

COVENANT MEMORIAL

A Fresh Perspective on Real Presence

Essay No 11

A Word about The Use of Creeds

- The Creed **anchors the Lord's Table** in apostolic faith rather than personal experience.
- It ensures Communion is received:
 - **trinitarianly,**
 - **christologically,**
 - **ecclesially.**
- In covenantal terms, the Creed is:
 - the Church publicly renewing allegiance
 - before receiving covenant signs.

Below is a pastoral introduction to the Creeds designed to be *read aloud* (or lightly adapted) before their recitation in worship.

1. a **general introduction** suitable for regular use
2. a **brief introduction specific to the Apostles' Creed**
3. a **brief introduction specific to the Athanasian Creed**
4. a few **pastoral notes for leaders** on tone and frequency

Everything is shaped to fit your **covenantal, evangelical, non-alarmist theology.**

A Pastoral Introduction to the Creeds

(General – may be used most Sundays)

Leader:

Brothers and sisters,
before we come to the Table of the Lord,
we confess together the faith of the Church.

This creed is not a test of intelligence,
nor a replacement for Scripture,
nor a set of private opinions.

It is the Church's shared confession—
the faith into which we were baptised,
the faith that has been guarded through the centuries,
and the faith by which we come in confidence to Christ's Table.

As we say these words together,
we are not merely recalling doctrines;
we are declaring our allegiance
to the God who has made himself known
as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Let us confess this faith together.

A Pastoral Introduction to the Apostles' Creed

(Short, warm, ideal for most services)

Leader:

Let us confess the Apostles' Creed—
a simple and ancient summary of the gospel,
shared by Christians across the world
and across the ages.

In these words, we declare
who God is,
what Christ has done,
and the hope in which we stand.

As we confess this faith,
we do so not because we have mastered it,
but because we trust the God it proclaims.

A Pastoral Introduction to the Nicene Creed

(Used regularly; confident, solemn tone)

Leader:

Let us confess together the Nicene Creed,
the historic confession of the Church
that clearly proclaims who God is
and who Jesus Christ is for our salvation.

This creed was shaped by the Church's careful reading of Scripture
and was received so that the gospel might be confessed
truthfully, clearly, and faithfully.

As we say these words,
we are not reciting a theory about God,
but bearing witness to the saving truth:
that the Father sent the Son,
in the power of the Holy Spirit,
for us and for our salvation.

Let us confess together
the faith of the Church.

A Pastoral Introduction to the Athanasian Creed

(Used occasionally; slower, more solemn tone)

Leader:

Today we confess the Athanasian Creed,
a historic confession of the Church
that bears faithful witness
to the mystery of the Holy Trinity
and the true humanity and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This creed was written not to speculate,
but to protect the gospel—
to safeguard the truth that
the God who saves us
is the God who has revealed himself.

As we confess these words,
we do so humbly,
acknowledging that God is greater
than our understanding,
yet gracious enough
to make himself truly known.

Let us confess together
the faith of the Church.

Optional Pastoral Framing (for congregations new to creeds)

You may occasionally wish to add this *once every few months*:

Leader:

Some of us are more familiar with praying our faith
than speaking it aloud together.
Confessing the creed is one of the Church's ways
of reminding ourselves
that the gospel we believe
is larger than any one of us.

We are joining our voices
to the Church across time and place,
and we are grounding ourselves again
in the truth that holds us steady.

Pastoral Notes for Leaders

1. Tone matters more than explanation

Say the introductions **calmly and confidently**, not defensively.
If you sound nervous, people will assume something strange is happening.

2. Do not over-teach the creed every time

Let repetition do the work.
The creed catechises quietly.

3. Say “we” more than “you”

This is a shared act, not a lecture.

4. Place the creed where it belongs

Between **forgiveness received** and **Communion approached**,
the creed functions as:

- shared allegiance,
- doctrinal stability,
- ecclesial unity.

5. Expect trust to grow over time

People often grow to love the creeds
after they've been saying them for a while.

A Closing Word for Pastors

When a congregation confesses the creed before Communion,
they are doing something profoundly pastoral:

They are saying, together,

*“This is the God who has forgiven us,
this is the Christ who meets us at the Table,
and this is the faith in which we come.”*

That is not a disruption to evangelical worship.
It is evangelical worship given depth, memory, and confidence.