

# Marquand Reader

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## **Giving Credence to Our Creeds**

Creeds have been used throughout Christian history to express what Christians believe. The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship calls a creed “a concise, accepted, and approved statement of the central beliefs held by an individual or community.” Although creeds have been used since the beginnings of Christianity, two of the earliest and still used creeds are the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed. The legend surrounding the Apostles’ Creed, found circa 500 CE and later, is that the creed contains twelve articles that were each written by one of the twelve apostles on the day of Pentecost, as they were inspired by the movement of the Holy Spirit. Historians have argued for a much later, post-apostolic writing, but regardless of its origin the Apostles’ Creed remains one of the most well-known creeds to this day. The Nicene Creed, approved by the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE, was written to quell Arian and other heresies about Jesus’ essence, divinity, birth and resurrection (consequently, the Nicene Creed says nothing of Jesus’ life!).

Liturgically, creeds are most often placed after the sermon: “The recitation of the creed after the proclamation of word in the gospel and the homily expresses the assembly’s verbal response to the story of salvation proclaimed in the scriptures.” Creeds continue to be written and used in Christian worship, even to the present day. In this Thursday’s Difficult Texts Series service, graduating student Leslie Woods will preach on Song of Solomon 5:1-6a, a passage unique in the Difficult Texts Series for being “difficult” because of its sexuality rather than its explicit violence or offensiveness. A creed written last year by Ian Doescher, for Siobhán Garrigan’s “Liturgy and Gender” class, will be used in the service. The creed uses texts from the Song of Solomon, and each stanza is addressed to a different member of the Trinity: Creator, Christ, Holy Spirit. Throughout the creed, God is described as the “Beloved.” Feel free to ask Ian for more details about the Trinitarian aspects of the creed, in case it is not readily apparent!

Creeds—both the ancient and the brand new—continue to be an important way of expressing our faith. We invite you to meditate on the creeds that are used in your worship, to consider newer creeds with an open mind, and even to try your own hand at writing a statement of your beliefs!

## **Considering Doubt**

Just as creeds have been with us since the beginning of Christian history, doubts are equally a part of the Judeo-Christian tradition. From the earliest traditions of biblical doubters—from Sarah to Jonah, from Zechariah to Thomas—Christian history has been a long line of faithful doubters. Often, it is those who doubt who become Christianity’s most famous writers and defenders, all the way from Augustine to Anne Lamott.

Despite its rich place in the Christian tradition, theological doubt continues to be a painful thing for those of us who experience it. This coming Thursday, chapel minister Emily Scott leads us in a service that stops to consider the doubts that many of us face—including doubts brought on

because of what we have learned (academic doubt), doubts brought on by suffering, and doubts brought on by the simple feeling of God's absence in our lives. As we gather Thursday morning to express another aspect of what we believe—a new creed—let us come together Thursday evening in prayerful consideration of the times when it is difficult or impossible to believe. Please note that the service Thursday evening has been rescheduled to 8:30 p.m., due to the reception for graduating students.

### **A Look Ahead: The Next Two Weeks' Services**

***Please join over the next two weeks for the following services at 10:30 a.m., except where otherwise noted:***

Monday, April 11: Professor David Kelsey will preach, as we welcome prospective students for spring visitation day.

Tuesday, April 12: graduating student Rob Fisher will preach, and the gospel choir will provide much music for the service.

Wednesday, April 13: sung morning prayer, led by Patrick Evans, continues!

Thursday, April 14: the eighth Difficult Texts Series service will feature graduating student Leslie Woods preaching on Song of Solomon 5.

***Thursday, April 14 at 8:30 p.m.: the chapel team presents a special service on the theme of doubt—academic doubt, doubt from absence and doubt from suffering—featuring visiting Professor Emilie Townes, jazz percussionist Benjamin Karetnick, and others!***

Friday, April 15: graduating student Jinny Smanik will preach, and Reverend Martha Highsmith will preside, at our weekly community Eucharist in the Presbyterian Church (USA) tradition. ***All who gather for worship are welcome at the communion table in Marquand Chapel.***

Monday, April 18: graduating student Erika Jones will preach.

Tuesday, April 19: the ninth and final Difficult Texts Series service will include a sermon from Professor Carolyn Sharp.

Wednesday, April 20: sung morning prayer, led by Patrick Evans, continues!

Thursday, April 21: graduating student Alison Branco Tichy will preach, with special music from the gospel choir.

Friday, April 22: the chapel team leads a community Eucharist service in honor of Earth Day, with Dale Peterson presiding.

***All who gather for worship are welcome at the communion table in Marquand Chapel.***