



MEDITATIONS ON THE APOSTLES' CREED
I BELIEVE . . .

“I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24b)

“I BELIEVE”—in Latin, “*credo*,” from which the word “creed” is derived. Unlike the Nicene Creed, which is a communal affirmation of faith (i.e., “We believe”), the Apostles’ Creed is written in first-person singular. It is a statement of one’s personal, even intimate beliefs.

Of all the phrases that comprise the Apostles’ Creed, “I believe” is perhaps the most profound and the most transformative. Apart from any phrase which might otherwise follow it (e.g., in God the Father, in Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit), this phrase affects the very heart of who we are; it stirs the very spirit of who we aspire to be.

Such an exalted and admirable notion seems to run contrary to the opinions of today’s skeptical, even cynical generation, who regard *believing* as little more than wishful thinking. Sadly, *believing* is all too often dismissed as a fanciful realm for those who cannot accept the harsh realities of this world. It is often derided as the whimsical delusion of little children who imagine they could grow up to become princesses or caped-crusading superheroes, and of naïve fools who suppose the lottery is their surety of wealth and happiness. Some even liken *believing* to the desperate supplications of pious dupes whose prayers go unanswered by a god who does not care or unheard by a god who simply is not there.

To be sure, no matter how resolutely we might believe in our ability to fly through the heavens, our beliefs will not alter the laws of physics. No matter how tenaciously we might believe in our own immortality, it will not change the stark inevitability of death. Indeed, our beliefs may not have the power to change the world itself, but they most certainly have the power to transform us—the believers. And thus, they have the power to change that part of the world that can be affected by the believers’ influence.

Everything we say and do originates in what we believe. If I believe that my neighbor is reckless and irresponsible with her own property (i.e., her house or her car), I likely will not loan her my lawn mower for fear that she might not take care of it or even return it. If I believe that human beings never visited the moon, I will probably dismiss reports of the moon landings as a government conspiracy. Certainly, what we believe about the world around us determines how we respond to it; and what we believe about others determines how we interact with them.

Our beliefs are at the very core of our souls; they are the window through which we perceive the world. Whether or not these beliefs are true, they are the foundation on which our interpretation and understanding of reality is built.

C.S. Lewis supposedly once said, “We are what we believe we are.” What might he mean by this declaration? Lewis’ statement attests to the transformative power of believing. Our beliefs define us, making us who we are. And, as our beliefs can change and develop, they have the power to move us toward our ultimate transcendence, lifting us up from what we are to what we ought to be. In essence, C.S. Lewis is affirming the sacred potential of believing—the potential for spiritual transformation.

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P O BOX 165
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from page 1

This sacred nature of believing is affirmed by the twentieth-century political ethicist Mahatma Gandhi, who said:

**“Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.”**

If I believe that the ultimate wrongness of my existence is being poor, then attaining financial security becomes my destiny and the acquisition of wealth becomes my means of transcendence. Effectively, money becomes my religion. If I believe that the ultimate wrongness is my estrangement from the divine and from all that is sacred in the world, in others, and in myself, then pursuing a relationship with that sacredness becomes my destiny and reconciliation with the divine becomes my means of transcendence.

Admittedly, some of our beliefs are not as formative in our spiritual transformation as others. My belief that a certain carbonated beverage is better than all others (for whatever reason that I may believe this) will indeed affect my shopping habits and other related choices, but such a belief is unlikely to become part of a life-defining creed. Rather, it is those deep, soul-writ beliefs that ultimately shape my destiny, that drive me toward ultimate transcendence, that compel me to become what I ought to be. These are the beliefs that rightly bare the moniker of “creed.”

So, as we reflect upon the articles of our Christian faith recited in the Apostles’ Creed, let us embrace each and every affirmation with the transformative power of the words “I believe.”

News Brief from Session

- Committee formed to plan for redecorating sections of the original buildings.
- Special Offering for Waters of the Living Lord set for Sunday, July 16 to help fund a new well in Honduras.
- Fellowship Committee will meet after church on Sunday, July 2. Come share your ideas and help plan for the upcoming months.
- **Called Congregational meeting** to elect officers for 2026 is **Sunday, July 9 at 10:45.**



Clerk of Session
Melody Mitchell

**CALLED CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
TO ELECT NEW OFFICERS
SUNDAY, JULY 9
10:45 AM (before worship)**



- | | | | |
|----|---------------|----|---------------------|
| 2 | John Roberts | 1 | Connie Reimold |
| 7 | Dana Miller | 4 | Will Harter |
| 8 | Sandy Dickson | 5 | T.J. Glass |
| 9 | Kyle Brubaker | 6 | Jackie Vance |
| 11 | Lydia Coleman | 7 | Mary Harter |
| 12 | Lacey Wolf | 13 | Abby Perry Freeman |
| 15 | David Deaton | | Aiden Ortttenburger |
| 19 | Philip Gump | 14 | Gil Shew |
| 20 | Dean Acker | 18 | Lucy Waterbury |
| 24 | Kay Patrick | 19 | Bonnie Gray |
| 25 | Brett Lawrenz | 20 | Marlene Waller |
| 27 | Eric Everett | | Jen Deaton |
| | | 21 | Sarah Gump |
| | | 23 | Dot Kirkpatrick |
| | | 25 | Coy Weldon |
| | | 27 | Marsha Frazier |
| | | 28 | Lynn Shearon |
| | | 29 | Kyah Brinegar |

MISSION.....a body of people sent

Special Need, Special Offering for Waters of the Living Lord (WLL)

With Don Dickson’s departure from our church, we are no longer organizing mission trips to send our church members to Honduras to install new water systems. Following thirteen years of such mission work, however, we still have many functioning installations, a network of Honduran partners and friends, and a great deal of equipment still providing clean and healthy drinking water for thousands of people every day. In Don’s absence, the Missions Committee has asked me to coordinate our ongoing relationships with our mission partners in Honduras.

Our dear friend Ermin Varela has worked with our teams for many years, and he continues to oversee five of our water projects in villages and towns near the city of El Progreso where he lives. One of those sites is the Rainbow Children’s Home in nearby El Negrito, Honduras. Unfortunately, that system has not been functioning lately because the springs and surface water in and around the village have entirely dried up over the past six months, and there is no water supply whatsoever on most days. The only long-term solution for communities facing this circumstance in Honduras is to drill a well—an expensive process well beyond the means of most of these villages. Ermin informs us that companies who bring equipment to drill wells in Honduran villages typically charge about \$6000-\$7000. In El Negrito’s case, a handful of church and charitable organizations both within Honduras and from other countries (most in the US) who have mission relationships with the community are contributing to raise funds for this well. So far about \$3500 has been raised.

Session has approved our Mission Committee’s request for a special offering on July 16th to help raise money for the El Negrito well project. We prayerfully ask you to give generously to help make the water flow again for Rainbow Children’s Home and the people of El Negrito.

David Coleman

May 2023 Love Fund Summary

<u>Category</u>	<u># of families served</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Utilities	17	\$1,864.85
Rent	20	\$2,972.79
Hotel	1	\$180
Save A Lot bill (food vouchers)	29	\$765.05
Gas	9	\$225
Cupboard Supplies		\$186.20
Love Cupboard Pantry assisted	13	
Total		\$6,193.89

45 Unique Families served (includes 52 children)



Thank you to our church family for making Christ’s love known to us explicitly during John’s recent health scare – especially the deacons and the women’s Sunday School class. We appreciate the calls, texts, meals, and continued prayers as he recovers.

*Sincerely,
John and Cindy Harter*



Church Picnic July 9th at 1:00 pm!!!!

Sue Chenault has graciously offered her farm again for us to gather and enjoy a picnic. The Deacons will be providing burgers and hotdogs on the grill and beverages will be available. We will have games and activities to keep us busy, but this is a chance to rest and visit too!

□

When: Sunday, July 9th at 1PM□

Where: 880 Duncannon Lane (Farm entrance is directly across from Bu-cee’s)□

What: Potluck...bring your favorite dish or dessert to pass

□

It will be a great day for fun and fellowship!□

I was amazed and very humbled at the overwhelming response of compassion and concern that I received at the sudden death of my husband Larry Brussell from my church family here at First Presbyterian especially since it occurred just before Holy Week began. During the busiest week of the year for the church you ministered to me. Pastor Dr. Curtis Christian and Music Director Dr. Joyce Wolf had the extra duties of the week yet delivered the service and music Larry would have loved and ministered to me. The deacons and volunteers provided a reception lunch that was complete with flowers and delicious. All was excellent. Thank you. I am humbled to be here with this congregation.

Gwen Brussell





VBS 2023
First Christian Church
First Presbyterian Church
White Oak Pond Church
present...
Quenched! Come & See
Jesus & The Woman at the
Well- A Marketplace
Adventure

Where: 412 W. Main St. @ First
Christian Church, Richmond, KY
When: August 6:
August 7 & 8:
Who: All ages, intergenerational
family groups!

Register:
www.fccrichmond.com/vbs



Lunch Bunch!

Tuesday Meetings

Our youth group is meeting on Tuesdays for lunch throughout the summer in the church gym at noon. We'll hang out together, play games and discuss some scriptures. All middle and High School Youth are welcome to attend!



YOUTH GROUP!

Middle School Montreat



IGNITING A SPARK

2023 Montreat Middle School Conference
@ Maryville College
July 19-23, 2023

Teaching With Soul
By Joel

I am not really a beach person. I don't particularly like the feel of sand between my toes. I don't look good in a swimsuit. I don't enjoy lying out in the sun and I hate getting burnt almost as much as I hate having to regularly apply sunscreen to avoid getting burnt. I do, however, appreciate the beauty of the ocean. It's just that I'd rather not have to interact with it beyond taking in the view and eating some of its many delicious crustaceans from time to time. But I married into a family of beach bunnies and so usually once a year we all load up the minivan and make the drive down south to some seaside town or another for family beach time where we all put on sunblock and swimsuits and spend some quality time together in nature's toilet.

It was on one of these family retreats that I found myself alone in the Atlantic swimming in some rather choppy water. The waves were steadily increasing in size and strength and I had to work a little to keep my head above the water. It wasn't really a scary situation. Scary would be the wrong word. I could touch the bottom in between waves and I never felt unsafe, but there was a definite sense that with each wave things were slipping further and further out of my control in a fun sort of way. Exhilarating would probably be a better word for it. I was enjoying myself in a thrill seeking sort of way.


Things continued to intensify until I was hit by one of the largest waves I'd ever experienced. That wave hit me like a freight train and sent me head over heels into the sandy ocean floor like I was nothing. Now I'm a pretty big guy and I'm not really used to feeling that way; like I'm nothing. The feeling certainly left an impression on me. Being tossed about like you were a butterfly in the middle of a tornado makes you feel kind of small, actually. That wave gave me the distinct feeling that compared to the power and vastness of the ocean; I was really nothing at all. It was a humbling thought and as I collected myself and quickly made my way to the safety of the beach before the ocean taught me another lesson in humility, I couldn't help but be reminded of Psalm 8.

Psalm 8 has always been one of my favorites and I'll encourage you to go pick up a Bible and check it out. The whole thing is about seeing the might and majesty of God through creation and being humbled by it. In Psalm 8, the psalmist gets this feeling by staring up into the night sky. I got the feeling when a big wave knocked me on my keister in the Atlantic. Either way, it leads to a realization of exactly how small you are in the grand scheme of things. I think it's good to feel small and insignificant from time to time, if for no other reason than because it helps you to realize how incredibly lucky we are that God loves and cares for us so much. In Psalm 8, the psalmist poses the question "what is man that you are mindful of him?" I don't really have an answer for that. It doesn't really make sense that God loves us insignificant mounds of dust the way He does, but that just makes me all the more grateful that He does.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			6/28	6/29	6/30	1
			Curtis on vacation			
				Dana on vacation		
2 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Worship Noon Fellowship mtg.	3 Bible Study cancelled	4  Independence Day	5 Bible Study 6:30	6	7	8 Officer Training 9-12
			Dana on vacation			
9 9:45 Sunday School 10:45 Congregation mtg. 11:00 Worship 1:00 Church Picnic	10 Bible Study 10:30	11 Tuesday crew 9-11 Mission mtg. 7:00	12 Bible Study 6:30	13 Needle Arts Fellowship 11:30	14	15
16 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Worship	17 Bible Study 10:30	18 Tuesday crew 9-11 CE mtg. 4:30 B/F mtg. 7:00	19 Bible Study 6:30	20	21	22
			MIDDLE SCHOOL MONTREAT			
23 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Worship	24 Bible Study 10:30	25 Tuesday crew 9-11 Session mtg. 7:00	26 Welcome Wednesday/ potluck 6:00	27	28	29
30 9:45 Sunday School 11:00 Worship	31 Bible Study 10:30					