



## THE CREEDS

From “The Three Historic Ecumenical Creeds of the Christian Church”  
[www.elca.org/communication/creeds/creeds.html](http://www.elca.org/communication/creeds/creeds.html)

Members of the Lutheran Church express their faith in corporate worship by use of the historic creeds, or belief statements, common to most Christians. This common profession of faith is a way to proclaim our unity with Christians around the world and throughout time back to the ancient church. The creeds are also useful for private devotions, especially the Apostles' Creed.

### *The Apostles' Creed*

The Apostles' Creed as we now have it dates from the eighth century. However, it is a revision of the so-called Old Roman Creed, which was used in the West by the third century. Behind the Old Roman Creed, in turn, were variations which had roots in the New Testament itself. While this creed does not come from the apostles, its roots are apostolic. It

serves as a Baptismal symbol -- that is, it describes the faith into which we are baptized and is used in the rites of Baptism and Affirmation of Baptism.

### *The Nicene Creed*

A greater variety of creeds appeared in the East than in the West. When the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) rejected the teaching of Arius, it expressed its position by adopting one of the current Eastern symbols and inserting into it some anti-Arian phrases, resulting in this creed. At the Council of Constantinople (381) some minor changes were made, and it was reaffirmed at the Council of Chalcedon (451). It is an essential part of the doctrine and liturgy of the Lutheran churches. Historically it has been used especially at Holy Communion on Sundays and major feasts (except when the Apostles' Creed is used as the Baptismal Creed).

### *The Athanasian Creed*

This creed is of uncertain origin.

It was supposedly prepared in the time of Athanasius, the great theologian of the fourth century, although it seems more likely that it dates from the fifth or sixth centuries and is Western in character. It assists the Church in combating two errors that undermined Bible teaching: the denial that God's Son and the Holy Spirit are of one being with the Father; the other a denial that Jesus Christ is true God and true man in one person. It declares that whoever rejects the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Christ is without the saving faith. Traditionally it is considered the "Trinitarian Creed" and read aloud in corporate worship on Trinity Sunday.

## FEATURED RESOURCES

- Apostles' Creed - [www.elca.org/communication/creeds/apostles.html](http://www.elca.org/communication/creeds/apostles.html)
- Nicene Creed - [www.elca.org/communication/creeds/nicene.html](http://www.elca.org/communication/creeds/nicene.html)
- Athanasian Creed - [www.elca.org/communication/creeds/athanasian.html](http://www.elca.org/communication/creeds/athanasian.html)
- ELCA Spiritual Center [www.elca.org/spiritual.html](http://www.elca.org/spiritual.html)

## MONTHLY BIBLE VERSE

*This Bible verse was selected by Harold Usgaard, bishop of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, for everyone in the synod to study.*

“Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:11

## ABOUT OUR SYNOD

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod is a faith community of 130,000 baptized people in 184 congregations as well as related institutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Its geographic area includes 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Minnesota.

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