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ZION Lutheran Church

November Newsletter | Vol. 26, Issue 11





During the month of October, we used various creeds during worship. We recited the three ELCA-affirmed creeds (Apostle's, Nicene and Athanasian), plus a creed written by Kimberlee Medicine Horn Jackson of the Yankton Sioux Tribe which is a translation of the Apostle's Creed into language commonly used by Native communities.

Throughout the month, I heard whispers of the use of the word “catholic,” questions about “eternal fire,” a desire to understand more of where the creeds come from and why we use them.

Creeds are a part of our worship life because unite us with Christians across denominations and declare our shared beliefs that transcend denominational lines. Reciting creeds, especially in corporate worship, connects us to Christians across the world and throughout time who profess these same beliefs.

The ELCA affirms **three creeds** as truth: Apostle’s, Nicene and Athanasian. Creeds are typically written in response to heresy (a belief that contradicts Christianity) in the hopes to define doctrine (a belief that is accepted by Christianity). Simply put, the creeds define what Christians believe and, therefore, make clear what Christians do not believe.

All three creeds use the word “catholic.” It is important to note that the use of “catholic” (little “c” catholic) does not refer to the Roman Catholic Church (big “C” Catholic). Rather, catholic refers to the universal church. It is the catholic church that use these creeds to profess the beliefs that unite us.

Below is a brief history of the three ELCA-affirmed creeds.

The Apostle’s Creed is the oldest creed, and little is known for certain about its origin or authorship. It was written in response to Gnosticism which is a variety of different beliefs related to Christianity and Greek philosophy. However, not all of Gnosticism is in alignment with Christian belief about the world/universe, the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and the resurrection. This creed is organized structurally by having one section for each person of the Trinity and making clear what Christians believe about each person of the Trinity. It is believed that this creed would have been widely known among Christians and could help them to determine heresy from doctrine in

their daily lives. The form we use today comes from the 8th century and is today the most used of the three creeds due to its clear and concise nature.

The Nicene Creed comes out of two major controversies in the 4th century. In the year 325 under the direction of Constantine, the first Council of Nicaea gathered which consisted of bishops and high-ranking church leaders. The primary reason for gathering was to address the Arian controversy which stated that Jesus was a created being and was not "of the same substance" of God. In plain words, Arius believed Jesus was not fully God. The first iteration of the Nicene Creed was born at this gathering. You'll notice in this creed the specific language about Jesus that relates to the controversy at hand: "true God from true God," begotten, not made," and "of one Being with the Father." In 381 at the Council of Constantinople, edits were made to the creed in effort to achieve more clarity, specifically regarding the person of the Holy Spirit. This updated creed is formally referred to as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and is what is used in churches today, although it is commonly referred to still as the Nicene Creed.

The Athanasian Creed was written anonymously likely during the late 5th century in southern Gaul (modern-day France) and was not written by Athanasius of Alexandria as the name may may suggest. It is the only of the three creeds listed here that was written in Latin as opposed to Greek. This creed was written primarily to reinforce the Christian belief against Arianism that all three persons of the Trinity are un-created and co-eternal, meaning The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are *all* fully God. Additionally, writers of this creed were concerned with the Nestorianism controversy which denied Jesus as fully God and fully human. This creed is the longest of the three and the most repetitive which is why it is less used today. The Athanasian Creed concludes with some potentially troubling lines, particularly lines 39-40 which read: "Those who have done good things will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil things into eternal fire. This is the catholic faith; a person cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully."

Although these statements do have a biblical basis, it is crucial to remember that as Lutherans, we believe that it is not our belief in dogma or doctrine that saves us, nor any deeds we do, rather, it is the grace of Jesus Christ that saves us. As our Reformation Sunday text reminded us last week, sinners are justified by God's grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24).

To continue wrestling with these two tough statements in the Athanasian Creed, check out Bishop Marcus Lohrmann's blog post on *The Crossings* (URL below).

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One beautiful part of being Lutheran is that it gives me the space to hold questions and doubts. Because of the Lutheran belief that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works, I can trust that despite my doubts and questions (or maybe even not believing everything in the creeds!), it is by the faith of Christ that I am justified and promised eternal life with God.

These creeds can help us to understand our Christian tradition and teach us about the history of the catholic (universal!) faith and they can also challenge us to figure out what we truly believe, even if it's not what is outlined in these creeds. The promise of God is that it is Christ who justifies us, not ourselves, so I can breathe and wrestle through these challenges with God, my community and myself.

In peace,
Pastor Christina

For further reading:

- https://crossings.org/the-athanasian-creed/
- *Confessing the One Faith: An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith*

- *The Book of Concord,* The Three Ecumenical Creeds

THIS WEEK: Election Day

Tuesday, November 3

As Christians, we are called to advocate for the marginalized and participate in the public arena as kind and loving neighbors to all. Voting in local, state and national elections is a crucial part of loving our neighbors and living into our baptismal vocations. There is information below to help you cast your vote. See you at the polls!

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MINNESOTA

Research Candidates Before You Vote!

Trusted, Nonpartisan Resources

VOTE 411

By the League of Women Voters

- See personalized ballots for your area
- Compare candidates side-by-side, learn about the office
- Read candidate statements in their own words, watch available forums
- Get details on where, when, and how to vote

My Ballot Finder

By the Minnesota Secretary of State

- Find out which races and questions will appear on your ballot
- Identify which candidates you need to research

Congress.gov

- Follow what current U.S. Senators and Representatives have done
- Track their voting records and the bills they've sponsored
- See committee assignments and official statements

OpenSecrets.org

- See where candidates get their money
- Look up top donors and industries by name
- Covers both federal and many state-level candidates

VoteSmart.org

- Check how incumbents voted on specific issues
- See speeches, public statements, and campaign promises
- Learn about a candidate's work history, education, and affiliations
- Review ratings by advocacy groups

Ballotpedia.org

- Learn about candidates at local, state, and national levels
- Read biographies, past election results, endorsements
- Explore key policy positions and campaign contributions
- Includes info on judges, ballot measures, and more



November 1 is our third gathering for this study of the ELCA's Social Statement on Faith and Civic Life.

Please join us for conversation around how our Lutheran faith and baptismal vocation call us to engage in the civic realm and how we do that faithfully in an ever polarized country.

You do not have to have attended previous sessions to participate - simply grab some goodies from the social hall and join us in the lounge!

November 1 | Session 3: Assessing the U.S. Constitutional Form of Government
November 8 | Session 4: Religion and the First Amendment
November 15 | Session 5: Constructive Relationships Between Religious Organizations and Political Authority
November 22 | Session 6: Selected Contemporary Concerns in Civic Life

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https://www.ecofaithnetwork.org/green-blades

Here is the link for the EcoFaith newsletter.

Last winter I attended a Webinar put on by the University of Minnesota extension called “Keystone Plants and Soft Landings”.

The webinar made me think about the Zion Lutheran church ecosystem at 1000 Washington Avenue, Cloquet.

The Zion Lutheran congregation was founded in 1886. It’s current building was constructed 1960 on 10 acres of pasture on the south side of town. Over the past 66 years, trees and shrubs have been planted along with an apple orchard, a community garden, three pollinator gardens and a rain garden. There is still a lot of lawn to mow and as is the case in most private lawns, most of the trees are surrounded by mowed grass.

The January webinar emphasized that insects need more than just food from our summer gardens to survive. They need winter protection. That’s where the concepts of “Keystone Plants and Soft Landings” come in.

I learned that keystone plants are native species of trees and plants

that:

1. Support the life cycles of beneficial insects.
2. Build healthy soils
3. Provide food for pollinators and songbirds.
4. Sequester more Co2 than turf grass
5. Reduce soil compaction and mowing line.

I also learned that 14% of tree genera support 90% of the caterpillars of moths and butterflies.

The top 10 Keystone trees for northern Minnesota are as follow:

1. Oak: supporting 436 species of caterpillar
2. Prunus: Plum and wild cheery family supporting 340 species of caterpillar
3. Willow: supporting 289 species of caterpillars
4. Birch: supporting 285 species of caterpillars
5. Popple, aspen/cottonwoods: supporting 249 species of caterpillars
6. Maple: 238
7. Alder: 245
8. Pine: 235
9. Elms: 187
10. Spruce: 184

The webinar noted the lack of larval stage support and winter protection in many gardens.

This prompted me to take a “walk about” on the Zion campus. I took an inventory of the trees and found we had 6 of the top 10 keystone trees plus American Basswood which though not making the top 10 is very good supporting 150 caterpillar species. This year we added saplings of Nanny berry, June berry, Burr oak and pin cherry. Each genus support around 100 species.

I think we have the trees! But what about the “Soft Landings”?

This fall we are asking our members to bring their bagged leaves. We hope to place the leaves under some of the trees, timing it with a snow fall or rain so they don’t all blow away. We will probably do this for two seasons and then to plant plugs.

I am currently propagating appropriate plants at my home garden. Shade tolerant natives like big leave aster, blood root, wild geranium, wild ginger, false Solomon’s seal, Jacob’s ladder are just a few of the recommended varieties.

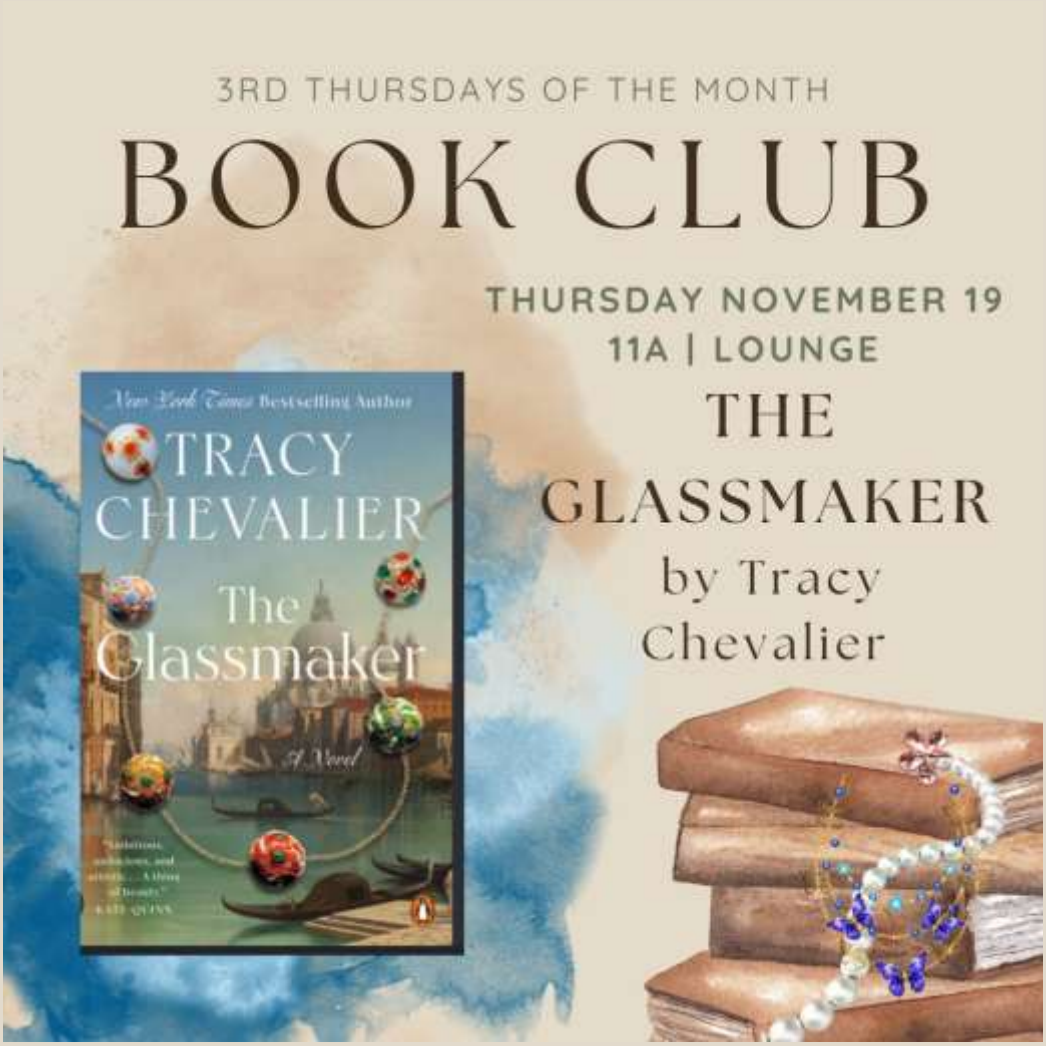
So, this is how this evolving ecosystem should work: In spring, butterflies, moths, bees and other insects visit the flower beds and trees, drinking nectar and collecting pollen to nourish their offspring and in the process enable plants to make seeds and fruits that other creatures like us depend on for nourishment. Eggs are deposited on the plants. The larva stages grow, eat the leaves of the trees and are eaten by birds. The larva enter their dormant stage. The leaves and plants at the base of the trees provide shelter for this over wintering stage. The area also supplies protection of other insects like native bee and other beneficial insects. In spring, the adults emerge, and the cycle continues.

The webinar was taped and is available by searching University of Minnesota Extension, Keystone Plants and Soft landings, Bee lab. The site has suggestions for the best plants to put under the trees.

I feel privileged to be a part of the evolving ecosystem at 1000 Washington Avenue.

Vicki Anderson,

Zion Lutheran Church, Cloquet




Zion Lutheran Church
SECOND SUNDAY SURPRISE
Intergenerational Sunday School
Sunday | 10:45 | Social Hall
September | 13th
October | 11th
November | 8th
December | 13th
Fellowship | Discussion
Craft | Lunch



Ongoing Help Needed!

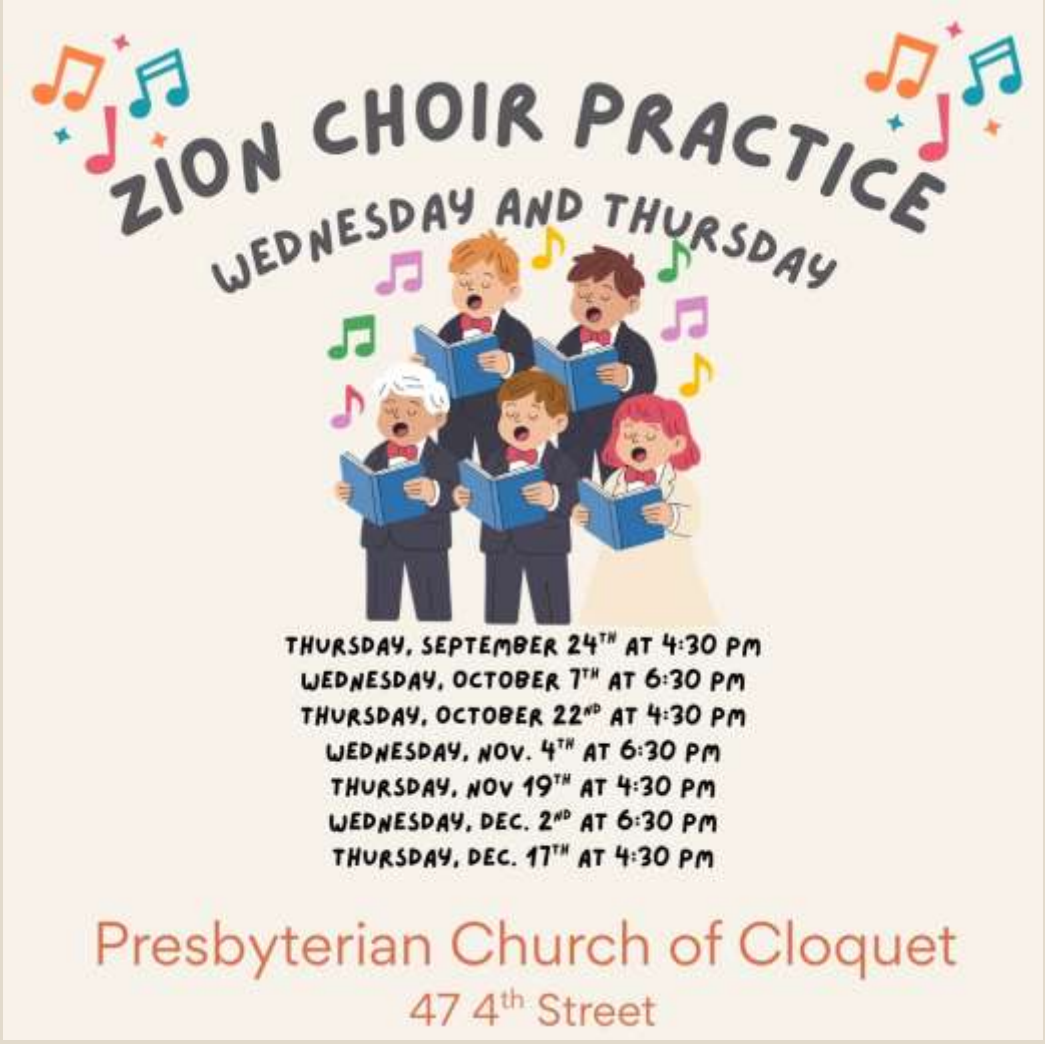


Daily stockers of the Little Free Pantry are needed to help keep our pantry a consistent source of food for our community. Commit to one (or more) scheduled days per week to load the Pantry. Training and Building Key provided.

Pairs of counters are needed to help record & deposit monetary tithes and offerings. One Sunday every 2-3 months. Training provided.



Zion Choir Practice



Notes from the Office

Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 8am-2pm.

Kristy can be contacted at office@zioncloquet.org about prepping worship materials, printing, scheduling, announcements and general questions.



Elise continues to support Zion's worship life through liturgy preparation and offsite graphic design support.

Contact Elise at media@zioncloquet.org for support with bulletins, website, posters and social media.





Zion Lutheran Church

1000 Washington Ave.

Cloquet, MN 55720

Pastor:

Rev. Christina Johnson

pastorchristina@zioncloquet.org

Office Administrator:

Kristy Cummings

office@zioncloquet.org

Council President:

Tracy Bockbader

Director of Music Ministry:

Gretchen Chelseth

Choral Director:

James Sheetz

Financial Secretary:

Paul Holm

Office Phone: 218.879.4647

Office Email: office@zioncloquet.org

Liturgical Assistant &

Graphic Design:

Elise Ames

media@zioncloquet.org

ZION Lutheran Church

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Our mailing address is:
1000 Washington Avenue
Cloquet, MN 55720

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