

Hello - and welcome to class!

As a PCUSA ruling elder, **Grace and Peace to each of you!** -- from the congregation and Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Las Vegas, Nevada – serving the whole Las Vegas valley from the “cross-roads of the valley” - where the Los Angeles to Salt Lake and the Phoenix to Reno freeways intersect like a big “X.”

As the immediately Past-Moderator of the Presbytery of Nevada, **God be with you -- and greetings!** -- from the other 32 neighboring Presbyterian churches, worshipping fellowships, new church developments, and specialized ministries and from the 53 active and retired pastors who together, comprise the Presbytery of Nevada which covers the state and five counties in Eastern California.

And as a Nevada Presbytery Commissioner to the Synod of the Pacific (of which our presbytery is a part), **welcome and enjoy God’s Holy love today!** -- from the 397 churches in the other 10 presbyteries of our Synod which also includes Oregon, Idaho, and Northern California ...

I give you these greetings from all three of these councils in our church – and from my heart.

I am Art Ritter, your teacher today.



Lets begin with prayer ...

Open our hearts and minds to your  
teaching Lord that we may learn  
your ways and glorify you in  
everything we do. Amen

2012 APA Certification Course (Elective)  
**PRESBYTERIAN 101 (2.5 Hours)**

History, Polity, Structure, Terminology of PC(USA)

see: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/101/>

I. Introductions

**II. Presbyterian Ethos**

III. A little Presbyterian history

IV. Introduction to polity – the Constitution: Part 1 Part 2

V. Entities/agencies of the Presbyterian Church

VI. Terms and acronyms we know and love

VII. Questions, comments, quiz

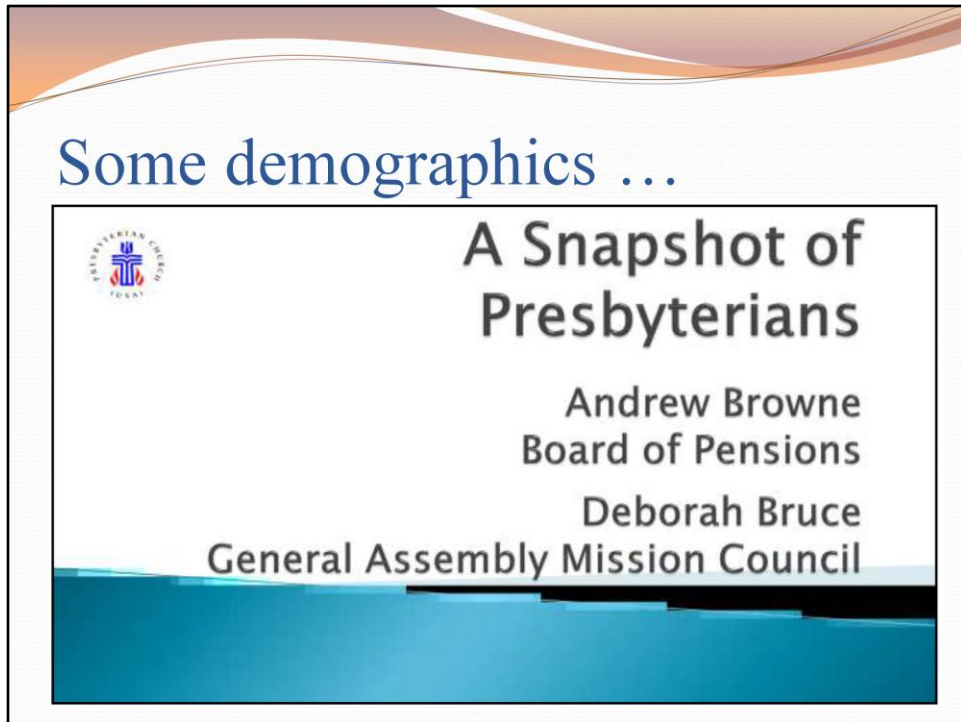
Just to make sure that you are in the right room – this is the PCUSA Administrative Professionals Association 2012 Certification Course Elective class on **“Presbyterian 101.”**

In six blocks, we address these suggested topics – generally in this order.

But, to get started here, I hope you have completed the first block before opening this one.

It may make more sense if you have ...

## Some demographics ...



This block deals with the Presbyterians in the pew - next to you.

Who are those guys?

And what can we expect of them?

Well, the Research Services office of the Office of the General Assembly Mission Council put a little cheat sheet together for the commissioners at the 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Pittsburgh this year – as always, a fun-packed week, held in the hottest and most humid part of the summer – early July.

Here is who they think 'those guys' are ... (with some selected commentary from other sources, too).

## How many of us are there?



First, they seem to be shrinking – well, in number, anyway.

We have seen a slow but steady decline in membership – shown here over the last decade and a half – we dipped below the 2 million mark in 2011.

Let's look at the membership of our denomination in a bit more detail.

## So where are we?

In its Quarter-century, the **PCUSA**:

**Shrunk** by **8%** its congregations

**Shrunk** by **half** its membership

**Shrunk** by **half** its baptisms

**Shrunk** by **two-thirds** its new church development

**Shrunk** by **40%** its minister ordinations

**Grew** by **10%** its average worship attendance

**Grew** by **63%** its per-member annual giving

According to **PCUSA 2008 - @25**

*Presbyterian churches have half as many members as in 1965.*

*Other denominations are losing members, not just the PC(USA).*

*Knowing how separate components contribute to gains and losses can help target efforts to reverse trends.*

### **Implications**

The PC(USA) has half the members its predecessor denominations did in 1965, a net loss of almost 2.1 million members. The numbers presented here give no hint that this downward trend is abating; indeed, they indicate that in recent years the downward pattern has accelerated. One projection based on changes over the last decade would have the membership shrinking to zero in only 20 years. (The result of fitting a second-order polynomial curve to the 1999-2009 membership trend.)

Such a “doomsday scenario” is much too pessimistic, but any prediction that the PC(USA) will make quick headway in reversing the downward trend is likewise unrealistic. Many societal forces work against such a reversal. For one thing, the downward trend in membership is not just a Presbyterian phenomenon, but has long characterized other mainline groups and, in recent years, some evangelical ones (e.g.,

Southern Baptists) as well. Low birth rates are a major reason, especially for Presbyterians, who long have had some of the lowest. Compounding the difficulty of generating growth via the reproductive route is, in recent years, the erosion of a longstanding pattern of Presbyterian congregations attracting more transfers than they lose. And the specter of aging baby boomers hovers over one of the more positive trends—a decline in deaths.

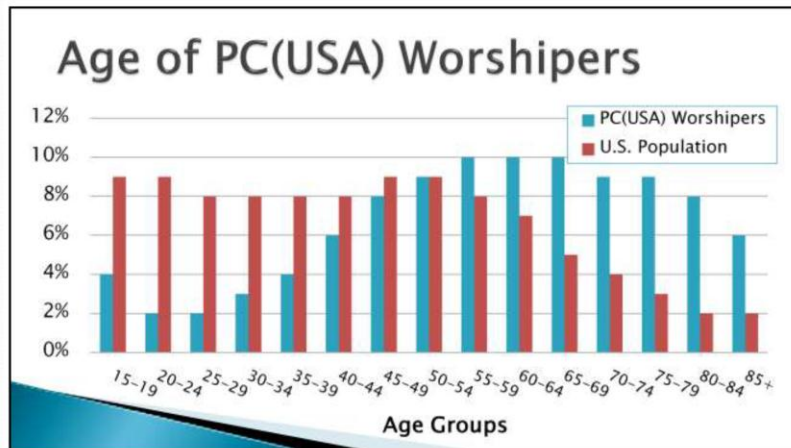
That's not to say the PC(USA) should quit trying. The General Assembly isn't doing so, having reaffirmed the important "Growing the Church Deep and Wide" initiative at its 2010 meeting. Understanding different components of gains and losses and how they contribute to the overall picture, as in this essay, can help the denomination target its efforts. It is one thing to know that net membership losses are growing; another that such changes mainly result from declining numbers of gains; and still another that a sharp dropoff of transfers of both types is the largest component of the accelerating decline.

While the latter may reflect larger societal trends, such as declines in religious involvement and civic participation, it may also suggest the need for more emphasis on reaching out to newcomers and assisting those who move away to find a church in their new community. The denomination has a member referral service and, while not widely used, it could be more broadly publicized and its functions enhanced.

Of course, ultimately people join or leave a congregation, not a denomination. (Despite the widespread conventional wisdom that controversial denominational actions or policies lead many people to leave its congregations, various research studies have shown otherwise.) The social context may make the task of slowing net membership loss more difficult, but the efforts of pastors, sessions, and individual members are key.



## How do we compare?



Back to the GA cheat-sheet.

Each of these bars represents a percent of a specific population.

The blue bars show the age distribution of worshippers in the PC(USA) – as a percent of worshippers of all ages in the PC(USA).

The red bars represent the population distribution of the general population of the US – as a percent of all of the general population of the US.

Do you see the WW II ‘baby boom’ in the population distribution of the US?

Do you see their parents in the PCUSA?

As a church, we are proportionately older than the general population of the US,.



## The median age ...

### Median Age of Presbyterians: 2001 and 2008

	2001	2008
Worshippers	58	61
Pastoral leaders	53	56
U.S. population	44	44

Source: U.S. Congregational Life Survey; U.S. Census

Lets view it in just a couple of numbers – how much older we are – and are getting to be. Look at the two data points to get a trend-understanding of the bar chart.

- Over this 7 year period ‘those guys’ got older (as a group)!
- See also that over this 7 year period, the median age of the general population of the US has remained stable.
- Note that over the same period, the age of our worshippers – and of our pastoral leaders has been quite a bit older than the general population (9 and 14 years older in 2001) – and has gotten ... even older. (to 12 and 17 years older, respectively).

Although the visual images of these data are interesting, it doesn’t mean that Presbyterians live longer – it simply means that the membership of our denomination is not increasing in the younger ages.

As the pastor of our church suggested to our white-haired congregation – “We have two choices: invite your neighbors – especially your younger neighbors -- to church, or start havin’ babies!”

Imagine the reaction of the ‘fourth row ladies’ – all in their 80s – first a quick intake of breath, then a bit of contemplation and slow smiles crept across their faces. I have no idea where they were going with this ... but a challenge is, after all, a challenge!

## A closer look...

### Presbyterians: Men and Women

	Women	Men
Members	60%	40%
Ruling Elders	51%	49%
Teaching Elders	33%	67%
GA Commissioners	44%	56%
GA Advisory Delegates	56%	44%

Members, ruling elders, teaching elders: Presbyterian Panel, 2011  
Commissioners and advisory delegates: 2012 GA registrations

A majority of members and about half of the ruling elders are women.

One third of our teaching elders are women – and that percentage has been steadily increasing in recent years.

Our parent denominations began ordaining women only about 80 years ago. Old habits erase slowly ...

The Research Services statisticians expect these percentages trends to widen – especially as global warming makes the golf season longer at both ends – and as the televised football, basketball, and baseball seasons continue to expand.

No, this last part is my conclusion – but on a serious note, where are the men?

## Still closer ...

### Marital Status of Presbyterians (age 25 years and older)

	Married	Single
Members	76%	24%
Ruling Elders	82%	18%
Teaching Elders	85%	15%
U.S. Population	51%	49%

Members, ruling elders, teaching elders: Presbyterian Panel, 2011

No matter what the recent votes at General Assembly may indicate, we are a conservative denomination on the issue of both the definition and practice of marriage.

## Too close?

### Race/Ethnicity of Presbyterians

	White	Other
Members	94%	6%
Ruling Elders	94%	6%
Teaching Elders	91%	9%
GA Commissioners	84%	16%
GA Advisory Delegates	77%	23%
U.S. Population	72%	29%

Members, ruling elders, teaching elders: Presbyterian Panel, 2011  
Commissioners and advisory delegates: 2012 GA registrations

But we are also pretty Caucasian and still relatively not very reflective of heritages within the community that surrounds us.

Note how the percentages change though with the 220<sup>th</sup> GA commissioners – and even more so with the Advisory Delegates.

Can you explain that?

(discussion)

Well, the real reason is the declared and enforced commitment of the church to be both inclusive and representational in our leadership and elected representation – pity the poor minority member of our congregations – talk about over-tasking to achieve balance!

# Who is in church this Sunday?

## Members and Non-Members in Presbyterian Pews

<i>Are you a member here?</i>	Presbyterian Worshippers
Yes	81%
In process of joining	2%
No, but regularly participate	10%
No	6%

U.S. Congregational Life Survey, 2008/2009

Here are some interesting indications; however – the field for evangelism is ripe and may already be in our pews!

How will we challenge these visitors this next Sunday - to meet Jesus face-to-face, be baptized, be discipled, be taught, and to be obedient to the King of all? (Matthew 28 – the Great Commission).

How are we challenging those on our membership rolls to these same things?

## What story is this telling?

### Members and Non-Members by Age

<i>Are you a member here?</i>	Worshiper Age:		
	15-24	25-44	45+
Yes	65%	69%	85%
In process of joining	4%	4%	1%
No, but regularly participate	19%	16%	9%
No	13%	10%	5%

U.S. Congregational Life Survey, 2008/2009

Where do we put these Great Commission efforts?



# Education

- Long history of founding – and attending colleges and universities

[Agnes Scott](#) • [Alma](#) • [Arcadia](#) • [Austin](#) • [Barber-Scotia](#) • [Belhaven](#) • [Blackburn](#) • [Bloomfield](#) • [Buena Vista](#) • [Carroll](#) • [Centre](#) • [Coe College](#) • [College of Idaho](#) • [College of the Ozarks](#) • [College of Wooster](#) • [Cook](#) • [School for Christian Leadership](#) • [Davidson](#) • [Davis and Elkins](#) • [Eckerd](#) • [Grove City](#) • [Hampden-Sydney](#) • [Hanover](#) • [Hastings](#) • [Illinois College](#) • [Inter American](#) • [Jamestown](#) • [Johnson C. Smith](#) • [King](#) • [Knoxville](#) • [Lake Forest](#) • [Lees-McRae](#) • [Lindenwood University](#) • [Lyon](#) • [Macalester](#) • [Mary Baldwin](#) • [Maryville](#) • [Millikin](#) • [Missouri Valley](#) • [Monmouth](#) • [Montreat](#) • [Muskingum](#) • [Peace College](#) • [Presbyterian](#) • [Queens University of Charlotte](#) • [Rhodes](#) • [Rocky Mountain](#) • [Schreiner](#) • [Sheldon Jackson](#) • [St. Andrews Presbyterian](#) • [Sterling](#) • [Stillman](#) • [Trinity](#) • [Tusculum College](#) • [Dubuque](#) • [Tulsa](#) • [University of the Ozarks](#) • [Warren Wilson](#) • [Waynesburg](#) • [Westminster](#) • [Westminster \(Pennsylvania\)](#) • [Westminster \(Utah\)](#) • [Whitworth](#) • [Wilson College \(Pennsylvania\)](#)

As Presbyterians in the United States of America we have a proud history and a Godly heritage. Devout

Scottish immigrants were among the earliest settlers of the New Land, and the first presbytery was established in 1706 in Philadelphia. John Witherspoon, the only active clergyman who signed the Declaration of Independence, was a Presbyterian.

For 250 years, Presbyterianism was a dominant force in American culture. In addition to planting thousands of churches, Presbyterians established scores of colleges and seminaries and hundreds of hospitals. For the 100 years between 1850 and 1950, Presbyterians were the greatest mission-sending denomination the world had ever seen.

I remember hearing at a the installation of our new pastor at Macalester Presbyterian Church – on the edge of the campus of Macalester college in St Paul, Minnesota the moderator of presbytery observe in these surroundings that wherever a Scot landed in America, he started a Presbyterian Church *and a Presbyterian College*. And when the second Scot arrived, he started another – of each!

This is the Association of Presbyterian colleges, today. Not shown are the colleges and universities whose heritage is Presbyterian - basically, the Ivy league.

... and how has bent to education this reflected itself into our demographics?



## The stats ...

	PC(USA)	All resp
<b>Highest Education within Household</b>		
Grade School	0.6	1.3
Some High School	2.5	4.9
Graduated High School	19.1	23.3
Some College - no degree	26.1	28.1
College Grad (2 yr)	5.9	7.2
College Grad (4 yr)	22.7	19.4
Post Graduate Degree	23.0	15.8

Well, the PRECEPT 1997 study found this --

So are these demographics surprising?

Note in the 1997 Precept study a large number of 'people of faith' in America were asked a barrage of questions.

'All respondents' in the study are from this very broad 'people of faith' target frame – not the general population of the US.

## OK; but, what are we, today?

About half had a  
significant  
conversion  
experience

Similar to overall  
US picture



Our friends in the Research Services office produced a '**Field Guide to PCUSA**' just a few years ago.

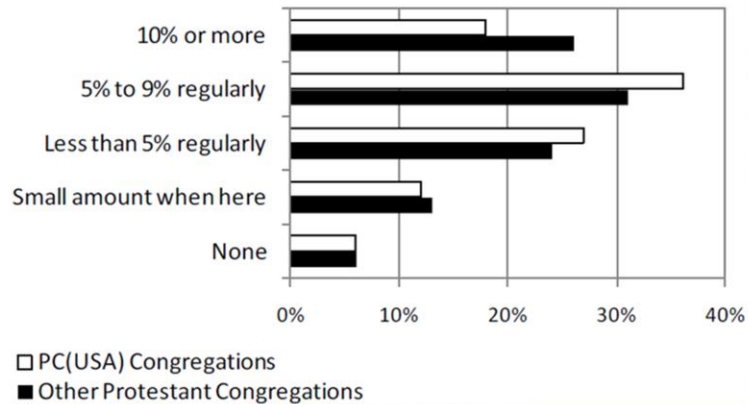
This Field Guide reports:

**How we come to the Faith.** About half of Presbyterian worshipers (48%) say they had a conversion experience or a moment of decisive faith commitment. The remaining half say "no" (30%) or are not sure (22%). This is similar to the overall U.S. picture, where 47% report a conversion experience; 29% say they have not experienced a conversion or moment of faith commitment; and 24% are not sure.

**Their Growth in Faith.** In 2001 half of Presbyterian worshipers (51%) said they had experienced much growth in their faith— through their congregation, other churches or groups, or their own activities. Now fewer than half (45%) report they have experienced much growth in their faith. Declines emerged in the spiritual growth worshipers attributed to participation in their own congregation (from 33% in 2001 to 31% today), to their own private spiritual activities (from 11% to 9%), and to participation in other groups or congregations (from 7% to 5%).

# What are we, today?

Q. About how much do you give financially to this congregation?



## Field Guide to PCUSA

**Giving.** Financial support connects people to the congregation and its mission. In PC(USA) congregations, 94% of worshipers make financial contributions to the congregation, including 18% who report regularly giving 10% or more of their net income to their congregation, and 36% who regularly give 5% to 9%.

Nationally, 26% of all Protestant worshipers give 10% or more of their net income, and 31% give between 5% and 9%. (Giving patterns in Catholic parishes are substantially different.) The contrast between mainline and conservative Protestant worshipers in the percentage who give 10% or more is striking—only 16% of mainline Protestants give at this level compared to 44% of conservative Protestant worshipers.

# What are we, today?

**11%** experienced  
major conflict in the  
church

**8%** experienced  
major conflict in  
congregations across  
the US



## Field Guide to PCUSA (continued)

Our friends in the Research Services continue ...

**Experiencing Conflict.** Three-quarters of worshipers in PC(USA) churches report no conflict (39%) or minor conflict (35%) in their congregation in the previous two years.

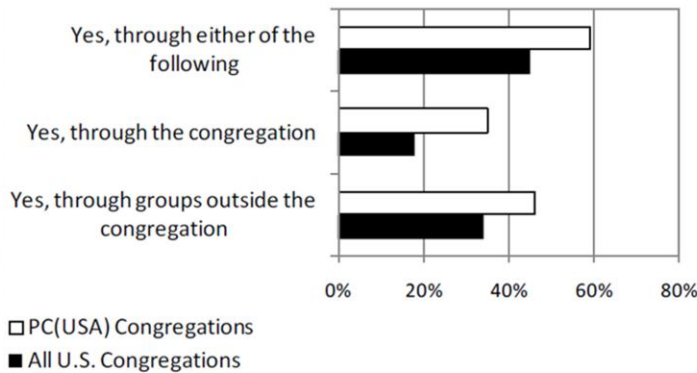
Yet, 11% say their church experienced major conflict in that period. (The remaining 16% said they didn't know.)

Across all U.S. congregations, the percentages reporting no conflict are slightly higher (47% report no conflict, 24% report minor conflict, and 8% report serious conflict).

More PC(USA) worshipers report conflict.

# What are we, today?

Q. Are you involved in any community service, social service, or advocacy groups?



## Field Guide to PCUSA

**Serving the Community.** Almost six in ten PC(USA) worshipers take part in community service, social justice, or advocacy activities. One-third overall join in community service activities organized through their congregation (35% in PC(USA) congregations take part in such groups). Even more (46% in PC(USA) congregations) participate in social service or advocacy groups **not** connected to their congregation. This is another area where Presbyterians excel. Just 18% of worshipers overall are involved in service or advocacy through their congregation, and 34% serve their communities through groups not connected to their congregation.

**Their Outreach to the Community.** While Presbyterians have traditionally sought to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods, towns, and cities, those efforts have expanded since 2001. Now more than one-third (35%) join in community service activities organized through their congregations (about 30% did so in 2001). Almost half (46%) contribute through social service or advocacy groups **not** linked to their church (about 43% did so in 2001). These behaviors reflect worshipers' changing values. The percentage of worshipers who say the wider community care exhibited by the congregation is one of the two most valued aspects of their congregation rose to 22% (from 17% in 2001).

## What are we, today?

	PCUSA	Other
• Contributed to a charitable organization other than your congregation.....	79%	73%
• Prepared or gave food.....	58%	50%
• Loaned money .....	24%	28%
• Helped someone find a job .....	19%	23%
• Cared for someone who was sick .....	22%	22%
• Worked on solving community problem.....	25%	20%
• Contacted official about a public issue.....	21%	18%
• Contributed money to a political party or candidate.....	22%	16%
• Went on a mission or service trip .....	9%	6%

### Field Guide to PCUSA

We are **Good Neighbors; Good Citizens**. Worshipers in Presbyterian pews are especially good neighbors and good citizens. They are more likely to have made a contribution to a charitable organization other than their congregation, prepared or given food to someone outside their family or congregation, worked on community problems or issues, and contributed money to a political party or candidate.



# What are we, today?

**88%** of Presbyterians  
vote

**83%** of US  
worshippers vote



## Field Guide to PCUSA

Given that just 50% of the American adult population voted in the last presidential election, it is particularly noteworthy that worshipers in general (83%), and Presbyterians in particular (88%), vote at very high rates.



# What are we, today?

**What Worshipers Value.** From a list of 14 possibilities, the things PC(USA) worshipers most value in their congregation are:

*traditional worship, preaching,  
celebrating the Lord's Supper,  
wider community care / social justice emphasis,  
care for one another, ministry for children or youth.*

Although the order is somewhat different, these are the **same things valued by worshipers in other types of congregations.**

## Field Guide to PCUSA

(Read slide)

# What are we, today?

**54%** of PCUSA ready to try something new

**69%** of PCUSA excited about future

**62%** of others ready to try something new

**74%** of others excited about future



## Field Guide to PCUSA

**Seeing Possibilities.** How open are worshipers in PC(USA) congregations to change and new directions?

About half of the worshipers in PC(USA) congregations (54%) believe their congregation is always ready to try something new.

Seven out of ten worshipers (69%) also express a sense of excitement about the congregation's future.

In the national picture of all U.S. congregations, worshipers are more likely to describe their congregation as willing to try new things (62%) and excited about the future (76%).

# What are we, today?

**75%** of PCUSA believe  
their church has a vision

**69%** of PCUSA are  
committed to it

**77%** of others believe their  
church has a vision

**66%** of others are  
committed to it



## Field Guide to PCUSA

**Committing to the Future.** Do worshipers in PC(USA) congregations claim a clear vision, goals, or direction for their congregation's ministry and mission?

Most worshipers in PC(USA) congregations believe there is a clear vision or direction for the future (75% say "yes," including 69% who are committed to that vision).

However, others are not sure that the vision is clear or that it exists (25%).

The national average shows most worshipers in U.S. congregations share similar views about their congregation's future (77% believe there is a clear vision, including 66% who are committed to the congregation's vision).

## So, are these **attitudes** surprising?

1. We are a ***Biblical/Evangelical*** people
2. We are an ***Orthodox/Confessional*** people
3. We are an ***Ecumenical/ Connectional*** people
4. We are a ***Compassionate/Socially Conscious*** people
5. We are a ***Reasonable/Moderate*** people
6. We are an ***Orderly/Process Oriented*** people
7. We are a ***Studying/Thinking*** people

-- Church of All Nations (CANDO.org)  
New Member Class, week 5

So are these attributes so surprising?

## So, what's a *Presbyterian*?

- Presbyterians are distinctive in two major ways - they adhere to :
  - a pattern of religious thought known as Reformed theology, and
  - a form of government that stresses the active leadership of both called ministers and elected elders.
- Presbyterians observe two sacraments—
  - Baptism and
  - the Lord's Supper.

OK – So what is a *Presbyterian*?

Here is what GA told the media attending the 218th GA --

Presbyterians are distinctive from most other Christians in two major ways: they adhere to a pattern of religious thought known as Reformed theology, and to a form of government that stresses the active, representational leadership of both ministers and church members. Presbyterians observe two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The word Presbyterian, coming from *Presbuteros*, the Greek word meaning elder, provided the name for the whole Presbyterian family of churches, which includes the Reformed churches of the world. Both Presbyterian and Reformed are synonymous with churches of the Calvinist tradition.



## Principles of faith and practice:

Obedience to Jesus Christ as revealed by scripture;

- Christians are justified by faith alone, not by works;
- The priesthood of all believers;
- God alone is the Lord of the individual conscience;
- Salvation is to be sought corporately as well as individually.

Our Calvinist tradition began with his Institutes of the Christian Religion, first published in 1536, which detailed the principles upon which Presbyterian faith and practice have been built over the last four and a half centuries. Those principles include:

- Obedience to Jesus Christ as revealed by scripture, which is the authoritative witness to Jesus as Lord and Savior and to Christian faith and conduct;
- Christians are justified by faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior alone, not by works;
- The priesthood of all believers—laypersons and clergy—as equally called emissaries of Christ’s teaching and ministry in the world;
- God alone is the Lord of the individual conscience, but greater wisdom is to be gleaned from councils of Christians than by individuals alone;
- Response to our salvation is to be worked out corporately as well as individually and therefore Christians are called to be active witnesses to their faith in worldly affairs.

## Calvin's flower ...

- **TOTAL DEPRAVITY**
- **UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION**
- **LIMITED ATONEMENT**
- **IRRESISTIBLE GRACE**
- **P**ERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS



Calvinist theology is sometimes identified with the five points of Calvinism, also called the doctrines of grace, which are a point-by-point response to the five points of the Arminian Remonstrance (see History of Calvinist-Arminian debate in your handout) and which serve as a summation of the judgments rendered by the Synod of Dort in 1619.

Calvin himself never used such a model and never combated Arminianism directly. In fact, Calvin died in 1564 and Jacob Arminias was born in 1560, and so the men were not really contemporaries. The Articles of Remonstrance were authored by opponents of reformed doctrine and Biblical Monergism (the idea that a person's nature is the exclusive work of the Holy Spirit – as opposed to the dual work of the Holy Spirit and the person, which is the Arminian position). These Articles were rejected in 1619 at the Synod of Dort, more than 50 years after the death of Calvin.

You will find the Arminian – Calvinist comparison in your handout. It is the question of “who is in charge of today?”

The five points therefore function as a summary of the differences between Calvinism and Arminianism, but not as a complete summation of Calvin's writings or of the theology of the Reformed churches in general.

In English, they are sometimes referred to by the acronym **TULIP**, though this puts



them in a different order than the Canons of Dort.

The central assertion of these canons is that God is able to save every person upon whom he has mercy, and that his efforts are not frustrated by the unrighteousness or inability of humans.

**"Total depravity"**: This doctrine, also called "total inability", asserts that as a consequence of the fall of man into sin, every person born into the world is enslaved to the service of sin. People are not by nature inclined to love God with their whole heart, mind, or strength, but rather all are inclined to serve their own interests over those of their neighbor and to reject the rule of God. Thus, all people by their own faculties are morally unable to choose to follow God and be saved because they are unwilling to do so out of the necessity of their own natures. (The term "total" in this context refers to sin affecting every part of a person, not that every person is as evil as possible.) This doctrine is borrowed from Augustine who was a member of a Manichaean sect in his youth.

**"Unconditional election"**: This doctrine asserts that God has chosen from eternity those whom he will bring to himself not based on foreseen virtue, merit, or faith in those people; rather, it is unconditionally grounded in God's mercy alone. God has chosen from eternity to extend mercy to those He has chosen and to withhold mercy from those not chosen. Those chosen receive salvation through Christ alone. Those not chosen receive the just wrath that is warranted for their sins against God.

**"Limited atonement"**: Also called "particular redemption" or "definite atonement", this doctrine asserts that Jesus's substitutionary atonement was definite and certain in its design and accomplishment. This implies that only the sins of the elect were atoned for by Jesus's death. Calvinists do not believe, however, that the atonement is limited in its value or power, but rather that the atonement is limited in the sense that it is designed for some and not all. Hence, Calvinists hold that the atonement is sufficient for all and efficient for the elect. The doctrine is driven by the Calvinistic concept of the sovereignty of God in salvation and their understanding of the nature of the atonement.

**"Irresistible grace"**: This doctrine, also called "efficacious grace", asserts that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom he has determined to save (that is, the elect) and, in God's timing, overcomes their resistance to obeying the call of the gospel, bringing them to a saving faith. This means that when God sovereignly purposes to save someone, that individual certainly will be saved. The doctrine holds that every influence of God's Holy Spirit cannot be resisted, but that the Holy Spirit, "graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ."

**"Perseverance of the saints":** Perseverance (or preservation) of the saints (the word "saints" is used in the Biblical sense to refer to all who are set apart by God, and not in the technical sense of one who is exceptionally holy, canonized, or in heaven). The doctrine asserts that since God is sovereign and his will cannot be frustrated by humans or anything else, those whom God has called into communion with himself will continue in faith until the end. Those who apparently fall away either never had true faith to begin with or will return.

## Governed by God's Will and Equal Representation

- Church (denominational) government by representative assemblies called presbyteries
  - Teaching Elders and Congregations (via commissioners)
- Ordered ministries – Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, Deacon
- Vote their Conscience under the Lordship of Christ
- Constitutionally based

### **Governed by God's Will and Equal Representation**

Presbyterianism in a wide sense is the system of church government by representative assemblies called presbyteries, as opposed to government by bishops (episcopal system), or by congregations (congregationalism).

Congregations of the PC(USA) are governed by a session, consisting of church members—called **ruling elders**—who have been elected and ordained by their congregation. Elders are elected by the congregation and in one sense are representatives of the other members of the congregation. On the other hand, their primary charge is to seek to discover and represent the will of Christ as they govern. Congregations also elect and ordain persons to an office of humanitarian service called **deacons**.

**Teaching elders**, (formerly called “Ministers of Word and Sacrament;” but before that, “teaching elders”) — are the third ordered ministry in the PC(USA). They are called (elected from outside the congregation) by the congregation; but, are ordained and governed by their presbyteries. Ministers are members of presbyteries, not of the congregations they serve.

# Worship Practices

- Sunday worship service order is determined by
  - The Pastor and
  - The Session.
- Worship generally includes prayer, music, Bible reading and a sermon based upon scripture.
- The Sacraments—the Lord’s Supper and Baptism—
  - A time of personal response and offering and are
  - Celebrated under the direction of the Session.

## Worship Practices

The order of a Sunday worship service in a Presbyterian church is determined by the pastor and the Session.

It generally includes prayer, music, Bible reading and a sermon based upon scripture.

The Sacraments—the Lord’s Supper and Baptism—are a time of personal response and offering.

## Ordination Firsts & National Offices

### The PCUSA:

- Ordained its first woman to the ministry of the word and sacrament in 1956—Margaret Towner.
- Elected the first woman moderator of the General Assembly in 1971—Lois Stair. T
- Elected the first African American moderator of the General Assembly in 1964—Elder G. Hawkins.

The national offices of the PC(USA), Louisville, Kentucky.  
The Board of Pensions offices, Philadelphia.  
The Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation,  
Jeffersonville, Indiana.

### Here are some “Fun Facts”

The PCUSA ordained its first woman to the ministry of the word and sacrament in 1956—Margaret Towner. The first woman moderator of the General Assembly—Lois Stair—was elected in 1971. The first African American moderator of the General Assembly—Elder G. Hawkins—was elected in 1964.

The national offices of the Presbyterian Church (USA) are located in Louisville, Kentucky. The offices of the church’s Board of Pensions are in Philadelphia. The Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation has its offices in Jeffersonville, Indiana – just a hop across the river from Louisville, by the way.

My brother, the Reverend Greg Ritter – the “voice of the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly,” for those of you who were there as GA met in Minneapolis in July, 2010 - was the Vice President of Development for the Foundation several years back (its best fund-raising years, by the way). I still find mutual friends as they represent the Foundation to our Presbytery and our Synod.

## So -- What is the Church??

In **organizational terms**, the best short description of any organization is an integrated expression of these most fundamental statements –

“We are (**our values**) sent to (**our market**) to accomplish (**our mission**) *so that* (**God’s vision of the future**) is achieved\* by (**His goal**).”

\* By the way ... His vision will be achieved – this is the Church’s part in it.

**So -- What is the Church??** We will be speaking in polity terms now – about the “church visible” - as an organization.

In real life, I tell my clients that ... in **organizational terms**, the best short description of any organization is an integrated expression of these most fundamental statements – Values, Market, Mission, Vision, and Goals – like this:

“We are (**our values**)  
sent to (**our market**)  
to accomplish (**our mission**)  
*so that* (in our case - **God’s vision of the future**)  
is achieved by (**His goal**).”

(Let me assure you ... His vision will be achieved – this statement is simply descriptive of the Church’s part in His work.)

I also tell my clients that making these foundational Values, Market, Mission, Vision, and Goals statements is **the singular responsibility of the owner of the organization** – who, after all, is the one who has some purpose, some objectives, something in mind to get out of the organization – by some date or event in the future.

Such a statement could be made for any type of organization (modified a bit to suite

its specific needs).

- Done formally, the organization itself has a far better self-understanding about what its owner wants to get out of its very existence, let alone its operation – and what its members are to do and why.
- Done clearly and accurately, this statement will describe exactly how - and will predict *how well* - the organization works and will work -- in terms of its owner's purpose for it.

Sadly, most churches screw these statements up entirely – mistaking vision for mission, mission for vision, ignoring market entirely or addressing it over-broadly, ignoring values, and over-focusing on time goals rather than event goals. Our results show how badly we fumble this ball -- from the very start.

**This last observation might have been a note-taking moment.**

Well, so much for the free consultation – lets see how this statement describes the church.

Formally done or not, done well or not, good or bad, clear or unclear, unified or scattered, this statement will diagnose how and whether any organization will produce what the owner wants from it.

In polity terms, lets look at “The Church” ...



## We are ...

- Called out of the World
- Saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church
- Transformed by the renewing of our minds
- Conformed to the image of God
- Given gifts - for building up the body *and* for accomplishing its mission
- Witnesses to the love of God for His creation
- Accompanied by God Himself

**We are ...**

(Read the slide)

Do these elements capture who the church is – and what it dearly values?

Could you add elements to improve this?



... sent to ...

- A lost and dying world
  - ... rebellious against God, their Creator
  - ... imprisoned by their sin
  - ... hungry for salvation - and
  - ... thirsting for reconciliation with their Creator

We are ... **sent to** ...

(Read the slide)

Do these elements capture who the church is sent to serve – its “market?”

Could you add elements to improve this?

## ... our Mission...

(what we are sent to **do**)

- **Proclaim the gospel** for the salvation of humankind;
- **Provide shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship** of the children of God;
- **Maintain (and practice) divine worship**;
- **Preserve the truth**;
- **Promote social righteousness**; and
- **Exhibit the Kingdom of Heaven** to the world

We are ... sent to ... our market ... to perform our **Mission** (or, what we are sent to **do**) which is to ...

(Read the slide)

Do these elements describe what the church is sent to **do**?

**These are the “Six Great Ends of the Church.”**

And they are all mission statements - “do” statements.

## ... God's Vision and Goal

(**why** we do it – **when** we will be finished)

*...so that* at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

-- The Apostle Paul, writing to the Philippian Churches 2:10-11

-- and to the Roman Churches 14:11

-- all the while, quoting God's prophet, Isaiah 45:23

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

-- Jesus to his disciples in Mark 13:32

-- Matthew 24:32

-- and Acts 1:7

And here is why this body -

- described-by-its-**values**, is sent to its
- **market**-described-by-its-state, and does
- the things we **do** with them/to them/for them (our **mission**) --

All of this makes sense to us humans (who are created in God's intellectual image and need to have the reason behind our actions – we are hard-wired this way) when we can see ...

God's **Vision and Goal** (**why** we do it – **when** we will be finished)

(Read the slide)

Do these elements capture why the church is sent to do its mission?

Could you add elements to improve this **vision**?

And when will we achieve the **Goal**?

I don't know.

Do you know?

Did Jesus know when He was with His church on this earth?

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." – Mark 13:32.

-- or --

Matthew 24:36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

-- or --

Acts 1:7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority."

## “The Church” described in our Constitution:

- *F-1.0301 The Church Is the Body of Christ*
  - ... given ... all the gifts necessary to be his body. ... to demonstrate these gifts in its life
  - ... a community of faith, of hope, of love , of witness ....

Here is how our church is described in our Constitution – the “blueprint for mission:”

### *F-1.0301 The Church Is the Body of Christ*

- The Church is the **body of Christ**. Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body. The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts in its life as a community in the world (1 Cor. 12:27–28):
- The Church is to be a **community of faith**, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.
- The Church is to be a community of **hope**, rejoicing in the sure and certain knowledge that, in Christ, God is making a new creation. This new creation is a new beginning for human life and for all things. The Church lives in the present on the strength of that promised new creation.
- The Church is to be a community of **love**, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.
- The Church is to be a community of **witness**, pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God’s transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord.



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  - ... given ... all the gifts necessary to be his body. ... to demonstrate these gifts in its life
  - ... a community of faith, of hope, of love , of witness ....
- *F-1.0302 The Marks of the Church*
  - With all Christians of the Church catholic, we affirm that the Church is “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.”

### *F-1.0302 The Marks of the Church*

With all Christians of the Church catholic, we affirm that the Church is “**one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.**”

#### *a. The **Unity** of the Church*

Unity is God’s gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Just as God is one God and Jesus Christ is our one Savior, so the Church is one because it belongs to its one Lord, Jesus Christ. The Church seeks to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone. There is one Church, for there is one Spirit, one hope, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:5–6).

Because in Christ the Church is one, it strives to be one. To be one with Christ is to be joined with all those whom Christ calls into relationship with him. To be thus joined with one another is to become priests for one another, praying for the world and for one another and sharing the various gifts God has given to each Christian for the benefit of the whole community. Division into different denominations obscures but does not destroy unity in Christ. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirming its historical continuity with the whole Church of Jesus Christ, is committed to the reduction of that obscurity, and is willing to seek and to deepen communion with all other churches within the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

b. *The **Holiness** of the Church*

Holiness is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Through the love of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God takes away the sin of the world. The holiness of the Church comes from Christ who sets it apart to bear witness to his love, and not from the purity of its doctrine or the righteousness of its actions.

Because in Christ the Church is holy, the Church, its members, and those in its ordered ministries strive to lead lives worthy of the Gospel we proclaim. In gratitude for Christ's work of redemption, we rely upon the work of God's Spirit through Scripture and the means of grace (W-5.5001) to form every believer and every community for this holy living. We confess the persistence of sin in our corporate and individual lives. At the same time, we also confess that we are forgiven by Christ and called again and yet again to strive for the purity, righteousness, and truth revealed to us in Jesus Christ and promised to all people in God's new creation.

c. *The **Catholicity** of the Church*

Catholicity is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. In the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God overcomes our alienation and repairs our division.

Because in Christ the Church is catholic, it strives everywhere to testify to Christ's embrace of men, women, and children of all times, places, races, nations, ages, conditions, and stations in life. The catholicity of the Church summons the Church to a deeper faith, a larger hope, and a more complete love as it bears witness to God's grace.

d. *The **Apostolicity** of the Church*

Apostolicity is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God sends the Church into the world to share the gospel of God's redemption of all things and people.

Because in Christ the Church is apostolic, it strives to proclaim this gospel faithfully. The Church receives the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ through the testimony of those whom Christ sent, both those whom we call apostles and those whom Christ has called throughout the long history of the Church. The Church has been and is even now sent into the world by Jesus Christ to bear that testimony to others. The Church bears witness in word and work that in Christ the new creation has begun, and that God who creates life also frees those in bondage, forgives sin, reconciles brokenness, makes all things new, and is still at work in the world. To be members of the body of Christ is to be sent out to pursue the mission of God and to participate in God's new creation, God's kingdom drawing the present into itself. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms the Gospel of Jesus Christ as received from the prophets and

apostles, and stands in continuity with God's mission through the ages.

The Church strives to be faithful to the good news it has received and accountable to the standards of the confessions. The Church seeks to present the claims of Jesus Christ, leading persons to repentance, acceptance of Christ alone as Savior and Lord, and new life as his disciples.

The Church is sent to be Christ's faithful evangelist:

- making disciples of all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
- sharing with others a deep life of worship, prayer, fellowship, and service; and
- participating in God's mission to care for the needs of the sick, poor, and lonely; to free people from sin, suffering, and oppression; and to establish Christ's just, loving, and peaceable rule in the world.

## “The Church” described in our Constitution:

- ***F-1.0301 The Church Is the Body of Christ***
  - ... given ... all the gifts necessary to be his body. ... to demonstrate these gifts in its life
  - ... a community of faith, of hope, of love , of witness ....
- ***F-1.0302 The Marks of the Church***
  - With all Christians of the Church catholic, we affirm that the Church is “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.”
- ***F-1.0303 The Notes of the Reformed Church***
  - the Word of God is truly preached and heard,
  - the Sacraments are rightly administered, and
  - ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered.

... and ...

*F-1.0303 The Notes of the Reformed Church* (See The Scots Confession, Ch. XVIII (*The Book of Confessions*, 3.18)

Where Christ is, there is the true Church. Since the earliest days of the Reformation, Reformed Christians have marked the presence of the true Church wherever:

- **the Word of God is truly preached and heard,**
- **the Sacraments are rightly administered, and**
- **ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered.**

## “Our Mission” described in our Constitution:

- *F-1.0303 (continued)* ... the Church is faithful to the **mission of Christ** as it:
  - *Proclaims and hears the Word of God,*
  - *Administers and receives the Sacraments, and*
  - *Nurtures a covenant community of disciples of Christ,*
- *F-1.0304 The Great Ends of the Church* The **great ends of the Church** are:
  - the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
  - the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
  - the maintenance of divine worship;
  - the preservation of the truth;
  - the promotion of social righteousness; and
  - the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Here is what God does! Will you see these things and join God in doing them?

### F-1.01 GOD’S MISSION

The good news of the Gospel is that the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — **creates, redeems, sustains, rules, and transforms** all things and all people. This one living God, the Scriptures say, liberated the people of Israel from oppression and covenanted to be their God. By the power of the Spirit, this one living God is incarnate in Jesus Christ, who came to live in the world, die for the world, and be raised again to new life. The Gospel of Jesus Christ announces the nearness of God’s kingdom, bringing good news to all who are impoverished, sight to all who are blind, freedom to all who are oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord’s favor upon all creation.

The **mission of God** in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church. In Christ, **the Church participates in God’s mission** for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ. **Human beings have no higher goal in life than to glorify and enjoy God now and forever, living in covenant fellowship with God and participating in God’s mission.**

The **Church’s life and mission** are a joyful participation in **Christ’s ongoing life and work**. Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in

the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. Christ gives to the Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its order and discipline. In Christ's name, therefore, **the Church is sent out** to bear witness to the good news of reconciliation with God, with others, and with all creation. In Christ the Church receives its truth and appeal, its holiness, and its unity. -- *F-1.0201 - F-1.0205 (selected)*

*F-1.0303 (continued)* In our own time, we affirm that, in the power of the Spirit, **the Church is faithful to the mission of Christ** as it:

- ***Proclaims and hears the Word of God***, responding to the promise of God's new creation in Christ, and inviting all people to participate in that new creation;
- ***Administers and receives the Sacraments***, welcoming those who are being engrafted into Christ, bearing witness to Christ's saving death and resurrection, anticipating the heavenly banquet that is to come, and committing itself in the present to solidarity with the marginalized and the hungry; and
- ***Nurtures a covenant community of disciples of Christ***, living in the strength of God's promise and giving itself in service to God's mission.

*F-1.0304 The Great Ends of the Church*

The great ends of the Church are:

- the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
- the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
- the maintenance of divine worship;
- the preservation of the truth;
- the promotion of social righteousness; and
- the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

(This statement of the Great Ends of the Church, slightly edited here, came from the United Presbyterian Church of North America, which united with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1958. The statement was then made a part of the Constitution of The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as the united body was called. This now classic statement was adopted by the United Presbyterian Church of North America in 1910, following various actions between 1904 and 1910 looking forward to the revision of the church's Constitution.)



... and here we are today!



The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with more than 10,000 congregations which are organized into 173 presbyteries and 16 synods -- it is the largest [Presbyterian](#) denomination in the U.S.

Its just under two million lay people members and 13,462 [ordained ministers](#) make the reunited denomination the most visible and influential Presbyterian denomination in North America.

## Summary 2 – *and coming attractions!*

### **What's it all about? – What's it all mean?**

I. Introductions

**II. Presbyterian Ethos**

**III. A little Presbyterian history**

IV. Introduction to polity – the Constitution: Part 1 Part 2

V. Entities/agencies of the Presbyterian Church

VI. Terms and acronyms we know and love

VII. Questions, comments, **quiz – final exam!**