THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Stories from the four churches

At **St Ann's**, after the sermon, the preacher announces a reflective song, and encourages people to use it to make their response to the preaching. She then introduces the Creed as the second part of the response to the sermon. She uses the interrogative form of the Creed from page 143 in *Common Worship*, pointing out that the sermon was asking direct questions about their faith.

The sermon in **St Bartholomew's** mentions using the Creed as a symbol of our unity in faith with the worldwide Church through the ages. After a period of silence the president stands and begins the Nicene Creed simply by saying 'We believe in God'. There is no explicit reference back to the sermon, but the intended link is clear.

St Christopher's have recently had some teaching on the Creed. They have used one or two of the seasonal Affirmations of Faith from *Common Worship* to fit with the teaching subject. One of the points that has been highlighted is the 'doxological' use of the Creed in Eastern churches, to gather together the praise of the congregation. So today the Creed is postponed until after the intercessions, when the choir lead an outburst of praise in a glorious setting of the Nicene Creed.

Meanwhile, in **St Dodo's** they all sing Merbecke's setting of the Nicene Creed. Unfortunately the choir copies have not been revised, so they sing the original Prayer Book text. The congregation wonder whether they should join in, but are not sure how the melody fits the words. It is marginally better than last Sunday, when the choir had a go at singing the Creed from Schubert's Mass in G. They came a cropper and had to start again – not surprising since some faced east, some sang it as a 'piece' to the congregation, and the remainder looked to one another to try to keep time. On neither occasion could the Creed be said to have fulfilled its function of uniting the church in the faith.

Which creed?

St Christopher's have had a debate about whether to use the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed.

* The Nicene Creed is traditional in celebrations of Holy Communion and, in contemporary versions, emphasizes the corporate: 'We believe ...';

* The Apostles' Creed has an individual emphasis, is shorter, and in easier language.

Both **St Ann's** and **St Bartholomew's** use the Corporate Renewal of Baptismal Vows (here), with the interrogative form of the Apostles' Creed, at Easter and sometimes at New Year. In previous years, the popularity of the corporate renewal of baptismal vows prompted the clergy at St Bartholomew's to use it at almost every opportunity. This led to some objections that it was becoming meaningless, and the more regular pattern of using it only once or twice a year, with appropriate warning and chance for preparation, has left the congregation feeling much happier and valuing it even more.

Suggestions about when Affirmations might be used

* Affirmation 4 for the Incarnation and Lent.

* Affirmation 5 for the Resurrection and memorial services.

* Affirmation 6 for Advent, Trinity and Heaven.

* Affirmation 2 for the Incarnation and Trinity.

The role of creeds

It is important for our unity in the catholic faith that any creeds used are not private or local compositions, but ones that are recognized by the wider Church. However, in Morning and Evening Prayer and in both Order One and Order Two Holy Communion the Creed may be omitted on weekdays, so omitting it clearly does not make the service invalid in some way! Public recitation of the Creed has not always been an essential part of the Church's worship. A Service of the Word allows for the occasional substitution of one of the Affirmations of Faith (here) for the Creed. Some of these are already set to music, and one of them is the specially- commissioned hymn paraphrase of the Apostles' Creed, 'We believe in God the Father' by Timothy Dudley-Smith. There is no provision for the use of any other credal hymn as a substitute, and where one is used on a Sunday it might well follow one of the shorter Affirmations of Faith.

¶ ***Creeds***

At a celebration of Holy Communion, the Apostles' Creed or the Athanasian Creed in an authorized form may be used in place of the Nicene Creed, or an

authorized Affirmation of Faith may be used. Suitable words of introduction or conclusion (such as 'Let us declare our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit') to the Creed or Affirmation of Faith may be used.

The Nicene Creed

E*1*

All **We believe in one God,**

the Father, the Almighty,

maker of heaven and earth,

of all that is,

seen and unseen.

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,

was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary

and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

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.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,

and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.

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.

The Nicene Creed may be used responsively as follows

E*2*

We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,

All **maker of heaven and earth,**

of all that is,

seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

the only Son of God,

eternally begotten of the Father,

All **God from God, Light from Light,**

true God from true God,

begotten, not made,

of one Being with the Father.

All **Through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,

and was made man.

All **For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;**

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the Scriptures;

All **he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,

and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

All **the Lord, the giver of life,**

who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

All **With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.**

He has spoken through the prophets.

All **We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.**

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

All **We look for the resurrection of the dead,**

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The text of the Nicene Creed which omits the phrase 'and the Son' in the third paragraph may be used on suitable ecumenical occasions. See Common Worship, *page 140*.

*The other authorized texts of the Nicene Creed are printed in the Order for the Celebration of Holy Communion – Order One (Traditional Language) and Order Two (*Common Worship, *pages 213 and 234).*

The Apostles' Creed

The origin of the Apostles' Creed is the profession of faith made at baptism. This association may have implications for the occasion when it is used at Holy Communion.

E*3*

All **I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

creator of heaven and earth.

I believe 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 to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and 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 the life everlasting.

Amen.

(or)

E*4*

All **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 Ghost,

born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, dead and buried.

He descended into hell;

the third day he rose again from the dead;

he ascended into heaven,

and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty;

from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;

the holy catholic Church;

the communion of saints;

the forgiveness of sins;

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting.

Amen.

The Apostles' Creed may also be used in the following form

E*5*

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

All **I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

All **I believe 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 to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

All **I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting.

Amen.

The Athanasian Creed

The authorized form of the Athanasian Creed is that contained in The Book of Common Prayer.

¶ *Authorized Affirmations of Faith*

In addition to the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed and the Athanasian Creed, these Affirmations of Faith are also authorized.

1

E*6*

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,

source of all being and life,

the one for whom we exist?

All **We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,

who took our human nature,

died for us and rose again?

All **We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,

who gives life to the people of God

and makes Christ known in the world?

All **We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

All **This is our faith.**

We believe and trust in one God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

2

E7

We proclaim the Church's faith in Jesus Christ.

All **We believe and declare that our Lord Jesus Christ,**

the Son of God, is both divine and human.

God, of the being of the Father,

the only Son from before time began;

human from the being of his mother, born in the world;

All **fully God and fully human;**

human in both mind and body.

As God he is equal to the Father,

as human he is less than the Father.

All **Although he is both divine and human**

he is not two beings but one Christ.

One, not by turning God into flesh,

but by taking humanity into God;

All **truly one, not by mixing humanity with Godhead,**

but by being one person.

For as mind and body form one human being

so the one Christ is both divine and human.

All **The Word became flesh and lived among us;**

we have seen his glory,

the glory of the only Son from the Father,

full of grace and truth.

from the Athanasian Creed

3

E*8*

All **We believe in God the Father,**

God almighty, by whose plan

earth and heaven sprang to being,

all created things began.

We believe in Christ the Saviour,

Son of God in human frame,

virgin-born, the child of Mary

upon whom the Spirit came.

Christ, who on the cross forsaken,

like a lamb to slaughter led,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

he descended to the dead.

We believe in Jesus risen,

heaven's king to rule and reign,

to the Father's side ascended

till as judge he comes again.

We believe in God the Spirit;

in one Church, below, above:

saints of God in one communion,

one in holiness and love.

So by faith, our sins forgiven,

Christ our Saviour, Lord and friend,

we shall rise with him in glory

to the life that knows no end.

(May be sung to any 87.87. or 87.87D. tune.)

4

E*9*

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

All **Though he was divine,**

he did not cling to equality with God,

but made himself nothing.

Taking the form of a slave,

he was born in human likeness.

He humbled himself

and was obedient to death,

even the death of the cross.

Therefore God has raised him on high,

and given him the name above every name:

that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bow,

and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

cf Philippians 2.6-11

5

E*10*

Let us declare our faith

in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All **Christ died for our sins**

in accordance with the Scriptures;

he was buried;

he was raised to life on the third day

in accordance with the Scriptures;

afterwards he appeared to his followers,

and to all the apostles:

this we have received,

and this we believe.

Amen.

cf 1 Corinthians 15.3-7

6

E11

We say together in faith

All **Holy, holy, holy**

is the Lord God almighty,

who was, and is, and is to come.

We believe in God the Father,

who created all things:

All **for by his will they were created**

and have their being.

We believe in God the Son,

who was slain:

All **for with his blood,**

he purchased us for God,

from every tribe and language,

from every people and nation.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:

All **the Spirit and the Bride say,'Come!'**

Even so come, Lord Jesus!

Amen.

cf Revelation 4.8,11; 5.9; 22.17, 20

7

E*12*

Let us declare our faith in God.

All **We believe in God the Father,**

from whom every family

in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son,

who lives in our hearts through faith,

and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,

who strengthens us

with power from on high.

We believe in one God;

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

cf Ephesians 3

¶ *A Form for the Corporate Renewal of Baptismal Vows*

when celebrated within a service other than Baptism or Confirmation

Notes

1 This form should be used only when there has been due notice and proper preparation. It is recommended that it is used no more than once or twice in any one year. Suitable opportunities include Easter, Pentecost, the Baptism of Christ in Epiphany, and the inauguration of a new ministry.

2 This form is a corporate affirmation for use within a service.

When it is used it replaces the Creed or other Affirmation of Faith.

3 Where it is customary for the assembly to be sprinkled with water from the font or to sign themselves with water from the font, this may take place immediately after the Profession of Faith or during a hymn, canticle or song at the conclusion of this form.

A Corporate Renewal of Baptismal Vows

E*13*

The president may use words of introduction to this part of the service.

A large candle may be lit. The president may address the congregation as follows

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

All **I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

All **I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

All **I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

All **I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

All **I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

All **I come to Christ.**

The president may say

May almighty God who has given you the desire to follow Christ

give you the strength to continue in the way.

The Profession of Faith

The president addresses the congregation

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

All **I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

All **I believe 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 to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

All **I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting.

Amen.

The president says

Almighty God,

we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith

with all who have been baptized into your name.

Keep us faithful to our baptism,

and so make us ready for that day

when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

The president may use the Affirmation of Commitment (E14).

The president concludes the Renewal of Vows saying

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith,

that you may be rooted and grounded in love

and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

All **Amen.**

¶ *Affirmation of Commitment*

E*14*

This Affirmation of Commitment may be used after an authorized Creed or Affirmation of Faith

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,

in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

All **With the help of God, I will.**

Will you persevere in resisting evil and,

whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

All **With the help of God, I will.**

Will you proclaim by word and example

the good news of God in Christ?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people,

loving your neighbour as yourself?

All **With the help of God, I will.**

Will you acknowledge Christ's authority over human society,

by prayer for the world and its leaders,

by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice?

All **With the help of God, I will.**

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