



**Nicene Creed:** *We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.*

## I. The Church is One

- a. All peoples become one people, united by covenant with the Triune God.
  - i. "There is one body and **one Spirit**—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—**one Lord**, one faith, one baptism, **one God and Father of all**, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6).
  - ii. "For just as the body is **one** and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are **one body**, so it is with Christ. For in **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body**—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of **one Spirit**" (1 Cor. 12:12-13).
- b. The division between ethnicities began at Babel.
  - i. "Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth" (Gen. 11:9).
  - ii. "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God" (Deut. 32:8).
  - iii. God judged the builders of Babel not only by confusing their languages, which scattered and divided them, but also by handing them over to "the sons of God"—fallen celestial beings—the "gods."
- c. After Babel, God launched His "reunification" plan through a series of covenants: to Abraham, Israel, and David.<sup>1</sup>
  - i. "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing... in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:2-3).
  - ii. "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine" (Ex. 19:5).
  - iii. "And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam. 7:16).
- d. Jesus fulfilled these covenants and established a new one through Jesus. The new covenant unites disparate peoples into a singular people.
  - i. "Because there is **one** bread, we who are many are **one** body, for we all partake of the **one bread**" (1 Cor. 10:17).
  - ii. "This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:25).
- e. Therefore, the dividing line between nation, race, gender, and socioeconomic class is broken down. The church is **ONE**—just as Jesus prayed.
  - i. "That they may all be **one**, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21).
  - ii. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all **one** in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

## II. The Church is Holy

- a. To be "holy" is to be "set apart." God is set apart in His divine attributes and transcendence. He is "holy" because He is "wholly other."
- b. The church is "holy" because we are "set apart" to the "set apart One." The church's holiness is expressed in three ways:
  - i. **Calling** (our commission from God):
    1. "To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his **holy** people..." (Rom. 1:7).

<sup>1</sup> God also established covenants with Adam (Hos. 6:7) and Noah (Gen. 9:8-17), but these could be viewed as "covenants with humanity" rather than God's chosen people. Once humanity rejected God—in the garden, at the flood, and then at Babel—God elected a particular people to establish His kingdom through covenants for all who believe.

2. God "saved us and called us to a **holy** calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began" (2 Tim. 1:9).
- ii. Condition (our status before God):
  1. "to the saints [Lit. 'holy ones'] who are in Ephesus..." (Eph. 1:1).
  2. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a **holy** nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).
- iii. Conduct (our actions before God):
  1. "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing **holiness** to completion in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).
  2. "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is **holy**, you also be **holy** in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be **holy**, for I am **holy**'" (1 Pet. 1:14-16).
- c. Believers need each other to grow in holiness: through spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12-14), speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15-16), admonishing and teaching (Col. 1:28), shepherding (1 Pet. 5:1-3), comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-5), prayer (James 5:16), bearing one another's burdens (Gal. 6:1-2), gathering (Heb. 10:24-25) and, in extreme cases, church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-5).

### III. The Church is Catholic

- a. "Catholic" does not mean "Roman Catholic." It means, "universal."
- b. The "catholic" church is the universal church of Jesus Christ that spans time, space, heaven, and earth.
  - i. "And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23).
  - ii. Paul preached the gospel "so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:9-10).
  - iii. "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus" (Heb. 12:22-24).
- c. If the doctrine of "unity" emphasizes the church's oneness across *human* divisions (race, gender, class, etc.), the doctrine of "catholicity" highlights the church's oneness across *all creation*—time, space, heaven, and earth.

### IV. The Church is Apostolic

- a. The "apostolic church" is the church that is based on the apostles' teachings and shares in their apostolic mission.
- b. Based on the apostles' teachings:
  - i. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).
  - ii. "Contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).
- c. Shares in their apostolic mission:
  - i. "Apostle" means "sent one."
  - ii. As the "apostle and high priest of our confession" (Heb. 3:1), Jesus, the Sent One, sent out His apostles: "As the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you" (John 20:21).
  - iii. Beyond the original twelve apostles, the church labeled missionaries as apostles (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25).
  - iv. It is impossible to have an "apostolic" church that does not live as "sent ones." The church that has lost its evangelistic zeal has lost its apostolicity. It has lost its church-ness.
- V. How "a church of house churches" embodies the Nicene Creed's definition of our identity as "one holy catholic and apostolic church."
  - a. Convergence embodies **ONENESS** through covenantal unity and diversity across house churches.

- i. Churches in the New Testament were not islands. They related closely in matters of doctrinal guidance (Acts 15:31), financial support (Acts 11:29-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-3), serving one another (Acts 11:27-30), and mission endeavors (Phil. 2:25; 2 Cor. 8:18-19). They also pressed through divisions based on ethnicity (Acts 6:1-6; 10:34-35; Eph. 2:14-16), socioeconomic status (1 Cor. 11:20-22; Gal. 3:28), or biblical convictions over secondary and tertiary matters (1 Cor. 8:7-13). The outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost created a diverse church (Acts 2:17ff), expanding the gospel beyond its Jewish borders.
- ii. Scattered churches that rarely gather or partner do not as naturally exhibit the "unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 4:3). The same could be said of ethnically homogenous churches. A "church of house churches" exhibits the church's oneness by naturally encouraging interdependence and cooperation among diverse house churches.
- iii. A "church of house churches" embodies the biblical reality of ONENESS by multiplying diverse house churches across OKC that unite in worship, community, and mission through shared leadership.
- b. Convergence nurtures **HOLINESS** through deep discipleship and mutual shepherding.
  - i. Transformation happens in relationship. House churches provide fertile ground for confession, encouragement, and accountability.
  - ii. At the same time, a "church of house churches" helps us connect with the broader community and be instructed by seasoned leaders who shepherd us in both holy behavior and holy doctrine.
  - iii. In Acts 2:42, the early church devoted themselves to "the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer." The apostles' teaching and prayer occurred primarily in the temple—the large gathering. Fellowship and Communion primarily took place in homes—small gatherings. A church of house churches, like the early church, benefits from both large and small gatherings—each uniquely suited to forming a holy people.
  - iv. By intertwining structured worship and teaching with intimate community, we cultivate holiness in both doctrine and life.
- c. Convergence reflects **CATHOLICITY** by honoring the global, timeless, and Spirit-led nature of the Church.
  - i. At Pentecost, the Spirit filled not the temple but a house—and also people (Acts 2:2). This signaled a shift. The "sacred" moved beyond the "temple" and "priesthood" into ordinary people and places.
  - ii. When churches elevate specific people (pastors) or places (buildings) as sacred above others, they shrink the vision of catholicity.
  - iii. By honoring the Spirit's presence across all gatherings (large and small), and in all believers, we embody *catholicity*.
- d. Convergence remains **APOSTOLIC** by guarding the gospel and joining the mission.
  - i. Doctrinally, the large gathering helps ensure that our smaller gatherings remain sound.
  - ii. Missionally, house churches contextualize our mission to the neighborhoods surrounding each home, not just the central building.
  - iii. Together, we uphold the apostolic faith and advance the apostolic mission—across living rooms, neighborhoods, and generations.

## VI. Moving from theology to practical reality:

- a. Purpose:
  - i. Convergence exists to grow in our **friendship with Jesus**, our **friendship with one another**, and to **extend these friendships** to the world through the **power of God's Word and Spirit**.
  - ii. This purpose flows out of the relational heart of the Triune God.
- b. Vision
  - i. Convergence is a "church of house churches."
    - 1. This is different from a "network of house churches" because we are united in doctrine, leadership, gatherings, mission, resources, and membership.
    - 2. This is different from "a megachurch with small groups" because each house church will have its own elders/deacons and contain the marks of a true church: gospel, sacraments, discipline, biblical leadership, and apostolic mission.
    - 3. We don't elevate the central church above the house churches, nor the house churches above the church as a whole. We walk in parallel tracks as one body.

- 4. If we over-emphasize the central church, we become a megachurch with small groups. If we over-emphasize house churches, we become a network without shared shepherding. We are neither. We are a "church of house churches."
  - ii. As a church of house churches, our vision is to see "Word and Spirit" churches made accessible to all peoples and in every city.
    - 1. By the power of God's Word and Spirit, our spiritual family is nourished, comforted, supported, and built up into the Head, who is Christ (Eph. 4:11-16).
    - 2. By the power of God's Word and Spirit, our spiritual family multiplies disciples and churches across OKC and the world.
- c. Leadership
  - i. On March 5, Convergence began a twelve-week training process for future House Church Elders (HCE). We expect to appoint them soon after their training is completed. These HCE will join "Central Elders" (CE) to form a "Full Council of Elders" (FCE).
  - ii. Every elder is a shepherd. Some elders shepherd house churches; others shepherd the church as a whole. No elder rules over another. We function as a team of equals—operating primarily within our "jurisdiction," while also coming together for some decisions.
  - iii. On April 6, Convergence appointed the first three CE's. These will gradually appoint more CE's (through nomination/approval by members) and HCE's, who together form the FCE.
  - iv. Each house church will eventually be led by its own elders, while remaining vitally connected to the broader vision and leadership of Convergence. This structure reflects our identity: a church of house churches.
- d. Membership
  - i. Believers are "members of one another" (Rom. 12:5), "members of Christ's body" (1 Cor. 12:27), and "fellow members" of God's household (Eph. 2:19), expressed in local churches.
  - ii. Our membership process is rooted in the biblical reality that we belong to one another as members of Christ's body. If you're walking with Jesus and walking with us, you can join.
    - Members:
      - 1. Believe in orthodox Christian doctrine
      - 2. Personally trust in Jesus Christ
      - 3. Have been baptized in water
      - 4. Commit to honoring the Holy Spirit's calling of contributing their time, talent, treasure, and life to God.
    - iii. Elders oversee the membership process, primarily through house churches once their elders are in place.
    - iv. We recognize that "membership" can be a loaded term for some. We're not trying to bind you to a legal document but to affirm you as spiritual family. That's why we don't use covenant language. Take your time if you need it—we're in no rush.
    - v. Membership means you have a voice: to nominate elders, to affirm certain big decisions, to serve as deacons/deaconesses or elders, and to participate in shaping our direction as a spiritual family.
- e. Meeting Rhythms
  - i. Our hope is for every member of Convergence to be involved in both the large gathering and a house church. Each setting offers something essential: the large gathering for corporate worship, equipping, and apostolic teaching; house churches for deeper connection, shared life, and mission in neighborhoods.
  - ii. We know our current rhythm has been difficult for many. Your voices matter, and we are actively working toward a rhythm that better supports your lives while sustaining our shared vision. Stay tuned—we'll discuss updates in the near future.
- f. Tying it back to the Nicene Creed: one holy catholic and apostolic church
  - i. Convergence intends to embody the historic Nicene vision from theology to practice: by forming a unified church made up of interdependent house churches, led by shared elders, grounded in common doctrine, and committed to multiplying disciples, we embody what it means to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.
  - ii. In short, everyone gets to play—as one family in many places.