

THE CREED

Truth For Today

Lent Devotional



North Sound
Church

Lent 2020 – The Creed: Truth for Today

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

As we journey through Lent, we are invited to let go of something and to add something. We are often tempted to give up something for Lent that we really should give up permanently for our well-being, but that is another topic. But the process of turning from something that we enjoy can create space for us to be more aware of God's presence in our lives, and to focus on what we have put our faith in. Are our behavior, attitudes, and actions a true reflection of what we say we believe in? That is our question during this season leading up to Easter.

We invite you to add this devotional to your life for Lent. There are reflection questions for each day and space to write your thoughts and prayers. If you are in a small group, some of the questions would be appropriate for your times together. As you spend time with God, our prayer is that you would draw closer to the One who loves you, will never forsake you, and desires to transform us individually and as a community.

Ash Wednesday – February 26th

Take a few moments in silence as you reflect on these questions:

1. What do you sense that you need less of in your life over the next 40 days?
2. What are you sensing that you need more of?
3. What do you hope happens for you and/or in you over the next 40 days?

Week 1 – March 1 - 7:

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

This week we look at the story of Moses when he encountered God in the burning bush.

Scripture reading: Exodus 3:1-15

Suggested Activities:

- Make a list of all the things you are grateful for.
- Pray for someone who walks by you today.
- Find a quiet spot and spend 5 minutes in prayer with God.
- Donate items from your closet that you no longer use.
- Set up a time and place that you can volunteer.

Prayer for the Week:

Gracious God, we believe in you, that you are our good, good Father, that you are Almighty, and the Creator of heaven and earth. We believe that you see us and desire to work in and through us to bring freedom and shalom to those around us. Help us to be attentive to your leading in our lives.

In the name of Jesus we pray,
Amen.

Monday, March 2 -

At the end of Exodus 2, the Israelites are suffering under a king that does not know their God. They cried out for help, and “God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them.” Moses was the Almighty God’s instrument in bringing freedom and release to His people.

Read Exodus 3:1-3

Can you think of a time when God got your attention as you were going about your business?

What would have happened if Moses had missed it or not been curious?

What is God stirring in your heart right now? How are you allowing God to use you as an instrument to bring shalom to your community?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Tuesday, March 3 -

Read Exodus 3:4-6

God immediately engages Moses as he takes his first steps toward this burning bush. Moses responds with, "Here I am," and at God's command, takes off his sandals to stand on holy ground.

During Lent, we often give something up in order to more deeply engage in this holy season. Is there something for you to lay aside in order to focus on the holiness and goodness of God?

When have you had a "Here I am" posture, willing to step into an unknown place in order to encounter God?

What about God the Father Almighty would make you want to hide your face?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Wednesday, March 4

Read Exodus 3:7-9

When have you experienced heartbreak on behalf of others who are suffering?

When have you felt seen by God in the midst of difficulty?

Where do you need deliverance in your life?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Thursday, March 5

Read Exodus 3:10-12

Can you think of a time when God has invited you to do something new and you have experienced resistance? What caused you to be reluctant?

Is there an area in your life right now where you are hesitating to follow God's leading? What is God's promise to Moses and what does that mean to you in your hesitancy?

Who in your life needs to be seen and how can you reach out to them this week?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Friday, March 6

Read Exodus 3:13-15

In God's answer of who He is, there is both an eternal sense of God - I AM (also translated I WILL BE) - and a reminder that God has been faithful in the past.

How has God been faithful to you in the past?

How does God's faithfulness give you the courage to step into the future with God?

In what area of your life right now do you need to lean into the faithfulness of God?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Saturday, March 7

Read Exodus 3:1-15

What words or phrases shimmer or resonate with you?

How does this passage deepen your understanding of the God in whom we believe?

How can you be an instrument of God this week, trusting that He has been faithful in the past, is Lord of the present and future, and promises to be with you?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Week 2 – March 8 – 14:

I Believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate

In our text this week, we see that Mary believed, and out of her trust, carried and birthed our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:26-41

Suggested Activities:

- Eat a meal with friends and/or family and talk about your day.
- Make treats for a neighbor or friend with a nice note.
- Pray in the morning for your family and friends.
- Do a craft or play a game that requires no technology.
- Practice giving thanks for even the annoying things today.

Prayer for the Week:

Jesus Christ, God's Son and our Lord, you have demonstrated your desire for us by becoming like us, born not into royalty but into seclusion, to a young woman who was willing to obey. Give us faith in you so that we might be willing to obey with the same faith, that your will may be done on earth through us.

Monday, March 9 -

Read Luke 2:26-28

What do we know about Mary from this passage? What makes her a likely candidate to carry Jesus? What makes her an unlikely candidate?

When have you experienced the favor of God? What would it look like for you to live in the awareness of God's favor on you all the time?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Tuesday, March 10 -

Read Luke 2:29-31

What perplexes you right now? What are you pondering?

“Do not fear.” When was the last time you needed to hear this? How does fear inform your choices and perspectives?

When have you overcome feelings of fear because the promise of a good future was presented?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Wednesday, March 11 -

Read Luke 2:32-35

What do you think was going through Mary's mind as she heard these things?

When have you felt flooded by an outstanding opportunity that sounded unreal? How did you respond?

Knowing Elizabeth was pregnant had to be a reassurance for Mary that God was in this. When have you been encouraged by God's working in someone else and then inspired to take a great risk?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Thursday, March 12 -

Read Luke 2:36-38

“For nothing will be impossible with God.” That was all Mary needed to hear for her to do God’s will and be the mother of Jesus. What do you believe that inspires you to do the will of God?

“Here am I.” The same words that Moses used when he encountered God on the mountain. What is God inviting you to and what will it take for you to echo the words, “Here am I”?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Friday, March 13 -

Read Luke 2:39-41

Who do you share exciting news with? Who are you journeying with as you live into God's will?

What opportunities do you have to affirm the work of God in others' lives?

Who in your life needs to be blessed and encouraged this week by you?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Saturday, March 14 -

Read Luke 2:26-41

What words or phrases stir you?

What did you hear from God this week as you read and journaled?

How does your faith in Jesus as God's Son shape your attitudes, behaviors, and words? Why does it matter that Jesus is God's Son?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Week 3 – March 15 - 21:

Jesus...was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead... the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

The passage this week comes right after the transfiguration, when Jesus shone in all His glory before Peter, James, and John, and Peter wanted to freeze the moment. Jesus knew what his purpose for coming to earth was. As his fame increased, so did his reminders to His followers of what that purpose was. To believe in Jesus Christ is to follow One who lived wholly devoted to His call, and invited his followers to do the same.

Scripture Reading: Mark 10:32-45

Suggested Activities:

- Plan to do something fun with a friend or family member.
- Leave a note for each family member or close friends.
- Sing your favorite song out loud like no one is watching.
- Take a walk and find signs of Spring.
- Learn something new today and share it with others.

Prayer for the Week:

Emmanuel, thank you for living among us and for staying focused on your character and purposes. Remind us that we follow a Lord and Savior who laid aside any reputation in order to reconcile us to God and to one another. As your followers, help us to reflect that same commitment to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Monday, March 16 -

Read Mark 10:32-34

When have you wished that a life story had a different ending that it actually did?

When have you altered the course of your life because you believed you were being called to make the change?

What emotions accompany changes like this? What emotions do you think the disciples were experiencing when they heard Jesus speak of his suffering and death?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Tuesday, March 17 -

Read Mark 10:35-37

Can you think of a time when you have prayed for something and were convinced it was the best thing? What happened and how did you experience the prayer being answered or unanswered?

“What do you want me to do for you?” How has your answer to this question changed during different seasons of your life?

How has your understanding of the ramifications of following Jesus changed over the years? What does it mean to you that you are following One who suffered, was crucified, and was buried?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Wednesday, March 18 -

Read Mark 10:38-40

How comfortable are you with the reality that following Jesus does not guarantee upward mobility?

How have you experienced suffering in the context of your faith in Christ?

What gives you motivation to stay faithful to Christ during difficult times?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Thursday, March 19 -

Read Mark 10:41-42

Can you think of a time when you were offended because someone asked for a favor you were too afraid to ask for?

How does this play out in your context now?

How does Jesus describe leaders who are not His followers? When have you experienced this kind of leadership? What motivates this kind of leadership?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Friday, March 20 -

Read Mark 10:43-45

How does Jesus describe leaders who are His followers? When have you experienced and/or reflected this type of leadership?

What makes it difficult to live into Jesus call to leaders?

How does Jesus' purpose as he stated it in vs. 45 reflect how we should live our lives?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Saturday, March 21 -

Read Mark 10:32-41

What stands out to you in this passage, or stirs emotion in you?

What phrase or word do you want to take with you and why?

How does your faith in Jesus as a serving and suffering Savior and Lord impact your attitudes, actions, behaviors, and words?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Week 4 – March 22 – 28:

I believe in the Holy Spirit

John the Baptist was called to prepare the way for Jesus to come. He understood that the baptism of water in and of itself had no power but prepared the people's hearts to receive the Holy Spirit. The word from which we get baptism, means soaking, like a cucumber is soaked in the brine and over time becomes a pickle. We believe in the Holy Spirit that soaks into us and transforms us into people that reflect the love and character of God.

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:7-13; Romans 8:26-27

Suggested Activities:

- Write a prayer to Jesus as if you could read it to Him face-to-face.
- Note a place you go by today and remember something that happened to you there.
- Draw a picture of what love looks like to you.
- Invite someone to do an activity with you that you usually prefer to do alone.
- Make a meatless dinner tonight and share with family or friends.

Prayer for the Week:

Holy Spirit, come. It is you who can transform us into the people of God. Help us to soak in your presence through our practices and our posture throughout the day. May we acknowledge your presence in every circumstance and allow you to guide our thoughts, our actions, and our words. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Monday, March 23 -

Read Mark 1:7-8

Have you been baptized? What do you remember about it?

What does John the Baptist say about Jesus? About himself?

Would you feel worthy to untie Jesus' sandal? Why or why not? How would Jesus respond to that question?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Tuesday, March 24 -

Read Mark 1:9-11

Why do you think Jesus made his way out to the wilderness to be baptized? What do we learn about Him by this action?

“This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!” This was before Jesus even began His ministry. What is God saying to us in this Trinitarian moment?

Can you hear the Holy Spirit declaring these same words to you and about you - “This is my beloved child, in whom I am well-pleased!”? What emotions are stirred up as you ponder this?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Wednesday, March 25 -

Read Mark 1:12-13

When have you experienced an immediacy of the Holy Spirit directing you somewhere? How did you respond?

Have there been times when the Holy Spirit led you further into the wilderness? What did you experience there?

Is there a feeling of wilderness where you are right now, and if so, where do you see the Holy Spirit's presence?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Thursday, March 26 -

Read Romans 8:26-27

What is the role of the Holy Spirit as described in this passage?

What emotions are a part of this passage?

Have you ever been at a loss of how to pray?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Friday, March 27 -

Read Romans 8:26-27

When have you experienced the Holy Spirit helping you in your weakness?

Twice in this passage, it says that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. How does that bring you comfort?

Is there something you are carrying that the Holy Spirit is inviting you to entrust to God?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Saturday, March 28 -

Read Mark 1:7-13 and Romans 8:26-27

What is stirring in you as you read these passages?

Is there something that God is inviting you to experience in a new way?

How will you live into the reality that you are God's beloved child, in whom God is well-pleased?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Week 5 – March 29 – April 4:

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints

From the beginning of the church, God has desired that we live out our faith in relationship with others and with the conviction that we are a part of a people across generations and the world who belong to God and are united by the love expressed through the Trinity.

Scripture Reading: Revelation 7:9-10; John 13:33-35

Suggested Activities:

- Think about someone you admire and send them a note or talk to a friend or family member about them.
- Invite family or friends over for a family-friends movie night.
- Find a church in another part of the world and pray for them.
- Read your favorite psalm and think about why it is special to you.
- Draw a picture of your favorite animal using only 2 colors.

Prayer for the Week:

Gracious God, you invite us to be in community with one another as you are as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are our model of perfect love and relationship, and we pray that we will reflect your love for each other and for the universal church that your name may be glorified.

Monday, March 30 -

Read Revelation 7:9-10

How are these worshippers described? What might be missing from the description?

Are there expectations that you put on what it means to be a believer that may exclude some followers of Christ in other nations and cultures?

What is significant to you that these followers are robed in white? Can you imagine yourself robed in white?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Tuesday, March 31 -

Read Revelation 7:9-10

When have you experienced a worship service that was unfamiliar to you? What did you learn about how different forms of worship bring glory to God?

Can you imagine what it would be like to stand before God and the Lamb in worship with others from around the world and across the centuries? What emotions are stirred up?

Are there ways that you can open yourself up to those who belong to the family of God who are in a different context than you? What would that look like?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Wednesday, April 1 -

Read John 13:33-35

What question is Jesus not able or willing to answer? Do you have questions that don't seem to have an answer?

What command is Jesus giving the disciples in the midst of the uncertainty?

What does it take to love others in the midst of uncertainty? How easy or difficult is this for you?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Thursday, April 2 -

Read John 13:33-35

How did Jesus exemplify love for his disciples?

How does your love for your community reflect Jesus' love?

Jesus said this is a new commandment. What did he mean by this?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Friday, April 3 -

Read John 13:33-35

Jesus said that by our love everyone will know we are his followers. Are there barriers that get in the way of our willingness to love one another?

What is at stake when we withhold love from one another?

What expectations and/or preconceived ideas might you need to let go of in order to love God's people? How might you overcome these things?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Saturday, April 4 -

Read Revelation 7:9-10 and John 13:33-35

What has been stirred in your heart this week around community and your relationships with others who are in relationship with God?

What step can you take to build a bridge between you and someone with whom there is distance or a conflict?

Who in your community can you thank this week for reflecting God's love to you?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Week 6 – April 5 – 11:

the forgiveness of sins

This is Holy Week, as we walk with Jesus on his journey to the cross. When we experience the darkness, we can appreciate the light so much more. When we have experienced the shame and guilt of our sin, we are ever more grateful for forgiveness.

There are a number of scripture readings this week.

Suggested Activities:

- Pray for those who have lost loved ones this past year. Send one of them a card.
- Go out of your way to serve someone.
- Buy flowers for someone who is sick and drop in to see them.
- Go to a park or public place and pick up litter.
- Plant flowers or seeds.

Prayer for the Week:

God of Salvation, we remember this week with our brothers and sisters across the world, your sacrificial act of forgiveness and love in the suffering and death of Jesus. We are undone by your love as we seek to comprehend. May your love and forgiveness take deep root in our lives so that we might love and forgive others with sincerity of heart and bring glory to you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Monday, April 6 -

Read Mark 14:26-31

How do you think Peter must have felt when his bold commitment was met with Jesus predicting his betrayal?

When have you made huge promises to God that you were unable to keep? How did it leave you?

What is Jesus saying to you about the condition on your heart? Where do you need to confess and ask for his forgiveness?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Tuesday, April 7 -

Read Mark 14:66-72

After reading Jesus' prediction yesterday, what emotions are stirred in you as you read about Peter's failure?

How do you think Peter felt as more people recognized that he had been with Jesus?

Can you think of a time when you faced your sin and failure straight on? How did you feel? What did you do?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Wednesday, April 8 -

Read Luke 23:34, 39-43

Who was Jesus interceding for as he hung on the cross? When have you experienced Jesus interceding for you?

As you read vs. 39-43, when have you been the first criminal in your interaction with Jesus? When have you been able to grasp reality like the 2nd and ask Jesus for forgiveness?

When have you experienced forgiveness and reconciliation? Is there a place where you need to ask forgiveness?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Maundy Thursday, April 9 -

Read John 13:1-11

What did Jesus know about Himself and how did he serve out of that knowledge?

How does your identity in Christ free you to take the role of a servant?

How would you feel if Jesus wanted to wash your feet? What do you believe about Him or yourself that would make it easy or difficult?

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Good Friday, April 10 -

Read Mark 15:33-40

Read this passage through a couple times. What emotions are stirred in you?

Put yourself in the place of each person in this scene? How are they experiencing Jesus' death differently?

In verse 38, it says that the curtain in the temple was torn in two, opening up the Holy of Holies to everyone without the need of a priest. What does it mean to you that you can approach God without fear and without a mediator? Write a prayer of gratitude for this access we have to God.

End by praying the prayer for the week.

Holy Saturday, April 11 -

Read Mark 15:42-47

What is it like for you to sit in complete darkness? How do you feel?

What is God doing in the dark soil of your soul? What are you asking him to do?

What is suspended in your life like this day between Good Friday and Easter? Write a prayer that offers it up to God.

End by praying the prayer for the week.

