

# THE WITNESS

A PUBLICATION OF WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SUMMER 2004

## Should We Recite the Apostles' Creed?

Dr. James E Bordwine II

The title of this article suggests that some are of the opinion that the people of God should not recite the Apostles' Creed during public worship. Concern for what takes place in worship is always commendable. Purity and truthfulness in our worship are paramount goals. It is beneficial, therefore, to question practices like the recitation of creeds. At the same time, it is also helpful to remind ourselves that we are a creedal church, meaning that the Reformed tradition is one in which written statements of belief have been a hallmark of our development. This characteristic alone does not justify the use of any particular creed, but it is important to remember that creeds and confessions have a long and honorable history among the Reformed.

Having said that, however, it must be emphasized that creeds are not to be seen as independently authoritative. The word "creed" comes from a Latin term meaning "I believe." Creeds are, if constructed rightly, expressions of Biblical doctrine; they are a means by which the people of God declare articles of faith. Creeds are, by definition, therefore, subordinate to the Scriptures which alone are the supreme and final authority for all matters of faith and practice. In a creed, our aim is to state what we believe to be true—that is, what the Word of God teaches. In this capacity, creeds are useful as summaries of Biblical doctrine which, in turn, makes creeds useful as sources of learning theology.

A.A. Hodge wrote:

Creeds and Confessions, therefore, have been found necessary in all ages and branches of the Church, and, when not abused, have been useful for the following purposes: (1.) To mark, disseminate and preserve the attainments made in the knowledge of Christian truth by any branch of the Church in any crisis of its development. (2.) To discriminate the truth from the glosses of false teachers, and to present it in its integrity and due proportions. (3.) To act as the basis of ecclesiastical fellowship among those so nearly agreed as to be able to labor together in harmony. (4.) To be used as instruments in the great work of popular instruction. (*The Confession of*

*Faith*, pp.2, 3)

This paragraph is a good summary statement regarding the necessity and usefulness of creeds. Giving attention to Hodge's four points, I would say that in the Apostles' Creed, we find a simple affirmation of several facts which, as Hodge suggests, reflect knowledge of our faith. Further, I would add that although this Creed is not lengthy, it does "discriminate the truth" from error, particularly in relation to the nature of the God-Man. As to Hodge's third point, it is beyond dispute that one aim in using the Apostles' Creed has been the recognition of ecclesiastical fellowship across the span of time. As

to the fourth point above, the Apostles' Creed has, in my opinion, excelled all others in the matter of "popular instruction." By this I mean that the Apostles' Creed is known by greater numbers of professing Christians than any other single confession or creed. This does not, however, necessarily dispense with concerns that have been expressed about the use of the Apostles' Creed. There is more to be said.

“ In a creed, our aim is to state what we believe to be true—that is, what the Word of God teaches. ”

In reciting the Apostles' Creed, we are claiming to be true the various propositions contained therein. Having given this introduction, the purpose of this article is to consider the reasons why some are opposed to the use of this particular creed in the Church. Objection to the Apostles' Creed is usually expressed in two criticisms. The first criticism is that the Creed is too simplistic or that it is lacking in theological depth and breadth. The second criticism is that certain statements in the Creed are confusing or unbiblical. Below, after providing a summary analysis of the Apostles' Creed, I will address these two criticisms.

### **Summary Analysis of the Apostles' Creed**

The Apostles' Creed was not written by the apostles, but was compiled as a summary of apostolic teaching. In the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, who lived during the latter portion of the first century and died c. 107 during the reign of Trajan, we find declarations that Jesus Christ was born of Mary, that He was persecuted under Pontius Pilate; further, Ignatius writes that Jesus Christ truly was crucified and truly died. It is

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evident that Ignatius was concerned with heretical assertions that Jesus Christ was not genuinely human and, therefore, could not really have suffered and died or been raised from the dead. The ancient heresy known as Docetism, in particular, held that Jesus only appeared to be human. This perspective, of course, undermines the truth and implications of the incarnation. So, from the earliest days, the Church was concerned with combating theological error in regard to the nature of the God-Man.

The Apostles' Creed is the result of such concern occupying the mind of the Church during the Apostolic and Post-Apostolic eras. The individual articles of the Creed are found in writings going back to the Apostolic Age, as illustrated above. The first appearance of the Creed in full form, however, or in a form resembling what we now use, dates from about the fifth century. Even at that time, though, there were differing versions of what came to be known as "The Apostles' Creed."

In his three-volume work, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Philip Schaff observes:

[The Apostles' Creed] contains all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith necessary to salvation, in the form of facts, in simple Scripture language, and in the most natural order—the order of revelation—from God and the creation down to the resurrection and life everlasting. It is Trinitarian, and divided into three chief articles, expressing faith—to God the Father, the Maker of heaven and earth, in his only Son, our Lord and Savior, and in the Holy Spirit (*in Deum Patrem, in Jesum Christum, in Spiritum*

*Sanctum*); the chief stress being laid on the second article, the supernatural birth, death and resurrection of Christ. (vol. II, pp. 14, 15)

While I don't agree with Schaff's opinion that the Creed "contains all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith necessary to salvation," I do believe the remainder of his perspective is insightful. The Apostles' Creed emphasizes the true humanity and, therefore, the true suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This has been the general opinion of the Church regarding the Creed for centuries. It addresses a particular concern—that being the true humanity of Christ—while giving an overview of revelation from creation to resurrection in an obviously simple and uncomplicated format. With that said, I quote again from Schaff:

At the same time, the very simplicity and brevity of this Creed, which so admirably adapt it for all classes of Christians and for public worship, make it insufficient as a regulator of public doctrine for a more advanced stage of theological knowledge. (*ibid.*, p. 16)

While we might appreciate the aim behind the formation of the Apostles' Creed, we do have to agree with Schaff regarding the nature of the Creed. It is not a sophisticated formulation of theology; it was not intended to be such. The Apostles' Creed is not sufficient to stand alone as a declaration of the faith. But, once again, it was never intended to serve in such a capacity. As Schaff goes on to say, as the Church developed in Her understanding of theology, so Her creeds and confessions became more precise and detailed. The Apostles' Creed represents a basic assertion of certain Biblical truths. It developed as a reaction against attacks on the true humanity of the Savior. It does not follow, however, that the rudimentary form of the Apostles' Creed makes it useless to believers of our day. For what it was intended to accomplish, the Apostles' Creed succeeds and may still have a place in our liturgy.

#### **Answering Concerns about the Use of the Apostles' Creed**

I noted above that criticism of the Apostles' Creed normally falls into one of two categories: 1) the Creed is too simplistic, lacking theological depth and breadth; or 2) the Creed contains statements which are confusing or unbiblical. The validity and, therefore, the significance of the first criticism depends, of course, on the standard being applied to the Creed; and, moreover, the strength of this criticism depends, as well, on the purpose behind the use of the Creed. If we say that those creeds and confessions used in public worship must reflect a particular ecclesiastical tradition, such as our Reformed heritage, then the Apostles' Creed may very well be ruled unacceptable because of its broad appeal. By this I mean that the Apostles' Creed is written in a manner which reflects doctrinal convictions found in many Christian communions; it is not written in a manner which reflects points of view which are uniquely Reformed. But, again, unless our goal is to use only creeds and confessions which are formulations of particular schools of theology, then this concern about the Apostles' Creed is of little consequence.

When it comes to concern for theological depth and breadth in our creeds, the standard we follow determines whether a particular creed is useful. Consider, for example, the use of

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## **CONTRIBUTORS:**

TOM BERKOMPAS  
JIM BORDWINE  
DEVIN BOWEN  
CLANCY BOYER  
BRIAN COLE  
LARRY HOLT  
DAN JONER  
JOAN JONES  
GREG SEIFERT

Comments, corrections, criticism and content ideas may be directed to [newsletter@solochristo.org](mailto:newsletter@solochristo.org). Since there is currently no staff, those with really good ideas will be awarded staff positions.

# Westminster's "Witness" . . . Who, What, Where, When & Why

The newsletter you hold in your hands is an attempt to enhance and extend communication, service and fellowship in the congregation that God has established at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Building on the foundation laid by the deacons last year (*The Deacon Beacon*), it is hoped that this periodic publication will help folks new to WPC become acquainted with the church as well as provide opportunities for expression and service to more seasoned members.

Perhaps the best way to initially explore the purpose and goals of a publication like this is to ask and answer some basic questions about the endeavor. We'll leave out the question of how for now and focus on the five 'w's: Who, What, Where, When and Why.

## Who

Simply put . . . You! If you have a desire to serve the body in this way and have some writing and or organizational skills, consider volunteering to help with the newsletter. Talk to Pastor Bordwine if you are interested.

## What

The newsletter will include feature articles, news and events, updates from the officers, special features, poetry and prose, art, calendar and more (items still yet to be determined). If you have an idea for content, please talk to Pastor Bordwine.

## Where

The newsletter will focus upon the congregation, activities and ministries of Westminster Presbyterian Church and her local sister churches in the NW Presbytery.

## When

The intention is that the newsletter will be published quarterly.

## Why

As already stated, the newsletter will seek to enhance communication, service and fellowship at WPC.

## Officer candidates prepare, proceed toward election

One of the important ways the Lord blesses and provides for His people is by raising up shepherds and servants who will care for and serve His flock. Far from occupying positions of prestige and power, the officers in Christ's Church are called to ministries of humility and meekness. Following the example of our Great Shepherd, officers are called to lay down their lives in service to God and to those He has called and redeemed. Though Scripture demands that those that serve as officers be gifted men of outstanding character (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, 1 Peter 5), these men are still men. They, like all men, are in desperate need of the prayers of God's people if they are to fulfill their callings faithfully.

There are currently four men at WPC who, in response to what they believe to be God's call and the recognition and formal nomination of the Church, are making preparations to stand for election as officers. Steve Eaton and Brian Tuck have been nominated to serve as deacons. Tom Berkompas and Clancy Boyer have been nominated to serve as elders. As a part of their training, studies in the BCO and the Westminster Confession are underway. Please remember to pray for, get to know and encourage these men as they seek to honor Christ in this important way. Though elections have not yet been scheduled, training and formal preparation should be completed by late July or early August.

## DEACONS' FINANCIAL UPDATE

Here is the first summary financial report for 2004. There are a couple of things worth highlighting. We began the new year with financial assets totaling \$118,388 and for the first two months of the year we received tithes and offerings of \$47,186. This compares to budgeted gifts of \$40,000 for a giving surplus over budget of \$7,186.

Our operating expenses for the first two months of 2004 totaled \$45,265 which was \$1,325 under the budget for such expenses resulting in a net increase in cash of \$1,921 for the first two months of the year.

If you would like further information on financial matters, please contact Tom Berkompas directly.

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
<b>Beginning Balance (12/31/03)</b>	<u>\$ 118,388</u>		
<b>Add: Tithes and Offerings</b>	47,186	\$ 40,000	\$ 7,186
<b>Less: Operating Expenses</b>	<u>(45,265)</u>	(46,589)	1,325
<b>Net Increase in Cash</b>	1,921		
<b>Ending Balance (2/29/04)</b>	<u>\$ 120,309</u>		

the Apostles' Creed in our worship. If we do not intend to say or imply that it is an exhaustive representation of what we believe the Scriptures to teach, then the criticism regarding the simplicity of the Creed lacks credibility. In reciting the Apostles' Creed, we are using it *as it was intended*—as a concise summary of several fundamental Biblical doctrines with particular emphasis on the true humanity of Jesus Christ. By no means is the Apostle's Creed sufficient to instruct the Church in all we need to know and confess; but neither should we say that it has no value whatsoever in the communication of Biblical truth. It is particularly useful, I would maintain, for instructing the children of the Church and for providing new believers with a basic grasp of several elementary teachings found in the Bible and held by all true Christians. Furthermore, in regard to those seasoned in the faith, the recitation of the Apostles' Creed is a reminder of our connection to all genuine believers in all times and places.

The second primary criticism raised against the Apostles' Creed is that it contains confusing or unbiblical statements. Normally, three declarations in the Creed are specified as creating confusion or as being in error:

1. The reference to God the Father as "Maker of heaven and earth"
2. The statement that Christ "descended into hell"
3. The assertion of belief in "the holy catholic church."

Let's begin with the statement that God the Father is "Maker of heaven and earth." Is this a confusing or unbiblical statement? Some say that this is, indeed, an unbiblical statement because Scripture speaks of Christ as the Creator. It is more accurate to say, however, that Christ is presented in Scripture as the Intermediate Agent through whom God created. When you examine the following sampling of texts, which contain relevant statements about the respective roles of God and Jesus Christ in the matter of creation, you discover that referring to God the Father as "Maker of heaven and earth" is not at all unbiblical (Isa. 40:28; Matt. 19:4; Mark 13:19; John 1:3; Rom. 1:25; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 4:3, 4; Heb. 1:2; 1 Pet. 4:19; Rev. 4:11; 10:6). Let us remember, once again, that the purpose of the Apostles' Creed was not to give us a fully developed Christology. It is not to be faulted, in my opinion, for failing to include a precise explanation of the Biblical doctrine of creation as it touches upon the respective roles of the members of the Trinity. What is said is true, although it is certainly not exhaustive.

The next reference alleged to be in error is the statement that Jesus Christ "descended into hell." Many contemporary Christians understand "hell" to mean only the place of eternal torment. But the word has not been restricted to this singular meaning in history or in theology. The word "hell" has been used to translate two different Greek terms: *gehenna*, which refers to a place of perpetual fire; and *hades*, which refers to the abode of the dead—that is, the place where people go when they die. In this regard, "hades" represents the Old Testament concept of "sheol." Sheol is the place of the dead or

the state of being dead. To say that someone "went to sheol" or was "abiding in sheol" was a way of saying they really died and were buried. This is the meaning of the term "hell" as it is used in the Apostles' Creed.

Remember that one of the heresies combated in the early Church was the teaching that Jesus Christ only appeared to be human and, therefore, only appeared to suffer and die. Although the expression "He descended in hell" may be foreign to us, the Apostles' Creed means to teach that Jesus Christ was fully human and did, in fact, die on the cross and was subject to death for a period of time.

“ When we recite the Creed, we are expressing our unity with those who have come before us and those who will come after us. ”

What has been said thus far, however, may clear up the confusion associated with the phrase "He descended into hell," but it doesn't necessarily prove that this statement is Biblical. Does the Bible say that Jesus Christ "descended in to hell" or, using some equivalent form, teach that Jesus was in the place of the dead following His death and burial? We could, of course, point to the fact that Jesus rose from the dead three days after His death, so He was *somewhere* between His death and His resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3, 4). But this still doesn't

answer our question or confirm the validity of the statement found in the Apostles' Creed. Therefore, we need to give our attention to Acts 2:31. I've included the translations of this verse in the four most popular English Bibles:

"Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay." (NIV)

"he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption." (NKJ)

"He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." (KJV)

"he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld nor did his flesh see corruption." (NASB)

You'll note that four different words are offered as designations for the place from which Jesus came at His resurrection: "grave," "Hades," "hell" and "the netherworld." All refer to the place of the dead or the state of being dead. All mean that Jesus really died and remained under the power of death for a time. The term "hell," found in the KJV, is the one used in the Apostles' Creed.

In this verse, Peter is quoting David who said: "You will not abandon my soul to sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay." (Psa. 16:10) Because this verse is quoted by Peter, we know it finds its ultimate fulfillment in the experience of the Savior. The Christ would not be left in sheol, the place of the dead. Whichever version your prefer, the Greek word (*egkataleipo*) translated "abandoned" (NIV and

NAB) or “left” (NKJ and KJV) means “to leave in straits, to leave behind.” The word speaks of not leaving something or someone where it is. This verse establishes the validity of the phrase “He descended into hell” when “hell” is understood as explained above. Jesus really died, but was not “left in Hades” (NKJ), “left in hell” (KJV), “abandoned to the grave” (NIV), or “abandoned to the netherworld” (NASB).

In his two-volume commentary on the Apostles’ Creed, Hermon Witsius writes: “Whoever intends, then, to express our Lord’s condition in the grave and in the state of death, in the language employed by ancient patriarchs and prophets, cannot make use of more elegant or striking terms than these: ‘Christ descended into hell, hades.’ And this is the native, proper, and literal sense of the expression.” (vol. II, p. 143)

It seems to me that the phrase “He descended into hell” is acceptable and even instructive once you know what was intended and also know what the Scripture says. The fact that modern Christians are uneducated when it comes to historical theology and the development of creeds is not sufficient reason to discontinue using a creed which has been utilized in the Church for centuries—in fact, in this case, it is an argument in favor of using the Apostles’ Creed. We should prefer, I think, to educate contemporary believers so that they appreciate the language and intentions of previous generations of saints rather than eliminate expressions which challenge our understanding.

The third statement alleged to cause confusion is “I believe in the holy catholic church.” The confusion comes, it is maintained, when some hearing the Creed recited mistakenly assume that by “holy catholic church” is meant “holy Roman Catholic church.” The confession of belief in “the holy catholic church” represents a truth that is both Biblical and precious. The term “catholic” means “universal.” When we confess one “holy catholic church,” we are saying that we believe the Scriptures teach that there is only one true Church of Christ upon this earth. This statement, then, honors the unity of the Body of Christ.

It’s worth noting that the writers of the *Westminster Confession*, who certainly had considerable reason to fear being misunderstood on this point, used this very phrase when explaining the doctrine of the church (cf. XXV:1). The phrase “holy catholic church” speaks to the true nature of the Church of Jesus Christ and is, therefore, a refutation of Roman Catholicism and other ecclesiastical institutions which teach contrary to the Bible. Again, I would contend that raising a congregation’s level of understanding so that ancient terms, classical definitions, and traditional practices may be employed is preferable to altering our liturgy or removing whatever exposes our lack of knowledge.

In the above paragraph, I refer to “traditional practices.” Therefore, as a quick aside, I would like to comment on the place of tradition as it touches the question of using the Apos-

tlés’ Creed in public worship. Some would say that an argument from tradition is completely unfounded. I would agree that tradition alone is not an argument for including any practice in worship. But, as I believe I’ve demonstrated above, there is more to commend the use of the Apostles’ Creed than mere tradition. Having said that, however, I will add that while tradition never matters more than Scripture, the very fact that we are one covenant people, one body of the redeemed reaching over many centuries implies that some things—besides Scripture—are going to be handed down.


As a Reformed Presbyterian congregation, our liturgy, for example, is traditional—most of the things we do on Sunday morning can be traced back for many generations. Tradition speaks of unity, like-mindedness and stability. While everything must be measured against the Word, we would be unwise, I think, to consider the tradition of the Church of Christ on earth insignificant. It is *not* authoritative, by any means, but neither is it, from my perspective, irrelevant in our current discussion. The Apostles’ Creed has been utilized as a statement of belief which captures the most basic elements of the faith, elements which all true believers can and should confess.

When we recite the Creed, we are expressing our unity with those who have come before us and those who will come after us. This thought, by the way, prompts me to respond to those who say that we should not use the Apostles’ Creed because Roman Catholics use it. Following this line of reasoning, it is said that when Protestants recite the Creed, they are suggesting an unwitting ecumenism. This can hardly be taken as a valid argument against use of the Apostles’ Creed in Protestant churches—not unless we are ready to apply this principle uniformly instead of selectively. The Roman Catholic Church also regularly uses the Nicene Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.

As I close this portion of the article, I want to emphasize that I do not claim to have answered every objection raised against the use of the Apostles’ Creed in public worship. I have, however, attempted to address some of the most pressing concerns.

“ In reciting the Apostles’ Creed, we are using it *as it was intended*—as a concise summary of several fundamental Biblical doctrines with particular emphasis on the true humanity of Jesus Christ. ”

### Conclusion

Should we recite the Apostles’ Creed in public worship? Yes, I believe we should. Is this Creed sufficient to instruct the congregation in all areas of theology? No, it certainly is not sufficient to accomplish that task. But this doesn’t mean, as I have maintained, that there is no place for the Apostles’ Creed in our worship. Once again, for what it was intended to accomplish, the Creed is a useful tool for imparting knowledge of some basic Biblical teachings, and for educating the Church in the matter of historical theology. Given the state of understanding among modern Christians, I think it is advisable that the use of the Creed in public worship be accompanied by instruction so that the purpose of the Creed might be grasped and puzzling phrases understood. 

## Under His Authority: An Update from your Session

*Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 1 Peter 5:1-5*

These words present a sober reminder to the session of the great responsibility we bear in serving as the shepherds of this body, of which Christ is the Chief Shepherd. To serve under His authority and for His glory is both a fearful and joyous privilege. In reviewing some of the actions of the session, we trust that by being more informed you will find encouragement in what our Lord is accomplishing here at Westminster.

Currently the session is meeting every other Wednesday at 6:30 PM at the church. Session meetings always begin with a devotional and prayer. Following the approval of the docket and the minutes from the last meeting and receiving the clerk's report, which includes any membership, baptism, or communion interview actions, discussion begins on the items of business. These items include any matter that touches the church. These may include: personal issues or concerns of members, review of and planning for worship services, Presbytery and General Assembly matters, missions, discipleship, or any other ministry related item that may be related to the well-being of the church. Any of the items may involve only discussion or result in a specific action.

Over the past several months, a great amount of time has been spent dealing with the recent turmoil of the departure of several families. And we continue to deal with this. This has demanded much of our time and energy, but we are ever thankful for the way our merciful God has enabled us to work through these matters. During this time we have been pleased to see many good things happening at Westminster. The attitudes of love and service have been especially pleasing to witness.

One of the greatest joys we have is to pray for those in special need. This happens when, following the instruction of James 5:14-15, someone calls upon us to pray. Through this demonstration of obedience and faith we pray. We know that God hears the prayers of his children and believe He will answer according to His good will.

This has been only a brief overview of the how the Session conducts the business of the church. Perhaps in future issues I can review some of our current actions.

Clerk of Session, Dan Joner

## Into All the World: Missions' Committee News

The WPC Missions Committee has met several times in the past couple months. We are continuing to define the scope of the Committee's activities within the overall ministry of Westminster Presbyterian Church. We hope to present operational guidelines to the Session very soon for their review, insights and eventual approval.

The task has not been as easy and quick as the committee first imagined. One of the factors in this is that we have been working to clarify how we at Westminster can remain faithful to our reformed beliefs while at the same time having the ability to work within the greater evangelical Christian Church.

The committee is reviewing how WPC will be able to work in three general missions areas: teaching / education, evangelism and mercy work. Once the guidelines are adopted officially, we will then have the ability to begin to discern which local, regional, national and international missions opportunities

and candidates are appropriate for WPC support and participation. Opportunities for the church body to participate actively would follow soon thereafter.

Westminster is currently providing monthly support to Nicolas Farelly (a recent graduate of Covenant Seminary in St. Louis, Nicolas is working to plant a church in Paris, France) and Ed Dunnington (the PCA's campus minister at the University of Washington in Seattle). Ed spoke to us in our evening service on June 6, opening the Word and bringing us up to date on what the Lord is doing at the U of W. Please remember to pray for these men and their families as they labor to serve the Lord across the globe and on the college campus.

If you have any questions or wisdom for those of us on the committee, it would be greatly appreciated. At this time, the committee members are Clancy Boyer, Brian and Julie Cole, Samantha Eaton and Greg and Karen Seifert.

# WPC Calendar & Events - July / August 2004

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
4 July Worship-10 am Bible Study-6 pm	5	6 Deacon's Meeting 6:30 pm	7 Session Meeting 6:30 pm	8	8	10
11 Worship-10 am Bible Study-6 pm	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 Worship-10 am Bible Study-6 pm	19	20	21 Session Meeting 6:30 pm	22	23	24
25 Worship-10 am Bible Study-6 pm	26	27	28	29	30	31
1 August Worship-10 am Bible Study-6 pm	2	3 Deacon's Meeting 6:30 pm	4 Session Meeting 6:30 pm	5	6	7
8 Worship-10 am Bible Study-6pm	9	10	11	12	13	14

## ELDER FELLOWSHIP DINNERS CONTINUE

In an effort to encourage unity and the love of the brethren, we have begun a monthly time of fellowship with our shepherds. Groups meet once a month for a quarter to enjoy a potluck-style meal together with one of the elders. The goal is to provide an opportunity for members of the congregations to have more interaction with the leadership and with one another, as we all grow in love and service as Christ's body.

The second quarter rotations are just now coming to a close. We are grateful to be able to say that the times together have been full of good fellowship and encouragement. We invite all who have an interest in participating to sign up for future rotations.

May God continue to bless the desire to "bear with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4: 2-3).



## Poetry & Prose

### I Know Him

Anonymous

I don't know why our grief can become so intense;  
And I don't know why our hearts can become so burdened;  
And I don't know why misery is allowed to linger;  
But I do know Him.

I don't know why the way sometimes remains dark;  
And I don't know why my longing goes unfulfilled;  
And I don't know why the answers I seek seem never to come;  
But I do know Him.

I don't know why my wounds are reopened;  
And I don't know why my tears never run dry;  
And I don't know why my nights are restless;  
But I do know Him.

I know Him.  
He is wisdom;  
He is grace;  
He is mercy.

I know Him.  
He is peace;  
He is justice;  
He is truth.

I know Him.  
He is compassion;  
He is hope;  
He is patience;

I know Him.  
He is strength;  
He is endurance;  
He is faithfulness.

I know Him;  
And He knows me.