

CPC101

THE "WHO ARE WE?" COURSE OF
CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
NASHVILLE, TN

(REVISED AUGUST 2022)

PURPOSE OF CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 101

CPC101 aims to provide information about Christ Presbyterian Church and how to become part of the story God is writing in, around, and through the shared life of our growing church family. It also aims to address common questions about what it means to be a Christian in general, and a member of Christ Pres in particular.

In CPC101, you will learn about (and hopefully connect with) our mission, vision, core beliefs, and ministry philosophy. It is very likely that along the way, you will also have some questions. When this is the case, please feel free to ask, or to contact any of the church staff members to find the answers.

We hope that CPC101 will be a positive experience for you. We're very glad you are here!

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SECTION 1: THE GOSPEL

OUR CORE BELIEFS

At Christ Presbyterian Church, we embrace biblical and historical Christianity as expressed in the Old and New Testaments, and as summarized in the Nicene and Apostles Creeds. Additionally, we affirm the five tenets of the Protestant Reformation: Scripture alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and to God alone be the glory.

1. The Bible is the inspired word of God. It is without error in its original manuscripts and contains everything we need to know about having a right relationship with God and our fellow human beings. The Bible is the basis for all of our essential beliefs (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

2. God is one (Mark 12:29), yet mysteriously exists in three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), who are to be equally loved, honored, and adored (Matthew 28:19).

3. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human. He is the sole Mediator able to restore the broken relationship, and the resulting alienation, between God and people (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

4. The Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the Trinity. He is alive and active. He indwells followers of Christ, working in unison with the Word of God to guide them in all truth. He is the power that enables Christians to live as new creations in Christ and empowers believers for service (John 16:7-14; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 6:17).

5. People are created by God and in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). On this basis, all people must be treated with dignity, honor, love, and respect (James 3:9-10). At the same time, in their quest for independence and the centrality of self, all people begin their lives alienated from God, and in this condition are without hope and under judgment, a condition that can only be cured through God's loving, gracious, and saving intervention through Christ (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1). As the image of God, we are most alive when our trust, affections, and allegiances center on him.

6. Salvation (a restored relationship with God and newness of life) is activated when the Holy Spirit gives people a new heart, leading and enabling them to trust in Jesus alone for salvation (John 1:12-13). Because God loves his creation, he will also restore the entire universe to a condition of beauty, rest, joy, perfection, and freedom (Romans 8:18-30). God's world, which began as a promising garden (Genesis 1:27-31), will find its fulfillment in a perfected, life-giving city in which there will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain (Revelation 21:1-8).

7. Good works do not and cannot make us acceptable to God (Ephesians 2:8-9), but are the natural outcome of authentic faith in Jesus (James 2:17). We become more fully human—the very best and most healthy version of ourselves—to the degree that we follow God’s loving commands. His commands, properly understood, are neither limiting nor oppressive but life-giving. Obedience to God’s commands is an essential prerequisite for true human flourishing.

8. The Church is the family of God and consists of those who place their personal trust (faith) in Jesus. God wants all members of his worldwide Church, together with their children, to be active in a local church which gathers weekly to worship God, serve each other, and be a life-giving presence in their local community and world (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24-25).

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN, AND WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

A Christian is anyone who believes the Gospel or “good news” of Jesus Christ. At its core, the Gospel is about who Jesus is, what Jesus has done, what Jesus is doing, and what Jesus will do to “make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found” as he brings his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, and as he fulfills his mission of loving people, places, and things to life.

The Gospel is the core message of biblical Christianity—it is good news that is not just a first step in a “staircase” of truths. It is better likened to the hub of a wheel, the central reality around which everything else orbits. It is not a basic truth from which we move on to deeper truths but is the foundational truth on which all other truths rest. Whether you are just starting to investigate Christianity or are a life-long follower of Christ, the Gospel is the single thing that must be grasped, internalized, and embraced to move forward with Jesus. Without the Gospel, life becomes unhealthy and disoriented in more ways than one can count. With the Gospel, we are placed on a trajectory toward beauty, truth, and wholeness.

THE GOSPEL DEFINED

The Gospel contains a “bad news” element as well as a “good news” element. The bad news is that the universe and everything in it is wearing down all the time, and people are more sinful, corrupt, and damaged—spiritually, emotionally, physically, relationally, and vocationally—than we even realize. The good news is that God, through the person and work of Jesus, intends to restore both the universe and his people to the original beauty and glory for which he created both.

SECTION 2: OUR STORY AND MINISTRY MODEL

OUR ABBREVIATED STORY

Christ Presbyterian Church was born on January 4, 1981, when we held our first worship service at Hillsboro High School in Green Hills.

We have had several wonderful pastors who have led us through many chapters and, frankly, through a handful of ups and downs along the way. The “up” seasons have been a demonstration of God’s kindness, and the “down” seasons a demonstration of God’s sustaining love for his church—as evidenced by the fact that we are still here, and by the grace of God are still stewards of a very visible, broadly reaching, ministry to and beyond the metropolitan Nashville region.

Those who have led us as senior pastors include Dr. Cortez Cooper (1981-1985), Dr. Peter Doyle (1985-1988), Dr. Charles McGowan (1988-2004), Dr. Ray Ortlund (2004-2007), Dr. Wilson Benton (2007-2012), and Rev. Scott Sauls (2012-present).

Additionally, we became a multi-site church in recent years and have congregations at several locations around the metro area, each of which has its own dedicated pastoral leadership. For information about each of the sites, you can visit our website at christpres.org.

We also celebrate several Nashville-area churches that were formed by people from Christ Presbyterian, including Christ Community Church, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Midtown Fellowship, and Koinonia Church, just to name a few.

OUR DENOMINATION

Christ Presbyterian Church is part of a denomination called the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The Presbyterian Church in America was formed in 1973 to be a denomination that is “Faithful to the Scriptures, True to the Reformed Faith, and Obedient to the Great Commission.”

The PCA is an Evangelical denomination in that we proclaim the Gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The word “evangelical” comes from the Greek word meaning “good news.” We desire all people to trust in the saving work of Jesus and enjoy eternal life in him.

The PCA is a *Reformed* denomination in that we believe in the biblical truth proclaimed during the Protestant Reformation. The Word of God, rather than tradition, is the only guide for the Church. God alone saves through his immeasurable mercy and according to his sovereign plan.

The PCA is a *confessional* denomination. This means that we have a written “confession of faith” which we believe to be a good and accurate summary of the teaching of the whole Bible. The PCA has made a firm commitment on the doctrinal standards which had been significant in Presbyterianism since 1645, namely the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and Westminster Shorter and Larger Catechisms.

The PCA is a Presbyterian denomination in that we have a representative form of church government. A local church is governed by a “Session” comprised of elders (i.e., “presbyters”) elected by the members of the congregation. Pastors and representatives of local churches in a region form a “Presbytery.” Representatives of Presbyteries and local churches meet annually at a “General Assembly.”

The General Assembly Committees and Agencies help local churches combine their efforts and resources to advance God’s Kingdom more effectively.

OUR MISSION, VISION, AND CULTURE

In March 2012, our elders began asking how Christ Pres can preserve its rich heritage of being a life-giving “home” for our members and a value-adding “mission” to our city and world, in a way that honors our history while also looking to the future. The result of that season is the following commitments related to our *mission, vision, and culture*.

Our Mission:

To follow Christ in his mission of loving people, places, and things to life.

Our Vision:

As a family united in Christ and led by Scripture, we exist as partakers in a movement of God’s Kingdom that offers spiritual life, public faith, mercy and justice, and the integration of faith and work to the people, communities, institutions, and churches of greater Nashville, and through Nashville, to the world.

Our Culture:

At Christ Presbyterian Church, we are a family united in Christ that aspires to be led and formed by Scripture. Together, we will look to the Father’s perfect Word as given in the Old and New Testaments—and as interpreted by the historical ecumenical creeds and Protestant Reformed confessions—to form our spiritual life. We will look to Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of sinners, to forgive our sins, refresh our spirits, ignite our worship, and transform our character. We will prayerfully depend on the Holy Spirit, whose power raised Jesus from the dead, to also empower us to live resurrected lives, loving God with our whole selves and our neighbor as ourselves.

Because Christ’s church is called to be a family, we will aspire to share life with one another. In our beliefs and teaching, we will unite around Scripture’s essential truths, while promoting freedom around things about which Scripture is flexible or silent. In our worship, we will honor God, gather weekly around the Lord’s Table, and create belonging for one another and our guests.

In our life together, we will honor one another above ourselves as we pursue the Father's vision for welcoming, listening to, loving, confessing, forgiving, serving, comforting, sharing burdens with, caring and praying for, remaining loyal to, and spurring on the best in one another.

We will celebrate our diversity—opening our lives and hearts and homes to sinners and saints, doubters and believers, seekers and skeptics, prodigals and pharisees, presbyterians and non-presbyterians, young and old, married and unmarried, leaders and followers, famous and infamous, our own and other ethnicities, nationalities, and cultures, happy and depressed, helpers and those who need help, creative and corporate, conservative and liberal, affluent and bankrupt, public and private and home-schooled—and all others who enter our doors. We will aspire to expand our “us” by carefully listening to, learning from, and being shaped by one another's unique experiences and perspectives.

As a church rooted in Jesus Christ—who taught that it is more blessed to give than it is to receive, and that greatness is found through serving—we will aspire to give ourselves away.

God, because he loves us, sweeps us up and includes us—along with all of his children everywhere—in his mission of loving people, places, and things to life. As his beloved ambassadors, he sends us out to “so love the world,” in hopes of leaving the world better than we found it. We hope to be part of something that adds such value to our city that if Christians disappeared, the whole city would weep.

Because Jesus called us to let our light shine so the world will see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven, our faith will be a public faith. We will aspire to love and serve all our neighbors in the places where we live, work, and play. We will host and encourage civil conversations that unite believers, seekers, and non-believers around shared interests, in hopes that the truth, beauty, love, and justice of God will be brought to bear on the most central and pressing issues of our time. We will host life-giving parties for our city and our neighbors as a sign of God's Kingdom, and of how heaven rejoices when prodigals come home, and cynics lay down their defenses and join the celebration.

Although Jesus reserves membership in his church and participation in his Table for those who trust him and seek to obey Scripture, we will join Jesus in befriending those who do not believe as we do. We will welcome all people into our worship services, parties, conversations, homes, and lives, including those who have misgivings or doubts about the beliefs, ethics, generosity, self-denial, and counter-cultural nature of historical Christianity.

As Christ's ambassadors to our neighbors in need, we will aspire to live lives of mercy and justice. We will give special attention to, and generously channel our resources toward improving conditions and systems—whether spiritual, social, economic, or vocational—for the poor, immigrants and refugees, ethnic and other minorities, and others who lack resources, opportunity, or privilege. We will embrace the idea that as conditions improve for those who have power, conditions

must also improve for those who lack power, and never at their expense. For wealth, privilege, and power are given to be stewarded and shared for the benefit of all, not protected and kept merely for the benefit of some.

As those who have been called into the world by Christ to serve him in our work, we will aspire to eliminate the false dichotomy of sacred versus secular. We will affirm that every good work—whether creative or restorative—is no less God’s work than the work of pastors and missionaries.

We will commit our resources to train, equip, and resource Christians for the integration of faith and work, in hopes that people and institutions representing church, business, education, the social sector, arts and entertainment, government and media, and other channels of influence—will approach their work with tenacity, purpose, and confidence that their work contributes meaningfully to God’s mission to heal the world.

Finally, because God’s Kingdom is much greater than a single church, we will pray and work for the flourishing of all people and not just our people; of all churches and not just our church; of all cities and not just our city; and of all nations and not just our nation. We will do this chiefly by making disciples, equipping leaders, creating and sharing content, and starting new, like-minded congregations—including cross-denominational and cross-cultural ones—throughout greater Nashville and across the globe.

Because our city is a strategic hub for multiple spheres of impact, we will expect any movement of God’s Kingdom in greater Nashville to also extend beyond Nashville to the world. We will pursue and embrace opportunities to share our resources and capital—whether spoken, written, creative, financial, relational, professional, or otherwise—toward Jesus’ vision to bless and heal the world. As we do this, we will celebrate wherever, whenever, and through whomever God chooses to grow his Kingdom. We will not concern ourselves with who gets the attention or the credit. Our task is to advance *his* fame and glory, and not our own. For it is from him, and to him, and through him that are all things. Amen.

SECTION 3: SIX KEY PRACTICES

At Christ Presbyterian, we affirm that the Lord formed the church for a purpose—to be a community of faith bound together for the purposes of giving glory to Christ and living as his witnesses in this world. This is why our mission is to follow Christ in his mission of loving people, places, and things to life.

As we've prayed through and worked diligently to distill our mission down into specific practices, we've zeroed in on three areas of focus: *worship, connect, and serve*. Our vision for a flourishing follower of Christ is someone who worships Jesus regularly with the local church weekly, and personally every day; is connected to people in the church and befriending and bringing in those outside the church; and is serving in their church, but also enhancing the flourishing of their world in the places where they live, work, and play.

So where do we start? We've distilled this vision down into six fundamental practices—two focused on worship, two on connection, and two on service.

STEP 1: WORSHIP

Practice 1: Be fully present with the church every single Sunday.

They "habituated" not being present with their church. We are living in a time when we are faced with the choice of whether or not to live faithful, spiritually maturing lives. One sign that we're struggling to do this is we trade the habit of worshipping alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ for either worshipping alone or not at all.

The faith Christians share is headed someplace—to an eternity of worship and delight, as a united people, in the presence of our Savior and King. In this life, the local church exists, in part, to serve as a dress rehearsal for that. There's no such thing as individualized Christianity, where one person, or even one family, can say to the rest of the church, "I don't need you" or "I'm not going to be an active part of you."

So, we are committed to cultivating this practice: Be fully present with the church every Sunday. *"Don't forsake meeting together . . . and all the more as you see the Day approaching . . ."* (Hebrews 10:25)

Statistically, church-going people in America attend church an average of 1.8 times per month. At Christ Presbyterian Church, we don't just want to see that number increase to 2.5. We want to see it increase to 4-5 times per month. We want to cultivate the habit of corporate worship in such a way that we're building the rest of our lives around worshipping Christ with his people rather than trying to fit worship in as an add-on.

When, because of our sin, God owed us nothing in terms of eternal fellowship with him, unthinkable access to God has been given to us. And so, we have

confidence to enter the presence of God. Through Christ's flesh, he has opened the way for us to have lasting, unbroken fellowship with our Creator.

So let us hold fast to the confession of our hope. Let's stir one another up to do the same. That's why we need each other here. That's why you need others here, and that's why others need you here—to hold each other up, to stir one another's confidence, to remind each other that the Gospel is true. Be fully present with the church every Sunday.

Practice 2: Be fully present with Jesus every single day.

Following Jesus through daily Scripture reading and prayer are forms of art. They're not just things we do; they're things we practice. Here's a promise: mastery begets joy. If you practice habits like prayer and Scripture reading regularly, you will develop in the craft.

In a world where people are trying to find their way to their deepest meaning, Scripture holds the answer. We weren't created to glide through this life as cynics, turning the sublime into memes. We were created to stand in awe of glory and bow our hearts to holiness. We're meant to love our Creator through reverence.

Question: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

—The Westminster Confession of Faith

Do you think you see all that is broken in your own life? How thoroughly do you comprehend your own worth? Your own limits? Psalm 19 says we are a people of hidden faults and presumptuous sins, which unchecked, can have dominion over us. What is the answer for this? The psalmist turns us to communion with God—regular intimate engagement with his Word and prayer. Here is where we learn. He shows us our weakness. He breaks the dominion of sin. That is why the Word of God is so sweet. The Lord works through it, by his Holy Spirit, to reveal himself, his love, our need, his rescue.

Spending time with Jesus on a daily basis is, in some ways, like spending time with anyone that often—it is the work of cultivating intimacy and friendship. These are ways we practice the art of intimacy and friendship with God. By spending time in his Word, we tune our minds to fix on him and our hearts to rest in him.

The goal of practicing these spiritual disciplines is to move to a place of trust, confidence, and familiarity with our Lord. It is to move from the unfamiliar to the intimate. This is why we practice the spiritual disciplines of daily Scripture reading and prayer. Be fully present with Jesus every day.

STEP 2: CONNECT

Practice 3: Take every opportunity to gather with your group.

Woven into the story of God calling and redeeming a people for himself is a call for those people to live in community. It was there in the beginning. It was not good for man to be alone. When God gave Eve to Adam, he didn't just give him a partner. Through her, he gave them both others. He gave them community. Scripture describes that community for Christians as a bride and a body.

One Christian's association with other Christians is, in the sight of God, intimate and unbreakable. As far as God is concerned, we are bound to each other forever. So, we respond to this call to unity by forming intentional communities—i.e., smaller groups, where Christ is our head, and we gather as a people under the authority of his Word—seeking to live out the two great commands he summarizes the entire law of God:

1. Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and
2. Love your neighbor as yourself.

The leadership and staff at Christ Presbyterian Church are committed to facilitating this process by facilitating several small group connecting opportunities. But the work of connecting lies with you. You have to do that part. And it won't always be pretty. You'll have lots of reasons to decline. We all do. We always will. But remember, the language the Lord uses to describe the life of a flourishing believer—someone who loves God with their entire being as a part of the Body of Christ and who loves their neighbor as themselves—is a connected life. This can't be done in isolation. Find and join a group and take every opportunity to gather with them.

Practice 4: Befriend and bring in people who don't have a church.

The South has a reputation for having a church on every corner—as though we have more churches than we need. This is not true. Not by a long shot. Our city is growing exponentially right now—and the projections indicate that our greater metro area will possibly double in size over the next twenty years. Studies also indicate that around 72% of the people in our city don't go to church.

We never want to recruit and steal people away from other churches. This does not grow the kingdom. But because we are committed to being an outward facing church filled with people who are public with their faith, one of the hallmarks of our health is that we form the habit of befriending and bringing in people who don't have a church home—seekers, skeptics, the de-churched, the unchurched, and folks who are new to town. When we do this, we're not merely inviting people to church. We're inviting them into our community.

Lifeway did a study a few years ago that found that, in general, non-Christian neighbors, or people with no current church community, will not be offended if you invite them to your church—especially if you have a connection with them. What was the reasoning? If someone knows you and cares about you or senses

that you care about them, they will have some interest in knowing what you care about.

When we invite someone to church, we're saying, "Though I may be a work in progress, I'm telling you that I am loved here, and I am committed to loving others here. I think you would benefit from this community, and I believe you have something of value to bring to it. Come join me."

Befriend and bring in people who don't have a church. The Lord will add to our numbers—not to merely grow a church, but to deepen a community. We get to play a role in that, and we get to do this our entire lives. Amazing.

STEP 3: SERVE

Practice 5: Strengthen the church by serving and giving.

Another key component to our vision is built into the membership vows of every church in our denomination—that we would strengthen the church by supporting it in its worship and work to the best of our ability for the glory of God. This means: Get plugged in. Serve. Give. Engage your church with your whole self.

Serving and strengthening the church is about contributing to a culture where anyone who considers this church home would never think, "The church is a place I go," but rather, "I am the church." Serving the church is a fight for our hearts—that we would see, embrace, and live out our calling to be people who steward well the garden the Lord has placed us in.

Consider the work life of a Christian. Along with whatever family and job responsibilities we have, we belong to the body of Christ. If we see ourselves as more than just church attenders—if we see ourselves as part of the body itself—then part of the work in front of us is to pour ourselves into the local church. We are part of the life of this community of faith. Maturing members of a community do not only take. They give. They serve. They invest.

The practice we're after here is that we would be people who are engaged with this life we've been given. An intentional life is one marked by worship, connection, and service.

Practice 6: Enhance flourishing by serving your work, your world, and people in need.

When we think about what it means to be outward facing Christians in public, seeking to enhance flourishing by serving our work, world, and people in need, this involves more than trying to convert people to Christianity. It means living our faith in every corner of our lives.

In our work, we're after more than mentioning Jesus at the water cooler. Serving our work means we go about our work with excellence, treating co-workers,

clients, and competition with dignity and respect. We conduct ourselves with integrity. We seek to improve the world through our work. We pray for those we work with—whether co-workers or the people we’re caring for. We see our work as an opportunity to enhance the flourishing of others.

In our world, we seek to be good neighbors who care for others and the planet we share. We get to know our neighbors by name so that we can be there for them in times of need. We bring levity and joy to others. We show up for parties. We mourn alongside the broken-hearted, not with an ulterior motive of winning them to Christ, but simply because it’s the right thing to do.

With people in need, we seek to live outward facing lives. We recognize, as C.S. Lewis said, that we’ve never met a “mere mortal.” Everyone we encounter bears the image of God and is worthy of respect, even if they believe, vote, school, eat, or live differently. And if they have a need we can meet, we should do what we can to meet it.

This is why we don’t distinguish between spiritual work and secular work. All work that contributes to the flourishing of this planet and the creatures and plants which inhabit it is holy. The sanitation worker confronts decay, the designer seeks to marry beauty to function, the builder employs people and makes homes, the doctor prolongs physical well-being, the entrepreneur seeks to introduce something new and useful, the artist holds out for us mystery, beauty, wonder, and awe, and invites us to consider matters of the heart.

We get to have a role in mending what’s broken, in standing up against what’s toppled over, in healing what’s afflicted, in adorning with beauty what’s ugly. We get to contribute. And that part each of us plays gets added to the work of so many others. We don’t have to do or be everything, but we get to do and be part of lots of things.

APPLYING THESE SIX PRACTICES

WORSHIP

Be fully present with the church every Sunday.

The application is pretty simple here. Come to church every week. Put your phone away and engage with what’s being said and read, and with what you’re saying and singing. When you’re out of town, you can always catch the live stream online, or better yet, find a church where you are and visit it.

Be fully present with Jesus every day.

Get into Scripture. Develop and cultivate the habit of prayer. There are lots of resources online and in print that you can use to dig into Scripture starting today. Here are a few we recommend:

- *She Reads Truth* and *He Reads Truth* offer free daily Scripture reading plans online and via email. You can also download their easy-to-use app or order their beautiful print books.
- *The Dwell Bible App* is a great resource for listening to Scripture. It is very customizable, down to the reading plans and the reader's accent.
- *The ESV or CSB Study Bibles*. These are both very readable translations with loads of helpful notes and accessible commentary. These Bibles come with a variety of daily reading plans—including reading through the Bible in a year, and also reading Scripture chronologically.

CONNECT

Take every opportunity to gather with your group.

Identify and get involved with a group in your church. Each campus of Christ Presbyterian Church offers various small group gatherings specific to each congregation. Here are some ways you can find a group, along with some “front door” opportunities through which you can invite others in today:

- Join a Connect Group. Connect Groups are one of our most “on the ground” opportunities to find a handful of other individuals and families to get to know and walk through life with.
- Be part of one of our Learning Groups.
- Get involved in or start a City Group.
- Check out Christ Presbyterian Church's men's and women's groups.
- Save the dates and come out for church events.

Befriend and bring in people who don't have a church.

Application here is simple too—invite. Our city is growing at a rapid pace. A recent study conducted by TheAmericanChurch.org indicated that only 28% of Davidson and Williamson County residents have a church home. Invite. Though some may not be open to your invitation, many will be.

SERVE

Strengthen the church by serving and giving.

The church is full of needs—you can serve with the Kids' Ministry, become part of the hospitality team, teach a class, facilitate a Connect Group, or become a mentor with the Student Ministry. Explore our website or ask hosts at the welcome table for more opportunities.

And give. Give in a way that is in proportion with your income, intentional, consistent, joyful, and in response to what Christ has given you.

Enhance flourishing by serving your work, your world, and people in need.

NOTES

There are many ways to do this in partnership with the church. Get involved with The Nashville Institute for Faith and Work (NIFW). Join or start a City Group. Serve with one of our ministry partners. Explore the possibilities at christpres.org.

But beyond all these opportunities lies the vision that we would be a church filled with people who are intentionally engaging not only in the church, but in the places where we live, work, and play.

Worship. Connect. Serve.

SECTION 4: JOINING THE CHRIST PRES FAMILY

There are several steps to becoming a member at Christ Presbyterian Church. You are about to be finished with the biggest and most time-committed step. Way to go!

Step 1: Completion of the CPC101 course.

Your first step is to attend CPC101. Attending this course does not obligate you in any way toward membership—you may simply find out more about Christ Presbyterians Church’s mission, values, and doctrine if you wish.

Step 2: The membership interview.

When you have decided you want to belong to the Christ Presbyterian Church family and have completed CPC101, contact your congregation’s ministry director who will set up your meeting with an elder and possibly an elder’s wife or other woman in leadership. Generally, this meeting lasts about 45 minutes and takes place at a time that is convenient for you.

Step 3: Elder approval.

After the interviews, the elders meet to officially enter the new members into our body. This is technically the official point of member reception—after that date you may be considered a full voting member. All that remains is your public acknowledgment before the congregation.

Step 4: Public vows.

After the elder meeting, your congregation’s ministry director or director of congregational care will contact you to confirm the date and service you will attend to make your public promises. When the time is called, you will go forward and affirm the promises after they are read by a pastor.

Step 5: Baptism.

If you have never been baptized, and are making your first public profession of faith, you may be baptized during the worship service. Let the elder know during your interview and we will schedule your baptism (or for parents, a child baptism). On the date of baptism, please arrive 30 minutes before the service to meet with a pastor. The baptism will take place after you have affirmed the promises of membership.

WHAT IF I DECIDE NOT TO BECOME A FORMAL MEMBER?

If you decide to stay involved with Christ Presbyterian without membership, there will be no effort to pressure you into joining. Do not join unless you are ready

to be committed. But if you are ready to commit, let's graduate from our current "dating relationship" and bring you in as a full member.

WHAT ARE THE MEMBERSHIP PROMISES?

Christ Presbyterian belongs to a wider family—the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a denomination in the Reformed and Evangelical tradition. Membership at Christ Presbyterian means you have committed yourself to our family of believers—that you have agreed to participate as fully as you are able in the life, ministry, and government of the church. Therefore, Christ Presbyterian Church members must affirm the following promises as a vow to the Lord:

Doctrinal promises: Believing the Gospel.

Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving his displeasure, and without hope except through his sovereign mercy?

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered in the Gospel?

Character promise: Seeking to grow into your identity as a new creation in Christ, not through self-reliance but through daily turning to Christ, repenting from sin, and relying on the Holy Spirit.

Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Christ?

Community promise: Being meaningfully engaged as a participant and contributor in the life and ministry of Christ Presbyterian.

Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?

Accountability promise: Holding yourself accountable to the Bible, the leaders of the church, and your fellow believers to live according to the promises. Seeking to be a biblical peacemaker in your relationships, according to Matthew 5:23-26, Matthew 18:15-35, and Galatians 6:1-2.

Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to strive for its purity and peace?

To explore further: See the Resource article, *The Value of Church Membership*

AS WE CONCLUDE...

NOTES

1. What are your questions about Christ Presbyterian Church and/or anything from this course?

2. Is there any advice you would like for us to pass on to our Leadership?



CHRIST
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