



The Presbyter

First Presbyterian Church 125 W. Main Street Ionia, Michigan 48846 May 2025

Words From Pastor Chris

Celebrating the Nicene Creed
(This is the last of a three-part series)

This month we conclude our reflections on the Nicene Creed. Last time we noted that the creeds of the early Christians are Trinitarian. That is, they make statements about God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This, however, raised questions concerning the nature of God.

The early Christians insisted that the God in whose name Jesus came and taught is the one God of Israel. At the same time, they called Jesus the Son of God. But how do these two truths hold together—that there is only one God, but also that both Jesus and the Father are divine?

One pastor named Arius (250-336) offered an answer. There is only one God. Jesus is not God but created by God. Arius regarded Jesus as an archangel, sharing in God's glory, but not eternal with God, and therefore not fully divine.

Arius' bishop, Alexander, opposed Arius. In 325, in Nicaea, bishops from across the Roman empire assembled to examine Arius' position. The majority condemned it and produced a creed that states that the Son is God in the same way as the Father is God. The Son is "God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made; of the same essence as the Father."

If this creedal language seems confusing, let us realize that the doctrine it expresses attempts to be true to the experience of the early Christians. In an encounter with Jesus, they experienced a saving encounter with God himself. Consider the Apostle Paul's words to the Galatians: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law" (4:4-5). God was really present in Jesus. Who can save from the guilt, condemnation, and death that come from breaking God's law, but God alone? At the same time God was also experienced as the God who "sent his Son." Paul continues: "And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father.'" (4:6) God was also experienced as the Spirit of the Son, whom God sends into the hearts of those who believe. By this Spirit they cried out to God as their Father.

Only by confessing God as Trinity is it possible to account for our salvation. This is what the council fathers determined at Nicaea. And they left to us the Nicene Creed that enshrines this very precious truth. We recite it today, because the God who saved then is the same God who saves now. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!

Eastertide blessings to you,

Pastor Chris

At A Glance

Worship
10:00 A.M.
in the sanctuary

Handicap Accessible
via elevator

Fellowship Time
immediately
following worship
in the Memorial
Room

**Adult Sunday
School**
following
fellowship time

Holy Communion
First Sunday
of the month

Session Meeting
May 21, 2025
10:00 a.m.

**Women's Study
Group**
Salad/Dessert
Supper
May 14, 2025
6:00 p.m.

Session Highlights

Session Highlights, **March 19, 2025** Meeting

- Pastor Chris and Elder Steve served in-home communion to two members on March 2.
- Member Lew Campbell joined the church triumphant March 15 just shy of his 90th birthday. Lew's service was held in Tiffin, Ohio.
- Worship plans are progressing for a Maundy Thursday service with Zion Church. The service will feature a Passover Seder meal in the Fellowship Hall.
- The Lakewood Area Choral Society (LACS) will hold a concert at our church June 22. Session approved a half page ad in the LACS program.
- Budget and Finance projects a \$36,000 deficit for 2025.
- Building and Grounds presented a report from Grand Wildlife Control. Our Church has an infestation of bats and squirrels. Session authorized B&G to proceed with an inspection and to get estimates of the cost to eradicate the varmints
- Building and Grounds also reported that the Narthex entrance needs drywall and painting. A number of electrical issues also need attention. Session authorized Building and Grounds to proceed with getting bids and doing the work.
- Adult Sunday school class will resume after Easter.
- Session authorized \$1,500 to help with the cost of producing a film that deals with mental health among teenagers.
- April's mission is to "fill a pew" with items for IM3rdMeal. In addition to granola bars and fruit cups, mission offerings on the first Sunday in April will be given to IM3rdMeal.
- Session members for the class of 2027 will be installed April 27.

Church Finances

Income and Expenses March 2025

	Month	YTD
Income	\$ 5,988	\$30,469
Expenses	\$11,512	\$31,966
Summary	(\$ 5,524)	(\$ 1,497)

3 Ami Cox
 6 Jeremiah Helsius
 6 Harlem Renucci
 16 Marsha Kohloff
 18 Evelyn Ransom
 19 Kathy VanSyckle
 21 David Kohloff
 21 Rebecca Speer
 24 Wade Arnold
 24 Marilyn McKay
 25 Marcia Brown
 25 Robert Sykes, Jr.
 28 Laela Agostini



Worship Volunteers

Usher/Greeter

May 4, 2025 Cindy Rozich, Norma Kilpatrick

May 11, 2025 Steve Zeoli, Pam Rogers

May 18, 2025 Lee Hunsberger, Barb Klenk

May 25, 2025 Marcia and Ernie Ross

Liturgist

Steve Zeoli

Marilyn McKay

Keith Sterner

Lee Hunsberger

Communion Preparer/Server

Kathy VanSyckle, Cindy Rozich

Mission Projects

Thanks to all who helped fill the pew with food supplies for IM3rd Meal! Committed to ending childhood hunger in Ionia and Montcalm Counties, IM3rd Meal provides food-insecure children with a nutritious ready to eat meal each school day to take home for an evening meal. Currently, IM3rd Meal provides 837 meals daily. That's 4,185 meals weekly. Meals are prepared by volunteers.

Way to go, church!

MOTHER'S DAY PURSES

RAVE (Relief After Violence Encounter) maintains a shelter for women and children in Ionia. They provide shelter and essentials for women and children so they can escape physical abuse when they have nowhere else to go. Rave provides the shelter, counseling, and advocacy needed for those affected to survive.

Rave's list of needs is long, but Mission is asking for help in collecting ladies' purses (new or gently used) and to fill the purses with feminine hygiene items. Examples include but are not limited to deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, fingernail clippers, comb, brush, hair ties, hand/body lotion. They currently have an ample supply of toothbrushes and toothpaste. Think of your own personal use of items when filling the purse. We will have some purses at church if you need one to fill. The shelter mentioned this is a great gift for those at the shelter for Mother's Day.

If you find you can't buy items to fill a purse, the Mission Offering for May will be designated for this project or you can give money to any Mission member, (Marilyn, Norma, Lee, or Mary), to do your shopping for you.



Special Dates

- National Day of Prayer, *May 1, 2025*
- Mother's Day, *May 11, 2025*
- Memorial Day, *May 26, 2025*
- Ascension Day, *May 29, 2025*

Announcements

First Presbyterian to Host LACS

Coming on **June 22, 2025** the Lakewood Area Choral Society will present a concert of sacred music in our sanctuary at 3:00 PM in the afternoon.

This group has been in existence for forty years and is still under the baton of its founding conductor and artistic director, Dr. Robert Oster. Members comprise a variety of musicians, a few of whom are trained professionals, but most are amateur singers who have sung in church or college choirs and enjoy making music with others. A variety of ages is represented as well, from folks who are young adults to those who are senior citizens. Four of those members belong to our congregation: Jen Furman, Cindy Rozich, Kathy Vansyckle, and Carol Campbell.



We are giving you notice of this concert a month ahead of time in order that you can save the date on your calendars! You will hear arrangements of well-known pieces such as “Abide With Me,” “When the Saints Go Marching In,” and “Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

The concert is free and open to the public, but a free will offering will be taken. Please invite your friends to join you for this audience friendly event. Let’s have a full sanctuary in our church!

Women’s Bible Study

The Women’s Study Group finished up our last series of studies, Bible Stories for Grownups this past week.

To conclude our year, we will be having a salad/dessert potluck supper at the home of Kathy VanSyckle, 919 W. Main Street, on May 14, 2025, starting 6:00 PM. We will enjoy an evening of food and fellowship before taking a break for the summer.

We plan to resume our studies again in the fall!

“He ascended into heaven...”



During his earthly ministry, Jesus could be physically present in only one place at any given time. “Only those could speak to him who came to where he was,” explained Archbishop William Temple. “If he was in Galilee, people could not find him in Jerusalem; if he was in Jerusalem, they could not find him in Galilee.” (from *Readings in St. John’s Gospel*).

Spiritually speaking, Christ’s Ascension means he is with us wherever we find ourselves. Christ desires to be present with us everywhere we go. His presence is universal. He is here now. “Believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory,” (1Timothy 3:16, NRSV) — that is what the Ascension affirms.

First Presbyterian Ruling Elders

Class of 2025 **Marilyn McKay, Cindy Rozich, Dr. Warren Thompson**
Class of 2026 **Carol Campbell, Barb Klenk, Pam Rogers**
Class of 2027 **Jen Furman, Linda Steele, Steve Zeoli**
Clerk of Session **Margaret Gregory**

First Presbyterian Staff

Rev. Dr. Chris Dorn **Pastor** **Tel. 616-610-5982**
Steve Slaughter **Custodian**
Sara Hyland **Administrative Assistant**

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