



We Believe

CELEBRATING 1700 YEARS
OF THE NICENE CREED

THIS WEEK'S ALTERNATE CREED:

THE MAASAI CREED

We believe in the one High God, who out of love created the beautiful world and everything good in it. He created man and wanted man to be happy in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe on the earth. We have known this High God in the darkness, and now we know him in the light. God promised in the book of his word, the Bible, that he would save the world and all nations and tribes.

We believe that God made good his promise by sending his son, Jesus Christ, a man in the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and man, showing that the meaning of religion is love. He was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He was buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day, he rose from that grave. He ascended to the skies. He is the Lord.

We believe that all our sins are forgiven through him. All who have faith in him must be sorry for their sins, be baptized in the Holy Spirit of God, live the rules of love, and share the bread together in love, to announce the good news to others until Jesus comes again. We are waiting for him. He is alive. He lives. This we believe. Amen.

WEEK 3

ONE GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025

I. Opening Prayer and Scripture Reading

- A. Recite the Maasai Creed
- B. Genesis 1:1-2:3 (The Creation Story)
- C. Opening Prayer

II. One God

- A. Shema—Christian monotheism is rooted in the fundamental confession of Israel: “*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one*” (Deut. 6:4). This *Shema* affirms that God alone is sovereign, without rival, and undivided in being.
- B. Strange kind of monotheism—Christian theology maintains this monotheistic foundation while confessing that the one God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—a triune unity.
- C. Unity of God—The oneness of God is affirmed throughout Scripture. Isaiah declares, “*I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God*” (Isa. 45:5). This absolute monotheism sets biblical faith apart from polytheism and henotheism.
- D. Trinitarian Monotheism—The New Testament maintains this strict monotheism while revealing the relational distinctions within the Godhead. Jesus affirms, “*I and the Father are one*” (John 10:30), and Paul describes Jesus as the one through whom all things exist while upholding the *Shema* (1 Cor. 8:6). The Holy Spirit is also fully divine (Acts 5:3–4), leading to the formulation of the Trinity—one God in three persons, not three gods.

III. “Father”

- A. What does it mean to call God “Father”?
- B. The relational aspect of God’s fatherhood:
 1. God as a loving and caring creator.
 2. Our identity as children of God.
- C. Problems with gender—Both male and female are created in the image of God. God is beyond human gender.
- D. Discussion Question: How does viewing God as “Father Almighty” shape our faith and relationship with Him?

IV. “Almighty”

- A. God is all ruling/ sovereign/Omnipotent
- B. Emphasizes God’s transcendence and in paradoxical tension with the title Father.
- C. This means that the Father’s almighty nature is not merely **power in the abstract** but a **relational and providential power**—one that works through Christ and the Spirit for the salvation of the world.

THE NICENE CREED

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 of the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
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 worshiped 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.

*universal

V. God as Creator

A. “Maker”—

1. The confession that God is the Maker (ποιητήν, *Creatorem*) of heaven and earth echoes the opening of Scripture: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)
2. This is a declaration of God’s absolute transcendence—God is not part of creation but its origin and sustainer. Creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) is a key Christian doctrine, rejecting the idea that the universe is eternal or self-existent (cf. Heb. 11:3).
3. God, as *Pantokrator*, creates not out of necessity but out of divine freedom and love (Ps. 33:6-9).

B. “Heaven and Earth”—The Full Scope of Creation—The phrase “heaven and earth” is a merism, meaning it includes everything in between. It signifies:

1. The material world (the cosmos, all physical reality).
 2. The spiritual realm (the angelic order, the dwelling of God)
- This rejects dualism, which sees matter as evil and spirit as good. Instead, Genesis 1 declares all creation “very good”(Gen. 1:31). The Gnostic tendency has been to see creation as not good. Some Christian groups have a theology of the Fall that limits creation’s goodness and God’s power. The image of God in humanity may be bent but it is never broken. Creation’s original goodness cannot be outweighed by original sin.

C. “Visible and Invisible”—Beyond Human Perception—This expands the doctrine of creation to include:

1. The visible world—everything perceivable by human senses (e.g., stars, earth, humanity).
2. The invisible world—realities beyond human perception, such as angels, spiritual beings, and divine mysteries (Col. 1:16). Paul affirms that Christ is the one through whom all things, visible and invisible, were created: “For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.” (Col. 1:16) Nothing exists outside His sustaining power.

D. Discussion Question: How does acknowledging God as Creator influence the way we see the world?

VI. Christianity, Science, and Evolution

A. The relationship between faith and science:

1. Historical tensions and modern perspectives.
2. How theology and science can complement one another. Good theology and good science are friends.

B. Christian perspectives on science and evolution:

1. Because creation is good; Christians can accept science as good.

2. Religion/Creation and Science/Evolution—Traditional Churches find no conflict between the two. 2016 UMC Statement on Science and Technology, “We find that science’s descriptions of cosmological, geological, and biological evolution are not in conflict with theology.”
 3. The role of faith in interpreting scientific discoveries.—“We affirm the value of science and reason in providing deeper understandings of the origins and functioning of the cosmos. We also acknowledge that like all human endeavors, science can be misused and abused. We, therefore, urge all those involved in scientific investigations to adhere to the highest ethical standards in conducting research and applying their findings.”
- C. Discussion Question: How can we reconcile faith in God as Creator with modern scientific understandings of the universe?

VII. Faith, Creation, and Stewardship

- A. The responsibility of humanity:
1. Genesis 1:26-28: Humanity’s call to stewardship.
 2. Caring for creation as an act of worship.
 3. United Methodist Statement on Creation: “We affirm that all creation belongs to God and is a manifestation of God’s goodness and providential care. Human beings, nonhuman animals, plants, and other sentient and non sentient beings participate in the community of creation, and their flourishing depends on the care of all God’s creation. Rather than treating creation as if it were placed here solely for humanity’s use and consumption, we are called to practice responsible stewardship and to live in right relationship with the Creator and with the whole of God’s creation (Gen. 1:26–31; Matt. 6:26–30; Rom. 8:22–24). We are also called to honor the role of every part of creation in healing the whole; thus we praise God with the whole of creation (Ps. 148) and recognize that we are part of complex ecosystems, all valued by God. We affirm our sacred calling to be responsible stewards and to lovingly tend all that God has wrought. We recognize the inherent worth of God’s creation, celebrate earth’s abundance and diversity, and, along with the entirety of the cosmos, give praise to its Creator. We recognize we are interconnected members of complex ecosystems, intricate webs of life, all of which have their origins in God’s gracious act of creation.”
 4. We are part of the earth. We are “earthlings!” The environment is not something that we live in but we are part of.
 5. Creation Mysticism—
 - a. Creation exists inside of God—“in whom we live and move and have our being.”
 - b. Creation as Family—St. Francis “All Creatures of Our God and King.”
 - c. Univocity of Being—While we have separate “thisness” (haecceity) we share the same “whatness” (quiddity).
- B. Practical applications:
1. How can we live in ways that honor God’s creation?
 2. The impact of faith-based environmental movements.
- C. Reflection Question: How does our belief in God as Creator affect the way we live in the world?

VIII. Closing Reflection and Prayer

- A. Recite the Nicene Creed
- B. Closing Prayer