

Welcome to Presbyterian-Land!

Presbyterianism is a polity and a theology. It is how we live together and serve God together. Presbyterianism is NOT a particular “style” of worship.

Book of Order:

Descended from John Knox’s “Book of Church Order”, the BOO describes how we are to organize ourselves and function.

Each particular church is governed by a **Session**. The Session consists of **ordained laity (ruling elders)** and **ordained clergy (teaching elders)**.

Session = ministry of governance. Help the church measure the distance between itself and the foot of the cross and, by policy and procedure, help the church draw closer to it. Provide for teaching, worship and missions.

Ordinarily, the installed pastor is both the moderator of the session and a member and shall have the right to voice and vote.

Deacons. Unicameral and bicameral boards.

Groups of churches are a **presbytery**. Do things churches can’t do. (Church planting, large mission trips.) Quarterly (or so) meetings. Equal number of ruling and teaching elders. Teaching elders have membership.

Must approve new pastors. Watch care over individual churches.

Groups of presbyteries are a **synod**. Do things presbyteries can’t. (Larger mission activities, train Presbytery staff.) Equal number of ruling and teaching elders. Have watch care over presbyteries.

Every other year we meet in a **General Assembly**. Equal number of ruling and teaching elders.

Do things only a national organization can do. Theology and Worship committee. Missions committee. UN.

Moderator can be either a ruling or teaching elder. Face of the GA.

WHAT WE BELIEVE / HOW WE WORSHIP

Call to Worship: God loves us. God created us out of love. God wants us to live in loving relationships with one another. God is Triune: Father, Son, Holy Spirit; Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer

Confession: All human beings are depraved: we are innately sinful. Sinfulness, living apart from God in broken relationships, is our natural way of being.

Pardon: God loves us so much God forgives us freely. No penance, no earning forgiveness (or salvation).

Bible: The Bible is God's love letter to humanity. Inspired by God but written by men(!). Read with attention to languages, customs, etc and w/ guidance of Holy Spirit. Jesus is God's word made flesh.

Sermon: Preaching, explaining the text re: how much God loves us and how we should respond. Ministers/Teaching Elders are often frustrated schoolteachers.

Sacraments: Purveyors of God's grace; visible signs of God's invisible grace. Baptism = sacrament of welcome into our faith. Communion = sacrament of nurture in our faith.

Offerings/Prayers: We respond to God's love with our wholeness.

Offerings/Prayers/Sacraments always come after the sermon because they are our loving response to the words of love and challenge we heard in the Scripture and the Sermon.

Go Forth to Share the good news but do it with Humility! We could be wrong. Probably are wrong about something. Our knowledge of God is always inadequate. Reformed Always Reforming!

GUIDES ALONG THE WAY / PEOPLE OF THE BOOKS

Book of Confessions: Snap-shots of the church in time, from the early church to the Reformation and the modern age. Our family photo-album (look at the hair!). What we believed about what mattered to us then. Our diary of what we thought and what was important to us in the past.

Book of Order: Practical guide to how we live out our faith in ministry together. Power is shared equally between clergy and laity. We are a connectional body, neither episcopal (top-down) nor independent. Lots of room for 'local option'.

Questions Asked of New Members

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

I do.

Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love?

I do.

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

I will, with God's help.

Will you be a faithful member of this congregation,

Being faithful to our church requires being active in it. Neglecting our church's life and ministry is tantamount to infidelity.

share in its worship and mission

Worshipping is not an option. Whether in-person or online, gathering with the community to praise God and grow in faith together is part of what we do.

Our mission is to proclaim the good news of God's love. It is not something individuals do. It is something we do together as a community and by empowering others to act on our behalf.

through your prayers and gifts,

How often will you pray for your church and its ministries?
Will your gifts be a token gift or a sacrificial gift?

your study and service,

Knowing about our faith is not 'the job of the pastor'. It's everyone's joyful responsibility just as knowing what a healthy diet is not 'the job of the doctor'. It's everyone's joyful responsibility.

Our faith is not just an intellectual exercise. It has to be acted out. How will you serve (be a part of the life and ministry of) your church?

and so fulfill your calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Church membership is not an end in itself. Church membership serves a larger purpose. It is the means by which we live out our calling to be followers of Jesus.

I will, with God's help.

No one can do this alone. We can only do it well with God's help.