



Confession Prayer Vigil

April 6, 2020



Thank you for participating in the April Prayer Vigil with Shepherd of the Hills. Prayer is one of the central projects of our lives as Christians. Paul encourages us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), hoping that prayer will be a habit of the heart and that our relationship with God will strengthen because of it. Today, you join other members of Shepherd of the Hills in setting apart some of the day for focused and intentional prayer. We pray individually, but we have a collective purpose—to confess both our faith and our sins before a merciful and loving God.

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“Prayer is both conversation and encounter with God. These two concepts give us a definition of prayer and a set of tools for deepening our prayer lives. The traditional forms of prayer—adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication—are concrete practices as well as profound experiences. We must know the awe of praising his glory, the intimacy of finding his grace, and the struggle of asking his help, all of which can lead us to know the spiritual reality of his presence.” --Timothy Keller, from *Prayer*

This prayer vigil will focus on confession, one traditional form of prayer. Confession is about who we are—saint and sinner alike—so we will confess both our faith and our sins. “Confession” comes from the Latin, “confiteor” which means “to speak together”. Confession, then, is the sharing of our inner selves, speaking together with God and one another.

Use this time to converse and encounter God. We have provided some avenues for this time. Feel free to use these as well as to pray as the spirit leads you.



Confession of Faith



the apostles' creed

Each Sunday at worship, we **confess our faith** using the words of the Apostles' Creed. Creed comes from the Latin word *credo*, which means "I believe" and some type of creed can be found as early as the days of the Apostles. The Apostles' Creed we know dates from 750 A.D. and saying it connects us to the faithful of all centuries. During this prayer vigil, meditate on the words of this important confession of faith and what the Apostles' Creed teaches us about how to live.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

Lord, I believe with a full heart that You created heaven and earth and that Your creation is good. Guide me to be mindful of your beautiful creation by...

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary...**

"The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus...the Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God' (Luke 1:30-31, 35)

"And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son." (Luke 2:7)

Lord, I believe in the miracle of your birth. Help me to be like your servant Mary by...

**(I believe Jesus) suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;**

“Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.” (John 19:1-2)

“So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.” (John 19:16-18)

“When he had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” (John 19:30)

“Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.” (John 19:40-42)

Lord, I believe that you were crucified and died to save a fallen world. Help me to remember your sacrifice when...

**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.**

“On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright, the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!’” (Luke 24:1-6)

“When [Jesus] had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up to heaven.” (Luke 24:50-51)

Lord, I believe that you rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Guide me to live a resurrection life by...

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26)

Lord, I believe that the Holy Spirit is with me. Open my heart to the workings of the Holy Spirit, especially...

the holy catholic church,

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.” (Matthew 16:18)

Lord, I believe the church is a holy place founded by you. Help me to be a disciple for you and your church by...

**the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Lord, I believe in the fellowship between all Christians, those living and those dead. I believe that you died for my sins. I believe that eternal glory is a gift from you. Today, I remember the saints who have shaped my life, especially... Today, I remember those who are near an end of this earthly life, especially... Today, I offer thanks to you for the promise of eternal life.



Confession of Sins

Each Sunday at church, we **confess our sins**. Use the following confession to acknowledge your sins and ask for forgiveness.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. **We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.** We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Lord, I have sinned against you in what I have thought. Forgive me for thinking...

Lord, I have sinned against you in what I have forgotten. Forgive me for not thinking about...

Lord, I have sinned against you in what I have said. Forgive me for saying...

Lord, I have sinned against you in what I have not said. Forgive me for remaining silent when...

Lord, I have sinned against you in what I have done. Forgive me for doing...

Lord, I have sinned against you in what I have not done. Forgive me for when I did nothing to...

Scripture – Confession of Faith and Confession of Sins

One way to pray is to read and meditate on scripture. Read this passage from Matthew and contemplate what it teaches us about proclaiming our faith.

Matthew 16: 13-20 – Peter's Confession of Faith in Jesus as Messiah

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter,^[b] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades^[c] will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be^[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be^[e] loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Psalms of Confession and Forgiveness

Martin Luther believed that the Psalms include “most beautifully and briefly everything that is in the entire Bible.” The Psalms are a prayer book, so another way to pray is to read through some of the psalms. Here are a few psalms to consider.

Psalms 32

Psalms 51

Psalms 130

Psalms 143

Example Prayers – Confession of Faith and Confession of Sins

Here are some prayers from the *Lutheran Book of Worship* that you can use to pray or you can use their structure to form your own prayers.

The Human Family

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and, through our struggle and confusion, work to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Enemies

O God, the Lord of all, your Son commanded us to love our enemies and to pray for them. Lead us from prejudice to truth; deliver us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge; and enable us to stand before you, reconciled through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Renewal

Almighty God, by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, you turn us from the old life of sin. Grant that we who are reborn to new life in him may live in righteousness and holiness all our days, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Self-Dedication

Almighty God, draw our hearts to you, guide our minds, fill our imaginations, control our wills, so that we may be wholly yours. Use us as you will, always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Prayers for Holy Week

Holy God, source of all love, on the night of his betrayal, Jesus gave us a new commandment, to love one another as he loves us. Write this commandment in our hearts, and give us the will to serve others as he was the servant of all, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Merciful God, your Son was lifted up on the cross to draw all people to himself. Grant that we who have been born out of his wounded side may at all times find mercy in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



*Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended that we to judge thee have in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted.*

*Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee? Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee.
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee.*

*Lo, the Good Shepherd for the sheep is offered; the slave hath sinned, and the Son hath suffered;
For our atonement, while we nothing heeded, God interceded.*

*For me, kind Jesus, was thine incarnation, thy mortal sorrow, and thy life's oblation;
Thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion, for my salvation.*

*Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay thee, I do adore thee, and will ever pray thee;
Think on thy pity and thy love unswerving, not my deserving.*

"Ah, Holy Jesus"

Text: Johann Heerman, 1585-1647; tr. Robert Bridges, 1844-1930