

Church Membership

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Newcomer Seminar Outline

The purpose of the newcomer seminar is:

- to review with participants the so-called "essential tenets" of the Reformed tradition;
- to offer suggestions for continued spiritual formation
- to review the polity of the Presbyterian Church
- to familiarize participants with the ministry of Indianola Presbyterian Church
- to provide resources for a better understanding of the history of the Reformed tradition and its theology of the sacraments

The Ten Essential Tenets of the Reformed Tradition

Tenets common to Christians everywhere:

1. The doctrine of the Trinity
2. The doctrine of the Incarnation

Tenets common to the Protestant tradition:

3. Ultimate authority of scripture
4. Justification by grace through faith

Tenets stressed particularly by the Reformed tradition:

5. Sovereignty of God
6. Doctrine of election
7. Life as covenant relationship with God and all humanity
8. Stewardship of the earth
9. Doctrine of sin (primary sin is idolatry)
10. Obedience

Spiritual Formation

Historically the Christian tradition has held up three major supports for nurturing the spirit:

prayer
study
action

Recognizing that finding a perfect balance between these three is difficult, the church offers a number of things which support not only the individual's spiritual formation but the spiritual formation of the church as a community as well. These include:

Prayer:

regular Sunday worship
monthly Taizé prayer services
devotional time at all meetings and church gatherings
other worship opportunities throughout the year

Study:

church school for all ages every Sunday
small groups for both prayer and study

Lenten study groups
occasional special programming

Action:

many mission activities
offering care to the sick, homebound, and grief-stricken
serving in the administration of the church
worship leadership

Polity of the Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church affirms the following:

Christ alone is Head of the Church

Christ calls the church into being and is its authority

God alone is lord of the conscience

Rights of private judgment in all matters that respect religion thus considered universal and unalienable

The Presbyterian Church is governed by representative bodies composed of presbyters, both elders and ministers of Word and Sacrament. The governing bodies are as follows:

The Session consists of the pastors and elders in active service and is responsible for the mission and government of the particular church.

Presbytery is a corporate expression of the church consisting of all the churches and ministers of the Word and Sacrament within a certain district. It is responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout its geographical district.

Synod is the unit of the church's life and mission which consists of not fewer than three presbyterian within a geographic region. It works to develop broad strategies for mission.

The General Assembly is the highest governing body and is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, session, and congregations.

The Ministry of Indianola Presbyterian Church

The following represent the major areas of ministry overseen by the Session of Indianola:

Worship

- music ministry
 - lay leaders
- Christian education
- church school for children
 - adult education
 - small group ministry
 - youth fellowship

Mission

- Indianola Children's Center
 - Neighborhood Services
 - B.R.E.A.D.
 - Bread for the World
 - Alternative Gift Market
 - Disaster Relief
 - Special offerings
 - Thai partnership
- University Relations
- Student ministry
 - outreach to the OSU community
 - working in cooperation with the campus ministry of the presbytery - Moonlight Madness Midnight Breakfasts Newcomers
 - outreach to the community
 - welcome and integration of newcomers
 - newcomer seminars

Finance and Stewardship

- Stewardship education
- Management of financial resources
- Revitalization campaign

Property

- Oversight of the church property
- Management of rental properties

In addition, the Board of Deacons provides outreach and care to the active membership of the congregation. The service of the deacons includes:

- welcome and hospitality

- visiting the sick and homebound
 - preparing the table for communion
 - pastoral care to all members
- The Meaning of Membership

(from the Book of Order of the PCUSA)

One becomes an active member of the church through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and acceptance of his Lordship in all of life. Baptism and a public profession of faith in Jesus as Lord are the visible signs of entrance into the active membership of the Church.

A faithful member accepts Christ's call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of the Church. Such involvement includes:

- Proclaiming the good news
- Taking part in the common life and worship of a particular church
- Praying and studying Scripture and the faith of the Christian Church
- Supporting the work of the Church through the giving of money, time, and talents
- Participating in governing responsibilities of the Church
- Demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the Church
- Responding to God's activity in the world through service to others
- Living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, and social relationships of life
- Working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment

The congregation shall welcome all persons who respond in trust and obedience to God's grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the membership and ministry of his Church. No persons shall be denied membership because of race, ethnic origin, worldly condition, or any other reason not related to profession of faith.

Each member must seek the grace of openness in extending the fellowship of Christ to all persons. Failure to do so constitutes a rejection of Christ himself and causes a scandal to the gospel.

Members shall regularly review and evaluate the integrity with which they are involved in the ministry of the Church and consider ways in which their participation in the worship and service of the Church may be increased and made more meaningful.