

The Hillside Messenger

A Message from the Rector

by the Rev Christopher Parrish

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

(The first article of the Apostles' Creed, p. 15, The Book of Common Prayer, 1928)

FROM time to time, it is good that we refresh our knowledge of the Christian faith that we hold. Therefore, I am commencing a series on the Apostles' Creed. Much of what I write here and in subsequent articles on the Apostles' Creed may be found in Part II of our ACNA Catechism, *To Be A Christian – An Anglican Catechism*. Colorado Springs, CO: Anglican Liturgy Press, 2026.

Our Christian faith is based on the testimony of God's written word, the Bible. The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation all bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. This testimony is based on eyewitness accounts of Jesus Christ's birth, life and ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, present heavenly rule, and future coming again. The writers of the New Testament believed that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament hope of the Messiah, or Christ, and the advent of God's kingdom. God's Covenant with Israel paved the way for God's kingdom, which the Church has received from Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

From the Bible we learn about the Lord Jesus Christ and the significance of all the

events of his life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension in God's plan for the salvation of mankind. For this reason, Anglicans believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are "God's Word written" (Article XX, *The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*, p. 607, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1928).

By the second century A.D., the essential teachings of the Apostles' faith had been arranged as an outline of topics for instruction (or catechesis) called the Rule of Faith. This outline later became known as the Apostles' Creed since it summarizes the apostolic faith, or the faith that the Apostles held.

In the tradition of the Church, the Apostles' Creed became the Creed that was used at Holy Baptism and was included as one of three Creeds in the 1662 Prayer Book of the Church of England. The Apostles' Creed is the shortest of the three Creeds and is more easily memorized than the other two, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed.

The Apostles' Creed focuses on God the Holy Trinity, the first article on God the Father Almighty, the second on the Lord Jesus Christ, and what the Church believes concerning Him and his work, the third on the Holy Spirit, the Church and Christian salvation. The whole Creed contains the essence of God's self-revelation for our salvation. This Creed

Inside this issue:

Rector's Message	1
Our Past Is Not Wasted	4
Book Review	6
Prayers	8
Parish Life	10
Calendar	12

has been used and recited by the Church for nearly two thousand years. If we ask what a Christian creed is, the simple reply is that it is a historic statement of the essential truths of the Christian faith. Why do we need such a creed? The creed, by being read or recited daily or weekly, helps believers know and remember the vital truths of their faith, so that they may easily share this faith with their families, friends, and others with whom they are in contact.

Now we proceed to the first article of the Apostles' Creed. "I believe in"- what does it mean? Question 20 of the Catechism tells us that belief in the creeds means that we accept God's revealed truth and that we intend to live according to it. This is not just a matter of intellectual acknowledgement of God, but a commitment to God, in which we entrust our lives to God to live according to his will. As St. James of Jerusalem wrote, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26, KJV). Our faith in God must not be a mere intellectual acknowledgement that God exists, but it must be expressed in a life of obedience to God.

When we say, "I believe in God," we are expressing our faith in "one divine Being eternally existing in three divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is the Holy Trinity" (Question 36, Catechism). There are at least two passages in the New Testament that clearly refer to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The first is Matthew 28:19, where Jesus Christ issues the Great Commission to the Apostles:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

(Matthew 28:19-20, KJV)

The second is St. Paul's valediction at the end of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

(2 Corinthians 13:14, KJV)

What, then, do we mean when we say that we believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? The first chapter of the Book of Genesis testifies that God created heaven and earth and all creatures. When we use the term "heaven and earth," we are referring to the whole universe and all things visible and invisible (the first article of the Nicene Creed: "I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible.") We cannot see ultraviolet light; yet God created it. We most often don't see angelic beings, but God created them. Our Christian faith even affirms the truth that God created everything out of nothing. Scientists have come to realize from their research in many fields that the evidence for the origin of the universe points to an intelligent Being who created it all from nothing. A book which documents findings by chemists, mathematicians, physicists, astronomers, and others, on the origin of the universe, is Stephen Meyer's *The Return of the God Hypothesis*.

Now, why in the Creed is God described as "the Father" before he is described as "Almighty" and "Maker of heaven and earth"? Probably, the answer to this lies in the Lord Jesus Christ's teaching about God as Father. In the presence of his Apostles, he referred to God as "my Father" and as "your Father." The Lord's Prayer, which he taught the Apostles, begins "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9b,



El Greco, Saint Peter, c. 1600–1610, oil on canvas.

KJV). In the same chapter, when instructing the disciples on prayer and forgiveness he refers to God as “your Father” (Matthew 6:8 & 14, for example). So he taught his disciples to call on God the Father. Of course, the Lord Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father (Luke 3:22; John 1:14), but we Christians have all been adopted as God’s children and given the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:15), by whose grace we call God “Father.” The implications of the Fatherhood of God for the Christian life are profound. We must submit to the Father’s discipline (Hebrews 12), for his discipline is to enable us to share in his holiness (Hebrews 12:10). But the love of God the Father for us exceeds all the love human beings can give us! He is sanctifying us through his Holy Spirit (Hebrews 13:20-21).

God the Father is also called the Almighty. What is meant by this term? The answer to Question 41 in the Catechism: he has power over everything and accomplishes everything he wills. With his Son and the Holy Spirit he is omniscient and omnipresent. The term

“Almighty” translates the Latin “Omnipotens,” which means “holding power over all things.” This in turn translates a Greek term which means “Ruler of all things,” and this is perhaps gives us a clearer understanding of God’s power than the word “Almighty.”

There remains just one point to make here, and that is, when God created everything, he saw that it was good (Genesis 1:4; 1:10, etc.). Because Adam and Eve sinned, sin, evil, sickness, corruption, and death came into the world (Genesis 3; Romans 3:1-20). All of us inherited Adam and Eve’s sinful nature. Therefore, we all sin and fall short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23, Question 46, Catechism). The consequences of sin for those that are apart from Christ are separation from God, spiritual death, God’s anger abiding upon them (John 3:36), and hopelessness (Genesis 3:16-19; Psalm 90:3-12; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 6:20-23; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:1-3).

In the next article in this series, I will proceed with the second article of the Apostles’ Creed.

Our Past Is Not Wasted

by Brandy Falcon

HAVE you ever wondered why God allowed you to walk through certain seasons of life? Why have some of us experienced addiction, grief, skepticism, illness, relationship struggles, conflicted spirituality, or other winding paths before coming to Christ?

Perhaps our past isn't something God simply forgives. Perhaps it's also something He redeems and uses to draw others to Himself.

I've been wondering about this for the past two years, ever since I converted to Christianity from New Age spirituality.

To make a very long story short, I spent decades searching for truth. I believed in God, but considered Jesus Christ to be just one of many spiritual teachers. In my wellness practice, I also incorporated spiritual practices such as dream interpretation, shamanic journeying, and intuitive guidance, sincerely believing they were helping people draw closer to God. Looking back, I can now see that the Holy Spirit was patiently drawing me toward Christ, even while I was searching in places that ultimately could not satisfy. Through many experiences – including dreams that deeply affected me – I gradually came to recognize Jesus not as one guide among many, but as the Son of God and my Savior. As my understanding of Christ deepened, I realized I could no longer continue practices that pointed people toward spiritual experiences without pointing them to Him.

I was quickly catechized, baptized, and wholeheartedly immersed myself in St. Luke's and our Anglican faith.

When I first became a Christian, I assumed my former life was simply behind me. Not so! While I stopped offering certain services in my wellness practice, I left my old blog posts and YouTube

videos online. Because of this, I still occasionally attract people looking for the "old me."

Something unexpected has happened though. Instead of pulling me backward, those conversations have become opportunities for God to work.

In the last few months, I've had several clients share with me that they are praying again, reading Scripture again, attending church again, or asking sincere questions about why I became a Christian. One prospective client found me through an old article I had written about healing dreams. When I explained that I now approach dreams through my Christian faith and only work with the Holy Spirit, instead of ending the conversation she asked, "Why did you convert?" I had the privilege of sharing my testimony and explaining that our greatest guide and protector is Jesus Christ.

These conversations are arising naturally – not because I'm trying to persuade anyone, but because people trust me enough to ask. Ironically, being honest about my past has helped build that trust. It doesn't weaken my witness; it strengthens it. People know I understand what it feels like to search.

What I'm beginning to understand is that God often sends us toward people whose language we already understand. Scripture shows this pattern repeatedly.

Moses understood Pharaoh's household because he had lived there. God later used that unique experience to lead Israel out of Egypt.

Paul never hid the fact that he had persecuted the Church. Instead, he returned to that part of his story again and again – not to glorify his past, but to magnify God's mercy (Acts 22; Acts 26). The very man who once opposed the Church became one of its greatest missionaries.

Even the Samaritan woman, after encountering Jesus at the well, immediately returned to the very people who knew her past and simply told them about the One who had changed her life. "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony" (John 4:39).

Perhaps God does something similar with us.

Someone who has overcome alcoholism may be uniquely equipped to walk alongside those who still struggle.

Someone who has experienced infertility may be able to comfort grieving couples.

Someone who once lived far from God may understand skeptics.

Someone raised in the Church may be especially gifted at nurturing children in the faith.

And perhaps someone who spent years searching for spiritual truth outside the Church can lovingly recognize that same longing in others.

Many people who do not yet know Christ are genuinely searching. They long for healing, purpose, transcendence, and truth. Those longings alone

don't lead us to salvation, but they reveal hearts that are seeking something only Christ can ultimately satisfy. We don't need to fear those conversations. We can enter them with humility, knowing where that road leads because we've walked it ourselves.

As Paul reminds us, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Becoming a new creation doesn't erase our story. It redeems it. God rarely wastes anything we surrender to Him.

As you reflect on your own journey, perhaps these questions are worth praying about:

- What experiences has God redeemed in my own life?
- Who might understand my story?
- Who has God uniquely prepared me to encourage?

None of our stories are accidental. In Christ, even the chapters we wish we could erase can become part of someone else's journey to Him. The Lord not only redeems our past – He often uses it to reveal the very people He is calling us to love.



John Constable, Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds, 1823, oil on canvas

The Last Stand: Christ or Chaos — The War for the West by Seth Gruber

by Gareth Comer

THERE is a tension among Christians when it comes to balancing proper engagement with secular culture and government. Some argue that Christians are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20), called to submit to governing authorities (Romans 13:1) and focus solely on preaching the gospel (Matthew 28:19). Others believe our duty extends further: to orient all of society toward Christ, drawing on God's mandate of dominion over creation (Genesis 1:27–28, Genesis 9:1–3, Jeremiah 29:6–7). Seth Gruber, author of *The Last Stand*, stands in the latter camp.

Gruber opens this book with the dominion mandates given to Adam and Eve and later to Noah. Both include commands to multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. In doing so, God establishes the family as the fundamental unit of civilization. Many of the book's chapters explore how modern forces seek to dismantle that foundation.

A key pillar of Gruber's argument is the work of sociologist J.D. Unwin, who studied the rise and fall of civilizations. Unwin observed that societies tend to collapse within three generations of abandoning monogamous marriage in favor of more libertine sexual practices. Gruber identifies 1973 as a pivotal turning point in the United States, when the Supreme Court legalized abortion, the Court weakened restrictions on obscenity and pornography, and Congress passed the Endangered Species Act — a symbolic shift that, in his view, elevated animals above unborn humans.

Much of the book illustrates these claims with historical examples. Some

sections are difficult to read, such as the accounts of unwanted infants abandoned to die in ancient Rome, Urfa, Gaul, and elsewhere. As Christianity spread, saints began rescuing these children — often at the cost of their own lives — until such practices were eventually outlawed. Gruber warns that the same spiritual forces driving ancient infanticide are at work today in the abortion industry.

Later chapters trace the modern threats to Christendom in the West, beginning with the French Revolution, moving through Karl Marx, and culminating in the Frankfurt School. Gruber draws on direct quotes from Cultural Marxists to show their explicit goals: the destruction of the family, sexual liberation, and the suppression of Christianity.

Gruber's writing is engaging and emphatic. At times, though, the chapters feel repetitive, and some sections seem padded with material already covered. A deeper exploration of Christianity's historical battles, victories, and defeats in Western civilization would have strengthened the book. It is also relatively light on specific prescriptions for the Church. Yet the core answer seems straightforward: the Church must reassert itself boldly in the culture.

While readers may differ with Gruber's framing of our age as a "last stand," it is hard to deny that the West is moving in an increasingly un-Christian direction. For many of us, the daily news cycle is discouraging and the temptation to disengage is strong. *The Last Stand* largely succeeds in providing historical perspective on what is truly at stake and offers real encouragement to stand firm in Christ.

This review reflects my own reading and is offered in the hope that it will stir thoughtful conversation among believers. It is recommended for those seeking to understand the cultural moment through a Christian lens.

*The Last Stand: Christ or Chaos — The
War for the West*
Seth Gruber
Vindex Media, Inc., 2026
306 pages, paperback

Prayers

A Bidding Prayer

GOOD Christian People, I bid your prayers for Christ's holy Catholic Church, the blessed company of all faithful people; that it may please God to confirm and strengthen it in purity of faith, in holiness of life, and in perfectness of love, and to restore to it the witness of visible unity; and more especially for that branch of the same planted by God in this land, whereof we are members; that in all things it may work according to God's will, serve him faithfully, and worship him acceptably.

Ye shall pray for Donald, President of these United States, and Gavin, Governor of this State, and for all that are in authority; that all, and every one of them, may serve truly in their several callings to the glory of God, and the edifying and well-governing of the people, remembering the account they shall be called upon to give at the last great day.

Ye shall also pray for the ministers of God's Holy Word and Sacraments; for Bishops, and herein more especially for Steve our Archbishop, Julian our Dean, Darryl our Bishop, Archbishop Samy of the Diocese of Egypt, and Canon Penfield, that they may minister faithfully and wisely the discipline of Christ; likewise for all Priests and Deacons, and herein more especially for Father Parrish, Deacon Vogel, and Deacon Bracken, that they may shine as lights in the world, and in all things may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

And ye shall pray for a due supply of persons fitted to serve God in the Ministry and in the State; and to that end, as well as for the good education of all the youth of this land, ye shall pray for all schools, colleges, and seminaries of sound and godly learning, and for all whose hands are open for their maintenance; that whatsoever tends to the

advancement of true religion and useful learning may for ever flourish and abound.

Ye shall pray for all the people of these United States, that they may live in the true faith and fear of God, and in brotherly charity one towards another.

Ye shall pray also for all who travel by land or sea; for all prisoners and captives; for all who are in sickness or in sorrow, especially Jim and Edna Davis, Debbie, Scott, Brittany, Tanya Theiler, Mark Quinn, Lisa, Ben, Marion, Flo, Max, the Pack, Stanko, and Bouchard families, Dan Hubbard, Mary Frances Reeves, Julie Sine, Wyn Reeves, Mrs. Kitt, Jon Carter, Linda Capone, Rose Handwerker, Ann and Frank MacVoy, Bishop Ilgenfritz, Victoria Grace, Christina, John and Heidi Donnelly, Carl, Judith Boreham, James Kitchin, Molly Ferguson, Deacon Peter & Kim Vogel, John Bainbridge, Alan, Mark Askew, Rosalia Ortiz's extended family, Jodi Schaeffer, Father Darrell Driver, Julia McNeely, Joshua, Betsy, Nancy Balcom, and Barry Ward; for all who have fallen into grievous sin; for all who, through temptation, ignorance, helplessness, grief, trouble, dread, or the near approach of death, especially need our prayers.

Ye shall also praise God for rain and sunshine; for the fruits of the earth; for the products of all honest industry; and for all his good gifts, temporal and spiritual, to us and to all men.

Finally, ye shall yield unto God most high praise and hearty thanks for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all his saints, who have been the choice vessels of his grace and the lights of the world in their several generations; and pray unto God, that we may have grace to direct our lives after their good examples; that, this life ended, we may be made partakers with them of the glorious resurrection, and the life everlasting.



*Fra Angelico, The Mocking of Christ,
1440–1441, fresco.*

And now, brethren, summing up all our petitions, and all our thanksgivings, in the words which Christ hath taught us, we make bold to say,

OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

O GRACIOUS FATHER, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church; that thou wouldst be pleased to fill it with all truth, in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, establish it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of him who died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

O GOD, HEAVENLY FATHER, who by thy Son Jesus Christ hast promised to all those who seek thy kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, all things necessary to their bod-

ily sustenance; Send us, we beseech thee, in this our necessity, such moderate rain and showers, that we may receive the fruits of the earth to our comfort, and to thy honour; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ALMIGHTY GOD, our heavenly Father, who declarest thy glory and showest forth thy handiwork in the heavens and in the earth; Deliver us, we beseech thee, in our several callings, from the service of mammon, that we may do the work which thou givest us to do, in truth, in beauty, and in righteousness, with singleness of heart as thy servants, and to the benefit of our fellow men; for the sake of him who came among us as one that serveth, thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O GOD THE HOLY GHOST, Sanctifier of the faithful, visit, we pray thee, this Congregation of St Luke's Chapel in the Hills with thy love and favour; enlighten our minds more and more with the light of the everlasting Gospel; graft in our hearts a love of the truth; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, O blessed Spirit, whom, with the Father and the Son together, we worship and glorify as one God, world without end. Amen.

Parish Life

- The next Evensong service will take place in the Chapel on Wednesday, August 5th, at 7 p.m. All are welcome!
- The monthly Vestry meeting will be held in McNeely Hall after fellowship hour following Morning Prayer on Sunday, August 9th. All parishioners are welcome to stay and attend.
- The International Day Potluck Luncheon will be served in McNeely Hall after the service of Holy Communion on Sunday, August 16th. At this luncheon, international cuisine will be featured. Please sign up by emailing Bridgitte Parrish (Bcsparrish@gmail.com) to tell her what item or items you will be contributing.
- Please use the sign-up sheet in McNeely Hall to indicate which Sunday or Sundays you will provide refreshments for fellowship hour.
- **Community Mission Project** Our third-quarter mission is to collect funds to contribute to the Tim Tebow Foundation, which combats human trafficking. For more information, use this link: <https://timtebowfoundation.org/> Please write Tim Tebow on your check memo line or offertory envelope when donating to this project. Thank you!
- **Downtown Palo Alto Emergency Food Closet** Please bring canned and dry grocery goods on any Sunday that it is convenient for you to do so.
- **Organ Fund** We welcome donations to this fund. Just write "Organ Fund" on your check memo line or on your offertory envelope.

- **Church Office Hours** Father Parrish's office hours at the church office are:
Wednesdays: 3:00 p.m.—7:00 p.m.
Saturdays: 11:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Somewhere at St. Luke's



Can you identify where this photo was taken?
Look for the answer in next month's issue.

Solution to last month's puzzle: in the narthex.

Calendar

Trinity IX

Sunday, August 2nd, 10:00 AM

Holy Communion with Holy Unction

Evensong

Wednesday, August 5th, 7:00 PM

Evening Prayer

Trinity X

Sunday, August 9th, 10:00 AM

Morning Prayer

Vestry Meeting after fellowship hour

Trinity XI

Sunday, August 16th, 10:00 AM

Holy Communion

International Day Potluck Luncheon after service

Trinity XII

Sunday, August 23rd, 10:00 AM

Morning Prayer

Trinity XIII

Sunday, August 30th, 10:00 AM

Holy Communion

Coffee hour in McNeely Hall follows all Sunday services.

St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills

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Established in 1964

A Parish in the Diocese of All Saints,
Anglican Church in North America