

*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

A Contemporary Creed

**We believe in God,
creator and lover of the earth,
origin and destiny of us all.**

**We believe in Jesus, the Christ, herald of hope,
God's laughter in the face of despair.
Plunged into death and hell,
he broke free the captives
and is leading the way to a land of promise
where justice and peace will flourish.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who plants the seeds of truth,
brings us to birth as the body of Christ,
and empowers us to confront and transform
all that is corrupt, degrading and deceitful.**

**We believe in the coming reign of God.
In that day all will be consummated
in the glorious marriage of earth and heaven.
In that day those who have passed through
the world's deep sorrow will be raised from the waters,
robed in righteousness,
and gathered into the joyous fulfillment of God's desire.**

**For the inbreaking of that day on this day,
we work and pray:
Come, Lord Jesus, Come!**

*THE GREETINGS OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

THE SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING Isaiah 6: 1-8 (*Pew Bible p. 604*)

Liturgist: This is the word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God!**

SPECIAL MUSIC *Sweet Hour of Prayer* Wm. B. Bradbury
(sung a cappella)

Darla Peterson, Alto Soloist

THE EPISTLE READING Romans 8: 12-17 (*Pew Bible p. 148*)

Liturgist: This is the word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God!**

*THE GOSPEL READING John 3: 1-17 (*Pew Bible p. 89*)

Liturgist: The Gospel of our Lord.

All: **Glory to You, O Christ.**

*THE CONGREGATIONAL CANTICLE - Hymn 321, vs. 1 SONG 13

**Holy Spirit, truth divine, Dawn upon this soul of mine;
Word of God and inward light, Wake my spirit, clear my sight.**

THE SERMON “ *SO FAR, SO NEAR* ” Dr. Swanson

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER (using “debts” and “debtors”)

THE PRESENTATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS & GIFTS

SPECIAL OFFERTORY MUSIC *All We Like Sheep* Ed Harris
Darla Peterson, Alto Soloist Larry Morrison, Recorder

*THE DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow:
Praise Him all creatures here below:
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

*THE UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**O God, we bring our gifts in faithfulness to your call,
beckoning us to a life of sacrifice and love. Now receive these
offerings, and continue to shape us in the likeness of Christ,
our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

*THE CLOSING HYMN 139 *Come, Thou Almighty King* ITALIAN HYMN

*THE BENEDICTION

*THE CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE - Hymn #599 Jacques Berthier
**Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.**

*THE TIME OF SILENCE

*THE CHARGE AND DISMISSAL

Pastor: Now may the blessing of God rest on our heads,
And the Truth of God set us free from all dangers, real and perceived;
So that in our labor and in our leisure,
In our rising up and our sitting down,
In hours of joy or in days of sorrow,
We shall with gladness of heart
Commend our lives wholly unto Him who keeps us from falling.

Pastor: Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

People: **Thanks be to God!**

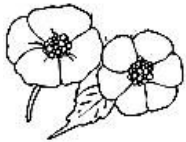
* THOSE WHO ARE ABLE, PLEASE STAND*

YOU WERE GREETED TODAY by Rose and Jim Curry.

WELCOME! GRACE AND PEACE TO ALL!

We are pleased to have you with us if you are visiting today! Kindly indicate your attendance by signing one of the cards in the pew rack, and introduce yourself to others sitting nearby.

Do join us for Fellowship Time immediately following worship each Sunday in the Assembly Room downstairs. Exit at the rear of the Sanctuary to take the stairs, or at the front to take the elevator to the lower level. The Assembly Room is near the small kitchen.



THE FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY are provided by Marilyn Ruff and Sue Ellen Reese & Families in loving memory of their father, Harold I. Kurtz, and his June 1st birthday.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR immediately follows this worship service downstairs in the Assembly Room. Everyone is cordially invited to attend. Hosting today's Fellowship Hour is Jennie Jamieson.

The Apportionment Offering Reminder:



If you were unable to be with us last Sunday, it is still not too late to contribute. Place your envelope on this morning's offering plate, drop it off at the office or mail it to the church.

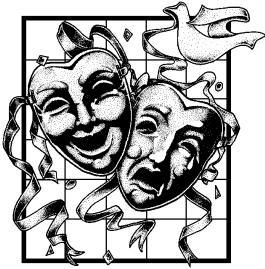
The 2009 per capita assessment is **\$25 for each person on the Membership Roll of Covenant Church.**

Extra envelopes are available in the narthex. Please make checks payable to Covenant Presbyterian Church, marked apportionment in the memo. ***Note: If you are paying with cash**, please remember to place your name on the outside of the apportionment envelope to ensure proper credit for your contribution. Thanks for "doing your part"!

MEETING TODAY - NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Members of the current Nominating Committee will meet **Today, June 7th** in the Connell Room immediately following this morning's worship service.

Be with us for worship next Sunday, June 14th ...



***Dee Demby is back with another
worship performance!***

This time Dee will be accompanied by several friends and associates who will offer an original drama entitled "In The Company of Women."

You'll want to be here for our 10 a.m. worship service on June 14. We look forward to Dee's program which is always innovative and captivating, and never dull or disappointing!

Note: Immediately following next Sunday's worship. . .

... members as well as visitors are encouraged to stay for our Annual Ecclesiastical Meeting to elect a new class of elders and members to serve on the Nominating Committee, as well as to review the reports of our ministries and programs for the preceding year.

Reminder to Committee Chairs:

The deadline to submit your report for the Ecclesiastical Meeting is Wednesday, June 10th. If you need assistance, please call the church office. Resources are available.

In The Life of Our Church

Prayer Concerns:

- MaryLou Wilson Eye surgery last Tuesday at Allegheny General, recovering at home
- Craig Sproat Micah Sproat's father, recently diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and facing uncertain days ahead
- Ellie Walchesky Now at Conccordia, Cabot in recovery from surgery, fighting infection in her knee
- Sharon Mauro Grace Sechler's daughter in Mansfield OH recuperating from recent surgeries
- Pat and Dick Wright Mary Lee Marten's good friends in Evans City both of whom are in need of prayer; Dick is recovering from a brain injury & is now at Harmarville for rehab

For Continued Prayer: Rev. Wayne Bell; Julie & Bud Bruno; Marion Campbell; Marian Curran; Joan Moore; Eleanor Ritts; Gladys Strobel; John Towns; Bill Wilson

Birthdays this week:

Betty Anderson (June 7) and Virginia Lokovich (June 10)

Anniversaries this week:

Orville & Edna Nicholas

Married June 7, 1997
Celebrating their **12th** Wedding Anniversary (Today)

John & Martha Keasey

Married June 8, 1949
Celebrating their **60th** Diamond Wedding Anniversary (Monday)

Bill & MaryLou Wilson

Married June 13, 1948
Celebrating their **61st** Wedding Anniversary (Saturday)

Congratulations, Best Wishes & God's Blessings!



**THE ANNUAL ECCLESIASTICAL MEETING
of The Congregation of
Covenant Presbyterian Church**

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2009

SANCTUARY

11:05 AM

Please make every effort to be present at this meeting.

One Image of the Trinity

by Anne Le Bas

One sunny day a few years ago, I was sitting on a patch of grass in the centre of a town near where I lived. There were lots of other people there, enjoying the sunshine, when suddenly one girl got up, took out three juggling balls and began to juggle. As I watched her, the doctrine of the Trinity came alive. The fact that she had two hands and three balls meant that there was no way she could hold onto them all at once. In order to touch them all she had to keep them in motion.

I remembered something once written by Evagrius of Pontus: "God cannot be grasped by the mind – if he could be grasped, he would not be God." It seemed to me that one of the joys of Trinitarian theology is that it implies that God is always beyond our grasp – that we can't formulate a static picture of the Godhead. I tend to approach the Trinity from the point of view that it is indeed a human concept, a human invention – but that it was an expression of the real experience of the early church. After all, you wouldn't make up something as confusing as that if you wanted to create a religion that sold well! It was the best they could do to "grasp" God!

“On the Trinity”

excerpts from the original writings of John Calvin

(Book I, Chapter XIII, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*)

THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE IN THREE PERSONS TAUGHT, IN SCRIPTURE, FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

(from Section 1.) The doctrine of Scripture concerning the immensity and the spirituality of the essence of God, should have the effect not only of dissipating the wild dreams of the vulgar, but also of refuting the subtleties of a profane philosophy. One of the ancients thought he spake shrewdly when he said that everything we see and everything we do not see is God [*Seneca, Natural Questions, Prologue, I. 13*]. In this way he fancied that the Divinity was transfused into every separate portion of the world. But although God, in order to keep us within the bounds of soberness, treats sparingly of his essence, still, by the two attributes which I have mentioned, he at once suppresses all gross imaginations, and checks the audacity of the human mind. His immensity surely ought to deter us from measuring him by our sense, while his spiritual nature forbids us to indulge in carnal or earthly speculation concerning him.

With the same view he frequently represents heaven as his dwelling-place. It is true, indeed, that as he is incomprehensible, he fills the earth also, but knowing that our minds are heavy and grovel on the earth, he raises us above the worlds that he may shake off our sluggishness and miscomprehension.

The Manichees ... [sought] both to destroy God’s unity and restrict his immensity. Their attempt to pervert certain passages of Scripture proved their shameful ignorance, as the very nature of the error did their monstrous infatuation. The Anthropomorphites also, who dreamed of a corporeal God, because mouth, ears, eyes, hands, and feet, are often ascribed to him in Scripture, are easily refuted. For who is so devoid of intellect as not to understand that God, in so speaking, lisps with us as nurses are wont to do with little children? Such modes of expression, therefore, do not so much express what kind of a being God is, as accommodate the knowledge of him to our feebleness. In doing so, he must, of course, stoop far below his proper height.

(from Section 17.) ... the Scriptures demonstrate that there is some distinction between the Father and the Word, the Word and the Spirit; but the magnitude of the mystery reminds us of the great reverence and soberness which ought to be employed in discussing it. It seems to me, that nothing can be more admirable than the words of Gregory Nazianzus: "I cannot think of the unity without being irradiated by the Trinity; I cannot distinguish between the Trinity without being carried up to the unity." Therefore, let us beware of imagining such a Trinity of persons as will distract our thoughts, instead of bringing them instantly back to the unity. The words Father, Son, and Holy Spirit . . . indicate distinction only, not division.



June 7, 2009
Trinity Sunday

On the face of it, two characteristics of God---transcendence and immanence---appear to be in conflict. A transcendent God is one who is beyond perception, independent of the universe, and wholly “other” when compared to us. An immanent God is one who exists within: within us, within the universe. Clearly there is some conflict between these two. The more God’s transcendence is emphasized the less God’s immanence can be understood and vice-versa. Like the Trinity itself, God’s nature must in the end be considered a holy mystery to the likes of us, limited by human understanding.

Austin Cline, author of
What is God's relationship to Creation? (2005)

The Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor

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