

THE DANCE OF LIFE

*1700 years with
The Nicene Creed*



*St Francis-
In-the-Wood*

Anglican Community Since 1927



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the Coast Salish Peoples, from time immemorial.

Season of Creation 2025

Reflections by Rev. Alex Wilson

This document reflects the original reflective work of Rev. Alex Wilson. Digital tools
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A LIVING MYSTERY

Rev. Alex Wilson

Friends

The Nicene Creed is one of the oldest prayers we still say as a church. Dating back to 325, it was the product of conflict driven necessity as bishops from every corner of the Roman Empire gathered in Nicaea. The bishops didn't come as one voice; they gathered with their fears, concerns, divisions, and worries for a church that was slowly losing its sense of self. The resulting council was not one of campfire songs and joy. They argued — hard — about how to talk about Jesus.

They argued because the early church had been waiting for the return of Jesus, sure that it was imminent. However, the longer they waited the gnaw of doubt started to creep in. Quickly questions arose about what they were even waiting for. If their worship was the issue, or were they waiting for nothing? Was their worship somehow misplaced? Had they misunderstood the purposes of God. Perhaps they needed a radical change, jettisoning what they felt was holding them back, to fit into the world they were living in.

It was into this landscape that Emperor Constantine walked, with what he thought would fix this forever. They'd hold a council. But even that didn't settle everything. Fifty years later, they gathered again, this time in Constantinople, to add words about the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Words that still stir disagreement in the church today.

The irony of the collective statements of the Nicene Creed is that it wasn't born from calm agreement. It came out of crisis, conflict, longing, and ultimately courage. And seventeen centuries later, we are again facing a context that birthed the creed— a world in turmoil. Creation groans under our misuse. Politics are fracturing communities. Churches age, struggle, and shrink. And we're still trying to work out what it means to say we believe in God.

The gift of the Creed is it isn't a relic or museum piece. It's a witness— to generations of hope and faith — a reminder that God has been here in the middle of uncertainty all along.

This leaflet is an invitation to sit with and reflect on the Creed again. Not to defend it or explain it away. But to lean in and listen once more for the truth that goes beyond all understanding. God has not abandoned us. The tides, the stars, the breath of the wind, the work of soil and seed — they're not just background scenery. They're reminders to notice God's presence, still moving, still creating.

Join me as we step into the dance of life we call the Creed.

Alex+



THE STORY OF THE CREED

Despite the collective nature of the Nicene Creed, its wording wasn't born in peace. It came through arguments—political, theological, pastoral—and was wrestled into being through local needs and prayer.

When Emperor Constantine called the first council in 325, the Church was deeply divided. Competing teachings were everywhere as people tried to make sense of who Jesus was and how he related to God. Arius, a priest from Alexandria, was teaching that Jesus, while holy, was created and then became holy. Others, led by Athanasius, resisted fiercely. For Athanasius, if Jesus were not fully God, salvation itself would collapse. Only God can save; a created being cannot.

What unfolded was a fight among the council fathers—yes, at that point, they were all men. In the end, the language they chose was uncompromising: Jesus is “begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.” The Greek word they used—*homoousios*, “of the same substance”—became the way the Church began to speak about God's presence in the world.

But the decision didn't bring calm. If anything, the new wording stirred even more division. Some thought the words were too vague. Others thought it was too hard and wanted more accessible language.

For the next fifty years, the debates surged back and forth until another council gathered in Constantinople in 381. That council gave the creed the fuller shape we know today, clarifying the divine action of the Holy Spirit as the giver and sustainer of life.

It would be dishonest to omit the harm this process has caused over the centuries. The creed has too often been wielded as a weapon—used to exclude, condemn, even justify violence, crusades, invasions, and displacements. To mark the creed's anniversary is not to glorify an untarnished history or deny God's presence among those who differ from us. It's to hold all of it—the beauty, the harm, and the longing for God—honestly before one another. Because after all these years, the creed still does not offer us a tidy resolution. Rather it gives a witness to presence—uncovered in the midst of crisis. Across time, it still speaks a living truth: faith in the Creator; faith in Christ, who is both truly God and truly human; faith in the Spirit, who gives life; and faith in the hope of resurrection.

And now, in 2025, the participants are different, but the questions are no less urgent. How do we confess one God in a world of many faiths? How do we speak of Christ when creation itself is being destroyed for our comfort? What is resurrection in a torn and dysfunctional world?

The creed doesn't settle these questions for us. Instead, it anchors us. It gives us language to keep naming the ways we encounter God's presence: in history, in creation, in Christ, in Spirit, and in hope.

**“WE BELIEVE IN ONE GOD,
THE FATHER,
THE ALMIGHTY...”**

*THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, OF ALL THAT IS,
SEEN AND UNSEEN.*



On a warm night you might find yourself looking up to a sky so wide it's almost impossible to conceive of the whole thing together. Stars scattered like sparks — and still, in the dark between them are millions of universes and planets we can't see. A breadth that is as close as the soil beneath our feet. In the soil under our feet life is teeming in ways we will never touch or even perhaps know. Roots reaching, microbes moving. All of it — seen and unseen — points towards the truth of what it means to belong.

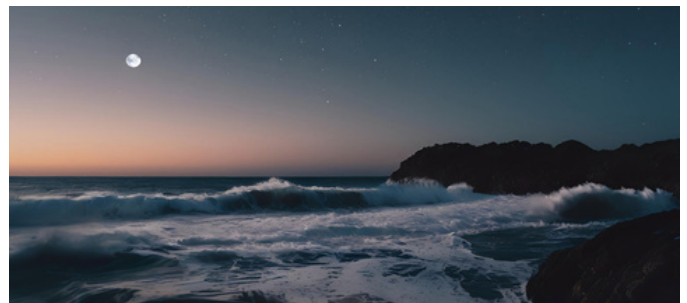
The Creed begins here, with belonging rather than definition, pointing us to recapture our awe and wonder. Given the challenges of the world at the time, it was important that this was said out loud: the God we meet in Jesus isn't a passing spirit or a human created deity. This is the Maker of galaxies, the One who calls both the hidden and the visible into being and gives them life.

When the Creed calls God “Father, Almighty,” it isn't saying God is male. It's the language the church had for source and shelter, for the One who gives life and holds it together. In scripture, God is also described like a mother — carrying, nursing, gathering her children close. “Father” here isn't about gender; it's about intimacy and belonging. We keep the word because it anchors us in the faith we've received — the church's way of naming the One who gives life and holds all things together.

And in our own time? It's easy to forget this — that God holds all of this world together for us. We treat the earth like it's disposable, as if the unseen doesn't count. But the Creed reminds us that nothing is outside God's care. The roots and the stars. The microbes. The galaxies. All gathered up in this first confession.

***“THE HEAVENS ARE TELLING
THE GLORY OF GOD; AND THE
FIRMAMENT PROCLAIMS HIS
HANDIWORK.”***

(PSALM 19:1, NRSVA)



Lingering with the Creed in Creation:

When you find yourself outside next, find a place to sit with comfort. Notice what you can see, and what you can't. Feel the steadiness of the ground beneath you, the wideness of the sky above. Let both keep company with the words: *maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.*

THE ONLY SON OF GOD, ETERNALLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER

Something I've come to know about mornings on the cove, is that the light arrives before the sun does. As our eyes adjust to the light, shaking off sleep, the window's already pale, like the edge of the day is leaning in. You still can't see where it comes from. It's just a glow. Quiet. Almost shy.

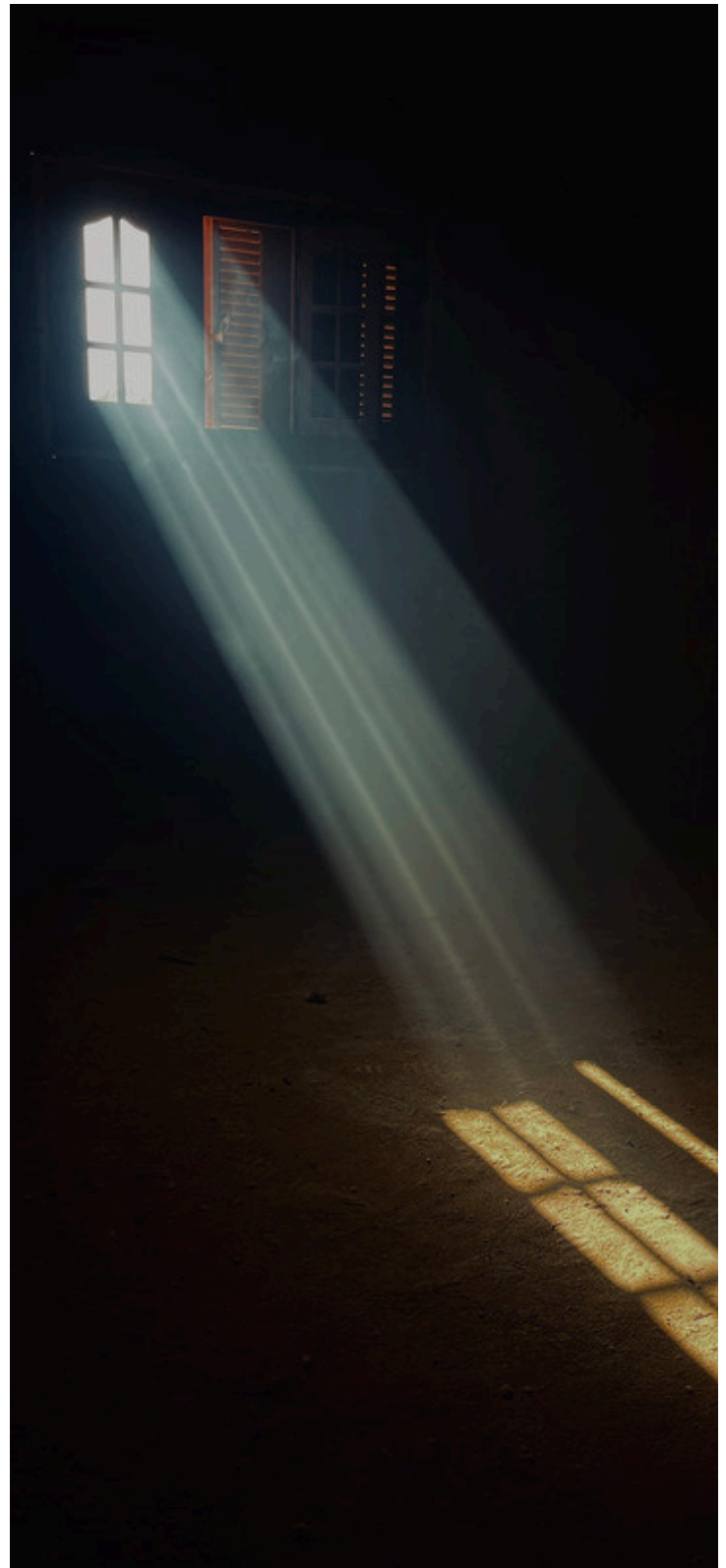
And in that soft light, the world's already awake. A heron lifts off from the shoreline. The tide tugs gently at the shore. Beneath the surface, seaweed sways, crabs scuttle, fish slip past unseen. Roots are drawing water up into salal and cedar. Everything — from the smallest tidepool creature to the stars above — is already humming with life.

The council fathers held onto images like this as they tried to find words for Jesus. Some thought he was only created — holy, yes, but made like the rest of us. Arius taught that in Alexandria. But others, Athanasius among them, said no: if Jesus were only made, then he couldn't bear God's own life to us. Without this, faith itself wouldn't hold.

So in 325 they gathered at Nicaea. They argued hard. Prayed harder. And in the end, they said it this way: begotten, not made. Sharing the same life as the Father. Not a copy. Not a reflection. The same. Like light spilling into light — impossible to pull apart.

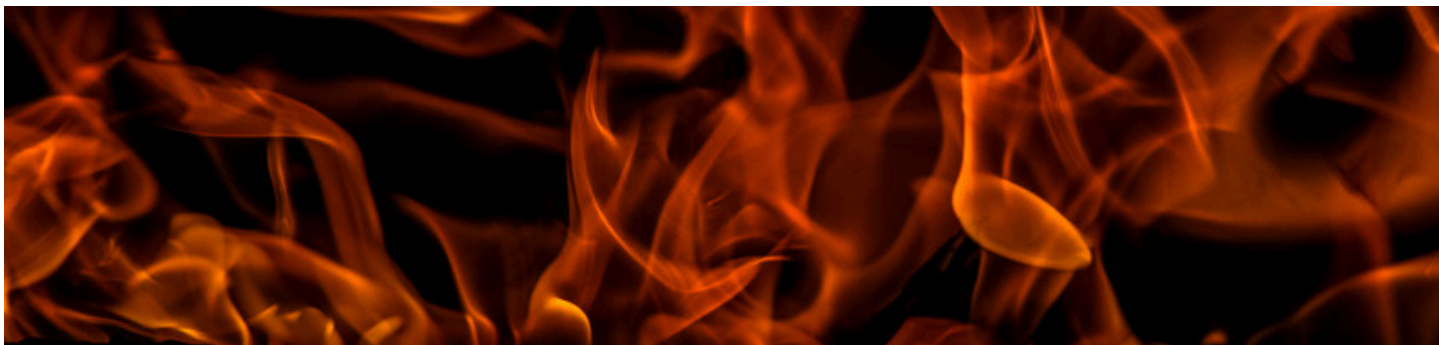
But this isn't just philosophical thinking for us. Its presence. Experiential presence. To say Jesus is the only Son, eternally begotten, is to trust that in him we glimpse God's own face — God's life reaching toward us, into us, into all things. In the tides. In the seaweed. In the crabs and the soil. In the flight of the herons. The same life in you. In me. In everything still coming to life.

***"IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THE LIFE
WAS THE LIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE."
(JOHN 1:4, NRSVA)***



Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

If you're up before sunrise sometime, watch how the light comes. Slow at first. Almost unnoticed. We can't see its source, yet we can see its presence. Let that light keep company with these words: *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

Have you noticed, sitting near a fire on a dark night, how one flame leans into another? Before you know it, the whole woodpile is glowing — flame, ember, heat. The second flame isn't separate from the first. It carries the same warmth, the same light, the same life.

And that same fire goes beyond just the light we see. It warms the air. It enlivens the soil beneath. It even wakes seeds that only open when touched by heat. In burning, creation keeps giving itself back to life.

This image would have been well known to the council fathers because of how light and heat were paramount to their own lives. So in 325, as they faced a church pulling itself apart, they reflected that nature in their own understanding. Saying God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God was like driving a stake into the ground. The Son is not created. Not a copy. Not a shadow. He shares the same life as the Father — homoousios, the Greek word the council used to say Father and Son are of the same being, sharing the same divine essence. As close as fire to flame. You can't pull them apart.

Far from an abstract theological concept, these words carry the heartbeat of faith. When you look at Jesus, you're not just seeing God's messenger.

You're seeing God's own self, own life burning with love, illuminating, bringing life here, in the world — the same living heartbeat that moves through the tides, through forests, through soil and stars alike.

That truth was worth insisting on in the fourth century, and I think it still matters today. It matters because it expresses a truth: that God is not distance, sending envoys while remaining untouched. God steps into the fire with us — into this creation, this shared life, this fragile, burning beauty.

**“WHOEVER HAS SEEN ME
HAS SEEN THE FATHER.”
(JOHN 14:9, NRSVA)**

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

Light a candle or fire where allowed and safely. Watch how one flame catches another. Notice how the same light spreads without being divided. Let that warmth hold the words: *God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.*



THROUGH HIM ALL THINGS WERE MADE

Have you stood by a river and watched how it moves? With streams gathering into tributaries. Tributaries into rivers. What started as a trickle, cascading down hill—reshaping landscapes— into the sea. Every drop finds its way, carried into something larger that holds it all — feeding soil, sheltering fish, shaping life as it goes.

The Creed says of Christ: through him all things were made. In the fourth century, this was a central statement. If Christ were less than God, as Arius argued, then he couldn't be the one through whom creation came to be. Only the Creator can create. By confessing that everything was made through him, the bishops at Nicaea named Jesus not as a creature, but as the One in whom creation itself finds its source and its coherence.

A gift of riverbanks is how they often cause us to pause and notice profound beauty. Beauty that points to an ultimate truth. Creation: the galaxies above, the soil beneath, the unseen life in roots and rivers, forests and tidepools, reveal the presence of God. Not as an afterthought, but from the very beginning. Anchored for us in Christ, that holds all things together.

And I think that changes how we live. Creation isn't random or disposable; it is a communion of belonging, held in Christ's very life. The same One who heals, forgives, and gathers us around a table is the One through whom rivers flow, forests breathe, seeds swell with life, and stars burn. Giving us life with an almost reckless sense of abundance. Life given to be shared.

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

When you are next close to a river or creek: Listen to the current; notice how it carries whatever enters it. Follow its path in your mind until it meets the sea. Let that flow keep company with the words: through him all things were made.

**“ALL THINGS CAME INTO BEING
THROUGH HIM, AND WITHOUT HIM
NOT ONE THING CAME INTO BEING.”**
(JOHN 1:3, NRSVA)



FOR US AND FOR OUR SALVATION

HE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN

Spring, after a long winter, heralds an eternal truth: new life is coming. If we push back the soil later in the season, we may find a seed just splitting open. Fragile, almost nothing at all — and yet inside it, somehow, is the strength to change an entire field. What looked lifeless and buried has begun to rise.

When the Church gathered at Nicaea, much of the argument came down to this: if Jesus were not truly God, then his life and death could not bring salvation. To say for us and for our salvation he came down from heaven was to say that it was God's own life that had moved into our neighbourhood and became human. Not a distant puppet master. Not some disinterested actor, playing a part. Rather, God who took root in human life, so that life itself could be renewed.

Which isn't about a transaction happening somewhere else. It's about the presence of our real lives. God chooses to step into the soil of our souls — fragile, vulnerable, exposed — so that what is buried is not the end. Life is hard work. We all carry things that feel buried. Dreams we thought impossible. Grief we haven't been able to name. The parts of ourselves we've hidden, or the losses we've tucked deep into silence. God steps into that very place — into endings that feel final — and brings the promise that hidden things can live again.

A seed doesn't grow by escaping the earth; it breaks open within it, feeding on the soil as it reaches towards the Source. In the same way, the salvation of our souls is not about leaving the world behind but about God's nutrient rich life renewing it — and us — from the inside out.

“SEE, I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW.”
(REVELATION 21:5, NRSVA)



Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

Think of something in your life that feels buried — a hope, a loss, a beginning you can't yet see. Imagine the quiet work happening beneath the surface, where the roots take hold and life stirs unseen.

Let that hidden strength keep company with the words: *for us and for our salvation he came down from heaven.*



BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*HE BECAME INCARNATE FROM THE VIRGIN MARY, AND WAS
MADE TRULY HUMAN*

After all the chaos of birth, there's that strange, nervous hush. Everyone waits — lungs still, breath not yet caught, the room holding itself in suspense — until air finally rushes in and the first cry breaks open the silence. Fragile and fierce all at once, that first breath changes everything.

When the Creed says Jesus "was made incarnate from the Virgin Mary," it's doing more than reciting a mystery. It's pushing back against those in the early church who claimed Christ only seemed human, wearing a kind of disguise. At Constantinople in 381, the bishops made it plain: Jesus was not pretending. By the Spirit's power, he was born of Mary — flesh of her flesh — breathing our air, sharing our limits.

And Mary's life matters here. In her time, to name someone a "virgin" wasn't about sexuality, although it became about it later, rather it was about standing. Or in her case, not having any. She was young, unmarried, on the margins. To say that God chose this young woman is to say something about where God chooses to be found. Not in power or privilege, but at the edges. It tells us that God's nearness is not abstract — it's as close as our own breath.

Which isn't some abstract theological idea to solve. All of it is about presence — God's presence — entering the fullness of our humanity without reserve. In Jesus, God took on hunger and thirst, laughter and tears, exhaustion and touch. Divinity drew its first breath in the loving arms of a mother and kept breathing the air we breathe, walking the same earth, drinking from the same rivers, depending on the same soil and seed that sustain us.

And this is why creation matters. God didn't craft the world and stand at a distance. God chose to need this world — its water, its food, its bodies, its breath — from the inside. In Christ, all of it is gathered into God's own life and called holy. To care for this earth, these bodies, this fragile web of life, is to honour the Incarnation itself — because God has already honoured it by being born here, breathing here, needing what we need, loving what we've been given.



**"AND THE WORD
BECAME FLESH AND
LIVED AMONG US."
(JOHN 1:14, NRSVA)**

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

Find a comfortable, quiet, and safe place where you feel held.
Close your eyes for a moment, if you like, and pay attention to your breathing.
Feel the rise and fall, the air moving in and out, steady and unearned.
Every breath is gift, Spirit-given. Every body — yours, mine, the person beside you
— God-beloved. The same breath we share is the breath Jesus shared too.
Let this breath, yours and ours together, keep company with the words: by the power of the Holy Spirit ... he was made truly human.

FOR OUR SAKE HE WAS CRUCIFIED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE;

HE SUFFERED DEATH AND WAS BURIED

When winter arrives, life seems to evaporate — just look at a tree. Gone is the lushness of spring and summer. Branches stripped, bark weathered, a husk of its former glory against the winter sky. And yet, what looks dead is still alive. Deep in the cold soil, roots hold fast. Buds are already forming along worn branches, hidden for now, waiting through the long silence.

When the Creed says Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate, it roots God's story in time and place. It mattered to the early Church to say that Jesus truly suffered, truly died, truly was buried. Against those who claimed God could not bleed, they answered plainly: God entered the full depth of our human experience and did not turn away like a disinterested parent.

Because Jesus was fully human, his life was as vulnerable as ours — tender to the breaking, open to being hurt, as fragile and exposed as we are. His body could be bruised like ours. His breath could stop like ours. The Creed doesn't make this abstract; it names it so we never have to pretend our own suffering is foreign to God.

But that's not easy to say, let alone live at times. We've all known moments of suffering that felt not just distant from God but absent of God altogether. The Creed insists otherwise. God does not step around what is brutal or cruel but walks straight into it. Not to defend it. Not to justify it. And certainly not to call it good. God meets it — right there, in the axis of the cross — and even there, does not leave us alone.



Like the winter tree, death does not speak the final word. While the branches may be bare now, new life is gestating. But the silence of winter matters, because out of that silence, new life begins, deep beneath the surface of even our most frozen soil.

**“HE WAS DESPISED AND REJECTED BY
OTHERS; A MAN OF SUFFERING AND
ACQUAINTED WITH INFIRMITY.”
(ISAIAH 53:3, NRSVA)**

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

As winter approaches, on a walk through the forest, pause as you are able next to a tree that speaks to you. Let its bare honesty meet your own. Notice how the roots still hold, even when the branches seem empty. Let that quiet steadiness keep company with the words: *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



Fire season in our world is terrifying, whether we live in its path or not. The air thickens, the sky turns strange, and we watch, knowing how little control we have when the wind picks up and sparks turn to inferno. However when the flames pass, the earth remembers. Charred trunks, blackened earth, destroyed homes. The lingering smell of smoke that hangs for weeks, sometimes months. It looks like an ending.

But if you walk the same ground a little later, you might see it: a flicker of green pushing through ash, a cluster of birch saplings reaching for the light. Birch is one of the first trees to return after a fire, holding the soil where little else can. Its roots weave the ground back together. It finds a foothold in devastation, creating space for life to return. What seemed lost begins, slowly, to live again.

So when the Creed says Jesus rose again on the third day, it ensconces the earliest proclamation of the Church: death does not have the final word. The councils at Nicaea and Constantinople didn't debate this; they required it, knowing how easily hope in life can slip away.

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

Birch saplings push up where the ground still holds ash. Their green is small, quiet, almost easy to miss. Life begins again slowly, without erasing what has burned. Sometimes we can see that; sometimes we can't. Both are true. For now, simply let this image sit beside the words: *on the third day he rose again ... he ascended into heaven.*

And the Creed goes on: he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. These words aren't putting distance between us and Jesus. Rather, they affirm that in the resurrection, Christ now shares fully again in God's own life — and somehow, mysteriously, he carries our life with him into God's presence, meaning we are now forever inseparable from God.

None of which, of course, makes death any less devastating. Rather, it says this: our wounds are not forgotten. Our stories are not left behind. The same Christ who rose still bears our humanity — scarred, bruised, and beloved — inside the very life of God. And that matters because God is not distant, God is in the midst of both life and death.

And perhaps these seasons of burning are not so foreign to us— living with losses that leave us standing among what feels stripped and fragile. The Creed doesn't rush us past that place. It stays with us in the ash and anchors our life in the God who has not left us. It doesn't explain how. It doesn't erase the ache. It only dares to whisper that the story isn't over, that Christ is risen, and somehow — beyond our seeing, beyond our holding — God's life still has the final word.

**“BUT IN FACT CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED
FROM THE DEAD, THE FIRST FRUITS OF
THOSE WHO HAVE DIED.”**

(1 CORINTHIANS 15:20, NRSVA)



HE WILL COME AGAIN IN GLORY

TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD, AND HIS KINGDOM WILL HAVE NO END

After rain, the forest floor wakes. Mushrooms push up overnight — soft, fragile, almost fleeting. But what we see is only the surface. Beneath the soil lies a vast, hidden web of mycelium, threading through roots and stone, carrying signals and nutrients, keeping trees alive, holding the whole forest together in ways we can't see. What seems scattered and temporary on the surface is part of something deep, connected, and enduring.

Something like this is what the Creed points us toward. When we say Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, we dare to hope that what is wounded will be healed, and what has been lost will somehow be gathered up. In the fourth century, this was a bold confession: history and the world is not drifting aimlessly, and Caesar — or any empire — is not the one who decides how the story ends. For the early Church, just as it is today, the life of Jesus — crucified and risen — is the measure of truth and mercy, which is a kingdom that runs deeper than any power we build or undo.

None of which is about fear. Nor are these words about condemnation. They're about restoration— bringing life back to everything that is broken, light into the darkness, wholeness where there was once fracture. An intricate and often invisible web of interconnectedness that is always calling us back to the source of life, which is God.

For us, the mushrooms help us see it. Acts of mercy, glimpses of justice, moments of love — they can feel small, fragile, fleeting, scattered across the surface of our lives. But underneath, Christ's life is already holding the world together, quietly binding what's divided, carrying life where we cannot see it. Like the mycelium beneath the soil, his presence moves through creation — patient, persistent, unseen — weaving all things back into belonging.

The mushrooms are only signs of a kingdom without limit — already here, still coming, deeper than we can imagine.

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

Imagine walking in the forest after rain. The air is damp, carrying the scent of earth and cedar. You notice clusters of mushrooms, some low to the ground, others climbing the sides of trees. Fragile as they seem, they are signs of something vaster beneath your feet — life moving quietly, unseen, holding the forest together. Let that quiet, hidden work keep company with the words: *his kingdom will have no end.*

**“THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AS IF
SOMEONE WOULD SCATTER SEED
ON THE GROUND ... THE EARTH
PRODUCES OF ITSELF.”
(MARK 4:26, 28, NRSVA)**

WE BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT,

THE LORD, THE GIVER OF LIFE, WHO PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON. WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON HE IS WORSHIPPED AND GLORIFIED. HE HAS SPOKEN THROUGH THE PROPHETS.

You can't see the wind itself, but you know when it's there. The rustling of leaves, branches sway, seeds lift and scatter into places they've never been. The air is always moving, always carrying breath, always stirring life.

When the Creed calls the Spirit the Lord, the giver of life, it reaches back to the language of scripture — ruach in Hebrew, pneuma in Greek — words that all mean breath, wind, Spirit. Together they give us a window into the breath that hovered over the waters at creation, the wind that bends the cedars, the Spirit that stirs our hearts, prophets, and prayers alike.

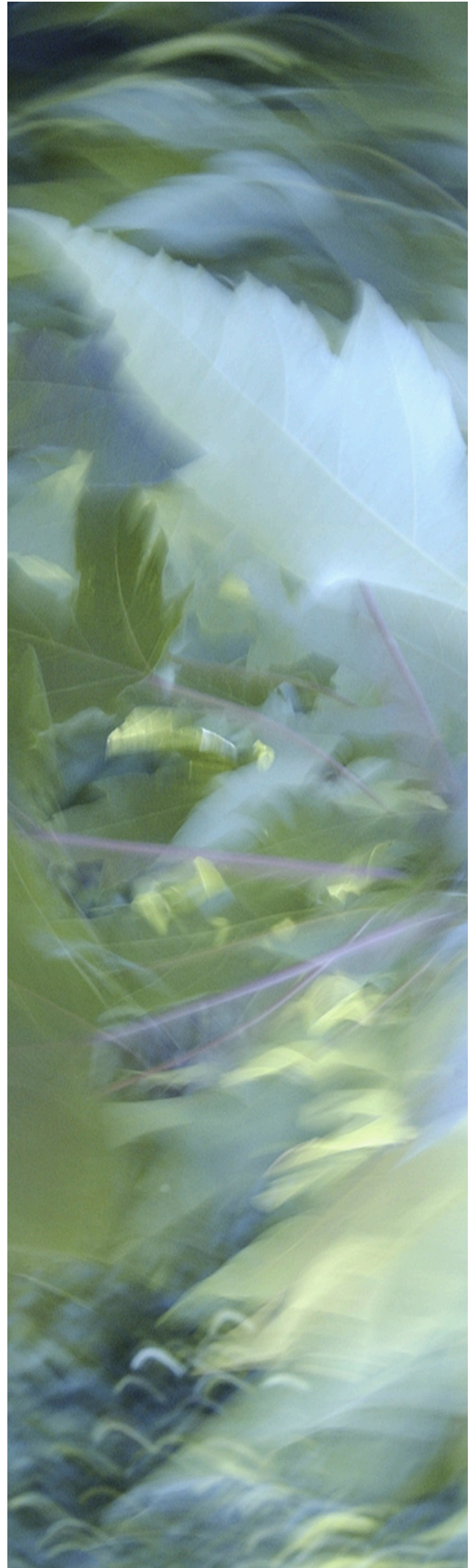
It's of no surprise then, I think, that centuries ago, at Constantinople, the Church searched for words to name what had always been true: the Spirit is not a vague force or passing energy, but fully God — present, life-giving, moving in ways we cannot contain. Like wind spilling over mountains, like breath weaving through the trees, the Spirit cannot be held or controlled. The same Spirit who breathed through the prophets is the Spirit still breathing through creation, through the Church, through us.

And for us, I think this means that God's presence is nearer than we often believe — as close as the breath in our lungs, as wide as the air moving through a forest, as uncontainable as the wind crossing ridges and seas. The Spirit isn't bound to one place, one people, or one time. Wherever life rises, wherever mercy breaks open, wherever truth unsettles us toward love — the Spirit is there.

**“THE SPIRIT HELPS US IN OUR WEAKNESS;
FOR WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO PRAY AS WE
OUGHT, BUT THAT VERY SPIRIT INTERCEDES.”
(ROMANS 8:26, NRSVA)**

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

Imagine walking in the forest after rain. The air is cool, carrying the scent of cedar and damp earth. Branches sway, leaves whisper, seeds lift and scatter where you can't follow. You can't see the wind itself — only what it stirs, only what it carries into life. As you notice your own breathing — steady, unearned, a gift — let the same Spirit that moves through trees and across seas hold these words close: *we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life.*



WE BELIEVE IN ONE HOLY CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH



Stand near a honeybee hive and you'll hear it before you see it — a low, steady buzz, the sound of a whole community at work. Inside, row upon row of hexagons are pressed tight, each cell distinct but fitted perfectly to the rest. Honeycomb is strong not because of any single piece, but because every part belongs to the whole. Its strength is shared. Its shape holds. Its sweetness comes when the cells are filled together.

From the earliest centuries, honeybees became a Christological symbol — a way Christians spoke about who Christ is and what his life means for us. Writers like Ambrose of Milan and Augustine saw in the hive a living parable: bees working together in harmony, each with its role, yet the whole thriving only when every part belongs. From their labour comes sweetness, and from their shared pattern comes shelter and strength — signs of the new life and community Christ gathers us into.

When the Creed says we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church, it isn't pointing us to an institution so much as a communion. In the fourth century, when divisions ran deep, these words dared to say the Church was still one — not because we are uniform or flawless, but because Christ holds the pattern together. It is holy because it belongs to God, catholic because it stretches across the whole world, apostolic because it carries forward the good news first entrusted to the apostles — not a passing idea, but something rooted, enduring, alive. The honeycomb gives us a glimpse: the shape of belonging, distinct yet held together, made strong by the life we share.

And yet, the Church has not always lived this well. These same words have sometimes been used to divide or exclude, to wound rather than to heal. We carry that history with us; some of us carry those wounds in our own lives.

And still, the heart of the Creed holds steady. Offering us an invitation to return, to renew, to live as one body — shaped by mercy, filled with Spirit, made for witness. Like honeycomb, the Church is meant to hold together what would otherwise fall apart — to be a shelter for life, a pattern strong enough to bear the weight of our differences, a place where sweetness gathers and spills into the world.

**“NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST
AND INDIVIDUALLY MEMBERS OF IT.”
(1 CORINTHIANS 12:27, NRSVA)**

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

On a warm day, pause near flowers or fruit trees and notice the bees moving between them. Each one carries more than it seems — pollen, life, connection — linking one place to another. Picture the hidden hive, each cell distinct yet belonging, the sweetness only possible because they share the work. Perhaps this belonging, fragile and strong at once, can hold these words close: *we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.*



WE ACKNOWLEDGE ONE BAPTISM

FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

After days of heavy rain, a river can swell past its edges. The calm current turns wild, rushing brown with silt, carrying branches, reshaping its banks. What once seemed steady suddenly surges, unpredictable and fierce.

When the Creed names one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, it draws us into that kind of power. In the early Church, baptism wasn't a gentle sprinkle but an immersion — a plunge beneath the surface, into water that could take your breath away. To confess one baptism was to trust being carried into Christ's death and raised into his life. And this isn't an idea far away from us — it's a promise that God has stepped into everything we face: our losses, our failures, our griefs, even death itself.

Baptism doesn't promise escape from the world as it is. It promises that we are not left alone in it — that God's life meets us right here, in the mess and the ache, and keeps pulling us toward what is being made new.

For us, baptism is both gift and upheaval. It is forgiveness and belonging, yes — but it is also surrender. It loosens our grip on what we cling to and carries us into a life we cannot make for ourselves. We are swept into God's story, into a belonging larger than anything we could hold on our own. And like a river in flood, baptism reshapes the contours of our lives — nothing remains untouched. It changes how we see ourselves, each other, and the world. It reminds us we are not left to make life new on our own — God's life is already moving through us, carving out space for grace where we thought there was none.

And in a world that often treats water as a commodity, even disposable, the Creed calls us back to reverence: water is holy, fierce, and life-giving. To be baptised is to trust that God meets us in that flood — forgiving, renewing, reshaping — until the banks of our lives are carved wider, making more room for grace.

**“WE WERE BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM
INTO DEATH, SO THAT, JUST AS CHRIST
WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD ... WE TOO
MIGHT WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.”
(ROMANS 6:4, NRSVA)**

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

There is a kind of river, after days of heavy rain, that pulls at everything around it. You can hear it before you see it. The air carries the damp scent of earth and leaves. Watch how the current sweeps branches and silt downstream, carrying more than anyone could hold. Baptism is like that: more gift than grasp, more surrender than striving.

Let the weight and movement of that water stay with these words: *one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.*

WE LOOK FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

Each autumn fish-bearing rivers teem with flashes of silver, red, and green. Salmon return from the ocean, unrelentingly throwing themselves against currents and falls. They leap, push, and strain upstream, fighting for home. Many will die in the struggle, their bodies feeding the riverbanks, the forests, the next generation of life. What looks like an ending becomes the beginning of another season's abundance.

When the Creed says *we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come*, it names that same fierce hope — that what looks final isn't the end. For Irenaeus of Lyon, this was what ultimate life with God meant: salvation was never about escaping the body or the earth but about their renewal. The council fathers, standing in the light of that vision, challenged teachings that imagined salvation as shedding flesh for pure spirit. Because God became flesh in Jesus, the Creed insists that our bodies matter, creation matters, and God's redemption reaches all that we are. This isn't abstract for us; it touches the ground where we live — when we stand at gravesides, when we scatter ashes, when we wonder what comes next.

For centuries, though, the church has taught that resurrection requires a physical body, as if God needed us to preserve our remains and discouraging practices like cremation. But resurrection isn't about holding molecules together; it's about God's promise to gather up everything we are — body, spirit, memory, and story — into life again. Nothing of us is lost to God.

Resurrection is bodily, not because God literally brings our bodies out of the ground, or because they are remade into something unrecognisable or "perfected," but because nothing of who we are is discarded.

Our stories, our scars, our identities, the ways we've been touched by love and by loss — all of it is gathered up and held in God's life. God's future is not the abandonment of creation but its healing: a creation where every body, every creature belongs, fully and without fear.

For us, the salmon still carry a glimpse of this truth. Death is not denied — it's real, and heavy, and we feel its weight. We know what it is to lose, to stand where something we love is gone. And yet, the Creed dares to trust that this isn't the end of the story. Even where death is real, life has its quiet ways of returning. Sometimes we see it, and sometimes we don't. Sometimes hope rises slowly, almost hidden, and not always where or how we expect.

**"HE WILL WIPE EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES. DEATH WILL BE NO MORE; MOURNING AND CRYING AND PAIN WILL BE NO MORE."
(REVELATION 21:4, NRSVA)**

Lingering with The Creed in Creation:

Stand by the river teeming with salmon in your mind for a moment. See the silver bodies flashing as they push upstream, tails striking the surface. Hear the churn of the current, steady and unrelenting. Notice how loss and new life flow together in the same water. Let that witness rest alongside these words: we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

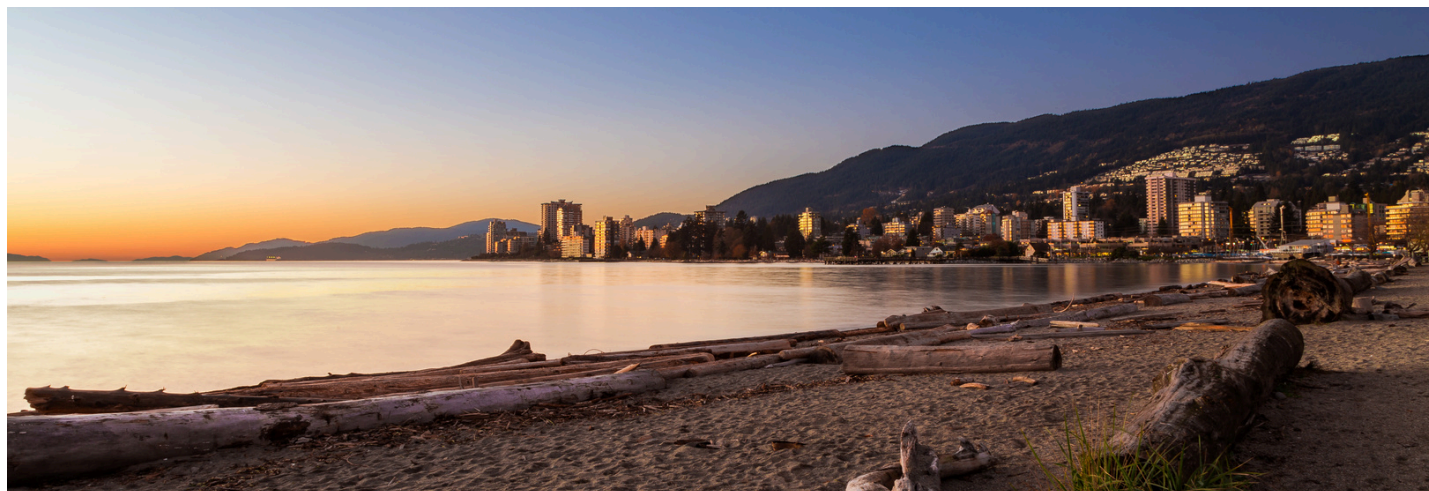


BREATHING THE CREED, LIVING WITH CREATION

Friends,

The Creed, as we've received it through time, is a living breath of faith — not a formula to master, but a companion to wonder with. Alongside its history — born of conflict and canon nearly 1,700 years ago — I believe creation itself stands as a guide for our faith, asking its own quiet questions of us. Stars and rivers, seeds and wind, mushrooms and salmon — they all ask how we see and know God's presence in our time, and how we honour that presence with the way we live.

The Creed doesn't end with certainty; it ends with longing. It leans toward a future still unfolding, "the life of the world to come." And that longing invites us to live differently now, because of what we confess about God together. Creation helps us glimpse what the Creed is daring to say:



That the stars remind us of a life woven through with interdependence — unseen forces holding us, sustaining us, helping us thrive. Planting seeds teaches us that what looks dead is often alive, waiting for its time. Rivers carve new paths as they go, reshaping their embankments, just as God's eternal water in baptism reshapes our souls. The quiet, hidden life of mushrooms reminds us that God's renewing work reaches further than we can see or imagine. And the salmon, returning home through waters where many will die before they arrive, teach us that death and renewal flow together. All life has purpose.

These glimpses in creation invite us to reframe our relationships — with the earth, with one another, and with God's life moving through it all. The Creed, first spoken into a world in crisis, I believe, still speaks into ours because:

- To confess God as Creator is to tend, live, and steward the earth and sky with awe and reverence.
- To confess Christ as Lord is to align ourselves with mercy and justice, not with the empires of our age.
- To confess the Spirit as giver of life is to honour breath — human, animal, forest, ocean.
- To confess resurrection is to live with hope, shaping communities that choose care over consumption, renewal over despair.

None of this is a checklist to complete. It's a guide for life. For centuries the Creed has endured, not as a museum piece but as a living witness. It has carried generations through uncertainty, naming again and again — even when we're not sure why — that despite everything we see, God has not abandoned us. God is with us: in history, in creation, in Christ, in Spirit, and in the world's future.

The Creed still invites us into the dance of life with God — not someday, but now — calling us to step into it again.

What might it be asking of you?

Alex+

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