

What is the Church? (G-1.0100-1.0200)

Christ is Head of the Church

All power in heaven and earth is given to Jesus Christ by Almighty God, who raised Christ from the dead and set him above all rule and authority, all power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has made Christ Head of the Church, which is his body.

Christ Calls the Church Into Being

Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission to the world, for its building up, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. It belongs to Christ alone to rule, to teach, to call, and to use the Church as he wills, exercising his authority by the ministry of women and men for the establishment and extension of his Kingdom.

Christ Gives the Church Its Faith and Life

Christ gives to his Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its officers and ordinances. Insofar as Christ's will for the Church is set forth in Scripture, it is to be obeyed. In the worship and service of God and the government of the church, matters are to be ordered according to the Word by reason and sound judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Christ is the Church's Authority

In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the Church confesses that he is its hope and that the Church, as Christ's body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God.

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
- The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world

The Meaning of Membership (G-5.0101a, b)

- The incarnation of God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives to the church not only its mission but also its understanding of membership.
- One becomes an active member of the church through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and acceptance of his Lordship in all of life.
- Baptism and the public profession of faith in Jesus as Lord are visible signs of entrance into the active membership of the church.
- Persons may enter into active church membership in the following ways: by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, or transfer of certificate from another church. All must complete the Church of All Nations' New Member Class.

Membership as Ministry (G-5.0102)

A faithful member accepts Christ's call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of his or her Church. Such involvement includes

1. Proclaiming the good news
2. Taking part in the common life and worship of the local church
3. Praying and studying Scripture and the faith of the Christian Church
4. Supporting the work of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents
5. Participating in the governing responsibilities of the church
6. Demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church
7. Responding to God's activity in the world through service to others
8. Living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life
9. Working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment

A Church of All Nations: Inclusiveness (G-5.0103)

The congregation shall welcome all persons who respond in trust and obedience to God's grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the membership and ministry of his Church. No persons shall be denied membership because of race, ethnic origin, worldly condition, or any other reason not related to profession of faith. Each member must seek the grace of openness in extending the fellowship of Christ to all persons. Failure to do so constitutes a rejection of Christ himself and causes a scandal to the gospel.



A Church for Others: Compassion (Matthew 25:31-46)

³¹When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."

³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

⁴⁰The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

⁴¹Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me."

⁴⁴They also will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?"

⁴⁵He will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me."

⁴⁶Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Categories of Membership (G-5.0200)

The membership of a particular church of the Presbyterian Church (USA) includes baptized members, active members, inactive members, and affiliate members.

1. A baptized member of a particular church is a person who has received the Sacrament of Baptism and who has been enrolled as a baptized member by the session but who has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Such baptized members are entitled to the pastoral care and instruction of the church, and to participation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
2. An active member of a particular church is a person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church, has voluntarily submitted to the government of this church, and participates in the church's work and worship. An active member is entitled to all the rights and privileges of the church, including the right to participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to present children for baptism, to take part in meetings of the congregation, and to vote and hold office.
3. An inactive member of a particular church is one who does not participate in the church's work and worship. An inactive member is entitled to all the rights and privileges of an active member except the right to speak in the meetings of the congregation and to vote and hold office.
4. An affiliate member of a particular church is an active member of another church of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who has temporarily moved from the community where the church of active membership is situated, has presented a certificate of good standing from the appropriate governing body of that church, and has been received by the session as an affiliate member. An affiliate member is entitled to all the rights and privileges of an active member except the right to vote and hold office.



La Cathédrale St. Pierre in Geneva, where John Calvin preached daily

Other Membership Details

- At the Church of All Nations, membership and discipleship are one and the same thing.
- The nominating committee will not nominate anyone to office who does not affirm the core vision and values of our missional, multicultural congregation.
- We invite corresponding members who live outside the driving range of our congregation to support our work through financial and prayer support.

Review of Membership (G-5.0500)

- Accepting the privilege and responsibility of membership in the church is a commitment to Jesus Christ that binds the individual to fulfillment of the obligations of membership. Members shall, when encouraged by the session, regularly review and evaluate the integrity with which they are involved in the ministry of the church and consider ways in which their participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.
- The session shall review the roll of members at least annually, and shall counsel with those who have neglected the responsibilities of membership.