



## **WHY WE SAY THE NICENE CREED: A SHORT GUIDE FOR THE CHURCH ON THE LIVING EDGE**

In a world of curated identities, consumer preferences, and self-defined truth, historic creeds offer us something more grounded: a shared confession that anchors us to the gospel once delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). The Nicene Creed is not just a religious formality; it is a proclamation of Christian orthodoxy forged in the earliest centuries of the Church. It clarifies what it means to follow Jesus in communion with believers across time, space, and culture.

This document explores the historical formation of the Nicene Creed, its theological significance, and why Church on the Living Edge includes it in our communal worship life. Our aim is to help every member understand that when we say the Creed, we are not reciting dead words—we are participating in a living tradition.

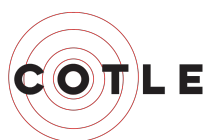
### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Nicene Creed was born out of crisis. In the early fourth century, the unity of the Church was threatened by the rise of a theological movement called Arianism, named after a priest named Arius. Arius taught that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was not eternal and divine in the same way as the Father. He claimed the Son was a created being—higher than humans but not equal to God.

This view gained popularity and caused widespread confusion, prompting Emperor Constantine to convene the First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. Bishops from across the Christian world gathered to respond. Their goal was to articulate clearly what Scripture teaches about the nature of Jesus Christ. The result was the original version of the Nicene Creed, which unequivocally affirmed that the Son is "begotten, not made, of the same essence (homoousios) as the Father."

A second major council in Constantinople in 381 AD expanded and finalized the Creed, particularly by clarifying the Church's belief about the Holy Spirit. This expanded Creed is the version most Christians use today. It stands as one of the most important theological achievements in Christian history, used in worship by Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant churches worldwide.

### **WHY THE NICENE CREED MATTERS**



1. **Theologically Precise:** The Creed offers a carefully constructed summary of the core doctrines of the faith: the Trinity, the incarnation, the resurrection, and the Church. Its wording is not accidental; it protects the faith from distortion and error.

2. **Historically Rooted:** Unlike modern belief statements that may shift with cultural winds, the Creed links us to the early Church. Saying the Creed connects us to Christians who endured persecution, wrestled with heresy, and passed on the faith with clarity and courage.

3. **Communally Unifying:** In an age of fragmentation, the Creed unites Christians in a shared confession. When we say it together, we declare that the Church is one, holy, catholic (universal), and apostolic.

4. **Formational:** The Creed shapes how we think about God and ourselves. It teaches us to prioritize what matters most. As one theologian put it, the Creed tells the true story of the world in miniature form.

## **WHAT THE CREED AFFIRMS**

**The Nicene Creed proclaims belief in:**

- One God: The Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
- One Lord Jesus Christ: Eternally begotten, not made, true God from true God, who for our salvation became incarnate, was crucified, died, and rose again.
- The Holy Spirit: The Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son], and who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
- One Church: Holy, catholic, and apostolic.
- One Baptism: For the forgiveness of sins.
- The Resurrection and Life to Come: The Creed ends with eschatological hope, affirming Christ's return and the resurrection of the dead.

## **WHY WE SAY IT AT CHURCH ON THE LIVING EDGE**

At Church on the Living Edge, we believe in being a modern expression of ancient faith. The Nicene Creed gives language to that ancient faith in a way that is concise, communal, and Christ-centered. In our gatherings, we do not simply affirm "what we believe" as individuals; we confess the faith that has claimed us as a people.

As Acts 2:42–47 reminds us, the early believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. They were not loosely affiliated individuals but a Spirit-filled community formed around shared truth and practice. In the same spirit, our reciting of the Creed is not a passive tradition but an active declaration of devotion to that same gospel.



The Creed is not meant to be a substitute for Scripture but a trustworthy summary of its essential teaching. It guides us away from self-made religion and toward the historic and apostolic faith once for all delivered.

## **CONCLUSION: A LIVING CONFESSION**

In a culture where many are content to be spiritual but not rooted, the Nicene Creed offers something ancient and anchoring. When we say it, we join in a confession that resists reductionism, relativism, and rootlessness. We speak not as isolated voices but as a choir echoing through centuries.

To be a member of the Church is to be part of something bigger than our personal journey. It is to be caught up in God's redemptive story and to confess with boldness and clarity the mystery of faith:

**“Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.”**

And so, we confess.

