

A Service of Hymns and Readings on the Nicene Creed

This service was written as an introduction to hymns and songs in *With One Voice*, and uses the Nicene Creed for its theme. Although it can be used at almost any time, it is particularly appropriate for use on the Sunday of the Holy Trinity.

The narration is intended for two alternating voices speaking alternating paragraphs; the congregation, in addition to singing, participates in the reading of the Creed. Directions for the singing of the hymns - alternating stanzas between men, women, choirs, and instruments, singing in unison or harmony - should be added to the Order of Service, as desired. This service may be adapted to fit your needs.

Biblical quotations are from the NRSV.

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We begin with a hymn written in 1971 for a Festival of Praise, by Fred Pratt Green, a Wesleyan Methodist minister in England in the middle years of this century. *With Once Voice* reunites this hymn with the tune for which it was originally written. Directions for the singing of each hymn are in your bulletin. Where no directions are given, everyone sings the entire hymn.

802 "When in Our Music God is Glorified"

Yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. (Galatians 2:16)

Confessions of faith have been a part of the church since Biblical times. The earliest creeds were simple declarations such as "Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone" from Deuteronomy (6:4) and "Jesus is Lord" from Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 12:3). As the church grew, creeds were expanded and formalized, usually in response to attacks on the church or to counteract heretical doctrines that had arisen. Creeds thus became fundamental to the church's teachings and doctrine.

"The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. (Romans 10:8-10)

781 "My Life Flows on in Endless Song"

L. Let us pray,

C. Almighty and ever-living God, you have given us grace, by the confession of the true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and, in the power of your divine majesty, to worship the unity. Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your eternal glory, one God, now and forever. (LBW, Prayer of the Day for The Holy Trinity)

The Nicene Creed was written by the early Church and adopted (in a slightly different version) by the Church Council at Nicea in AD 325 and further revised to its present form by the Council at Chalcedon in AD 451. Based probably on the baptismal creed of Jerusalem, this Creed contains a fuller statement concerning Christ and the Holy Spirit than the earlier formula. It has remained in use since that time and is currently an essential part of the doctrine and liturgy of the Lutheran Church. *We confess the creed together:*

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. (Gen. 1:1-2)

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground. (Psalm 104)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. (John 1:1-3)

The text of "Mothering God" is based on the writings of Julian of Norwich, an English mystic of the fourteenth century. Julian, or Juliana, as she is sometimes known, received a series of visions, which she meditated on for 20 years before recording them in a book known as the "Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love".

769 "Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth"

When the Nicene Creed was drafted, the chief enemy was Arianism. Arius, a priest in Alexandria, denied the full deity and pre-existence of the Son of God. He held that the Son, while divine and like God ("of like substance"), was created by God as the agent through whom God created the universe. Much of the Nicene Creed's focus, therefore, is to assert the divinity of Jesus.

We continue with the creed.

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 being 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.

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness." (Jer 33:14-16)

"All Earth is Hopeful" is one of several hymns in *With One Voice* of South American origin. The original Spanish text is included, however, we will sing in English!

629 "All Earth is Hopeful"

We continue with the creed:

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)

Samuel Crossman, author of the next hymn, was one of the first English writers of hymns, preceding the prolific Isaac Watts by several years. "My Song is Love Unknown" was first published in 1664, and appears here complete and unaltered with a tune from 1924 by John Ireland.

661 "My Song is Love Unknown"

We continue with the creed:

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.

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19)

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. (Mark 16:19)

"Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia" is one of several hymns of African origins in *With One Voice*. Much of this music is based on folk music, and comes out of an unwritten, oral tradition where the parts are freely improvised. This song is from Tanzania. Please feel free to sing in parts, using any of the parts written or making up your own.

678 "Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia"

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6:3-5)

This next hymn comes to us from a pair of American Lutherans, Herb Brokering and David Johnson. Of Johnson's many compositions, primarily for organ and choirs, this is probably the best known, although it is usually associated with "Earth and All Stars", a text also written by Brokering.

674 "Alleluia! Jesus is Risen"

We continue with the creed:

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. (1 Thess. 5:1-2)

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let everyone who hears say, "Come." And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift. ... The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Rev 22)

744 "Soon and Very Soon"

We continue with the creed:

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.

Jesus said to his disciples, "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you." (John 14:26)

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. (1 Cor 2:12-13)

687 "Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading"

We continue with the creed:

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.

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)

Our next hymn is a translation of a well-known Swedish hymn. The offering will be collected as the hymn is sung.

746 "Day by Day"

Prayers of the Church

Lord's Prayer

Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. For great is your steadfast love toward me. (Ps 86:11-13)

We go on our way with a prayer for guidance. "Be Thou My Vision" combines an old Irish hymn with an old Irish folk tune. Although the earliest publication of the two together is from

only 1927, origins of the text can be traced back to the 8th or 10th century. Please stand as we sing.

776 "Be Thou My Vision"

L. The Lord almighty bless us and direct our days and our deeds in his peace. C. Amen