

AN A-Z GUIDE TO CHURCH LIFE

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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The following information is an alphabetical guide to activities, groups, and vocabulary specific to the First Presbyterian Church, heretofore referred to as FPC.

If you should have a question about anything at FPC, your first place to turn for a quick answer is the church office. The office is staffed Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM.

CHILDCARE

Childcare - Childcare is provided for children under 3 years of age for the 9:30 & 11:00 AM services. Parents who leave a child in the care of our childcare staff and volunteers are given a pager for peace of mind. Helpers are always needed. Prayerfully consider sharing some time in the nursery. Anyone interested in helping, please call the church office.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP

Confirmation Class - Confirmation is the opportunity given to 7th Graders to delve deeper into the meaning of discipleship and membership in the Presbyterian Church. At the end of the process, youth are invited to publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ before a worshipping congregation. This act confirms the baptism they may have received as infants. In other words, they claim their baptisms to be their own. Youth who were not baptized previously are baptized after making a profession of faith.

Middle School and Senior High Fellowship - Sunday night fellowship provides a fun way for youth to build relationships and become excited about growing in their faith. As a result of their relationship with Jesus, they reach out to their friends with a message of love and hope only found in Him. Middle School Fellowship is open to youth in 6-8th grade. Senior High Fellowship is open to youth in 9-12th grade.

Preschool - A tuition based, Christ-centered program that addresses the developmental needs of pre-kindergarten children with morning and afternoon groupings for 3 and 4 year old students.

Sunday School - Classes are provided at 9:30 AM from September to May for children 3 years old through 12th grade. David C. Cook's "The Bible- in - LIFE" curriculum is used by church members who volunteer to be teachers. Sunday School teachers are always needed. This is an awesome way to raise our children in the way they should go.

Summer Sunday School - During the months of June through August, we offer Sunday School classes at 9:30 AM. Preschoolers (three year olds through kindergarten) are combined. Students in 1st - 5th grades are combined. Church members are asked to serve as teachers at least one week during the summer.

Vacation Bible School - Otherwise known as VBS, this is a Bible school program held for one week in June for children in 1st-5th grades. This program is open to the community. All adults feeling God's call to serve children will richly benefit from this fun-filled week.

Youth Club - The club is for all children in grades 1-5. It meets every Wednesday from 6:00 to 8:00 PM from September to May. Some of their traditional activities include: Day Camp at Pine Springs, the Fall Festival, A Giving Thanks Feast, the Lock-in, and a spring musical. There is also a bridge program for the 6th graders who attend for a four-month session, September to December. This provides the opportunity for them to acclimate to the Middle School program. The success of this program is due to the commitment of the volunteers and children, the prayers and financial support provided by the members of our church.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Book of Order - This book contains the constitutional documents that guide church governance, discipline, and worship for local congregations, Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly. The Book of Order is amended annually to reflect any decisions made by the General Assembly concerning these matters. The current edition of The Book of Order is available on the national web site: www.pcusa.org/navigation/resources.htm.

Book of Confessions – This book is a collection of creeds and confessions that are statements of doctrine that guide Presbyterian faith and practice. A copy of the book is available on the national website: www.pcusa.org/navigation/resources.htm.

Church Government Level One: Session - The decision making body that gives guidance to the work and worship of the local congregation. It is composed of the Minister and the ruling elders who have been elected by the members of the congregation. The Session is comprised of 18 Elders and the Ministers on staff. The Session meets monthly or as needed.

Church Government Level Two: Presbytery - The second level of church governing body which includes a number of congregations in a geographical area. The Presbytery consists of all the Ministers in those congregations and an equal number of Representative Elders. FPC is in Redstone Presbytery, which includes PC (USA) churches in Westmoreland and Cambria counties. The Presbytery oversees the work of local church Sessions, offers training, and organizes projects that are best accomplished by local churches working together. Presbyteries also provide ethical oversight of Ministers and congregations through judicial commissions. The website for Redstone Presbytery is www.redstone.org.

Church Government Level Three: Synod - The third level in the series of church governing bodies which includes several Presbyteries. We are part of Redstone Presbytery, which belongs to the Synod of the Trinity. Our Synod is comprised of 17 presbyteries in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and eastern Ohio. The synod serves 1,320 congregations with 287,000 members. The Synod is a collaborative body that coordinates resources for regional ministries, Presbyterian colleges, and seminaries. The Synod is also the place where appeals from Presbytery judicial proceedings are heard. Our synod's website address is www.syntrinity.org.

Church Government Fourth Level: General Assembly - The national church governing body that meets bi-annually and makes decisions for the whole of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Each Presbytery sends a voting delegation of equal numbers of Ministers and Elders. The General Assembly is the body that will consider appeals of synod judicial proceedings. The PC(USA) website address is www.pcusa.org. Louisville is the place where the GA offices are located.

Clerk - The secretary of a church governing body who records the minutes of each meeting and handles the correspondence. From this basis come titles such as: Clerk of Session, Clerk of Presbytery, Clerk of Synod, and Stated Clerk of General Assembly.

Deacons/Youth Deacons –Based on teachings of the Bible, deacons are people who are elected to use their spiritual gifts and talents in service to the church. The office of Deacon is one of sympathy, witness, and service after the example of Jesus Christ. Persons of spiritual character, honest reputation, exemplary lives, love, warm sympathies, and sound judgment are chosen for this office. The work of the Board of Deacons falls under the supervision of Session and is advised by the Ministers. At FPC, the Deacons visit the homebound and hospitalized members, provide emergency relief for the needy in the community, maintain the church van used by various groups of the church, and oversee the Youth Deacon program.

Elders – Based on teachings of the Bible, elders are people who are elected to use their spiritual gifts and talents in service to the church. Together, with Ministers of Word and Sacrament, they exercise leadership, government, and discipline in the life of the church. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian discipleship, both within the church and in the world. Members elected by the congregation to serve on Session are called ruling elders (see Session). When a ruling elder's term on Session is completed, the designation of elder remains, although the term "ruling" is not applied.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament- A person who has been set aside by ordination to serve the church. In the Presbyterian Church(USA) there are both spiritual and academic qualifications required for ordination as a minister. Besides also being ruling elders, ministers are the only ones in the church who administer the sacraments of Baptism and Communion. Our pastors work as a team to provide worship leadership, teaching, baptisms, the serving of communion, crisis care, counseling, visitation to homebound members, and

administrative oversight of church life. **If you or someone in your household are hospitalized, please call the church office.** Hospital visitation and prayer are important aspects of their ministry.

Moderator - A person who presides at a meeting of a church governing body to direct the business and keep order. The Minister of a local congregation is the Moderator of the Session. At the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly level, the Moderator is elected by the members of each governing body. The Moderator at these levels may be a minister or an elder.

Office Staff - The office is staffed Monday through Friday each week during the hours of 8 AM through 4 PM. Please call the office with any questions you may have about schedules, pastoral care, suggestions, membership status, financial contributions, etc.

Ordain - An action by a governing body to set apart members elected by that body to serve as Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Elders, or Deacons. Sessions of local congregations ordain Elders and Deacons. Presbyteries ordain Ministers.

Per Captia - This is the name given to an amount of money that is assessed to each church in order to share the administrative costs of operating the offices of the General Assembly and its presbytery and synod. The fee is based on the number of active members.

Presbyter - One who is a member of a Presbytery. In the PC(USA), Ministers of Word and Sacrament are presbyters. Elders elected to represent FPC at meetings of presbytery are also presbyters.

Presbyterian - A generic name given to churches in various parts of the world who trace their roots to the protestant Reformation of the 16th century and who accept a form of church government in which crucial decisions are made by elders. The word Presbyterian is derived from the Greek word that appears in the New Testament and which is translated "elder" (as in Acts 15:2 and 20:17, etc.).

Presbyterian Church (USA) - The official name of our Christian denomination. Be aware that there are different kinds of Presbyterian denominations such as the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA), The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) to name a few. Each denomination is governed the same but there are differences in belief especially surrounding the role of women in the church. The PC (USA) believes that women may be ordained to the offices of Deacon, Elder, and Minister.

ADULT GROUPS

Christian Characters - This group meets in homes for prayer, Bible study, and discipleship support.

Presbyterian Women - Membership is open to all women of the church. The Circles provide the opportunity for prayer and Bible study. Gatherings encourage building a caring community of women within our church. Babysitting is also provided in the church nursery by the Youth Deacons. Please contact the church office for more information.

Small Groups -The Word of God is at the heart of the Christian Faith. A variety of study options are provided through various Small Groups. Small Groups for adult study, mission and fellowship meet throughout the week.

Sunday School - An adult class is offered during the 9:30 AM Sunday School hour.

FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES AND ADULTS

2nd Sunday Coffee Hour -The 2nd Sunday Coffee Hour promotes fellowship through a gathering for *Dunkin Donuts* munchkins, coffee or a cool drink on the second Sunday of each month following the 9:30 and 11:00 AM worship services. Donations help cover the cost.

3rd Sunday Coffee Hour -The 3rd Sunday Coffee Hour promotes fellowship in two ways. The coffee hours are hosted by Villages on behalf of the congregation. When a village is assigned a coffee hour, members of the village are mailed postcards with suggestions on what to bring. (see *Member Care: Trinity Village Association*)

Cheapest Lunch In Town -The Cheapest Lunch is served at noon on the first Sunday of each month. A donation of \$1.50 per person is collected. It is very upbeat, with birthday celebrations and general overall fellowship.

Christian Cruisers - Open to everyone, this is a fellowship group pertaining to adult ministry, bus trips, activities, Bible study, dinners, and worship services.

Craft Ladies - A small group of ladies who meet to make crafts. The proceeds from their bazaars are used to purchase needed items for the church. In the past, these items have included: a commercial oven and grill for the basement kitchen, an oven for the upstairs kitchen, the upstairs kitchen floor, refurnished and painted the lounge, installed chair lift, etc.

Men's Prayer Fellowship - Men from all denominations and churches in and around the community join together once a week for devotions, singing, and prayer concerns for those in need, clergy members and the churches of our community. The group meets at FPC on Wednesdays from 7:30 – 8:30 AM. Breakfast is served in the social hall.

LIBRARY

Church Library -The church library which is located in the parlor, has a wide variety of books appropriate for all ages. It is available for use by all members of the congregation.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Active Member – A person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, received into membership, voluntarily submitted to the government of this church, and participates in the church's work and worship. Active members are entitled to participate in the Lord's Supper, present children for baptism, take part in meetings of the congregation, and to vote and hold office.

Affiliate Member – A person who is an active member of another church, regardless of denomination, and has temporarily moved from the community where their church is situated, may be received by the Session as an Affiliate Member upon receipt of a membership certificate from their church. An Affiliate Member has all the rights of an Active Member except the right to vote and hold office. An Affiliate Member may speak at meetings of the congregation as a function of being active in the work and worship of our church.

Baptized Member – A person who has been baptized, enrolled by the Session as a Baptized Member but has not made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Baptized members are entitled to pastoral care and instruction of the church, and to participate in the Lord's Supper.

Inactive Member – A person who does not participate in the church's work and worship will be notified by Session to resume activity. If this request is not honored within a year, the person will be moved to the Inactive Roll. If inactivity continues for a period of two additional years, the Session may remove the member from the Inactive Roll without notice. Inactive Members are entitled to all the privileges of Active members except the right to hold office and to speak and vote in congregational meetings.

MINISTRIES OF CARE

College/Military Outreach Ministry -This ministry is a way to remind graduates who would be living away from home that their church family cares about them. Each group/organization within the church is contacted at the beginning of each school year and asked to "adopt" a student or military personnel. Individual families also "adopt" these young adults. They are asked to make contact with them at least four times throughout the school year.

Prayer Chain -This ministry is made up of people who believe in the power of intercessory prayer. Prayer requests are called in to Phyllis Adams and Ruth Loughner who then notify the head caller of each of the six groups of names. If you would like to be a part of intercessory prayer, please call the church.

Prayer Request Boxes - The title of boxes that are found near the sanctuary entrances in which people may deposit messages for the minister. This term is specific to our church.

Trinity Village Association – This ministry involves every member of FPC. Every member is assigned to a village. Each village is scheduled to host the **3rd Sunday Coffee Hour** each month following the 9:30 & 11:00 services. The Villages also provide funeral luncheons to the bereaved family of deceased members.

MISCELLANEOUS

Greeters Committee -This committee is comprised of several volunteers who greet folks on Sunday morning for worship and at special services. They serve for one service each month for a period of one year and may continue to serve if they wish.

Office Volunteer Committee -This committee consists of a group of church members who assist the church secretaries whenever needed. They assist in extra mailings, help out during the Stewardship Program and other times of the year. If called upon to be an office volunteer, please respond willingly. It is a way to help our church and also a great way to have a morning fellowship.

Ushers Committee - This committee is made up of approximately 60 members from the congregation, and are selected at large to give more people a chance to participate. New members are always welcome to be a part of this group because it is an excellent way to become better acquainted with other members. The individuals are dedicated to the responsibility of ushering at either 9:30 or 11 :00 AM worship service one Sunday a month as well as all special services.

MUSIC MINISTRIES

Chancel Choir -The Chancel Choir provides music for all regular 9:30 & 11 :00 AM services. In addition, they sing at special Thanksgiving Eve, Christmas Eve, and Holy Week services. Rehearsals are held weekly on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 PM. New members are always welcome.

Handbell Choir -Ringers meet on Thursday evening at 7:00 PM. New ringers are always welcome and interested persons should contact the church office. Marion Kunkle is the director.

Youth Club Choir -meet for rehearsal every Wednesday night at Youth Club. All children in the church are the choirs. They share their prayer and message in song on the third Sunday of every month.

SPORTS/ACTIVITIES

"JayBirds" Softball Team -Join the church softball team for great fun and fellowship. Our home field is at Irwin playground. Come out and watch the team or, better yet, come out and play!

Presby Women's Bowling League -The women's bowling collects \$7.50 from each member each week. \$5.25 is paid to Main Bowling Center toward the kitty. This is used for prize money and the two luncheons the year.

WORSHIP: SEASONS OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Advent-The time of expectancy of the coming of the Messiah, covering four Sundays before Christmas. As we look back in time to the events leading up to the coming of Jesus, we also look forward in anticipation of his return. This is a season of self-examination and rededication to being a disciple of Jesus.

Christmas -A day that celebrates the birth of Jesus, as well as a season lasting until Epiphany.

Epiphany -A period beginning on January 6, that starts with the coming of the wise men and emphasizes the earthly life of Jesus.

Lent -The 40-day period (not counting Sundays) preceding Easter. Like Advent, Lent is a season of reflection on one's discipleship. Lent prepares us for the celebration of Easter. The last week of Lent is often called "Holy Week" which includes special observances on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.

Easter - The joyful season that begins with Easter Sunday, a day to celebrate the freedom that comes from the resurrection of Jesus. The date of Easter is based on the lunar calendar. It falls on the Sunday after the first full moon on or after March 21st. The earliest possible date for Easter is March 22nd and the latest is April 25th. The Easter season leads to Pentecost.

Ascension- The 40th day after Easter, which celebrates the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father.

Pentecost -The 7th Sunday after Easter, which celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles and the birth of the church.

Trinity –This is the large period of time between Pentecost and Advent. During this time Christians hear sermons and explore the whole range of God’s work in the world.

WORSHIP: SPECIAL TERMS

Apostles’ Creed - Though not written by the Apostles, this is an ancient creed of the Christian Church and is understood to represent the teaching of the Apostles. In its present form it is dated no later than the fourth century and is more widely recognized and used within Christendom than any other Christian creed. At FPC, we use the ecumenical version printed in the hymnbook.

Chancel - The elevated area at the front of the sanctuary where the Communion Table, lectern and pulpit are located.

Friendship Register - At each worship service at FPC, all who are in attendance are invited to record their presence by signing the Friendship Register found at the end of each pew.

Lectern - A desk or stand for holding a Bible in a church sanctuary. Scripture lessons are often read from the Bible on the lectern.

Litany/ Responsive Reading - A form of prayer or reading in which a leader reads a phrase of the prayer or reading and the congregations responds in kind. Litanies and responsive readings are printed in the worship bulletin.

Liturgist - An individual who participates in the leadership of a worship service by reading scripture or leading the congregation in prayer.

Pulpit - A desk or stand in a church sanctuary behind which a minister may stand in delivering a sermon to the congregation.

Sanctuary - The term used to refer to that area of a church building, which is used for the holding of public worship services.

WORSHIP: SACRAMENTS

Sacrament - The PC (USA) observes two sacraments: Baptism and Communion. A sacrament is a practice observed in obedience to the command of Jesus. The practice serves as an outward sign of an inward grace.

Baptism - The sacrament of Baptism is administered once. Adults and children are baptized in the PC (USA). The means of baptism through sprinkling or immersion is open to the Session in conversation with the person to be baptized. Baptisms take place in the midst of the worshipping congregation, except in extreme situations. The sacrament symbolizes the entry into a faith relationship with Jesus Christ, which cleanses us from sin and enlivens us to live as his followers in a community called “the church.” The PC (USA) recognizes the baptisms of other Christian denominations therefore there are no provision or need to re-baptize a person.

Communion - A service of worship in which bread and wine are set-aside for the special purpose of representing the body and blood of Christ, broken and shed on the cross. This service is patterned on Jesus’ final Passover meal with his disciples. This service is sometimes also called the Lord's Supper or Eucharist (meaning “thanksgiving”). Most PC (USA) churches do not serve communion at all worship services but only at designated "communion services" which occur monthly or at other times as announced by the church’s Session.

WORSHIP: SERVICES

Sunday Morning: - Families with children in Sunday School are encouraged to attend the 8:15 AM or 11 AM services together. Three services of worship are offered each Sunday morning as follows:

- **8:15 AM** – A shorter service without a children’s sermon, choir anthem, or an ushered offering.
- **9:30 AM** – A service of worship that involves the full participation of the choir and an ushered offering. This service may also feature special voice and instrumental offerings.
- **11:00 AM** - A service of worship that involves the participation of the choir for the first half of the service, and an ushered offering. Like the 9:30 service, the 11:00 AM service also features occasional voice and instrumental offerings.