**Confirmation - Church History**

**Church Timeline:**

* Jesus Christ of Nazareth was alive approximately 5 BCE - 27 CE.
* Peter was the first leader of the Church and Catholics would consider him the first Pope.
* Early Church was referred to as “The Way” in Acts and other New Testament books
* Church was under oppression from Rome and culture until 313
* 313 - Edict of Milan - Christianity was tolerated and no longer illegal
* 325 - First Council of Nicea that led to the Nicene Creed (attached)
  + A Creed is an agreed upon statement that influences a religious practice.
* Many Church councils met after Nicea. These were gatherings of leaders and theologians (people that develop official belief statements). The councils decided on (or disagreed) really tough questions like “Was Jesus a human like us, or a spiritual presence, or both?”
* In 550, the crucifix (the cross) was introduced as a Christian symbol.
* The Middle Ages (400s to 1400s) - the Church was mostly Catholic.
* 1054 - The Great Schism - Eastern Church split from the Western Church
  + Eastern Church is known as the Eastern Orthodox Church
  + Western Church is mostly understood as the Catholic Church
  + They disagreed on a few theological ideas but mainly it was from cultural differences. The Holy Spirit was a major factor in their disagreement.
* After the Black Plague, the Renaissance Period followed and society was improved.
  + Renaissance was during 1300s to 1600s
  + During this “rebirth” of society many people asked questions about the Christianity.
* The Reformation was a movement of people that disagreed with some of the Church’s practices and beliefs. They wanted reform (change) and did not want to split from the Catholic Church. The Catholics excommunicated them (kicked them out) and the group became known as the Protestant movement. Not everyone that wanted changed agreed on what should be reformed so the early Reformers started their own churches. Many of the early Reformers were arrested and killed for trying to change the Church. Protestant Christians then went through a time of oppression from the Catholic Church.
* 1563 - The Heidelberg Catechism was made. It was a list of beliefs that people learned that became the basic understanding of their faith as Protestant Christians.
* In 1620, Pilgrims fled Europe on the Mayflower because they feared for their lives and wanted to live somewhere they could practice their faith freely. Both the Pilgrims and the Puritans were part of the Reformed movement which is part of the early foundation of the United Church of Christ denomination.
* In 1957 the United Church of Christ was formed by the joining of Evangelical Reformed Churches and the Congregational Christian Churches. More on this later in class.

**Important People**

* Early Church Fathers - people that developed Christian theological statements and ideas during the “Council Period” - year 100-400
  + Tertullian and Origen were important people that developed a lot of writings and primarily contributed to the idea of the Trinity.
    - Trinity: God is Father, Son, Holy Spirit. 3 in 1, 1 in 3. Not separate but distinct parts… it’s complicated. We will go over this again.
* St. Patrick - in 432 he converted the island of Ireland to Christianity
* St. David - (about 100 years after Patrick) David converted Wales. Our church has roots in the Welsh settlers.
* Reformers of the 1500s:
  + Martin Luther (Lutherans) John Calvin (Reformed Church), Ulrich Zwingli (Reformed Church), John Knox (Presbyterians)
* Reformer of the 1700s:
  + John Wesley (Methodists)
* Martin Luther King, Jr (Baptist) taught about equality

All of this matters because Christians have been conflicted by their religious experience to change something about the world around them. Conviction is an important part of our faith and will be an important part of our discussion on Devotion throughout class.