

THE RESURRECTION

OF CHRIST



What we believe

Christ is risen!

We are orthodox Christians in Germany. The Orthodox Church is evangelical, but not Protestant. It is orthodox, but not Jewish. It is catholic, but not Roman. It isn't non-denominational - it is pre-denominational. It has believed, taught, preserved, defended and died for the Faith of the Apostles since the Day of Pentecost 2000 years ago. While many faith communities expend much effort trying to clarify their beliefs and “doctrine,” Orthodox Christians have inherited a rich theological tradition.

Orthodoxy is, by definition, “Right Belief” or “Right Worship” (*this is the literal translation of the two Greek words ortho and doxa*). In the tumultuous period that followed the death and resurrection of Christ, many people laid claim to offer the “true” Christian teachings, and these teachings were often at odds with each other—when the leaders of the Church gathered in assembly to clarify the “orthodox” interpretation of the Apostolic teaching, a body of Orthodox dogma emerged. The Christians who embraced this orthodox dogma in time came to refer to themselves as the “Orthodox Church” (*which stood in opposition to those who held a different, or heterodox, teaching*).

Until an unfortunate rift, or schism, between Eastern and Western Christians that evolved from 800 to 1200 AD, there was a unified Orthodox Catholic Church. Issues such as Papal supremacy and Roman modifications to the Nicene Creed (*the most basic profession of Orthodox Faith*) caused Eastern and Western Christians to break communion. As Christ’s prayer was that His followers would be one, “As I and the Father are one,” it is our prayer that these hurtful divisions in the Church would be healed. Since this goal has not been realized, Orthodox Christians practice what some term, “closed communion,” which is in fact not closed but open to all through formal reception into the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church holds to the faith “once delivered to the Apostles.” As noted, competing interpretations of the Apostolic faith forced the Church to clarify its teachings, and these teachings were most often preserved during Church councils, or assemblies (both local and Ecumenical or Universal), where bishops, priests and theologians gathered together to discern, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Orthodox teaching. Common teachings of the Christian Church such as the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus Christ emerged within this context. One product of the first two Ecumenical Councils is the Nicene Creed—this forms the core of Orthodox teaching. It reads:

The Nicene Creed:

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 the heavens, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man; And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; And rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures; And ascended into the heavens, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets; In One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I Confess one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the life of the age to come, Amen.

While the Nicene Creed is our primary creedal statement, Orthodox belief is ultimately Scriptural. All teachings and dogmas of the Church are focused on the person and work of Jesus who, as the Creed states, rose “on the third day according to the scriptures.” Orthodox Tradition, therefore, proclaims Christ. Whether in hymns or art (iconography and architecture), theological treatises or our liturgical worship, the entire body of tradition offers humanity an unadulterated picture of Christ Jesus who alone saves mankind. The teachings and beliefs of the Orthodox Church are important and guarded because the central message of Christian teaching is that mankind, which has fallen in sin, is in need of a savior. God’s plan from the foundation of the world was the redemption of mankind through the incarnation of His Son and the obliteration of death. Upon departing the earth after His resurrection, Christ promised the world his continued presence through a Church guided by the Holy Spirit. We the faithful are therefore obliged to preserve the Christ that saves and to offer him back to the world. This is our sacred calling. As we embrace salvation in Christ, we strive toward holiness in His image.

The worship in which we participate is nothing less than the timeless worship of the angelic hosts and saints throughout all eternity. Our primary Lord’s Day service is the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom which dates to the earliest centuries of the Church. We faithfully realize our calling as the assembled body of Christ in the breaking of bread, by which we are transformed into the mystical reality that is the Church.