

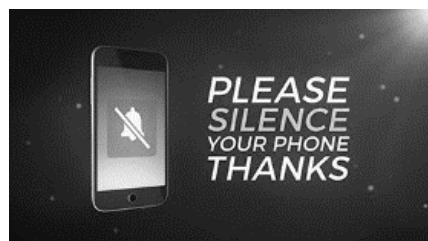
February 28, 2024

*Reflections & Prayers
On Luther's Small Catechism*

The Apostles' Creed

NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
Wednesday, February 28, 2024
The Apostles' Creed
Reverend Giuseppe Mattei

Information for the hearing impaired: Are you having difficulty hearing what is being said during our worship service? If so, try using our Assisted Hearing System, which is available from an usher.



Prelude

Please, stand as able.

Call to Worship

The Lord is near you,

On your lips and in your heart.

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord,

**And believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead,
you will be saved.**

Faith comes from what is heard,

And what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

Prayer

Lord God, use this holy season of Lent to reorient our lives toward You. **As we raise our voices in lament, comfort us and give us cause for hope. Guide us with your Spirit, that we may follow where You lead in confidence and trust. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

Please, sit.

A Reading from the Prophet Ezekiel

18:21-28

Reader: Evelyn Lawlor

²¹ If the wicked turn away from all their sins that they have committed and keep all my statutes and do what is lawful and right, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²² None of the transgressions that they have committed shall be remembered against them, for the righteousness that they have done they shall live. ²³ Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that they should turn from their ways and live? ²⁴ But when the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity and do the same abominable things that the wicked do, shall they live? None of the righteous deeds that they have done shall be remembered, for the treachery of which they are guilty and the sin they have committed, they shall die. ²⁵ Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Brief silence.

A Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah

17:5-10

Reader: Evelyn Lawlor

Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. They shall be like a shrub in the desert and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Please, stand as able.

Hymn

Christ, Be Our Light

715
vv. 1-2



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
 2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
 3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
 4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



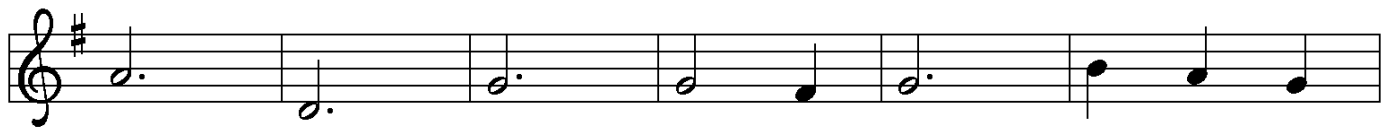
truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
 has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
 to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Please, sit.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

A Special Liturgy on the Apostles' Creed

Let us with the whole church confess the true and only God.

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

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. God also protects me in times of danger and guards me from every evil. All this he does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit on my part. Therefore, I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey him. This is most certainly true.

God has sent redemption to his people.

He has commanded his covenant forever.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Thanks be to God.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

The Lord is gracious in all his deeds.

Brief silence.

With the church on earth and in heaven, let us confess Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Redeemer and Lord.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved.

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

In this consists God's love for us,

In that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the

flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
Thanks be to God.

Please, stand as able.

Hymn

It Is Well with My Soul

785
 vv. 1 & 4

1 When peace like a riv - er at - tend - eth my way, when
 2 Though Sa - tan should buf - fet, though tri - als should come, let
 3 He lives—oh, the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought; my
 4 Lord, has - ten the day when our faith shall be sight, the

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll, what - ev - er my lot, thou hast
 this blest as - sur - ance con - trol, that Christ hath re - gard - ed my
 sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to his cross and I
 clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trum - pet shall sound and the

taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.
 help - less es - tate, and hath shed his own blood for my soul.
 bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
 Lord shall de - scend; e - ven so it is well with my soul.

Refrain

It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.
 It is well with my soul,

Please, sit.

Brief silence.

With the whole church on earth, let us confess the Spirit of God, our Counselor and Sanctifier.

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.

All who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God.

I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church day after day he fully forgives my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you.

The Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak. And he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Thanks be to God.

Brief silence.

A Reading from The Early Church Theologians

Reader: Evelyn Lawlor

Recognize to whom you owe the fact that you exist, that you breathe, that you understand, that you are wise, and, above all, that you know God and hope for the kingdom of heaven and the vision of glory, now darkly as in a mirror but then with greater fullness and purity. You have been made a son of God, coheir with Christ. Where did you get all this, and from whom?

Let me turn to what is of less importance: the visible world around us. What benefactor has enabled you to look out upon the beauty of the sky, the sun in its course, the circle of the moon, the countless number of stars, with the harmony and order that are theirs, like the music of a harp? Who has blessed you with rain, with the art of husbandry, with different kinds of food, with the arts, with houses, with laws, with states, with a life of humanity and culture, with friendship and the easy familiarity of kinship?

Who has given you dominion over animals, those that are tame and those that provide you with food? Who has made you lord and master of everything on earth? In short, who has endowed you with all that makes man superior to all other living creatures?

Is it not God who asks you now in your turn to show yourself generous above all other creatures and for the sake of all other creatures? Because we have received from him so many wonderful gifts, will we not be ashamed to refuse him this one thing only, our generosity?

Though he is God and Lord he is not afraid to be known as our Father. Shall we for our part repudiate those who are our kith and kin?

Brethren and friends, let us never allow ourselves to misuse what has been given us by God's gift. If we do, we shall hear Saint Peter say: Be ashamed of yourselves for holding on to what belongs to someone else. Resolve to imitate God's justice, and no one will be poor. Let us not labor to heap up and hoard riches while others remain in need. If we do, the prophet Amos will speak out against us with sharp and threatening words: Come now, you that say: When will the new moon be over, so that we may start selling? When will the sabbath be over, so that we may start opening our treasures?

Let us put into practice the supreme and primary law of God. He sends down rain on just and sinful alike, and causes the sun to rise on all without distinction. To all earth's creatures he has given the broad earth, the springs, the rivers and the forests. He has given the air to the birds, and the waters to those who live in the water. He has given abundantly to all the basic needs of life, not as a private possession, not restricted by law, not divided by boundaries, but as common to all, amply and in rich measure. His gifts are not deficient in any way, because he wanted to give equality of blessing to equality of worth, and to show the abundance of his generosity.

Saint Gregory of Nazianzen, 4th-century archbishop of Constantinople and theologian.

(Oratio 14, De Pauperum amore, 23-25: PG 35, 887-890)

Brief silence.

Please, stand as able.

Hymn

Christ, Be Our Light

715, vv. 3-5



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
 2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
 3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
 4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
 has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
 to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.

Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Brief silence.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Benediction

God, the Giver of love, Christ, the Resurrection and the Life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless you in this Lenten journey. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

Build Us Up, Lord

670

1 Build us up, Lord, build us up; set in
2 Build us up, Lord, build us up; let our

us a strong foun - da - tion. Lead us to do your
lives re - flect your glo - ry. Cast a - way all our

ho - ly will; form and shape your new cre - a - tion.
doubts and fears; help us tell the world your sto - ry.

Build us up, Lord, build us up; as we
Build us up, Lord, build us up; help us

guide and teach each oth - er, help us to share your love with the
bear good fruit for you, Lord, give us vi - sion and keep us

world: ev - 'ry sis - ter, ev - 'ry broth - er.
sure. Grant us faith that's stead - fast and true.

Refrain

Grow-ing in Christ, we plant seeds for the king-dom; we fol-low in
 faith what's be-gun! Lord, set in our hearts the pow'r of your
 word to spread the news of your Son!

You may leave in silence.

Offering

You may leave your offering in the basket on your way out.

WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY

Presider
Reader
Organist/Director of Music
Audio

Pastor Giuseppe Mattei
 Evelyn Lawlor
 Donna Olsen
 Art Alt

ABSENCE OF FLOWERS. *There are no flowers displayed in the church during Lent, therefore, no flower signup sheet. If you would like to dedicate the bulletin to someone in place of flowers, the suggested donation is \$10.00. The bulletins would then be in honor or memory of that person. Please call or stop by the office with your request, 352-597-1456.*

VISION STATEMENT

Working as a supportive family of faith to extend God's gracious welcome through worship, community service, and spiritual growth opportunities.

MISSION STATEMENT

With the birth of Jesus in our hearts we carry light and love to the world.

OUR VALUES STATEMENT

We recognize that we are not here by chance but are gathered together to be the church of God in Christ. We recognize that God is making us, through grace, into a Fellowship that embodies and expresses the spirit of Christ.

In this fellowship, there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of us are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). We, therefore, welcome equally all people, regardless of religious office, position, possessions, education, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental ability, physical ability, or other distinctions. (Adopted 9/7/07)

**NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEEKI WACHEE
A CONGREGATION OF THE FLORIDA-BAHAMAS SYNOD OF
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

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Reverend Giuseppe Mattei

Deacon Charlotte Downing

Deacon Clyde Rosten

Music Director: Donna Olsen

Audio/Visual Director: Art Alt

Bell Choir Directors: Janet & Todd Holly

Sunday Services at 9:30 a.m.