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THE APOSTLES' CREED FOR LENT

VOLUME TWO



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Created to be Redeemed & Sanctified:  
The Apostles' Creed for Lent

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"The Resurrection of Jesus" — The Easter lily on one side of his head and the sword on the other, Jesus stands above a scene of the resurrection of the dead.



# *Easter Sunday ~ The Resurrection of our Lord*

“When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” — Mark 16:1-8

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**C**hrist is risen! This was the good news proclaimed by the angel to the women at the tomb that first Easter morning. Had the angel not been there to announce Christ’s resurrection, the women would have simply found an empty tomb and been left with nothing but doubt: Was Jesus’ body stolen? Did some gardener carry it away?

No! Christ is risen indeed! The angel spoke the Word of Christ’s victory over death and the grave, and the women believed, for faith comes from hearing. The women ran from the tomb to tell Jesus’s disciples what they had heard, and on the way Jesus met them and greeted them.

You too have heard this good news of Jesus’ resurrection, and by the work of the Holy Spirit, faith has been created and strengthened in your heart from that hearing. Therefore, do not doubt, nor be alarmed. Christ is risen, and someday you will see Him, just as He told you.

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*We praise You, O Christ, for you have conquered death for us by Your glorious resurrection. Amen.*

*For the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church  
wherever she may be found*

*And for the Glory of God*

## Holy Saturday

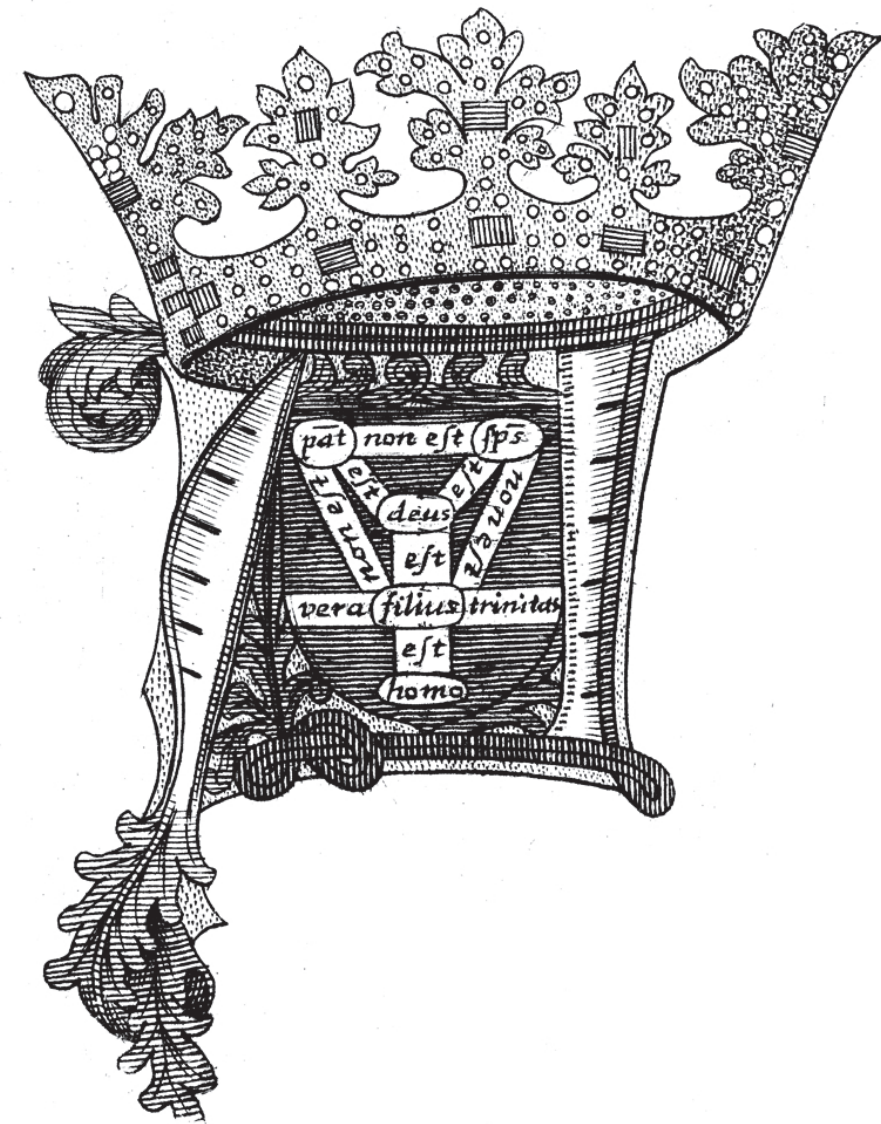
“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.” — 1 Peter 3:18-22

**O**n Good Friday Jesus Christ suffered and died on the cross. He did so “in the flesh,” that is, according to His human nature. Death cannot properly be a part of the divine nature. God is eternal. God is life.

Yet we rightly confess that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, died for us men and for our salvation. His divine and human natures are united inseparably in one person. Therefore, what Jesus Christ did for us in the flesh He did as the Son of God and Savior of all mankind. The Son of God truly was crucified for us—He, the Man who is God. He who alone is essentially righteous in His nature suffered for the sins of us who are unrighteous.

And Who is risen from the dead, gone into heaven, and seated at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him? It is the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, our brother according to the flesh. Therefore, we may with confidence draw near to His throne of grace, for He sympathizes with our weaknesses and will bestow mercy and grace to help in our time of need.

*We praise You, O Christ, for You have redeemed us by Your holy, precious blood and innocent suffering and death. Amen.*



“Shield of the Trinity” by William of Newburgh, 1136-1201 — A version of the Shield of the Trinity or Latin Scutum Fidei (Shield of Faith) set on a shield or coat of arms and topped with a jeweled crown. This traditional Christian visual symbol is a compact diagram of the Athanasian Creed and Doctrine of the Trinity. The Latin reads: “The Father is God, The Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God; God is the Father, God is the Son, God is the Holy Spirit; The Father is not the Son, The Son is not the Father, The Father is not the Holy Spirit, The Holy Spirit is not the Father, The Son is not the Holy Spirit, The Holy Spirit is not the Son.” In this version, the Latin words vera (true), trinitas (Trinity), and homo (man) are added to the diagram to form the shape of the cross.

*Holy Father, holy Son,  
Holy Spirit, three we name Thee;  
Though in essence only one,  
Undivided God we claim Thee  
And, adoring, bend the knee  
While we own the mystery.*

LSB 940:5

Beloved Baptized Saints of God,

This is the next devotion in our series to go through the Small Catechism during the Lenten Season. The Ten Commandments come first because by them God tells us what we must do and so forth. The Creed is the natural follow up to this as it teaches us about this God we are commanded to fear, love, and trust in above all things. The Holy Trinity is a mystery, and yet it has been revealed through Holy Scripture. You have been given to know this mystery by faith, even if your understanding or logic fail to grasp it. The Ecumenical Creeds (Apostles, Nicene, Athanasian) help summarize the teachings of the Scripture. They are of the same intent as the Catechism itself, taking the teaching of Scripture and putting it into a simple, clear, and concise confession of what Scripture teaches and what we ourselves believe. We are blessed to have both the Catechism and the Creeds.

The title for this devotion (*Created to be Redeemed and Sanctified*) comes from the Large Catechism, where Dr. Luther lays out for the Church what sort of God we have, what we know from Scripture, and what we confess before the world around us.

*For here in all three articles God has revealed Himself and opened the deepest abyss of His fatherly heart and His pure, inexpressible love [Ephesians 3:18–19]. He has created us for this very reason, that He might redeem and sanctify us. (Large Catechism, Apostles Creed, par 64).*

During this Lent, please use these devotions within your household to grow in faith and knowledge of our Triune God, the Father who created us to be redeemed by the Son and sanctified by the Spirit. The Lord bless your time in His Word.

Rev. Joshua Scheer  
Editor-in-Chief  
Steadfast Lutherans

*Jesus, in Your thirst and pain,  
While Your wounds  
Your lifeblood drain,  
Thirsting more our love to gain:  
Hear us, holy Jesus.*

*Thirst for us in mercy still;  
All Your holy work fulfill;  
Satisfy Your loving will:  
Hear us, holy Jesus.*

*May we thirst Your love to know.  
Lead us in our sin and woe  
Where the healing waters flow:  
Hear us, holy Jesus.*

LSB 447:13-15



## Good Friday

“After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.” — John 19:28-37

**T**hroughout their writings the Apostles emphasize that they were eyewitnesses of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. Indeed, it was for this purpose that Christ called the apostles, that they should see and hear all that He did and go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel.

Their testimony has gone forth into the world in the Word they wrote, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it has come to you. You believe because the Apostles wrote what they saw in order that you may believe. Though you may not be an eyewitness like John, you are likewise called to confess Christ crucified, a faith built on the testimony of the Apostles.

*Lord Jesus, may the Gospel of Your crucifixion be preached throughout the world for the forgiveness of sins. Amen.*

## The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand  
of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come  
to judge the living and the dead.

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

Amen.

# God the Holy Spirit



**"Feeding the 5,000"** — A boy provides Jesus and his disciples with five loaves of bread and two fish to feed the multitude of 5,000.

## Maundy Thursday

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, *"This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, *"This cup is the new testament in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."* For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself." — 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

**T**he reception of the Lord's Supper at a particular altar is a confession of faith. This is one of the chief reasons why the Church practices closed communion. *"Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."* (1 Corinthians 10:17) It is dishonest to commune at a church which does not share your public confession, and it is negligent for a pastor to commune an individual who does not share that congregation's public confession.

What is the confession made by communicants when they receive the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ at the altar? It is not merely a confession of unity, as though the Sacrament was simply an expression of fellowship. It is instead a confession of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, that by the giving of His body and the shedding of His blood He has made atonement for our sins. This should make every communicant both humble and eager to receive this Sacrament often, even until He comes again in glory.

*Lord Jesus Christ, create in us a hunger and thirst for Your Supper, trusting in Your Word. Amen.*

## Sunday of Lent 4

Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” — John 6:11-14

Read John 6:1–15.

Each of the disciples had a basket to pick up the holy leftovers. Jesus’ concern was that nothing may be lost. Jesus’ concern is the same for His own disciples as well as the five thousand plus. The women and children in attendance were not counted. During the time of the Exodus, only men were counted. Why? Often, the men counted were those available for temple or military service, depending on their family line. The people gathered there (as well as the people hearing this account from St. John) knew how people were counted in the Old Testament. This text itself invites comparison to Israel’s unfaithfulness in the wilderness and the Lord’s faithful provision to them there. Jesus is similarly faithful and generous, giving daily bread and more — Himself.

Jesus is a king that allows His subjects to resist Him. He compels no one. As a servant king, a suffering Servant that is also our prophet, priest, and king, Jesus allows Himself to be rejected by His own subjects all the way to a cross. In that we have reason to rejoice, for the cross is where salvation is won. Thanks be to God that Jesus also feeds us this day with His Word, and according to His own words of promise, with His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

*Lord Jesus, thank you for taking care of us this day. Help us to never reject you but to firmly trust in you at all times. Amen.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, You have prepared  
This feast for our salvation;  
It is Your body and Your blood,  
And at Your invitation  
As weary souls, with sin oppressed,  
We come to You for needed rest,  
For comfort, and for pardon.*

LSB 622:1

## Monday of Lent 4

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

— Titus 3:5

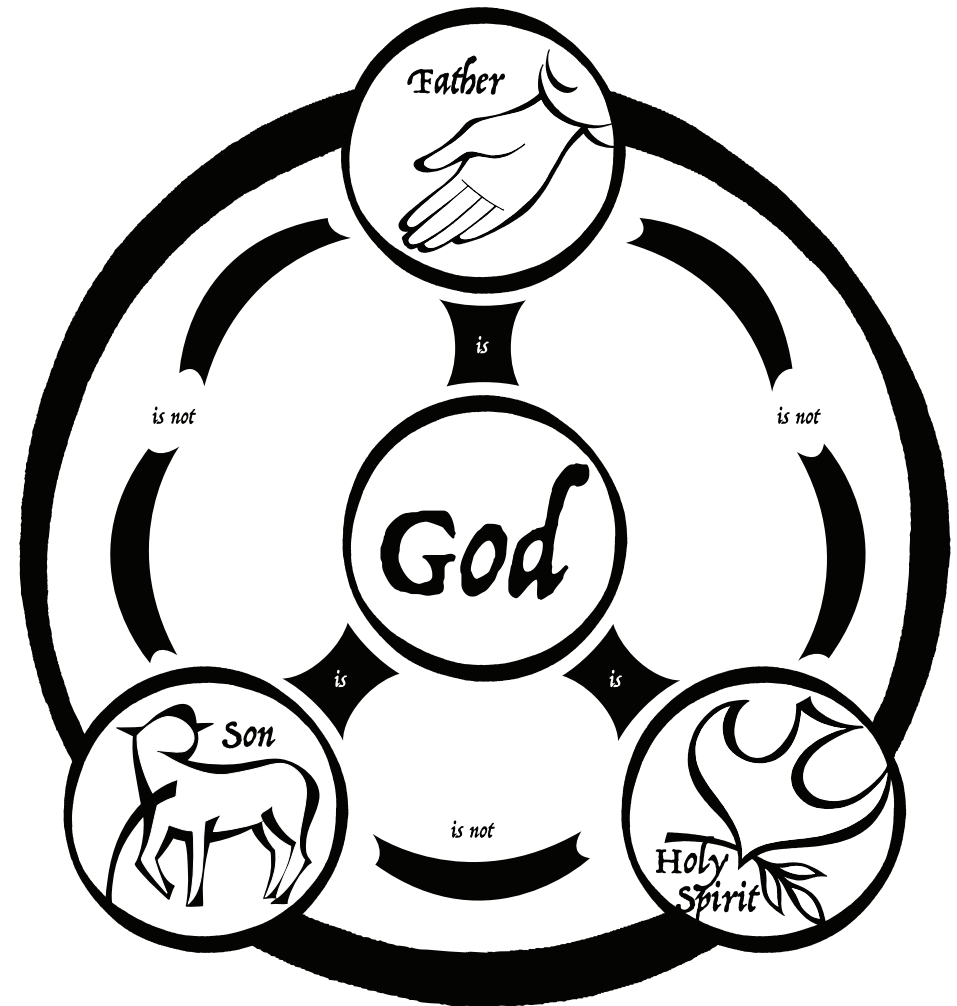
**W**e've got spirit, yes we do. We've got spirit, how 'bout you?" Have you ever heard this cheer at a football or basketball game? My high school used it all the time. It became a shouting contest between our Longhorns and the Visitors to our gridiron or hardwood. I was honestly horrified—speechless—when a fellow seminarian told me his congregation once used it as a “call to worship.” Such is a counter-example, to be sure. Lord, have mercy! Christ, have mercy! Lord, have mercy! Thank the Lord for the holy liturgy!

The Holy Spirit points to Christ Jesus (see John 16:14-15). He does not draw attention to Himself. Compare what we learn in *Small Catechism* about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The “*What does this mean*” sections of the Apostles’ Creed tell Who the Father is and what He does and Who the Son is and what He does compared to what the Third Article meaning confesses about the Holy Spirit. We learn exclusively about what He does rather than Who He is.

The Holy Spirit has names reserved only for God (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16). He has qualities and attributes only God can have (Psalm 139:7-10; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Hebrews 9:14). He can do things only God can do (Genesis 1:2; Titus 3:5). Finally, He receives worship reserved only for God (1 Peter 4:14). The Spirit is the Comforter (John 14:26).

God the Holy Spirit is a person. He is not merely God’s energy, the Lord’s power, or an impersonal “force” found in science fiction.

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is divine, God Himself, the third person of what Christians call the Holy Trinity. (Sanctus Deus, Sanctus Fortis, Sanctus Immortalis, miserere nobis.) Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.





# Holy Wednesday

“And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” — Luke 22:39-44

**T**he Athanasian Creed teaches, *“The catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance...[and] it is the right faith that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is at the same time both God and man.”*

The Trinity and the Incarnation, which are essential to our Christian faith, do not arise from philosophical speculations or the development of human traditions. They are taught in the Word of God. For example, in the account of Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, it is clear that Jesus and the Father are one God yet two distinct Persons, as the Son prays to the Father and speaks of Their wills. It is also clear that the Son of God Jesus is also true Man, as He kneels and prays, as He sweats, as His soul is in agony.

Whoever desires to be saved must think thus about the Trinity and the Incarnation, but not as an intellectual exercise. Rather it must be believed that the Father sent His Son to be born in human flesh and blood and to suffer and die for us men and for our salvation. The Son obeyed His Father’s will not by parading His deity in humanity before men, but by dying on the cross to defeat death and hell for you.

*O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith in the true doctrine taught in Your holy Word. Amen.*



“Infant Baptism” — An infant is being baptized in fulfillment of the great commission. The Holy Spirit is represented in the form of a dove above the group.

The work of the Holy Spirit to call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify the whole Christian church on earth, and keep it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith will be explained in more detail next week.

*Heavenly Father, keep us from error in regard to the Holy Spirit. Help us to always check our experience against Your Word of Truth which was wrought by the same Spirit. Amen.*



*Come, Holy Ghost,  
 Creator blest,  
 And make our hearts  
 Your place of rest;  
 Come with Your grace  
 and heav'nly aid,  
 And fill the hearts  
 which You have made.*

## Holy Tuesday

**“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” — 1 Timothy 6:12-14**

**T**he Scriptures speak of the Christian life as warfare. However, unlike the pagan religions, the weapons of the Christian’s warfare are not of the world, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Instead, as the Christian fights the good fight against the devil, the world, and his sinful flesh, he takes up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and wields it by making the good confession. The good confession is that Jesus Christ is Lord and God, who suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation. It is the same good confession that Jesus Himself made before Pontius Pilate, when He declared Himself to be the King of the Jews, whose kingdom is not of this world. It is the same good confession made by the Church throughout the world and history in the Creed.

There are some who think that this confession has lost its value, that it is no longer good enough for our day and age and must be replaced by a modern, more relevant confession. Others say that a good confession is worthless, that we must occupy ourselves with “deeds, not creeds.” But this is not what the Scriptures teach. The Christian doctrine given to the Church by the Apostles in Holy Scripture is complete and perfect for all time. Therefore, the Church will gladly make the good confession, just as her Lord did, until He appears in glory.

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*Lord Jesus, give us Your Holy Spirit that we may boldly make the good confession until Your return. Amen.*

Fight the good fight  
with all your might;  
Christ is your strength,  
and Christ is your right.  
Lay hold on life, and it shall be  
Your joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race  
through God's good grace;  
Lift up your eyes,  
and seek His face.  
Life with its way before us lies;  
Christ is the path,  
and Christ the prize.

To You, the Counselor, we cry,  
To You, the gift of God Most High;  
The fount of life, the fire of love,  
The soul's anointing from above.

In You, with graces sevenfold,  
We God's almighty hand behold  
While You with tongues  
of fire proclaim  
To all the world His holy name.

Your light to ev'ry thought impart,  
And shed Your love in ev'ry heart;  
The weakness of our mortal state  
With deathless might invigorate.

## Tuesday of Lent 4

“But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” — these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.” — 1 Corinthians 2:9–10

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-16.

**I**saiah 52:15 and Isaiah 64:4 are quoted in 1 Corinthians 2. And what has the Spirit revealed? God’s testimony about Himself. The important thing to the one who bore this testimony, St. Paul, was not how well he spoke or how wise he was, but the focus of his testimony. It wasn’t himself. In fact, he tells us what the testimony of God is: for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Striking words, aren’t they? For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. The heart and soul of this testimony is Jesus’ crucifixion. Jesus’ death was the greatest act of love this world had ever seen. Romans 5:8 says, “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Christ died for us. And because He died for us, we can live eternally with our heavenly Father. Jesus’ death served as the payment for all our sins. No interest is accruing anymore! Jesus’ death completely satisfied God’s anger toward us.

God was indeed angry with us. He doesn’t take lightly our failures to meet His standards. Rather, He has declared that any and all failure merits our being cast into hell! That’s why the cross of Christ is not a morbid sight, but rather a wonderful sight. There Jesus rescued us from this horrible fate by suffering in our place. And He is the only one who has done that. We can’t make ourselves worthy of God’s favor. Neither can anybody else appease God’s wrath for us. Only Jesus did that. We are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus, in Holy Baptism, the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

*Eternal God, by Your Spirit lead us to know and trust in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Amen.*

*Grant us grace to see Thee, Lord,  
Present in Thy holy Word ~  
Grace to imitate Thee now  
And be pure, as pure art Thou;  
That we might become like Thee  
At Thy great epiphany  
And may praise Thee, ever blest,  
God in man made manifest.*

LSB 394:5



# Holy Monday

[Jesus said,] “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.” — John 12:27-33

**J**esus Christ is true Man. This is evident in the trouble that filled His soul as He approached the hour of His death. Yet He is perfect Man; therefore, He is willingly obedient to His Father’s will and seeks the glory of His name.

And what is the glory of God the Father’s name? It is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. For the Son of Man must be lifted up on the tree of the cross. His is not the earthly exaltation of a human king, with all the pomp that accompanies the glories of man. There are no nobles accompanying Him, but two criminals hanging on His right and on His left. He has no gold or precious jewels, but thorns on His brow and nails in His hands and feet. He wears no silken garment, but He is stripped and bloody.

But this is indeed the glory of God’s name, that His only begotten Son should suffer and die. For He suffered and died for you and for your salvation. By Christ’s death, you have been reconciled to God, adopted as sons and heirs of heaven. Yours is now the hope of the glory of God.

*Heavenly Father may your name be glorified in all the earth by the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Amen.*

*Drive far away our wily foe,  
And Your abiding peace bestow;  
With You as our protecting guide,  
No evil can with us abide.*

*Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
And You, from both, as Three in One  
That we Your name may ever bless  
And in our lives the truth confess.*

*Praise we the Father and the Son  
And Holy Spirit, with them One,  
And may the Son on us bestow  
The gifts that from the Spirit flow!*

*Amen.*

LSB 499:5-7

## *The Nicene Creed*

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

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His  
Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of  
Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father, by whom  
all things were made; who for us men and for  
our salvation came down from heaven and was  
incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man; and was crucified also for us  
under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the  
Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits  
at the right hand of the Father. And He will come  
again with glory to judge both the living and the  
dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds  
from the Father and the Son, who with the Father  
and Son together is worshiped and glorified, who  
spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic  
Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the  
remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection  
of the dead and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.

## *Palm Sunday*

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’” — Matthew 21:1-5

Jesus Christ is the Word who from eternity is with God and is God, through whom all things were made. Even when He came in the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, He is and ever shall be the Lord of Creation, for whom and by whom all things exist. Therefore, if the Lord Jesus says that He needs something, even if it’s a donkey and a colt, then they ought to be sent at once.

But isn’t every beast of the forest His, the cattle on a thousand hills? What could the Lord of Creation possibly need? What could He possibly lack?

The necessity that compelled Jesus to act was not His lack, but ours. We were lost and condemned, separated from God and without hope in this world. But for our sake the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He came to His own so that he might save His own, the Creator rescuing His creation out of his boundless love and mercy. Thus, it was necessary for Christ to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, even to the point of death on a cross, for He willed to redeem us and make us His own eternally. How else can we, His creatures, respond but by crying out, “Hosanna in the highest!”

*Blessed are You, O Lord, who had mercy on us poor sinners and came to us in order to redeem us. May we with all creation praise You now and forevermore. Amen.*

*All glory, laud, and honor  
To You Redeemer, King,  
To whom the lips of children  
Made sweet hosannas ring.*

*As You received their praises,  
Accept the prayers we bring,  
O Source of ev'ry blessing,  
Our good and gracious King.*

LSB 442:5

## *Wednesday of Lent 4*

**“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”  
— John 15:26**

**Read John 14:15-21 and the Nicene Creed.**

**T**here are a couple of things missing from that Sunday School song about Zacchaeus, the wee little man who sought to see Jesus. It misses that Zacchaeus received the Lord joyfully at His invitation, that he believed in the Christ and it was counted to him as righteousness, and that, being thus justified by faith, Zacchaeus bore fruit, keeping the Seventh Commandment by helping and being of service to his neighbor in regard to wealth and possessions. The Lord came to seek and save the lost, and He did just that with Zacchaeus. He called sinners to repentance, and this small-of-stature tax-collector was called also to faith in Christ. He was a son of Abraham by faith and he was an heir of the promise of everlasting life.

We as well have been called by our Lord. He calls us to repentance for our many sins. We may not be tax-collectors, but we have all sinned. We are guilty of breaking the Ten Commandments as much as Zacchaeus, but just like Zacchaeus, we have a Savior in Christ Jesus, who makes us children of God through our baptism into Christ. As children of God, the riches of His grace are poured upon us, we receive not what we deserve for our sins but we receive His grace and favor. And so we too, like Zacchaeus live as the children of God by loving God and our neighbor, bearing the good fruit and doing those good works that God, in His Word, has prepared for us to do.

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*Heavenly Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit help us to bear good fruit flowing from our faith in Your Son Jesus. Amen.*

## Thursday of Lent 4

**Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit. — 1 Corinthians 12:3**

**A**bout once a year I get a frantic phone call from a member asking for a meeting. It's a different person every time, but the language and later conversation is nearly identical every time: "Pastor, I have to come see you as soon as possible." I agree, and patiently wait to offer comfort for a semi-common affliction.

“I’ve done it, pastor. I’ve committed the sin against the Holy Spirit,” the person says.

“You’re sure?” I respond.

“Yes,” they say with embarrassment.

After I pause, I offer, “No, you haven’t. Would you like to hear why?”

“Yes, please!”

We then review Matthew 12, where Jesus says, “Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

The Holy Spirit delivers the forgiveness of sins. If a person refuses to hear the Word, receive the Sacrament of the Altar, and overall refuses “delivery” of the Lord’s gifts, then that person won’t be forgiven.

Our conversation continues as I say, “If you had committed the sin against the Spirit, then talking to your pastor, walking into a church, and hearing the Word of God would be the last things you would want to do. Had you sinned against the Spirit, honestly, you wouldn’t care anymore!”

## Reflections

[illegible]



## Saturday of Lent 5

**“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”  
— Hebrews 10:24-25**

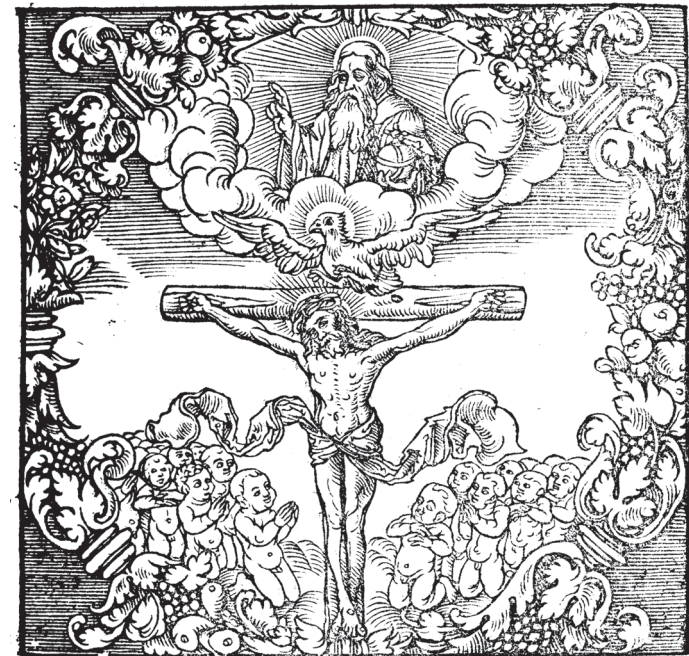
**W**e confess the Holy Spirit and the Holy Christian Church in the same breath. This week we have learned more about the connection between these two. To sum it up, the Holy Spirit makes us holy by His work through the Gospel and the Sacraments in the Church.

We belong to this Church by belonging to a faithful congregation and attending it. Christ has won our salvation on the cross; the Holy Spirit takes that salvation and delivers it to us through the means of grace. But if we don't show up to church to receive it, then we confess with our absence that Christ died in vain.

Let us not neglect to meet together in the assembly of the saints. To do so dishonors God and, moreover, does serious harm to ourselves. The Holy Spirit has His means through which He works to give us the fruits of Jesus' death and resurrection. If we neglect those means, it's not as if the Holy Spirit works through other means, like a cup of coffee, or the morning paper, or the snooze button on the alarm clock, or preparations for a party, or a sports team, or an RV, or a lake, or a golf course. If we won't be sanctified through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, then we won't be sanctified at all.

Today's Bible passage shows that absence from church was as much a problem in the first century as it is today. In the face of temptations away from church, we encourage one another. Just think of what the Holy Spirit offers in church! He brings you forgiveness of sins, a good conscience, and Christ with all his benefits. These are precious treasures, and the Holy Spirit has not put them out of reach but has brought them near for our salvation.

*Dear Jesus, give us peaceful sleep, wake us in the morning, and make us eager to hear Your Word. Amen.*



**“Trinity” — the crucifixion of Jesus dominates this representation of the Christian Trinity.**

Rejecting the Lord and His Word and His servants are sins on the road to the sin against the Holy Spirit. May the good Lord deliver us from all sin, from all error, from all evil, and from the crafts and assaults of the devil. It is God the Holy Spirit who grants us the gift of faith by which we confess with joy, “Jesus is Lord.”

*Almighty God, protect us from rejecting Your Word and work among us. Help us to cherish even the hard words. Amen.*

## The Athanasian Creed

- <sup>1</sup> Whoever desires to be saved must,  
above all, hold the catholic faith.
- <sup>2</sup> Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled  
will without doubt perish eternally.
- <sup>3</sup> And the catholic faith is this,
- <sup>4</sup> that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity  
in unity, neither confusing the persons  
nor dividing the substance.
- <sup>5</sup> For the Father is one person, the Son is another,  
and the Holy Spirit is another.
- <sup>6</sup> But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal,  
the majesty coeternal.
- <sup>7</sup> Such as the Father is, such is the Son,  
and such is the Holy Spirit:
- <sup>8</sup> the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated,  
the Holy Spirit uncreated;
- <sup>9</sup> the Father infinite, the Son infinite,  
the Holy Spirit infinite;
- <sup>10</sup> the Father eternal, the Son eternal,  
the Holy Spirit eternal.
- <sup>11</sup> And yet there are not three Eternals,  
but one Eternal,

## Friday of Lent 5

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” — Matthew 16:18

It is important to remember that the Church is an article of faith: “I believe in...the Holy Christian Church.” This doesn’t mean that the Church is altogether hidden. There are certain marks of the Church by which we can know we’ve found a Christian congregation, namely, the pure Gospel and Sacraments. The *Augsburg Confession* thus says, “*The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered*” (AC, VII).

Nevertheless, the eternal existence of the Church is not always apparent to the eyes. By all appearances, it looks like the world could obliterate the Church. Between litigation and all-out physical persecution, we might wonder what chance we stand of surviving.

In 1 Kings 19, the prophet Elijah ran for his life from Jezebel. Elijah had witnessed widespread persecution of the Lord’s prophets and mass apostasy of the Lord’s people. In the wilderness, Elijah lamented to the Lord, “*I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away*” (1 Kings 19:14). This was one of those moments when it became clear that the Holy Christian Church is an article of faith, not of sight. For the Lord responded to Elijah, “*I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him*” (1 Kings 19:18).

At the time of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession, it looked like the Gospel was about to be destroyed by the combined power of the emperor and the pope. Yet the Reformers boldly confessed that their congregations “*teach that one holy Church is to continue forever*” (AC, VII). The Church may seem small and weak. She is like her Lord in His passion where appearances were deceiving. But the simple fact is, rage as they might, the devil and the world cannot take away the Gospel and the Sacraments. The Church will remain forever, thanks be to God.

*O Jesus, strengthen our faith to believe that Your Church will never perish. Amen.*



*Graciously my faith renew;  
Help me bear my crosses,  
Learning humbleness from You,  
Peace mid pain and losses.  
May I give You love for love!  
Hear me, O my Savior,  
That I may in heav'n above  
Sing Your praise forever.*

LSB 440:6

<sup>12</sup> just as there are not three Uncreated or three Infinites, but one Uncreated and one Infinite.

<sup>13</sup> In the same way, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty;

<sup>14</sup> and yet there are not three Almightyies but one Almighty.

<sup>15</sup> So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God;

<sup>16</sup> and yet there are not three Gods, but one God.

<sup>17</sup> So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord;

<sup>18</sup> and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.

<sup>19</sup> Just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so also are we prohibited by the catholic religion to say that there are three Gods or Lords.

<sup>20</sup> The Father is not made nor created nor begotten by anyone.

<sup>21</sup> The Son is neither made nor created, but begotten of the Father alone.

<sup>22</sup> The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten but proceeding.

<sup>23</sup> Thus, there is one Father, not three Fathers;  
one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit,  
not three Holy Spirits.

<sup>24</sup> And in this Trinity none is before or after  
another; none is greater or less than another;

<sup>25</sup> but the whole three persons are coeternal  
with each other and coequal so that in all things,  
as has been stated above, the Trinity in Unity  
and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped.

<sup>26</sup> Therefore, whoever desires to be saved  
must think thus about the Trinity.

<sup>27</sup> But it is also necessary for everlasting  
salvation that one faithfully believe  
the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it is the right faith that we believe  
and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Son of God, is at the same time both God  
and man.

<sup>29</sup> He is God, begotten from the substance  
of the Father before all ages; and He is man,  
born from the substance of His mother in this age:

<sup>30</sup> perfect God and perfect man,  
composed of a rational soul and human flesh;

<sup>31</sup> equal to the Father with respect to His divinity,  
less than the Father with respect to His humanity.

## Thursday of Lent 5

“He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”  
— John 16:14

Jesus has won the forgiveness of sins by His innocent suffering and death on the cross. Yet if we desire the forgiveness of sins, we do not go to the cross to get it. First, we cannot go to the crucifixion of Jesus; that was an event that happened two thousand years ago. Second, even if somehow we could return to Jesus’ crucifixion, what could we expect to receive there? The Roman soldiers had Jesus’ blood on them, but they were not thereby justified in the sight of God. Those who believed in Jesus were either present and mourning, or else running for their lives and going into hiding. If you want the forgiveness of sins, you don’t go to where it was won. You go to where it is delivered.

We cannot go back in time to get the fruits of Jesus’ cross. But the Holy Spirit takes what belongs to Jesus and He preaches it in a place where we can go: church. When the Holy Spirit proclaims the things of Jesus, He delivers them to us in the present, and that means it is far better to be in the pew on Sunday than on Mount Golgotha two millennia ago. Luther writes brilliantly on this point in the Large Catechism: *“For neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe on Him, and obtain Him for our Lord, unless it were offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the Gospel. The work is done and accomplished; for Christ has acquired and gained the treasure for us by His suffering, death, resurrection, etc. But if the work remained concealed so that no one knew of it, then it would be in vain and lost. That this treasure, therefore, might not lie buried, but be appropriated and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed, in which He gives the Holy Ghost to bring this treasure home and appropriate it to us”* (LC, III.38).

*O Jesus, give us a hunger and thirst for Your Word and Sacraments. Amen.*



## Wednesday of Lent 5

“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” — John 17:17

Jesus prays this prayer to His Father right as His passion begins. As Jesus approaches the cross, this is His concern for His people: that the Father would sanctify them. What does the word “sanctify” mean? It means “make holy.” The Father grants this prayer when He sends the Holy Spirit to work through His Word.

In the First Article of the Creed, we confess that the Father made us; that’s His verb. In the Second Article, we confess that the Son of God has done and suffered many actions for our redemption. In the Third Article, we don’t have an outright verb, but rather a series of nouns. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is at work and is doing something. He is doing what His title suggests. He is the Holy Spirit, and He makes us holy.

Consider these words from the Large Catechism: *“Therefore we must take our stand upon the word Holy Spirit, because it is so precise and comprehensive that we cannot find another. For there are, besides, many kinds of spirits mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, as, the spirit of man, heavenly spirits, and evil spirits. But the Spirit of God alone is called Holy Spirit, that is, He who has sanctified and still sanctifies us”* (LC, III.35-36).

The Holy Spirit makes us holy through holy things: the Holy Gospel, Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, in the Holy Christian Church. Through these things, the Holy Spirit grants us faith in Christ our righteousness, removes the uncleanness of our sins, and makes it so that we can stand before God without threat of destruction.

We cannot make ourselves holy any more than we can redeem ourselves. But Jesus directs us toward the means by which we are made holy: *“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”* To receive the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work, we go to church and hear the Word of God. Through that Word, the Holy Spirit makes us holy as the Father continues to grant the prayer of His Son.

*Father in heaven, continue to grant the prayer of Your Son and send Your Holy Spirit to sanctify us by Your Word. Amen.*

<sup>32</sup> Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ:

<sup>33</sup> one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh but by the assumption of the humanity into God;

<sup>34</sup> one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

<sup>35</sup> For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ,

<sup>36</sup> who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again on the third day from the dead,

<sup>37</sup> ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

<sup>38</sup> At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds.

<sup>39</sup> And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire.

<sup>40</sup> This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved.

## Friday of Lent 4

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” — Matthew 28:19

Read the Athanasian Creed, LSB 319-20.

The catechetical devotions today and tomorrow identify Scripture behind the Athanasian Creed. As Lutherans, we are used to having an Explanation part to Luther’s Small Catechism. Line numbers are those as provided by Lutheran Service Book.

Where did the word “Trinity” come from? Christians invented the word, combining “tri,” meaning “three,” and “unity” as a shorthand to confess the one God in three Persons and three names in one Name of Matthew 28:19.

The Spirit is *one* with Father and the Son as God (Lines 4, 6). (Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; Mark 12:29, 32; John 10:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:5; James 2:19)

The Spirit is a *person distinct* from the Father and the Son (Line 5). (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:18; 6:44; 10:15; 14:16-17, 26-27; 15:26; 16:7, 13-15; Acts 8:29; 10:19; 13:2-4; Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 8:6 Ephesians 4:4-6)

The Spirit is *uncreated* (8). (Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:28; John 1:1; Ephesians 3:10-11; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 1:8)

The Spirit is *infinite* (9). (Genesis 1:1; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 113:4-6; 145:3; 147:5; Isaiah 40:28; Jeremiah 23:24; Romans 11:33; Ephesians 3:8; Revelation 4:8), eternal (Isaiah 9:6; 48:12; Matthew 3:11; John 1:1, 3; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 17:5; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 9:14; Titus 3:5-6; Revelation 1:8; 22:13)



“Pentecost” — the Holy Spirit descends upon the believers in the form of a dove and as flames of fire on Pentecost.

*O Lord, give us delight in the assembly of Your Christian people, and make us see what great gifts You give us there.*

## Tuesday of Lent 5

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” — Acts 2:42

The word “church” translates the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means “assembly.” An assembly always gathers around something and for a distinct purpose. In Greek literature, *ekklesia* often referred to the regular civil assemblies: the Athenians might assemble around the question, “Should we destroy this small island in the Aegean Sea, or not?” In the Creed, the church (*ekklesia*) has adjectives that set it apart from other assemblies: *the Holy Christian Church*. We assemble around something different than the Athenians did.

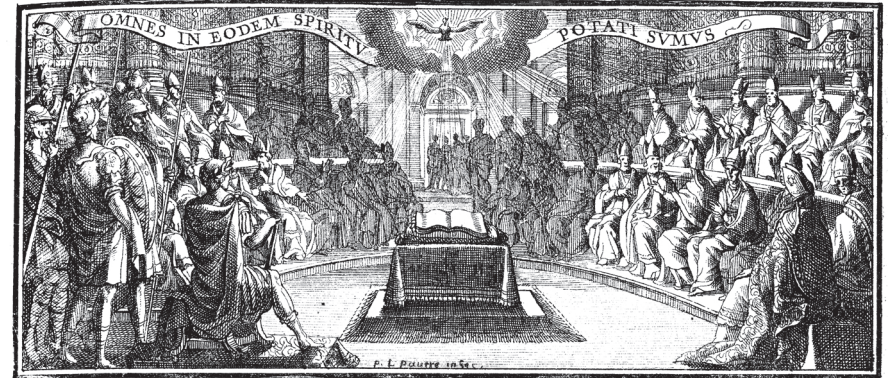
And what is that something? What do we gather around on Sunday morning, and for what purpose? In today’s reading, we hear a description of the assembly that the Holy Spirit called together on Pentecost.

First, the Holy Spirit’s Church is devoted to the apostles’ teaching. In other words, this Church cares about *doctrine*. Why? Because in sound doctrine there is great comfort and salvation and honor toward Christ, whereas in false doctrine there is despair and condemnation and disdain toward Christ. The Holy Spirit has called this assembly by the Gospel, and thus those who have been called want to hear that Gospel in its truth and purity from Christ’s apostles (at that time from their mouths, now through their writings).

Second, the Holy Spirit’s Church is devoted to the fellowship, which might also be translated “communion.” The words “the breaking of bread” further explain this. In short, the Holy Spirit gathers us around the Sacrament of the Altar.

Third, the Holy Spirit’s Church is devoted to the prayers, because the Holy Spirit makes the Church devoted to the commands and promises of her Lord: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

The teaching of the apostles, communion, prayers: these are the things around which the Holy Spirit continues to gather the Church to this day, and it sets the Christian Church apart from every other assembly on earth.



“Historiated Headpiece” — This historiated headpiece depicts the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending upon a gathering of priests and soldiers with the Latin phrase OMNES IN EODEM SPIRITU POTATI SUMUS from 1 Corinthians which means “we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

The Spirit is *almighty* (13).

(Genesis 17:1; 18:14; Psalm 62:11; Matthew 19:26; Mark 14:36; Luke 1:35; John 5:21; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 12:4, 11; Ephesians 1:20–21; 3:20–21; Philippians 3:20–21; Colossians 2:9–10; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6)

The Holy Spirit is *God* (15).

(Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:18, 23; 28:19; John 1:1, 14; 6:27; 10:30; 20:28; Acts 5:3–4; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10–11; 3:16; 6:19; 8:4; 2 Corinthians 1:21–22; 3:17; Colossians 1:15–17; 2:9; Titus 2:10)

*Almighty God, Your Word reveals who you are. As we have looked into Your Word this day, bless us by it. Amen.*

## Saturday of Lent 4

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” — Matthew 28:19

Read the Athanasian Creed, LSB 319-20.

**T**he catechetical devotions yesterday and today identify the Scripture behind the Athanasian Creed. Take the time to read as many Scripture passages as possible.

The Holy Spirit is *God* (15).

(Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:18, 23; 28:19; John 1:1, 14; 6:27; 10:30; 20:28; Acts 5:3-4; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 3:16; 6:19; 8:4; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 3:17; Colossians 1:15-17; 2:9; Titus 2:10)

The Spirit is *Lord* (17).

(Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 11:25; Luke 2:11; Acts 10:36; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Revelation 17:14).

Line 22 confesses, “The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.

(Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 33:27; Job 38:4; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 5:26; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16-17; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 4:11)

The Spirit is coeternal and coequal with Father and Son (25).

(Genesis 1:2, 26; Exodus 3:14-15; Isaiah 44:6; John 8:58; 16:15; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 9:14; 10:29; 1 Peter 1:2; Revelation 5:13; 21:22-23) (John 1:1-2; 10:30; 16:14-15; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:4-6; Hebrews 9:14)

The Holy Spirit always points to Christ:

*“For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.*



*Jesus, I will ponder now  
On Your holy passion;  
With Your Spirit me endow  
For such meditation.  
Grant that I in love and faith  
May the image cherish  
Of Your suffering, pain, and death  
That I may not perish.*

LSB 440:1



## Monday of Lent 5

**“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” — Acts 2:4**

**U**pon first hearing the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed, it may sound like the Holy Spirit merely receives honorable mention before we move onto other things, or that the Third Article is a catch-all for doctrinal points that don’t belong anywhere else. Not so. The Third Article of the Creed in its entirety is about the Holy Spirit: His person, His work, and the means by which He works.

Martin Luther writes in the Large Catechism concerning the connection of the phrases in the Third Article: *“I believe that the Holy Spirit makes me holy, as His name implies. But whereby does He accomplish this, or what are His method and means to this end? Answer: By the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. For, in the first place, He has a peculiar congregation in the world, which is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God, which He reveals and preaches, [and through which] He illumines and enkindles hearts, that they understand, accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it”* (LC, III.40-42).

We see this work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost: the Holy Spirit causes the apostles to preach the Word of Christ. The Holy Spirit works through that Word to enkindle faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit gathers believers around the Means of Grace (more on that tomorrow). Thus the Holy Spirit makes a Christian congregation in which He “daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.” The Holy Spirit and the Church go together, and thus we confess them together in the Third Article of the Creed.

*Heavenly Father, grant to Your Church faithful pastors and congregations and preserve for us the pure Gospel and Sacraments. Amen.*



**“Trinity”** — The woodcut depicts the Trinity, showing the crucified Jesus juxtaposed over against the bronze serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness to save all who gazed upon it from death by serpent bites (see Numbers. 21:4-9; John 3:14-16). The woman in the central position may be Mary Magdalene.

*At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds. And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire. “This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved” (Lines 35-40).*

*Almighty God, help us by Your Word to know the Holy Spirit and to always trust in He whom the Spirit speaks of, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*



# God the Holy Spirit



"Jesus Threatened with Stoning" — Jesus is nearly stoned by the Pharisees in the temple for blasphemy.

## Sunday of Lent 5

"So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple." — John 8:59

**H**ostility mounts this Sunday against Jesus, preparing us for the upcoming Holy Week. Jesus' conversation with the Jews shows how silly their hatred of Him is. Jesus is the Christ, the one promised to them by God, and He has come to save and forgive. Yet the Jews call Him names and accuse Him of blasphemy.

As we continue studying the Third Article of the Creed this week and take up the topic of the Holy Christian Church, we do well to remember that the life of the Church is the life of Christ. We shouldn't expect the Christian life to be full of earthly wealth or honor. We should expect the world to call us names, accuse us of speaking wrongly, and desire our destruction. The life of the Church is cruciform, that is, it is cross-shaped. Our life takes its imprint from Christ's crucifixion.

This is not something to lament. When we suffer as the Church, this should make us recall Christ's sufferings, by which He has atoned for our sins, reconciled us to the Father, and gained for us eternal life. If the Church's life were all roses and sunshine, she would quickly forget her Lord. And so our Lord makes us partakers of His sufferings, which does us the great service of making us remember His sufferings.

But there's more to living in Christ than just suffering. The Church's life is Christ's life, and of Christ it says, "*We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him*" (Romans 6:9). After suffering and dying, Christ rose from the dead, and therefore Paul writes, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18). We share in Christ's sufferings now (to our great benefit), and soon we will share with Him in glory.

*Dear Jesus, keep us faithful to You. As we suffer in this world, comfort us with Your sufferings, and bring us at last to see Your face in glory. Amen.*