

**We Believe: Week 6 The Church
Pastor Peter Smith, 07-24-16**

**Nicene Creed says,
“We believe in One holy, catholic apostolic church...”**

We Believe:

1. There is One Universal Church

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

-Eph. 4:3-6, NIV

1. One faith, one hope, one Lord, one baptism...

God's Church in One entity: in Christianity there are not 'faiths' as we sometimes say (*“What faith are you?” we say to other Christians...*)

It's like Walmart or McDonalds: one company but lots of locations

2. Researchers say there are over 33,000 denominations, distinct segments of Christianity!
3. Diverse but unified (Jesus is the Savior)
4. **On Screen:** So there is 1 Lord, 1 faith, 1 Baptism...just 1 set of beliefs / Church.

Problem is: in our town there are 26+ churches! How do we reconcile / make sense of this?

Some churches have decided to say the following: In Federalsburg there's 1 Church meeting many locations

- It reminds us we are connected
- It reminds us love each other
- It reminds us to pray for each other
 - **Great thing to do:** when you go by a church pray for their Pastor and members....

What does Catholic mean?

1. Ignatius of Antioch, 2nd Century, used the phrase “catholic” (Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church) meaning universal
2. “General, universal, concerning the whole”

Jesus prayed, That they all may be one, father, like I in you and You in me.....

Our belief comes back to Jesus: personally and to let others know about him!

- Our unity, love for one another, support of others...

Differences are OK!

“Master,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him, because he is not one of us.” “Do not stop him,” Jesus said, “for whoever is not against you is for you.”
-Luke 9:49-50, NIV

This passage is difficult for me...

“It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so out of love...The former out of selfish ambition, not sincerely...But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.” -Philippians 1:15-18, NIV

POINT: If there is One church, then

We need to honor the faith of other Christians, whether we like their practices or not!

Aren't we all flawed?

We Believe:

2. The Church is Holy

- Dedicated to God for a purpose

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 1:10-11, NIV

1. Is the Church holy? Better Question is “Are you holy?”
 - a. It’s a personal question, isn’t it?
 - b. Is there spot or blemish in my life or yours?
 - i. Problem is, like my pastor said last week, we don’t think there is anything wrong with our blemishes or spots.
 - ii. Denial is a terrible thing, isn’t it?
 - iii. If I continue to steal or lie after professing my faith in Jesus, and simply say “Well, that’s just who I am”, am I really faithful to Jesus?
 - iv. Shouldn’t we try as hard at being holy as we do at:
 - Hunting and fishing?
 - Driving?
 - Sports?
 - Personal appearance?
 - Why? So my life shows people who God is!

POINT: Holiness should not be my philosophy but my [lifestyle](#)

We Believe

3. The Church is Apostolic or Bible based

- For some, in the line of the Apostles
 - For others, remain faithful to the Apostle’s teachings
1. No “new” revelations from God. We have his Word
 2. For the record, there is a lot of room in Christian faith for interpretation, for convictions, for all who believe.
 - How we dress (conservative, modern)
 - how do we sing (southern gospel / chanting hymns / contemporary)

- what we eat (all things or veggies only),
3. At the end of the day, do we stay within the boundaries of the teachings of the early church? Are we holding fast to faith in Jesus, being baptized, a holy lifestyle?

Point: My faith should revolve around the Bible more than traditions

Traditions will kill you and me and a church!

My Next Step:

This week I will daily pray for 1 other church and I will practice what I read in the Bible.