mind. When they think of Peter rushing to the empty tomb, something concrete comes to their mind.

Now, I'm sure some concrete ideas come to everyone's mind when they hear these accounts. We have all seen drawings of them which help them become more vivid to us. We have all seen photographs that help also. So, why would a visit help more?

The first reason that comes to my mind has little to do with the Bible itself. I have been blessed to travel all over this country. Included in the sights I've seen are the Rocky Mountains, the Grand Canyon and Niagara Falls. I had seen photographs of these sights long before I ever saw them with my own eyes. As great as those photographs were, and as much as they inspired me to want to go and see these wonders, they did not prepare me for what I actually saw. Those vistas are so grand that a photograph simply could not make the same impression on me that the actual natural wonder did. I expect the same experience, time and time again, when I go to Israel.



It is one thing to see photographs of Jews gathered at the "wailing wall," which is part of the foundation of the Temple Jesus walked in; it will be another thing to see those stones for myself (Luke 21:5-6). It is one thing to read about, or see pictures of, the garden where Jesus prayed and was betrayed; it will be another thing to see it with my own eyes and touch some of the olive trees.



The second reason I want to go is related to the first. What I'm especially looking forward to is adding my witness to the host who have gone before me and saying, "I've looked into the tomb of Jesus and it is empty!" (1 Corinthians 15:6; Acts 26:26; Luke 24:12). He is not there! He is risen!

I know that many Protestants are disappointed by this particular sight because the Church of the Holy Sepulcher surrounds it. This Eastern Orthodox Church reflects the piety of centuries gone by when objects of particular significance were adorned with gold and other exquisite decorations. For such Protestants, the effect is gaudy. For me, though, I expect to be moved by the reflection of piety throughout the ages. Most importantly, though, will not be the decorations. It will be the empty tomb. No amount

of decorations, or lack thereof, can change the importance of the empty tomb.

Some of the members of our congregation have asked me to share pictures from our trip. I will be happy to do so. It will take some time to go through what I expect to be hundreds of pictures to select the few dozen I will use, but sometime near the end of February or the early part of March, all interested can gather at Church for the show.

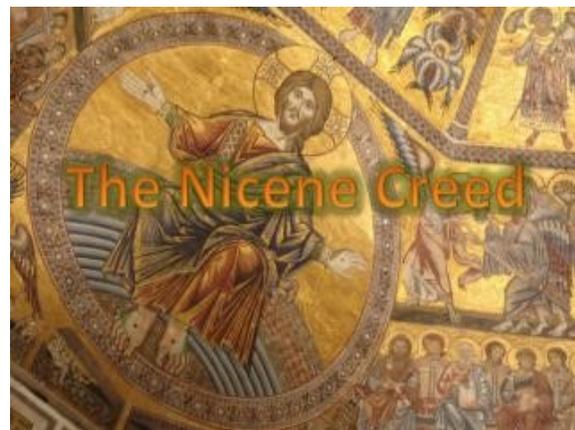
Blessings in Christ,  
Pastor



## Digging In The Nicene Creed First Article, Part 8

*I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*

We now turn our thoughts to God as the creator of all things ... invisible. In our day and age, we know that there are a whole host of things in the physical creation that are not visible to the naked eye. The ancient Greeks first postulated atoms, but never could see them. They certainly had no idea of sub-atomic particles. In the days of Darwin, the cell was conceived of as the smallest part of living creatures. The molecules working within a cell were beyond their comprehension. With the development of microscopes, and subsequent improvements, much of this "invisible" part of the physical creation has become visible to us. However, when the Nicene Creed was written, the word "visible" referred to the physical creation. Therefore it referred to those portions of the creation that were too small for them to see, just as surely as it referred to celestial bodies then undiscovered.



The word "invisible" refers to the "spiritual" realm. This obviously excludes God himself. He is eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 9:7; 1 Timothy 1:17; etc.). What this includes are the angels, and other spiritual realities. The angels fall into two large categories: angels who fell from their original state of bliss (the evil angels) and those who have retained their original state of bliss (the good angels).



The Bible does not tell us when the angels were created, but we do have hints. The first hint is in Genesis 2:1-2. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done."

The above verses, as far as I'm concerned, should be the closing verses of chapter one. Chapter one is the "big picture" story of creation. Chapter two provides details of some of the aspects of that big picture. While Genesis 1 does not mention angels, it does indicate that God had finished his creation. Therefore, it is assumed, he had created the angels by the end of the sixth day.

In the book of Job, God questions Job (chapter 38) about creation. He asks Job where he was at that point in time "when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:7). Using the Hebrew poetry form of parallelism, "sons of God"

and "morning stars" are referring to the same thing. In Revelation 1:20 we see "stars" representing "angels." Based on this association, it seems that the angels were created, perhaps, on the first day.



Genesis 1:31 reads, "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." "Everything God had made" includes the angels. As everything was "good," that means that all the angels were created good. That some of them abandoned their original state of bliss, does not change what they were at first. Therefore, those who think God created evil are mistaken. Those who feel good and evil are equal opposing forces are also mistaken. There is no evil being at the same level as the true God. Satan is nothing but a fallen creature, inferior to God in every aspect and, in fact, inferior to many (if not all) of the angels who did not follow his foolish lead.

Next month we will continue with our consideration of the "invisible" part of creation. 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.

## New Years Devotion — The Lutheran Hour

### Everything new

*And at the end of eight days ... He was circumcised ...* (Read Luke 2:21).



New Year's Day was always an exciting new beginning. If the old year had brought us pain and misery, we could rejoice that it was over, gone, behind us. And in the dawning of a new day, there was the hope the New Year would be so much better.

This day was also a new beginning for the Baby Jesus. Jesus is eight days old, and it is now time to circumcise Him, according to the Law of the Lord. This ceremony made Jesus a member of God's people Israel. It also bound Him under the Law, obligating Him to keep that Law perfectly. As our Substitute, Jesus perfectly obeyed God's Law, so His perfection, holiness and righteousness might be ours, covering our failings, our flaws, and our sins.



But His circumcision carries with it the reminder that Jesus will not simply cover our sin, He will remove it from us -- forever. On this eighth day of His young life, Jesus first sheds His blood for us, but it will certainly not be the last time He does this. On a dark day some 30 years into the future, Jesus will shed His blood and die on the cross to satisfy God's wrath against our sins.

The symbolism of His circumcision and our Baptism both remind us of God's work, cutting off our sinful nature or drowning it. In Baptism God makes us new creatures, so we can stand before Him spotless and pure through Jesus Christ.

## What a way to start a New Year!

### Expectations

*And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ* (Luke 2:26).

Read Luke 2:25-27.

We are moving further away from Christmas Day. For most of us life is returning to normal. Back when I was a child I would be back in school by now, or I would know that it was only a few days away. Time passed for Jesus too. He didn't stay a baby. Like every other child He quickly grew. In our reading He is now more than a month old, and Mary and Joseph take Him to Jerusalem for His presentation.

At the same time they carry Him into the temple courts, an Israelite man enters. Luke describes Simeon in much the same way he had spoken of John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, when he first introduced him. Both men were righteous through their belief in God, firm in their faith, and waiting anxiously for Him to keep His promise and send the Savior. The Holy Spirit had given Simeon a remarkable promise: he would not die before he had seen the Christ. During his lifetime the Messiah would come, and Simeon would see Him with his own eyes.

Simeon was a rare Israelite in his day. By the Holy Spirit's guidance, he understood the Old Testament promises accurately. The Christ would comfort His people by saving them from their sins -- not by driving out their earthly enemies, as most Jews expected.

And this very day Simeon feels a powerful urging from the Holy Spirit to go to the temple. As he passes through the temple courts, he is drawn to a young Boy being carried by His mother and father.

Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador

## THROUGH THE WORSHIP WINDOW



## January — And Beginnings

This portion of the calendar year includes the early events in the Lord's earthly life. We start with the Epiphany; the visit of the Magi, and the baptism of the Lord. After that the Gospel focus is on the wedding and His first miracle. Then we are reminded of the first time the Lord is rejected in Nazareth. At this point the additional miracles are featured that confirm His divine power.

The Epistle lessons begin by revealing the function of the Church and our life in relation to His death for us and the result of the resurrection. It continues with a reminder of the spiritual gifts we receive and the need for the church body to be one in

spirit and faith.

The Old Testament lessons begin by revealing that God will reach the Gentiles as well. Even long before Christ, the Word speaks of the Grace of God and His redemption. And we see God's promise to Israel as His wife; who will be restored to favor.

*Although this is not the start of the new Church year, it is a beginning to meditate on the Lord's gifts and blessings offered us each day. We should take advantage of the services and sacraments.*

Arlen D. Besel– Worship

## Sinner Saints

*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.* Matthew 16:16

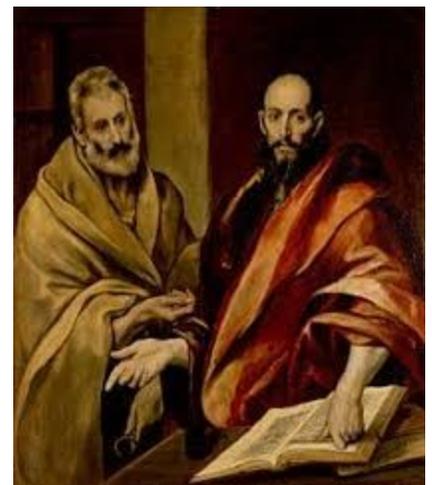
*And he went out and wept bitterly.* Luke 22:62

*But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest...* Acts 9:1

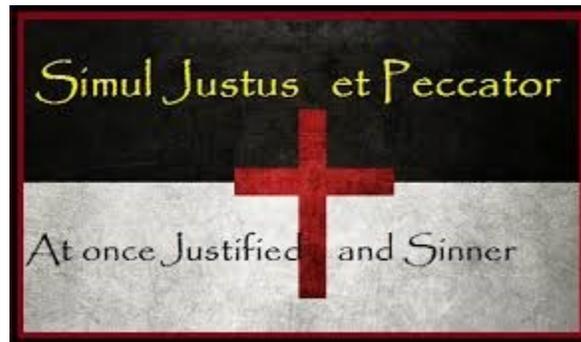
*It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.* Acts 23:6

At the beginning of a new calendar year, we often take stock of ourselves: What have we done? What had we *planned* to do? How did we handle the gifts God has given us? How had we *wished* to use them? Did we improve? How had we *intended* to do/be better?

We find ourselves successful in some things, lacking in many more. This is the lot of every human being ever! We never measure up, certainly not to God's standard—perfection. Peter and Paul, great saints that they were, were both sinner and saint, just as are all believers in Christ this side of heaven.



This month, we celebrate the life and witness of Saints Peter and Paul. The opening Scriptures give you a quick recap of highlights and low-lights in the lives of these two pillars of the Christian faith; their apex and nadir. At one moment, Peter is confessing that Jesus is the Son of the Living God; then he is denying he ever even heard of Jesus. Paul is trying to imprison and kill as many Christians as he can lay his hands on; later he is confessing Christ before an angry mob who wants him dead because of his faith in Jesus.



We, as Christians, understand that our lives in Christ are at the same time saint and sinner. We, therefore, heed the call of the Holy Spirit to be in His Word so that we are strengthened for this life; we need this every day, not just on Sundays, certainly not just a couple of times a year! We daily ask for God to drown our sinful nature in the remembering of our baptism into Christ and revitalize our New Man so we might live a good witness to Him. We will, like Peter and Paul, fall into temptation, but, like the saints before us, we confess our sins, obtain forgiveness, and set our sights on improving by His Spirit in our hearts. May we live this year in newness of life in Jesus, and boldly share that faith with those around us, like Peter and Paul, no matter the cost.



#### **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!

**Reminder:** Pastor & Kitty will be on vacation 1/7-1/21/19; the office is closed.

#### **Epiphany**

The Epiphany of our Lord falls on January 6. Therefore the twelve days of the Christmas Season ends with January 5. At one time, Epiphany was a bigger holiday than Christmas. The word means something like an “unveiling” or a “revelation.” The idea behind the name is that Jesus is revealed as God in flesh, the unpacking of the name Emmanuel. Traditional lessons associated with the celebration include the visit of the wise men, when Jesus is revealed as the Savior of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Another common theme is in the Divine Light shining into our sin-darkened world, like what we find in Isaiah 60. The lessons throughout the Epiphany season accent the divinity of our Lord.

It does not take any real faith to believe Jesus was a flesh-and-blood human. I believe that about George Washington, Martin Luther, Julius Caesar, and my own father. It is what we can't see, his Divine Nature, that requires faith. It takes faith to accept what the writer of Hebrews said about Jesus, “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.” (Hebrews 1:3).



Because Epiphany is fixed to January 6, it typically does not fall on a Sunday. Again, in years past, Christians often had special worship services on Epiphany. This practice is actually making a comeback in some churches. This year, we need not worry about that because January 6 is a Sunday. Join us in worship this day as we celebrate the truth that Jesus is GOD in the flesh.

### Removing the Christmas Decorations

Following our worship service on January 6 (Epiphany) we will remove our Christmas decoration. Please plan to stay and help.



### Build a Bag

Our group that makes sleeping bags for the homeless will end their Christmas break in January. They will meet Saturday, January 12, to resume their work. Anyone may join. They gather at 10:00 AM and stay until 2:00 PM. However, not everyone can stay for the full four hours. Any amount of time you can give is appreciated and helpful. If you plan to stay the whole time, don't forget to bring something to eat for lunch.

### Upcoming Garden Meeting

Once again, we will have the pleasure of having a master gardener speak to us about our neighborhood garden (as well as our own gardens) coming in February. Rick Rudd will be here at Our Redeemer on Tuesday, February 12th, 7 pm, to talk about Cool vs Warm Season Veggies; Good Practices for crop rotation, intensive planting & inter-planting; Garden Maintenance & Integrated Pest Management, plus help answer questions we might have. Please put this on your calendar & plan to attend!

### CHECA

The Chestnut Hills Estate Homeowners Association will have their regularly scheduled meeting Monday, January 7, beginning at 7:00 PM.



### January Anniversaries

6 Bob & Bonnie Johnston

*If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please call the church office. (302) 737-6176 or email [secretary.orlcde@outlook.com](mailto:secretary.orlcde@outlook.com).*

### No January Calendar

Due to the lack of activities & information for January, no calendar has been created; volunteers for the month follow:

1/6:

Comm. Asst. = Bob J.; Ushers = Milt & Mitzi; Lector = Kitty; Greeters = Milt & Mitzi; Flowers = Fiske; Altar = Carla

1/13:

Ushers = Paul & Bob J.; Lector = Hertha; Greeters = Greg & Carla; Flowers = none

1/20:

Ushers = Loren & ?; Lector = Gary; Greeter = Loren; Flowers = Ruth

1/27:

Ushers = Dennis & Jim; Lector = Helga; Greeters = Dennis & Jim; Flowers = none

Important Events in January:

1/1 New Year's Day—Office Closed; 1/3 Winkel, Dover, all day; 1/6 Epiphany, Take Church Decorations Down; 1/7 CHECA Meeting, 7 pm; 1/7-1/21 Pastor & Kitty on Vacation—Office Closed; 1/20 Newsletter Articles Due; 1/30 Summit Worship, 10:30 am; 1/31 Revelation Study, 2 pm

## JANUARY BIBLE READINGS

1	Luke 1:68-79 Mark 2	16	Psalm 44 Genesis 4-6
2	Psalm 30 Mark 3	17	Psalm 45 Genesis 7-9
3	Psalm 31 Mark 4	18	Psalm 46 Genesis 10-12
4	Psalm 32 Mark 5	19	Psalm 47 Genesis 13-15
5	Psalm 33 Mark 6	20	Psalm 48 Genesis 16-18
6	Psalm 34 Mark 7	21	Psalm 49 Genesis 19-21
7	Psalm 35 Mark 8	22	Psalm 50 Genesis 22-24
8	Psalm 36 Mark 9	23	Psalm 51 Genesis 25-27
9	Psalm 37 Mark 10	24	Psalm 52 Genesis 28-30
10	Psalm 38 Mark 11	25	Psalm 53 Genesis 31-33
11	Psalm 39 Mark 12	26	Psalm 54 Genesis 34-36
12	Psalm 40 Mark 13	27	Psalm 55 Genesis 37-39
13	Psalm 41 Mark 14	28	Psalm 56 Genesis 40-42
14	Psalm 42 Mark 15-16	29	Psalm 57 Genesis 43-45
15	Psalm 43 Genesis 1-3	30	Psalm 58 Genesis 46-48
		31	Luke 1:68-79 Genesis 49-50

