

One Church & One Baptism
Various Verses
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We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We are not just to believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but we are to also believe in the Church.

This can be difficult because of church hurt.

Challenge: When you talk about the church, use the words "we" and "us," not "they" and "them" because we are the church.

When we want to give up on the Church, we must remember that Jesus loved the Church so much that he died for it and even now is working to build it. (Eph. 5:25; Matt. 16:18)

The 4 Marks of the Church:

- ***one*: We are united in Christ.** (1 Cor. 10:17; 12:13; Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 2:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20)

We are one positionally in heaven, so we are called to be one practically on earth. We are to become what we already are. We are to become how God sees us.

In our church, we learn to live as the Church.

- ***holy*: We are set apart for God.** (Heb. 10:10, 14; 12:10, 14; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:1-2, 14-16; 2:5, 9)

We are holy positionally in heaven, so we are called to be holy practically on earth. We are to become what we already are. We are to become how God sees us.

The Church is not holy because its people are perfect; it is holy because God is forming its people.

Holiness is only experienced through our repentance, which means a change of mind and direction. (Mk. 1:15; Lk. 13:3; Matt. 3:8; Acts 3:19; 17:30)

Baptism is a picture of turning and cleansing. We are only baptized once because it is the one initiation into the one Church. Baptism is not a work that earns salvation or a transactional ritual that independently removes sin. Rather, it is the God-given sign of our identification with Jesus Christ and the forgiveness only found in him. (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:8-9; 4:4-6; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:11–14; 1 Pet. 3:20-21)

- ***catholic*: We are members of the universal church** (all places, people, and points in time) (Gen. 12:1-3; Isa. 42:6; Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 13:47; Rev. 5:9; 7:9)

Every Christian belongs to the most old, most diverse, and most global institution on the planet: the Church!

- ***apostolic*: We are grounded in Scripture and mission.** (Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:19-20; Gal. 2:9; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; 3:15; 2:2; Tit. 1:9; Jude 1:3; John 20:21)

We are not just a church that gathers around truth; we are a church that is sent to the world.

All four of these marks are essential. If any are missing from a congregation, it is not a true church.

The Nicene Creed statement about the Church is in the same article about the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit gave birth to the Church, and the Church is where he is at work today empowering us.

In your weariness and wounding, if you struggle with giving up on the Church, ask yourself:

What do I know about the church that Jesus doesn't? What does Jesus see in the church that I may be missing?

Am I universalizing my unique painful experience in a church or churches to the whole Church when I really need to experience the universal church?

Is it possible for God to turn brokenness into beauty?

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one essence with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Adapted from the *Book of Common Prayer*, 1979.

Scripture & Creeds

Scripture is the Word of God. (ultimate authority)
Creeds are the church's confession of that Word.

Creeds…

Summarize: Condense the central teaching of Scripture

Clarify: Explain how the church understands Scripture

Teach: Provide a framework for learning Christian doctrine

Defend: Guard against false interpretations and heresies

Unite: Give Christians a common confession

Creeds are the guardrails of the New Testament commands to hold to truth and resist false doctrine.

Creeds

Creeds connect us to billions of fellow believers in the historical and global church.

The creeds are the essential beliefs at the center of our faith where we are close together, not the non-essentials.

Creeds are not just statements – they are stories.

The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed was first formulated at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 and expanded at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381.

The Nicene Creed is the most important creed in history because it is the only confession that every Christian group affirms: Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants.

The Nicene Creed is the most historical, global, ecumenical, and influential creed.

The Nicene Creed states who God is, what he has done, and how our lives are changed.