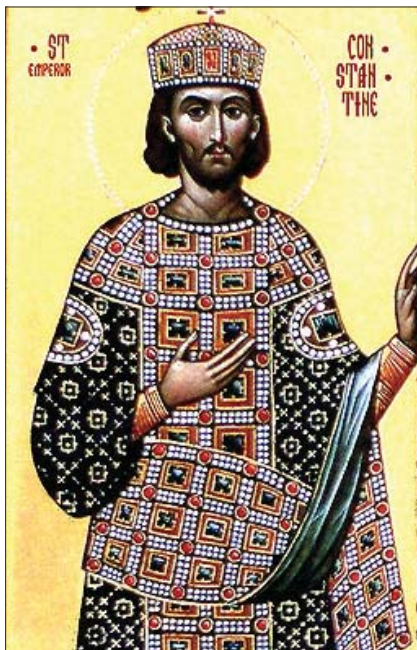


The earliest **Christian creed** was probably the simple confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ, i.e., the Messiah, and that the Christ is Lord. By publicly confessing this belief, the person could be baptized into Christ, dying and rising with Him into the New Life of the Kingdom of God in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

As time passed, different creedal statements began to appear in different places. While they professed the identical faith, they employed different forms and expressions, with different degrees of detail and emphasis. These creedal forms usually became more detailed and elaborate in those areas where questions about the faith had arisen and heresies, or false teachings, had emerged.

In the fourth century, a great controversy developed about the nature of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Some claimed that He is a creature, like everything else made by God. Others contended that He is eternal, divine, and uncreated.

Many councils met, each making statements of faith about the Son of God's true nature.



St. Constantine the Great

The controversy raged throughout the entire Christian world.

It was the creed of the council called by the emperor Constantine in the city of Nicea in the year A.D. 325 that was ultimately accepted by Orthodox Christianity as the proper Symbol of Faith. This council is called the **First Ecumenical Council**, and this is what it said:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end.

Subsequently, a dispute about the Holy Spirit arose. The following definition of the Council in Constantinople in A.D. 381, subsequently known as the **Second Ecumenical Council**, was added to the Nicene statement of faith:

And [I believe] in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

This complete Symbol of Faith was ultimately adopted by the entire Church throughout the world as the formal and official confession of faith made by a person (or his or her sponsor or godparent) at his or her baptism. It is also used as the formal statement of faith by individuals who convert to Orthodox Christianity.

In the same way, the Creed became a part of the life of Orthodox Christians and an essential element of the Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church, during which each member of the faithful formally and officially accepts and renews his or her baptism and membership in the Church. Thus, the **Symbol of Faith** is the only part of the Liturgy that is in the first person. All other hymns and prayers of the Liturgy



are in the plural, beginning with “we.” Only the Creed begins with “I,” because faith is first personal, and only then corporate and communal.

To be an **Orthodox Christian** is to affirm the Orthodox Christian faith, not merely the words of the Creed, but the essential meaning of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith.

It also means to affirm all that this statement implies, and all that has been expressly developed from it and built upon it in the 2000-year history of the Orthodox Church over the centuries, down to our own time.

The **Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed** was formally drawn up at the First Ecumenical Council in Nicea in A.D. 325 and at the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in A.D. 381. The word creed comes from the Latin word *credo*, which means “I believe.”

In the Orthodox Church, the Creed is usually called the Symbol of Faith, which means literally the “bringing together” and the “expression” or “confession” of the faith. In the early Church, there were a number of different “creeds,” originally used in relation to baptism.

Before being baptized, a person had to state what he or she believed. To this day, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed is prayed at infant baptisms and professed by adults converting to the faith.

For further information on Orthodox Christianity visit the web site of the Orthodox Church in America at www.oca.org

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**HOLY TRINITY
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

369 Green Ave., East Meadow, NY

The Rev. Martin Kraus, Rector

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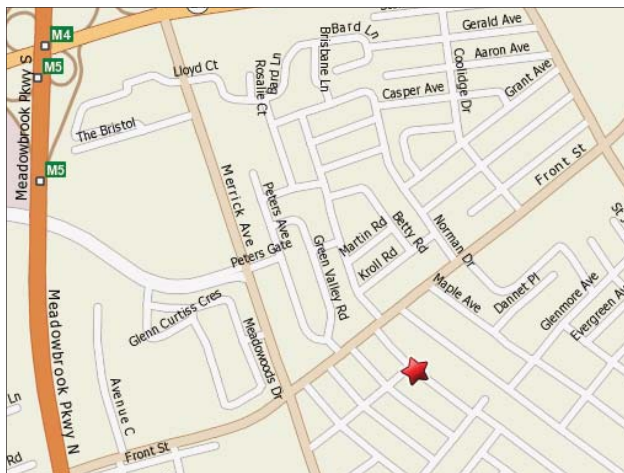
Saturday Evening

7:00 PM Great Vespers and Confessions.

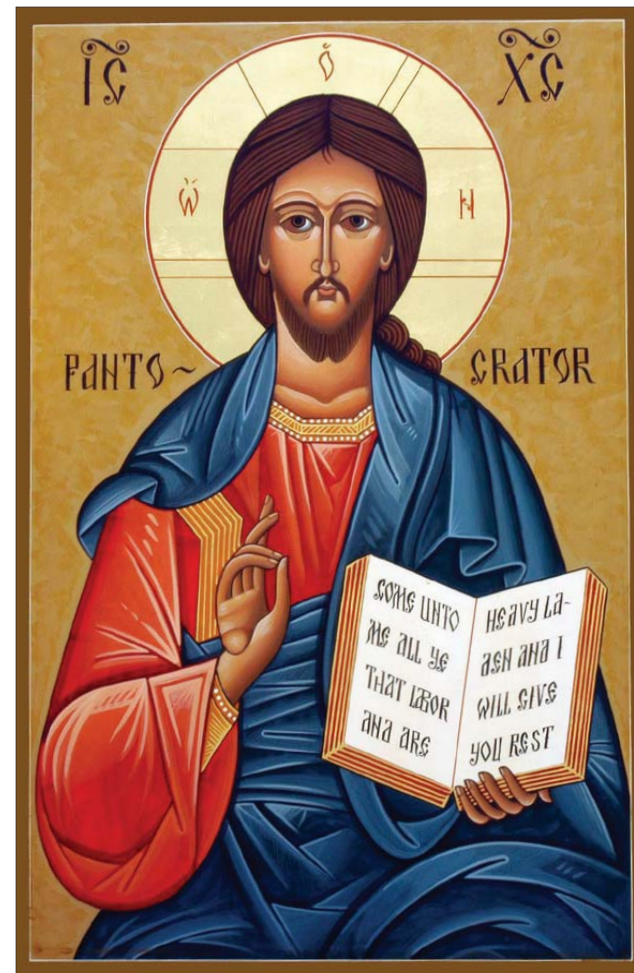
Sunday Morning

9:30 AM Liturgy, Fellowship, and Education for all ages. (9:00 AM *during the summer*).

Please call 516-483-3649 to register as a member of the parish; to arrange Baptisms, Weddings, Memorials, Conversions, Visitations, etc.; and for additional information on Orthodox Christianity in general and our parish in particular.



WHAT WE BELIEVE



The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

Holy Trinity Orthodox Christian Church
East Meadow, NY
Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of New York & New Jersey