

The Why of Today's Study

There are a couple of reasons as to why we are undertaking this study today. The first is the recent use of the Apostles' Creed at the Sunday Liturgy, and one version of it that attempted to use non gender specific references in the creed. The other was a modern statement of faith that really did not display the key components of a creed. The second reason is the admonition on the part of Bishop Andres that we begin using the Nicene Creed at the Sunday liturgy since it is specifically mentioned in the rubrics for the service.

In addition to those concerns, there is the general concern, shared by many churches about the use of the Creed, its language and its precepts. You are not alone in these concerns as they are shared generally amongst all the churches, not just the Episcopal Church but especially amongst the liturgical churches (Anglican, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic) that have long standing connections with the Nicene Creed. Let me share with you a quote from Jaroslav Pelikan, emeritus Professor of History at Yale University, and a prolific author on Church History and related topics. Here is what he had to say- A quote from Chapter Seventeen of Credo, Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition.

"The title of this chapter (Statements of Faith in Modern Christianity) may well seem to be an oxymoron, above all to anyone who equates modernity with religious skepticism and doctrinal relativism and who therefore feels that even if the time for faith as such may not have passed, the time for teaching Christian faith as authoritative dogma probably has, and the time for confessing it in a normative creedal formulary certainly has. As noted earlier, one twentieth century reference work of Liberal Protestant theology speaks for this modern view of creeds and confessions when, after positing the neutral and unobjectionable definition, "Historically considered, creeds are convenient summaries arising out of definite religious situations, designed to meet urgent contemporary needs, and serving as tests of orthodoxy," it proceeds, by means of a "therefore," to draw from the definition a conclusion diametrically opposed to the traditional one: "Therefore they are inadequate in new crises and unable to secure uniformity of belief." In a time when faith itself has become problematical to so many serious and thoughtful seekers – for whom the confidence of the traditional formula, "We believe, teach, and confess," has been replaced by the cry of the anguished father in the Gospel story, "I believe; help my unbelief – the role of the confession of faith cannot avoid being a problematic one. At most, it would seem to be the function of such a confession to acknowledge the reality of the secularization of society and to seek to define (or redefine) the Christian mission in response to it."¹

¹ Palikan, Jaroslav, Credo, Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition, 2003, Yale University Press, Page 486f.

The Creeds

Creed	Date	Accepted by	Original name	Notes
<u>Apostles' Creed</u>	120–250	Western Church	<u>Lat.: <i>Symbolum Apostolorum</i> or <i>Symbolum Apostolicum</i></u>	Product of the Roman Christians around AD 180, who developed an early form of the Apostles' Creed, possibly to critique <u>Marcion</u> .
<u>Creed of Nicaea</u>	325	Ecumenical Church	<u>Greek: Σύμβολον τῆς Νικαίας or, τῆς πίστεως, Latin: <i>Symbolum Nicaenum</i></u>	Product of the <u>first ecumenical council</u> in Nicaea which tried to solve the <u>Arian controversy</u> .
<u>Nicene Creed (Nicaea-Constantinopolitan Creed)</u>	381	Ecumenical Church		Expansion and revision of the 325 Creed of Nicaea (includes new section on Holy Spirit). It is the most widely accepted Christian creed. It critiques <u>apollinarism</u> and a later addition, the <u>Filioque</u> clause, resulted in disagreement between <u>Eastern Christianity</u> and <u>Western Christianity</u> .

Creed	Date	Accepted by	Original name	Notes
<u>Chalcedonian Creed</u>	451	<u>Council of Chalcedon</u>	<u>Latin: Concilium Chalcedonense</u>	In response to <u>Nestorian</u> teachings, the Chalcedonian formulation defines that Christ is "acknowledged in two natures", which "come together into one person and one <u>hypostasis</u> ". Accepted by nearly all Christian denominations (except Oriental Orthodoxy, the Assyrian Church of the East, and much of <u>Restorationism</u>).
<u>Athanasian Creed</u>	500	Western Christian denominations	<u>Lat.: Quicumque vult</u>	The origin of this creed is uncertain, but it is widely used in various Christian denominations.

Comparison of the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds

The Apostles' Creed (ca. 400)	The Apostles' Creed (ca. 700)	The Nicene Creed (381)
I believe in God the Father almighty;	I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth;	We believe in one God, the Father All Governing, creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible;
and in Christ Jesus His only Son, our Lord, Who was born from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, Who under Pontius Pilate was crucified and buried, on the third day rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, whence He will come to judge the living and the dead;	And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended to hell, on the third day rose again from the dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, thence He will come to judge the living and the dead;	And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all time, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created, homoousion as the Father, through Whom all things came into being, Who for us men and because of our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and ascended to heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father, and will come again with glory to judge the living and dead. His kingdom shall have no end.

The Apostles' Creed (ca. 400)	The Apostles' Creed (ca. 700)	The Nicene Creed (381)
and in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh.	I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints , the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.	And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, Who proceeds from the Father, Who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son, Who spoke through the prophets; and in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.c

A Comparison of the Apostles' Creed and the Order of Saint Helen Version:

The Apostles' Creed	The Apostles' Creed the Order of Saint Helen	Notes:
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth;	I believe in God, the Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.	Eliminates "the Father"
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended to hell, on the third day rose again from the dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, thence He will come to judge the living and the dead;	I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only-begotten One, Who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary; Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; Who descended to the dead. On the third day the Christ arose; ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Creator. Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead.	Eliminates, "our Lord" and adds "God's only begotten One." Substitutes "died" for "dead" Substitutes "descended to the dead" for "descended to hell", as in the new translation in the BCP. Substitutes "right hand of the creator" for "God the Father Almighty."
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.	I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.	No Changes

Some Notes:

In the Eastern churches, the Nicene Creed eventually replaced the local symbols completely, but this was not the case in the West, where local and regional baptismal symbols continued to flourish alongside the conciliar statements. By the early eighth century, these regional creeds coalesced into the final form of the Apostles' Creed, which in the ninth century and following assumed a place comparable in traditional authority to the Nicene Creed, although it never garnered the universal sanction of an ecumenical council.²

² Fairbairn, Donald; Reeves, Ryan M.. The Story of Creeds and Confessions (p. 109). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

There were multiple Christian creeds in the first few centuries, with significant differences in wording, but not in content. In the second and third centuries, these creeds were most commonly associated with baptismal liturgies, and foremost among them was the baptismal symbol of the Roman Church, which some call the Apostles' Creed and others refer to as the Old Roman Creed. In the fourth and fifth centuries, the crises over the Trinity and Christology led to the ecumenical councils that produced two great conciliar statements, the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Definition, which were the subjects of chapters 4 and 5. In the Eastern churches, the Nicene Creed eventually replaced the local symbols completely, but this was not the case in the West, where local and regional baptismal symbols continued to flourish alongside the conciliar statements. By the early eighth century, these regional creeds coalesced into the final form of the Apostles' Creed, which in the ninth century and following assumed a place comparable in traditional authority to the Nicene Creed, although it never garnered the universal sanction of an ecumenical council.³

³ Fairbairn, Donald; Reeves, Ryan M.. *The Story of Creeds and Confessions* (p. 109). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.