

CONFESSING CHRIST

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to you all. May the love of God in Christ sustain and encourage each of you as you prepare for the blessed Lenten Season just ahead.

As Editor of the Confessing Christ Lectionary and Resources, I would like to take a moment to express appreciation to Professor Lee Barrett of Lancaster Theological Seminary, who has been the Convener of "Confessing Christ" over the past few years. Dr. Barrett will entrust this responsibility to others at Easter. He has been a thoughtful teacher and dedicated leader of this project and I am pleased to say he will continue as a member of the Steering Committee. The Rev. Steven Small and the Rev. Gail Miller of Massachusetts will become the co-chairs of "Confessing Christ" in April, and the Steering Committee is delighted and grateful for their willingness to guide the project into the future.

I want to thank all of you who took time to return the questionnaire that was enclosed in the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany mailing. More than one-half of you who responded have indicated that you would like to receive future mailings via e-mail. The Steering Committee is meeting via conference call this month to determine the future nature of these mailings, which have become increasingly expensive. If you have not yet responded, please send a note via e-mail or "snail mail" indicating whether you want to continue on our mailing list and, if so, if you would prefer e-mail or "snail mail." If e-mail, then please include your e-mail address. (Respond to: Colleen Darling[darlingca@lakeland.edu] or Colleen Darling [c/o Lakeland College, PO Box 359, Sheboygan, Wisconsin 53082-0359] or via phone [920-565-1538]. Please do this as soon as possible. And if you do not want to continue on the "Confessing Christ" mailing list, please let us know.

For all of your support and encouragement over the past 15 years, I thank you on behalf of the Confessing Christ Steering Committee.

Your brother in Christ,



Frederick R. Trost, Editor
1 Cedar Lane,
Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin 53020

“For no one can lay foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.”
(1 Cor. 3:11, NRSV)

CONFESSING CHRIST -- DAILY LECTIONARY AND PRAYERS
LENT 2009

Frederick R. Trost, Editor

"I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me." (Psalm 16:7)

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Ash Wednesday, 2/25	Joel 2:13	Bonnie Van Overbeke Fitchburg, WI
Thursday, 2/26	Psalm 130:1-4 1529, Diet of Speyer +1969, Karl Jaspers	Dexter Van Zile Brighton, MA
Friday, 2/27	Psalm 130:5-6 1973, Wounded Knee	David & Doreen Vanderline- Abernathy Barre, VT
Saturday, 2/28	Psalm 130:7-8 +1551, Martin Butzer	Lydia Veliko Cleveland, OH
Sunday, 3/01 (Invocavit)	Psalm 25:1-5 1522, Luther leaves the Wartburg	Jan Vergowe New Holstein, WI
Monday, 3/02	Psalm 25:6-7 +1791, John Wesley	Jeanne Vetere Coral Springs, FL
Tuesday, 3/03	Psalm 25:8-10	Tony Villareal Schwensville, PA
Wednesday, 3/04	Psalm 25:11-15	Joan & Donald Vincent Montrose, CO
Thursday, 3/05	Psalm 25:16-22	Gordon Vought Beacon Falls, CT
Friday, 3/06	Mark 1:9-15 +1274, Thomas Aquinas +1585, Zacharias Ursinus	Ken Vriesen Germantown, WI
Saturday, 3/07	1 Peter 3:18-22	Victor Vriesen Blue Earth, MN
Sunday, 3/08 (Reminiscere)	Psalm 22:22-24	Donald Wagner Lebanon, IL
Monday, 3/09	Psalm 22:25-26	Jacob B. Wagner Shaker Heights, OH
Tuesday, 3/10	Psalm 22:27-28 1872, First Protestant Congregation in Japan +1913, Harriet Tubman 1987, Conscientious Objection declared a human right by the United Nations	John J. Wagner East Andover, NH
Wednesday, 3/11	Psalm 22:29-31	Edward A. Walker Dennis, MA

Thursday, 3/12	Mark 8:31-38 +1607, Paul Gerhardt +1977, Rutilio Grande, El Salvado	Marlene Walker Chicago, IL
Friday, 3/13	Mark 9:2-9	Albert J.D. Walsh Sacramento, CA
Saturday, 3/14	Romans 4:13-25 *1879, Albert Einstein	Jerry Walton & Carol Brubaker Twin Lakes, WI
Sunday, 3/15 (Oculi)	Psalms 19:1-4	Richard Ward Denver, CO
Monday, 3/16	Psalms 19:5-6	Jeffrey Wartgow De Witt, IA
Tuesday, 3/17	Psalms 19:7-10 +1970, Gunther Dehn	Malcom Washburn Washington, NH
Wednesday, 3/18	Psalms 19:11-13 +386, Cyril of Jerusalem	Jed Watson Lake Villa, IL
Thursday, 3/19	Psalms 19:14	David Lowes Watson Murfreesboro, TN
Friday, 3/20	John 2:13-22	Susan J. Watterson Red Lodge, MT
Saturday, 3/21	1 Corinthians 18-25 *1685, Johann Sebastian Bach 1960, Sharpeville Massacre, South Africa 1965, Selma March to Montgomery, AL	Steven Wayles Phoenix, AZ
Sunday, 3/22 (Latare)	Psalms 107:1-3 +1758, Jonathan Edwards	Robert Webber Willow Street, PA
Monday, 3/23	Psalms 107:17-22	Lyle J. Weibel Pleasant Hill, TN
Tuesday, 3/24	John 3:14-21 +1980, Oscar Romero	Gregory A. Weider Norwalk, CT
Wednesday, 3/25	Ephesians 2:1-10	John R. Weiler Bethlehem, PA
Thursday, 3/26	Luke 21:1-4	Richard A. Weisenbach Wakefield, MA
Friday, 3/27	Philippians 1:12-14 +1327, Meister Eckhart	Michael Weiser Perris, CA
Saturday, 3/28	Philippians 1:15-18 +1985, Marc Chagall	Mark Welch Andover, MA
Sunday, 3/29 (Judica)	Psalms 51:1-12 +1788, Charles Wesley	Stephen Welch Oconomowoc, WI

Monday, 3/30	Psalm 119:9-16	Frederick Wenner Frederick, MD
Tuesday, 3/31	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Jane Wenninger League City, TX
Wednesday, 4/01	Hebrews 5:5-10	Roger Wentz Black River Falls, WI
Thursday, 4/02	John 12:20-23	Bill & Delores Wenzler Milwaukee, WI
Friday, 4/03	Isaiah 49:13 +1953, Katharina Staritz	Tim Wepner Newton, NC
Saturday, 4/04	John 17:1-8 +1968, Martin Luther King, Jr.	John A. Werley Malone, NY
Sunday, 4/05 (Palm Sunday)	Mark 11:1-11	Robert H. Werme Waterbury, CT
Holy Monday, 4/06	John 12:12-16	Muriel Wernecke Randolph, VT
Holy Tuesday, 4/07	Psalm 118:1-9	David Wernecke Sheboygan, WI
Holy Wednesday, 4/08	Psalm 118:19-29	Glenn W. Wernecke Buckeye, AZ
Maundy Thursday, 4/09	John 13:1-17 +1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer	Marcia Werntz Severna Park, MD
Good Friday, 4/10	Psalm 22 *1953, Jean Donovan	Fritz West Marine on St. Croix, MN
Holy Saturday, 4/11	Job 14:1-14 1963, Pacem in Terris	Paul Westermeyer St. Paul, MN

[Please note that the names of persons for whom intercession is made are taken from several sources: 1) the Confessing Christ mailing list (not all have attended Confessing Christ gatherings, though most have expressed interest and support for this project of joyous and sincere theological work, in service to our life together and the Church's mission, 2) the listing of Conference Ministers currently serving in the United Church of Christ, 3) a listing of national officers of the Church.]

You are invited to refer to the Confessing Christ website at the following address:

<http://www.confessingchrist.org>

Confessing Christ materials are being prepared at the Mission House Center, Lakeland College. Those no longer wishing to receive materials or those with address changes should contact Colleen Darling, Lakeland College, PO Box 359, Sheboygan, WI 53082-0359 or e-mail darlingca@lakeland.edu

RESOURCES FOR LENT, 2009

A Prayer for the First Sunday in Lent:

Gracious God, long-suffering and full of compassion: be present with us now we pray, as we come before You with our sorrows and our sins, to ask for Your comfort and forgiveness. We thank You for this season of thought and prayer in which we make ready to recall our Savior's sufferings and to celebrate His triumph.

Grant us the aid of Your Holy Spirit, that as we acknowledge our sins and implore Your pardon, we may also be enabled to deny ourselves, and be upheld in the hours of temptation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(The Church of Scotland, adapted)

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A Prayer for the Second Sunday in Lent:

O God, eternal and ever blessed, You have called us to worship You in spirit and in truth: look mercifully upon us as we worship and adore You. Order what is disordered in our lives, bring our minds to Your truth, our conscience to Your law, and our hearts to Your love that, in fellowship with all Your Church, we may hear Your voice and be enabled to answer You with humble trust and willing obedience; through Jesus Christ our Lord (The Church of Scotland, adapted)

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A Prayer for the Third Sunday in Lent:

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was tempted that He might be able to console and help all of us who are tempted: we ask You to save us from those snares and temptations by which we are continually assaulted, and thus to strengthen us mightily by Your good Spirit that in all things we may be more than conquerors; through Him who loves us and has carried our sins to the tree, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

(The Church of Scotland, adapted)

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A Prayer for the Fourth Sunday in Lent:

May Your grace turn us from our unworthy ways, O God, to walk in the ways of Your love: that enduring hardness as devoted disciples of Jesus Christ, we may deny ourselves and take up our Cross and follow Him. So may we be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as You in Christ have forgiven us. And to You, O God, shall be our praise and glory for ever. (The Church of Scotland, adapted)

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A Prayer for the Fifth Sunday in Lent:

O God, who by the Cross and passion of Your Son Jesus Christ, did save and deliver humankind: grant that by steadfast faith in the merits of that holy sacrifice, we may find help and salvation, and may triumph in the power of His victory, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. (The Church of Scotland, adapted)

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A Prayer for Palm Sunday:

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of Your tender love towards humankind, has sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself our humanity and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all of us should follow the example of His great humility; mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

(The Church of Scotland, adapted)

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A Prayer for Maundy Thursday:

Eternal and ever-blessed God, who in Your infinite compassion for weak and erring humanity did become human like us: give us reverence, humility and faith as we approach the mystery of the Cross, that we may enter into the fellowship of His sufferings and that our sins may be forgiven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(The Church of Scotland, adapted)

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A Prayer for Good Friday:

We remember how, in the fulfillment of the Scriptures, You have said, "I thirst." Was it not written of You: "and my tongue cleaves to my jaws, and You have brought me into the dust of death?" Yet Your word endures. "If any thirst, let them come to me and drink." O You, who are the fountain of life, You, who thirsts for our souls, our souls thirst for You in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. Wherefore, we worship and adore Your holy name. (The Church of Scotland, adapted)

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A Prayer of Confession:

Leader: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One God, in perfect community, look now on us who look to You.

All: Hear our prayer for the Church and for our community in this place.

Leader: Where there is falseness...

All: Smother it with Your truth.

Leader: Where there is any coldness...

All: Kindle the flame of Your love.

Leader: Where there is joy and hope.

All: Free us to share it together.

Leader: Where there is anything we will not do for ourselves...

All: Make us discontent until it is done.

Leader: Make us one...

All: As You are one.

Leader: Before God and you who are near me, I release anything I hold against you. I regret all I have done to harm you. I stand beside the wrong in my life and ask for God's forgiveness.

All: Before God and you who are near us, we release anything we hold against you. We regret all we have done to harm you. We stand beside the wrong in our lives and ask for God's forgiveness.

(Silence)

Leader: The Lord Jesus Christ says to us, each one: "Go and sin no more. Come and follow me." Now bind our hands with honesty as we offer them to each other and our prayer to You, who for our sakes became poor so we might not perish, but have everlasting life.

All: (The Lord's Prayer) (Iona Community, adapted)

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"Come, my Light..."

Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness.

Come, my Life, and revive me from death.

Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.

Come, Flame of divine love, and burn up the thorns of my sins, kindling my heart with the flame of your love.

Come, Lord of heaven and earth, sit upon the throne of my heart and reign there.

For you, and none other, are my Lord.

(St. Dimitrii of Rostov, 17th century, adapted)

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"O burning mountain, O chosen sun ..."

O burning mountain, O chosen sun,

O perfect moon, O fathomless well,

O unattainable height, O clearness beyond measure,
O wisdom without end, O mercy without limit,
O strength beyond resistance, O crown of all majesty,
The humblest you created sings your praise.

(Mechtild of Magdeburg, 1207-1294)

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“Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life...”

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a Way as gives me breath:
Such a Truth as ends all strife:
Such a Life as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
Such a Light, as shows a feast:
Such a Feast, as mends in length:
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
Such a Joy, as none can move:
Such a Love, as none can part:
Such a Heart, as joys in love.

(George Herbert, 1593-1633)

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“O night that is brighter than day...”

O night that is brighter than day,
O night more dazzling than the sun,
O night more sparkling than fresh snow,
O night more brilliant than all our lamps!
O night that is sweeter than Paradise,
O night delivered from darkness,
O night that dispels the sleep of sin,
O night that makes us keep vigil with the angels,
O night terrible for the demons,
O night desired by all the year,
O night that leads the bridal Church to her Spouse,
O night that is mother to those enlightened!
O night in which the Devil, sleeping, was despoiled,
O night in which the Heir
brings the co-heirs to their heritage!

Prayer of Asterius of Pontus (341-c. 400), for Easter Eve)

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“Via Dolorosa”

With sorrowful heart, yet for the joy of atonement,
You went, O Christ, to Calvary.
If the stars ceased to twinkle and the sun forgot to shine,
The ever-increasing rays of God’s love
Would find an earthward passage through You.

O Christ, that a thousand and a thousand years
Have passed since Golgotha You braved;
And still we grasp with fear and grasp with greed—and suffer:
Let us swing into the orbit of Your love.

Hasten the day when we can forget the borders of countries,
The hues of the skin;
When we—all of us together—can praise in harmony Your love.

O, let us see more vividly Your blood of love from Calvary,
Streaming like ever-increasing rays... Earthward.

(Toyohiko Kagawa (1888-1960))

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THE YEAR 2009 MARKS THE 500th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN CALVIN (1509-1564)
“By (Christ’s) death he prevented us from dying, or, which comes to the same thing, by his death recovered life for us. But in this respect he differed from us—he surrendered himself to death to be, as it were, overcome by it, not that he might be absorbed in its abysses, but rather that he might destroy that by which we should have been at length devoured; he surrendered himself to death to be subdued, not that he might be overwhelmed by its power, but rather that he might overthrow that which threatened us, which indeed had already overcome us, and was triumphing over us...” (“The Institutes of the Christian Religion,” II.xvi.7)

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(Calvin) emerged chipped from flint, and the dedication of his “Institutes” to Francis I, the King of France, was no mincing feeler. He told the king roundly that Protestant teaching was nothing other than the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the king would do well to heed and follow if he would rule his country with tranquility. John Calvin was a little naïve, however, in disclaiming any revolutionary implication in the new teaching...

The differences between Calvinism and Lutheranism are greater than those between Calvin and Luther. On all the main points the two were agreed. Even on the Lord’s Supper Calvin’s readiness to accept a real, albeit a spiritual, presence was less objectionable to Luther than Zwingli’s memorial theory. Nevertheless, there were variant emphases. Luther’s theology has been compared to a flower all the petals of which are attached as a center to the forgiveness of sins. Calvin’s center was the sovereignty of God. He commenced his “Institutes” not with justification by faith but with the knowledge of God... Calvin was overwhelmed by the sense of the majesty of God who sits above the circle of the earth, before whom the nations are as a drop in the bucket, who exalts and abases, who is the Lord of time, the director of history, the end and aim of (human) endeavor and aspiration... (Roland H. Bainton in “The Age of the Reformation”)

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“One must not imagine that the Christian faith is a bare and mere knowledge of God or an understanding of the Scripture which flutters in the brain without touching the heart, as it is usually the case with the opinion about things which are confirmed by some probable reason. But faith is a firm and solid confidence of the heart, by means of which we rest surely in the mercy of God which is promised to us through the Gospel.” (John Calvin in “Instruction in Faith,” 1537)