

Spotlight on our Denominations *Presbyterian Church (USA)*



Symbol

WHO WE ARE...

Date:

1536—John Calvin writes Institutes of the Christian religion

1643—49 Westminster Standards define Presbyterian doctrine

1789—Presbyterian Church (USA) first organized

Numbers:

40-50 Presbyterians worldwide

2 million USA

Web Page: <https://www.pcusa.org/>

WHAT WE BELIEVE...

Scripture:

Historic view: Scripture is infallible and inspired; the sole and final rule of faith.

PC (USA): Scripture is “the witness without parallel” to Christ, but in merely human words reflecting beliefs of the time. The standard Protestant canon is accepted.

God:

The One Creator and Lord of all, existing eternally and the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)

Jesus:

The eternal Son incarnate, fully God and fully man, conceived and born of the Virgin Mary, died on the cross for our sins, rose bodily from the grave, ascended into heaven, and will come again in glory to judge us all.

Salvation:

We are saved by grace alone when God imputes to us his gift of righteousness through faith alone (*sola fide*) in Christ, who died for our sins. Good works are the inevitable result of true faith, but in no way are the basis for our right standing with God.

Death:

The souls of believers upon dying go immediately to be with Christ. At Christ’s return, their bodies are raised to immortal, eternal life. The souls of the wicked begin suffering immediately in hell.

The Church:

The church is the body of Christ, including all whom God has chosen as his people, represented by the visible church, composed of churches that vary in purity and corruption. Christ alone is head of the church. Congregations choose Elders to govern them. Regional groups of Elders (presbyteries) meet in denominational wide General Assemblies.

Sacraments:

Baptism is not necessary for salvation but is a sign of the new covenant of grace, for adults and infants. Jesus’ body and blood are spiritually present to believers in the Lord’s Supper.

Beliefs:

Conservatives affirm the “5 points of Calvinism”: humans are so sinful they cannot initiate return to God; God chooses who will be saved; Christ died specifically for those whom God chooses; God’s infallibly draws those whom he chooses, they will never fall away.

THINGS WE DO...

Locally

Through **The United Churches**, we support:

- The Food Pantry of Hot Springs
- Hot Springs Ministerial Association
- Basic Needs Boutique
- Barely Used Boutique
- Educational Scholarships for local Presbyterians
- Christmas Rose Bowls for Shut-ins
- Boiler Project
- Window Project
- Radio Transmitter
- Advent Candles and Stand

Through the **local Presbyterian Denomination**, we support:

- Spiritual Retreats
- SD Mission Pledge
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Makasan (Pine Ridge Presbyterians)
- Presbyterian Women
- Mission Trips
- Church Camps and Scholarships

Denominationally

The PC(USA) provides numerous programs and services for those in need such as:

- Advocacy
- Education
- Financial Aid
- Human Trafficking
- Intercultural & Urban Ministries
- Leadership Development
- Mental Health
- Hunger & Poverty
- Race & Culture
- Women's & Youth Ministries

THINGS WE DO (Continued)...

The PC(USA) also supports those who have the least by promoting Special Offerings which include:

- One Great Hour of Sharing
 - ⇒ Hunger, Disaster, Development
- Pentecost
 - ⇒ Children at Risk, Youth, Young Adult
- Peace & Global Witness
 - ⇒ Peacemaking & Reconciliation
- Christmas Joy
 - ⇒ Church Leaders-past, present, & future
- Giving Catalog

For further information visit www.presbyteryofsd.org

or

www.presbyterian.org/programs-services

Local information can also be found in *New Song*, the newsletter of the SD Presbytery (also available on the website).

HOW TO JOIN...

Prerequisites

- Have come to know and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and have received Him into your heart and life as Lord.
- Have been or are willing to be baptized.
- Have prayed about and decided which one of the three denominations God would have you join. (Yes, you have to choose one of the three.)

Process

- Talk to the Pastor about your desire to join, discussing your personal faith in Christ, the details of baptism, and the desired mode of membership: public profession of faith, certificate/letter of transfer, or statement and reaffirmation of faith.
- Commit to attending a Membership Class.
- Discuss and decide on a worship service (usually on a Sunday morning) to join the church
- Meet with the Pastor, Board of Trustees, and relevant denominational leader(s) prior to the designated worship service (as the Trustees and denominational leaders are responsible for referring prospective members to the congregation of The United Churches).

Procedure

- Come forward at the appropriate time in the worship service and stand with the Pastor.
- Respond positively to the following:

Question 1: Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of the Living God, and have you received Him as your personal Savior and Lord of your life? Do you, and have you?

Answer 1: *I do, and I have.*

Question 2: Are you willing to rely on God's saving and sustaining grace to strengthen you in your life of faith in Christ in whatever way God is calling you; and do you renounce evil and commit yourself to trying to live a life that is pleasing to God from now on? Are you, and do you?

Answer 2: *I am, and I do.*

Question 3: Do you promise to participate actively in the worship services of our church, responsibly utilizing your time, talents and treasures in supporting the ministry and mission of our church family? Do you?

Answer 3: *I do.*

HOW TO JOIN *(Continued)...*

- Listen to your church family's response as the Pastor asks the Congregation: Do we members of The United Churches accept and welcome **[Your Name]** into our church family, and will we support, befriend, encourage, and pray for them as a beloved brother/sister in Christ and pledge to treat as such in the life and work of this family of faith? **Do we, and will we? We do, and we will.**
- Listen as the Pastor declares:
We welcome you in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, into the family of your denomination and The United Churches of Hot Springs, conferring to you all the rights and responsibilities congruent with your membership.
- Join the Pastor in the foyer at the conclusion of the worship service in order to greet and be welcomed by fellow church members.

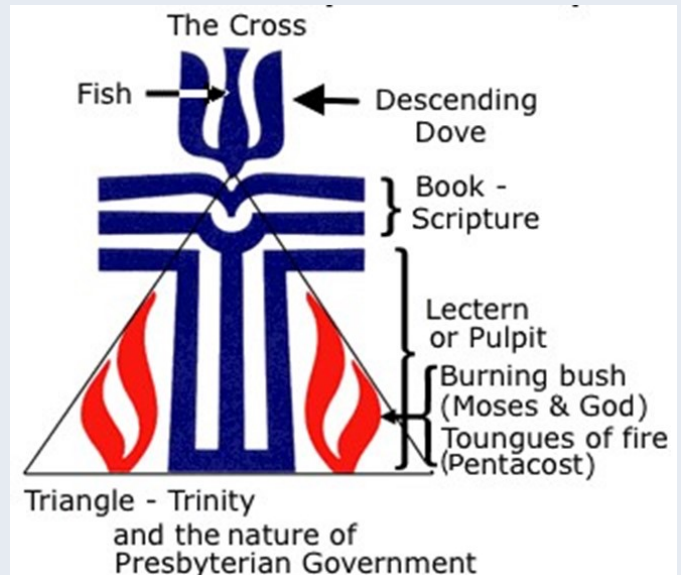
Perks to Receive

- Church Connects Us with God and Gives us an Opportunity to Worship Him.
- Church Gives Us a Chance to Reflect on Gratitude.
- Church Connects Us Socially.
- Church Helps Us Better Connect with our Spouse and other Family Members.
- Church Gives Us the Opportunity to Receive Encouragement from Others in Our Church Family.
- Church Allows Us to Feel Reverence.
- Church Provides Plenty of Opportunities to Give Back.
- Church Helps "Find the Lesson" in our Trials.
- Church Teaches Us Forgiveness.
- Church Fills Our Hearts with Song.
- Church is Where We "Find Our Purpose" and Find Deeper Meaning in our Lives.
- Church Membership Gives Us the Privilege of Participating and Voting in Elections and Other Business Affairs of Our Denomination and of The United Churches.

Promises to Keep

- Attend worship services regularly.
- Study the Word of God through Bible study.
- Encourage one another.
- Pray for one another and for the needs of our community, country, and world

THE SEAL A Closer Look



The Cross

The cross represents the incarnate love of God in Jesus Christ, and his passion and resurrection. Because of its association with Presbyterian history, the Celtic cross was chosen.

The Bible

The two center lines of the cross represent an open book ... the role of Scripture as a means of knowing God's word.

The Dove

The uppermost section... the shape of a descending dove. A symbol of the Holy Spirit, ... also symbolizes Christ's baptism by John and the peace and wholeness which his death and resurrection bring to a broken world.

The Pulpit

Beneath the image of the book is the suggestion of a lectern or pulpit, which captures the important role of preaching in the history of Presbyterian worship.

The Flames

The flames convey a double meaning: a symbol of revelation in the Old Testament when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, and the beginning of the Christian church when Christ manifested himself to his apostles at Pentecost and charged them to be messengers of the good news of God's love.

The Triangle

The triangle a traditional symbol of the Trinity also suggests the nature of Presbyterian government, with its concern for balance and order, dividing authority between clergy and elders and among different governing bodies.

The Fish

In the shape of the descending dove, one can discern the form of a fish, an early-Christian sign for Christ, recalling his ministry to those who hunger.

The Font/Chalice

In the lower central part of the image of the cross one can find a baptismal font or a communion chalice (cup) both images of the sacraments ... an ongoing sign and symbol of God's presence with us and working through us .