

## Highlights and Happenings:

- **May 3<sup>rd</sup>** : Prayer Meeting, 7pm
- **May 9<sup>th</sup>** : Men's Bible Study, 6:30pm
- **May 10<sup>th</sup>** : Ladies' Bible Study, 10:30am
- **May 14<sup>th</sup>** : Patriot Heights Ministry, 2:45pm
- **May 19<sup>th</sup>** : Spaghetti Dinner and Talent Show
- **May 20<sup>th</sup>** : Ladies Fellowship Brunch at the Voeller's 10 - noon
- **May 21<sup>st</sup>** : Patriot Heights Ministry 2:45pm
- **May 23<sup>rd</sup>** : Men's Bible Study, 630pm
- **May 24<sup>th</sup>** : Ladies' Bible Study, 10:30am
- **May 28<sup>th</sup>** : Agape Fellowship Lunch

"People seem to think that the masses are outside the Christian church because our evangelistic methods are not what they ought to be. That is not the answer. People are outside the church because looking at us they say, "What is the point of being Christians? - look at them!" They are judging Christ by you and me. And you cannot stop them and you cannot blame them."

~Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Welsh Protestant Minister, 1899-1981

## May Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Prayer Meeting 7pm	4	5	6
7 Worship 11a & 5:00p	8	9 Men's Bible Study 6:30pm	10 Ladies' Bible Study 10:30am	11	12	13
14 Worship 11a & 5:00p		16	17 Spaghetti Dinner and Talent Show For Youth Camp May 19 <sup>th</sup> 6 - 8 pm		20 Ladies Fellowship Brunch	
21 Worship 11a & 5:00p	22	23 Men's Bible Study 6:30pm	24 Ladies' Bible Study 10:30am			27
28 Worship 11a & 5:00p Lunch: Agape Fellowship Potluck	29	30	31			

Full of Grace Issue 38 May 2017



Grace  
Orthodox  
Presbyterian  
Church

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Monthly News From  
Grace Orthodox  
Presbyterian  
Church

# Full of Grace

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ~ 2 Cor 12:8-9

## Through Many Dangers

"...Through many dangers, toils and snares; I have already come; 'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far; and Grace will lead me home..."

This month's image (courtesy of Cowper & Newton Museum, UK) is a stained glass window at the Olney Parish Church depicting the famous hymn by John Newton (Amazing Grace).

John Newton (1725-1807) was the son of a commander in the merchant service engaged in the Mediterranean trade. His mother, who gave him some religious training, died of consumption 11 July 1732.

Thereupon his father married again, and John was sent to school at Stratford, Essex, where he learned some Latin. When he was eleven (1736) he went to sea with his father, and made six voyages with him before 1742. Subsequent voyages, work on a slaver ship in Sierra Leone and many other "adventures" ensued.

During his wandering life he had lost all sense of religion, and afterwards accused himself of degrading debauchery. But the dangers of the homeward voyage, when Newton was set to steer the ship through a storm, suddenly awakened in him strong religious feeling. To the end of his days he kept the anniversary of his 'conversion,' 10 March 1748, as a day of humiliation and thanksgiving for his 'great deliverance.'

Are you interested in contributing? Send me your ideas! ~Jill Karr  
[horseslobber@yahoo.com](mailto:horseslobber@yahoo.com)



## The Belgic Confession



Dr. Cornelis P. Venema is president and professor of doctrinal studies at [Mid-America Reformed Seminary](#) and associate pastor of [Redeemer URC](#) in Dyer, Ind. He is author of many books.

The Belgic Confession is one of the best known and most loved of the Reformed confessions. Philip Schaff, the venerable historian of the church and her confessions, observes that it is "upon the whole, the best symbolical statement of the Calvinistic system of doctrine, with the exception of the Westminster Confession." This Confession is known most commonly as the "Belgic" confession because it emerged from the French-speaking Reformed churches in the southern "Lowlands" or "Netherlands" (now Belgium). It has served historically as one of the three confessional symbols of the Dutch Reformed churches. Affection for this confession among these churches stems as much from the poignant circumstances suffered by its original author and subscribers as from its rich statement of the Reformed faith.

In our brief sketch of this confession, we will address both of these features: first, the background and setting within which the Belgic Confession was produced; and second, the distinctive content of its classic statement of the Reformed faith.

### Background and Setting

The Belgic Confession was originally written by a French-speaking, Reformed pastor, Guido de Brès, who had been a student of Calvin's in Geneva. Though de Brès was principal author of the Belgic Confession,

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other Reformed pastors and theologians, including Francis Junius, who was later to become a well-known Reformed professor at the University of Leiden, contributed to the final, received form of the Confession.

First written in 1561, copies of the Confession were sent to Geneva and other Reformed churches for approval. The present form of the Confession stems from the time of the great Synod of Dordt in 1618-19, when the text was revised and officially approved in four languages (the original French, Latin, Dutch, and German). Not long after it was first written, the Belgic Confession was presented to Philip II of Spain, who exercised sovereignty over the Netherlands at the time, in the vain hope that toleration would be extended to the Reformed faith. From the beginning, this confession enjoyed ready acceptance among the Reformed churches of the Netherlands.

Shortly before his death as a martyr, the principal author of the Belgic Confession, Guido de Brès, wrote from prison the following words to his wife Catherine: "Your grief and anguish, troubling me in the midst of my joy and gladness, are the cause of my writing to you this present letter. I most earnestly pray you not to be grieved beyond measure.... If the Lord had wished us to live together longer, He could easily have caused it so to be. But such was not His pleasure. Let His good will be done then, and let that suffice for all reason.... I pray you then to be comforted in the Lord, to commit yourself and your affairs to Him, for He is the Husband of the widow and the Father of the fatherless, and He will never leave nor forsake you.... Goodbye, Catherine, my well beloved! I pray my God to comfort you, and give you resignation to His holy will. Your faithful husband, Guido de Brès."

CONFESSIONS Continued on Page 2

## Hymn Notes

By Mark Moody  
Red Trinity Hymnal 506  
Isaac Watts, 1709,  
Scottish Paraphrases, 1781

As when the Hebrew prophet  
raised the brazen serpent high,  
The wounded looked, and straight  
were cured, the people ceased to die;

So from the Saviour on the cross  
a healing virtue flows;  
Who looks to him with lively faith  
is saved from endless woes.

For God gave up his Son to death,  
so gen'rous was his love,  
That all the faithful might enjoy  
eternal life above.

Not to condemn the sons of men  
the Son of God appeared;  
No weapons in his hand are seen,  
nor voice of terror heard;

He came to raise our fallen state,  
and our lost hopes restore;  
Faith leads us to the mercy seat,  
and bids us fear no more.



As a forgetful people  
we need frequent  
reminders of the  
glorious fact of our  
redemption. This  
hymn reminds us of  
our redemption with  
an analogy with the  
“brazen serpent”  
reminding us that  
Christ became sin for  
us (2 Cor 5:21). I like  
the last line – we have  
no reason to fear.

## Test Your Knowledge



Test your brain and see if  
you can guess the  
answers...

(The answers are at the bottom of  
this page).

### Water in the Bible...

From which verses come these  
quotes?

1. I am poured out like  
water...
2. I baptize you with water...
3. Where do you get that  
living water...
4. ...and he will guide them to  
springs of living water...

## The Belgic Confession (continued)

These moving words of de Brès were written shortly before he was martyred by hanging for his faith and witness to the great suffering on the part of evangelical and Reformed believers in the Netherlands. These sturdy believers, who could speak of “joy and gladness” even in the midst of severe persecution, declared in the preface to the Confession that they would “offer their backs to stripes, their tongues to knives, their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to the fire,” rather than deny the truth of the Gospel. That these words were no idle boast is attested by the fact that an estimated 100,000

Reformed believers lost their lives during the struggle for the Reformation of the church in the Netherlands.

The purpose for the preparation of the Belgic Confession and its presentation to Philip II is of particular importance. In the face of intense persecution by this Roman Catholic sovereign and his magistrates, Guido de Brès and the Reformed believers of the Netherlands were anxious to demonstrate that their faith was in accord with the teaching of Holy Scripture and the ancient consensus of the holy catholic church and her councils. Consequently, the Belgic Confession has an irenic tone throughout, especially in its careful demonstration of the Reformed faith’s commitment to the great biblical doctrines of the Trinity, as well as the person and work of Christ. Roman Catholic teaching is rejected at critical points, but the aim of the Confession is to persuade its readers that the Reformed faith is nothing other than the historic faith of the Christian church.

Another purpose of the confession, which distinguishes it from the French or Gallican Confession of 1559, with which the Belgic Confession shares many striking similarities, was to demonstrate that the Reformed faith was distinct from that of the “Anabaptists.” Among the Anabaptists, who had considerable influence in the Netherlands in the early period of the Reformation, there were those who not only rejected the practice of infant baptism but also the legitimacy of the civil magistrate as a servant of God and instrument for exercising his rule. The Anabaptists sharply distinguished Christ’s spiritual kingdom, the church, from the civil order, and advocated a strict separation from the world, which required a refusal of military service, the taking of oaths, and the paying of taxes. Some of the most distinct features of the Belgic Confession indicate that it was written to defend the Reformed faith against the assumption that it shared these features of the radical fringe of the Reformation.

### Distinctive Content

The Belgic Confession is not a confessional statement like the Canons of Dort that was written to address a particular doctrinal error. Similar to its precursors, Calvin’s Genevan Confession and the Gallican Confession (both completed in 1559), the Belgic Confession offers a comprehensive statement of the Christian and Reformed faith. Broadly speaking, the contents of the thirty-seven articles that comprise the Confession are distributed according to the three articles of the Apostles’ Creed. After several introductory articles that set forth the Reformation view of the inspiration and authority of the canonical Scriptures (Art. 1–7), the Confession first affirms the truth of the Trinity and of God’s works of creation and providence (Art. 8–13). The central section of the Confession sets forth the biblical teaching regarding Christ’s person and work, distinguishing the Reformation’s understanding of salvation by grace alone through faith alone from the errors of medieval Roman Catholic teaching (Art. 14–23). The concluding section of the Confession then offers a summary statement of the person and work of the Spirit, which includes several articles on the church and sacraments as well as a specific article on the divine appointment and ministry of the civil magistrate (Art. 24–37).

CONFESSIONS Continued on Page 4

## CHURCH NEWS AND NOTES...

### PRAYER MEETING – NEW DAY!!

Join us for prayer the first  
Wednesday of every month  
from 7 – 8 pm. Prayer is  
“the powerhouse of the  
church” as Spurgeon said.  
The success of the church’s  
ministry depends on it.

### Church Elders:

Mark Moody	210.379.8606	jmoodysa@aol.com
Vernon Jackson	830.931.4720	vjackson@wildblue.net
Joel Granados	210.389.1618	j.granadas1@att.net

### Church Deacons:

Fernando Prendez	210.413.1823	fprendez@gmail.com
Ted Haynes	210.380.1456	reginaldhjr5022@gmail.com
Mike Holcomb	210.330.4434	buck_justice@yahoo.com
Greg Karr	210.204.9452	gregkarr@gmail.com

Did you know... You can download past Sunday sermons from our website: [www.sagrace.org/media](http://www.sagrace.org/media). You can also request a CD via the Media Request Form in the foyer or on the website: [www.sagrace.org/mediarequest](http://www.sagrace.org/mediarequest)



### LADIES WHO BRUNCH!

Please make plans to join us on  
**Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> from 10am –  
noon** at Amy Voeller’s home for a  
wonderful *Ladies Fellowship  
Brunch*. More details to come!



### AGAPE FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

Mark your Calendars for the **4<sup>th</sup>  
Sunday of every month** bring  
your favorite dish and join us for  
this blessed time of fellowship!



Fellowship Meal



PICTURE OF THE MONTH: 4s & 5s Sunday School Class  
enjoying Easter morning fellowship together!

## Looking Ahead to June...

### Spaghetti Dinner and Talent Show

Youth Camp Fundraiser

6pm to 8 pm

Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>

Grace OPC Fellowship Hall

All proceeds go towards OPC Youth Camp  
Scholarships



Angie Meyer	May 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Greg Karr	May 5 <sup>th</sup>
Cristina Zepeda	May 13 <sup>th</sup>
Haley Lewis	May 17 <sup>th</sup>
Stephen McKinney	May 18 <sup>th</sup>
Cadyn McKinney	May 20 <sup>th</sup>
Du Anne Hamby	May 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Robert Hampe	May 28 <sup>th</sup>
Maximus Miller	May 29 <sup>th</sup>
Bill Buell	May 31 <sup>st</sup>
Vernon Jackson	May 31 <sup>st</sup>

## Happy Anniversary

Sterling & Rhonda Alexander	May 10 <sup>th</sup>
Mark & Susan Moody	May 24 <sup>th</sup>

## Nursery Volunteers Needed



Ladies 18 and older – we  
**URGENTLY** need additional  
volunteers to help in the  
nursery during morning  
worship. This ministry is a  
great blessing to parents  
and to our visitors.

Please sign up on the  
bulletin board outside the  
nursery and/or contact  
DeDe Jackson  
(goatopia@wildblue.net)

## The Belgic Confession (continued from page 2)

For the purposes of our brief summary of the content of the Belgic Confession, we will identify two major themes that stand out in its testimony to the Reformed faith.

First, like the later Westminster Confession of Faith, the Belgic Confession opens with a classic statement of the Reformed doctrine of revelation, particularly the doctrine of Scripture. According to Article 2, God is “made known” by two means, general and special revelation. Though the creation itself, and the superintendence of history under God’s sovereign purposes, testify to God’s everlasting power and divinity, as a “most elegant book,” this general revelation only leaves sinful man in a state of inexcusable ignorance and rebellion before God. Therefore, to make known “more clearly” His will and purpose, especially His redemptive work through Jesus Christ in the Gospel, God has provided His church with the Holy Scriptures. These canonical Scriptures, which were produced under inspiration and possess the full authority of their divine Author, are the only norm for the regulation and foundation of the Christian faith.

Second, in its testimony regarding the person and work of Christ, the Belgic Confession not only echoes the ancient consensus of the church but also emphasizes the distinctive Reformed understanding of sovereign and merciful election (Art. 16), and of Christ’s redemptive work for His people. The doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone is clearly articulated. Of special interest is Article 22, which was slightly revised at the Synod of Dort in the context of debates regarding the nature of Christ’s righteousness that was imputed for the believer’s justification. This Article specifically notes that Christ’s righteousness includes “all His merits, and so many holy works which He has done for us and in our stead,” thereby clarifying that the righteousness imputed to believers includes what is known as Christ’s “active obedience.” While the justification of believers is clearly distinguished from the grace of sanctification, these two benefits of Christ’s saving work are inseparably joined in the communication of God’s grace in Christ to believers (Art. 24).

Though the Belgic Confession bears evident marks of the historical context in which it was first written, it remains among the best historic statements of the faith of the Reformed churches. Evangelical believers would do well to acquaint themselves with this Confession, taking note especially of the difficult circumstances of persecution within which it was written. Sealed with the blood of many martyrs, this sturdy testimony to the Gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ continues to express for many the “living faith of the dead” (Jaroslav Pelikan).

Reprinted with Permission <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/belgic-confession/> *Tabletalk Magazine*, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008.

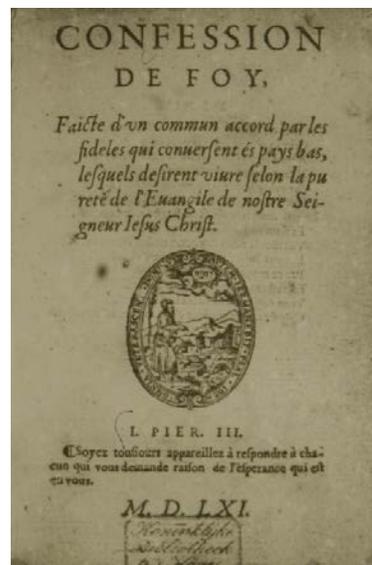


Figure Cover from the Belgic Confession.

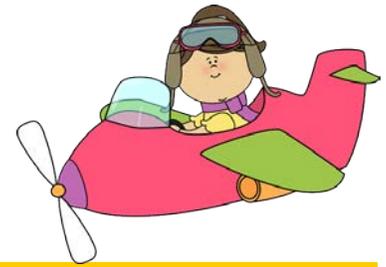
## The Matter of “Amen”

Should we say “Amen” during worship? The OPC says we may!

Here is an excerpt from the OPC Directory for the Public Worship of God. But as you read it, you get the impression that the encouragement is for the congregation as a whole more than for an individual person spontaneously speaking out. That being said, the session of Grace OPC has said that we are fine with spontaneous “amen” being said, with motivations as described in this excerpt.

*“...it is appropriate that worshipers at times respond with brief spoken or sung expressions of praise or affirmation such as “hallelujah” or “amen.” The former is a heartfelt declaration that the living God alone is worthy of adoration. The latter grows out of the responsibility of God’s people to affirm solemnly and earnestly the truthfulness of his Word and the permanence of his character. It is especially fitting for the congregation to join in an “amen” at such times as a response to a blessing, a Scripture reading, a psalm or hymn, a confession of faith, or a prayer. When believers sing or say “amen,” they are testifying to their wholehearted agreement with what has been spoken as being in harmony with God’s permanently valid Word.”*

# Kids' Corner



## Memory Verse

*"So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him." ~ Genesis 22:3*

### Fill-in-the-Blanks

"Early the next morning, \_\_\_\_\_ got up and saddled his **donkey**." (Gen 22:3)

"I (\_\_\_\_\_) have cattle and **donkeys**, sheep and goats, menservants and maidservants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes." (Gen 32:5)

"They (\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_) loaded their grain on their **donkeys** and left." (Gen 42:26)

"So \_\_\_\_\_ took his wife and sons, put them on a **donkey** and started back to Egypt. And took the staff of God in his hand." (Ex 4:20)

"\_\_\_\_\_ got up in the morning, saddled his **donkey** and went with the princes of Moab." (Num 22:21)

"Then she (\_\_\_\_\_) came riding her **donkey** into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them." (I Sam 25:20)

"See your king (\_\_\_\_\_) comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a **donkey**, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (Zech 9:9)

## Donkey Craft



Have your mom or dad paint the bottom of your foot gray. (If you don't have paint, or don't want to paint your foot – just trace your foot on gray paper.) Stamp your foot on a white piece of paper. With black paint, marker, or construction paper make an oval for the donkeys nose. Make his eyes and mane.

### Quiz

What are the only 2 animals to speak in the Bible?



Answer to Quiz: Snake/Serpent and Donkey