

June 14, 2017

In the Interim...

Sunday worship this summer will have a special focus: *What We Say We Believe: The Apostle's Creed*. See the schedule for our series on the front page of the current newsletter.

In worship we will use the updated translation of the Creed. We have a proclivity to do things by rote memory without consciousness as to why and what we are saying. By updating the words in the Apostles' Creed, we will be thinking more about what it is we profess.

There are four critical word changes in the updated translation of the Creed, the version used by the majority of Christian communities. The former words are now out of use in modern English, making them obsolete or their meaning no longer the same.

1. The change from "maker" to "creator": The word "creator" carries more power than "maker" and conveys the true nature of God's relationship with the universe. A maker is someone who works with materials that already exist. A creator is someone who brings something out of nothing.
2. The update of "Holy Ghost" to "Holy Spirit": Holy Spirit is the reality of the third person of the Trinity. When we think of a ghost, we think of one who was once alive as human and now is dead. The Holy Spirit has always been part of the divine God and never human except in the indwelling of the Word made flesh in Christ.
3. The change from "descended into hell" to "descended to the dead": For many years in the southern branch of the Presbyterian Church, this phrase was left out altogether. The phrase was reintroduced because of our strong belief that Jesus really did die, that he was dead for three days and then on the third day was resurrected in victory over death. The phrase "descended to the dead" expresses this belief more clearly than "descended into hell."
4. The update of "living" to "quick": Few of us use the word "quick" these days when we talk about living.

We struggle to convey the good news of Christ in a vernacular that can be understood by all. This was an impetus for the Protestant Reformation. Therefore, when our language changes over centuries, the church updates the wording in the professions of faith we make. May we continue to study and learn from this timeless confession and the many translations and wordings it has used over the years.

Summer blessings,
Wanda Neely