

THE APOSTLES' CREED (origins: early centuries of the church)

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator 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;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.

Amen.

A CHRISTIAN CREED BASED ON THE APOSTLES' CREED, FROM: IONA, SCOTLAND
Modified for AHPC (the creed we use every Communion and Baptism Sunday)

We Believe in God above us,
Maker and sustainer of all that lives,
Of sun, moon and stars,
Of water, air, and earth,
Of male and female,
All genders, colours, and cultures.

We believe in God beside us,
Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
Born of a woman's womb, servant of the poor.
He was tortured and nailed to a cross.

He bore the suffering of others but died himself forsaken.
He descended into the earth to the place of death.
On the third day he rose from the tomb.
He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present,
And his reign will come on earth.

We believe in God within us,
The Holy Spirit of transforming flame,
Life-Giving breath of the church,
Energy of healing, justice, and forgiveness,
Source of resurrection and life everlasting.
Amen.

A creed is an “I believe” or “we believe” statement. The creed we use at Armour Heights is based on the original Apostles’ Creed written almost 2000 years ago. Each of the three paragraphs is based on the activity of one of the members of the Trinity. The first paragraph privileges God’s as Creator. The second paragraph privileges Jesus Christ as the one who became human and faced the kind of cruelty and injustice humanity is capable of perpetrating. It privileges his suffering with us and his solidarity with the victims more so than his forgiveness of the perpetrators. It is in the third paragraph on the Holy Spirit, that we get the forgiveness. But whereas the original Apostles’ Creed has only one line on the Holy Spirit, the creed we use frames the whole third paragraph within the activity of the Holy Spirit.

What’s also different in our version is the use of inclusive language and gender diverse language. There’s more said about the creation. In the movement of Christ through the 2nd paragraph it ends not with him coming to judge the world as one who co-reigns with God, but rather as the one whose reign “will come on earth.” This is the vision we Christians live for, to make the kind of difference in our world that points to a better world we dream about coming to be promised when Christ reigns (thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven). Finally, in the third paragraph we describe the Holy Spirit using metaphors of energy and transformation rather than more traditional person-like language.

There’s always more we can say in a creed, but if it reflects some core tenets of faith we embrace, it serves its purpose. What do you think?