

**HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY**  
**IMMANUEL LUTHERAN, PLAINVIEW, MN.**  
**JUNE 7, 2009**

**Message – The Three Creeds**

This is Holy Trinity Sunday, the Sunday we, the Holy Christian Church, celebrate the good news that Almighty God, who is one God in three persons, has revealed His grace to us, as our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier. The Christian Church has taught and defended this basic doctrine of our Christian faith throughout its history. The church has stated this doctrine of the Holy Trinity in three creeds which we will be using today in our worship. The word ‘creed’ simply means, ‘I believe’. When we confess these ancient creeds of the Church we continue to teach and defend our Christian faith in the one true God, the Great 1 in 3 and 3 in 1, the Great I AM as the Christian Church has for millennium.

**I.** We begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Accompanying this invocation of our Trinitarian baptism, we confess the earliest creed of the Christian Church, the Apostles Creed. This creed, based on the teachings of the apostles, thus its name, was first used as part of baptismal services in the early Christian Church just as we use it today. It is a simple, basic, brief statement of what the Christian faith believes based on God’s Word. Written as three articles in one creed it illustrates and confesses our saving faith in the Triune God, one God in three persons. We join together in making this common confession of faith:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

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, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church; the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

**II.** The second great creed of the Christian Church is the Nicene Creed. This creed was confessed by the early church as a defense of the Christian faith. A dispute had developed within the Church over who Jesus Christ truly was. Was He true God; **the** Son of God and true man; **the** Son of Man, or was He merely **a** good man of

God, a son of God as any human being. A teacher/pastor by the name of Arius was teaching that Jesus was only a creature of God like any man and so was only a great teacher who could teach us how to get to or reach God. To resist this false doctrine and to make a clear statement of faith the early Christian congregations sent representatives to the city of Nicea, Asia Minor which is in modern day Turkey, thus the name Nicene Creed. They confessed a common statement of faith in defense of the Triune God, one God in three equal and undivided persons, emphasizing Jesus Christ as being not only a son of God, but being **the** Son of God, God incarnate, God in flesh and blood. We join in confessing that same saving faith, today:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one Holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

**III.** The third great creed of the Christian Church we want to consider this Trinity Sunday is the Athanasian Creed. It is the least known creed but one of the most powerful confessions of faith for us Christians. Like the Nicene Creed this creed was confessed by the early church as a defense of the Christian faith against error. This creed defends the unity of the three persons of God and defends the two natures of Christ, not confusing them but clearing confessing them. The Athanasian Creed is named for a young pastor/teacher who lived at the same time as St. Augustine. Both these men defended the clear teachings of the Word of God against false doctrine or error. It is no small thing to make affirmation of our faith before God and before one another. It is truly a matter of life and death, eternal life and eternal death. Many, many people over the last twenty centuries have laid down their lives for the defense and confession of the Christian faith in one God three persons and in Jesus Christ as true God and true man. We join with those saints in our confession of the same faith, today:

**Pastor:** Whoever will be saved shall,

**All:** Above all else, hold the catholic faith.

**Pastor:** Which faith, except everyone keeps whole and undefiled,

**All:** Without doubt He will perish eternally.

**Pastor:** And the catholic faith is this:

**All:** That we worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God,

**Pastor:** Neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.

**All:** For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit.

**Pastor:** But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one,

**All:** The glory equal, the majesty coequal.

**Pastor:** Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit.

**All:** The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated.

**Pastor:** The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.

**All:** The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal.

**Pastor:** And yet they are not three eternal but one eternal.

**All:** As there is not three uncreated not three incomprehensibles but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

**Pastor:** So like wise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty and the Holy Spirit almighty.

**All:** And yet they are not three almighties but one almighty.

**Pastor:** So the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God.

**All:** And yet they are not three Gods but one God.

**Pastor:** So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord and the Holy Spirit is Lord.

**All:** And yet they are not three Lords but one Lord.

**Pastor:** For as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every person by Himself to be both God and Lord,

**All:** So we cannot by the catholic faith say that there are three Gods or three Lords.

**Pastor:** The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

**All:** The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten.

**Pastor:** The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten but proceeding.

**All:** So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

**Pastor:** And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another;

**All:** But the whole three persons are coeternal together and coequal,

**Pastor:** So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped.

**All:** He, therefore, that will be saved is compelled thus to think of the Trinity.

**Pastor:** Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**All:** For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man;

**Pastor:** God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and man of the substance of His mother, born in the world;

**All:** Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

**Pastor:** Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood;

**All:** Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two but one Christ.

**Pastor:** One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh but by taking the manhood into God.

**All:** One altogether, not by confusion of substance but by unity of person.

**Pastor:** For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;

**All:** Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, He sits at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies and will give an account of their own works.

**Pastor:** And they that have done good will go into life everlasting;

**All:** And they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

**Pastor:** This is the catholic faith

**All:** Which, except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved. Amen.

(the word catholic means universal/world wide)