

What is a "Presbyterian" Church?

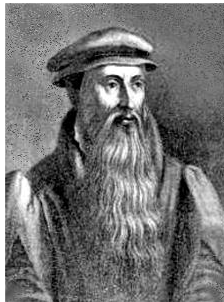
St. Ninian brought Christianity to Scotland in the 4th century; Patrick Hamilton worked to



make Scotland Protestant in the 16th century, but was martyred. During the Reformation, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin formulated reformed theology and the Presbyterian form of church government.

In 1560, John Knox, a student of Calvin, adapted Presbyterianism for the Kirk (Church) of Scotland. "Presbyterian" churches are governed by the Session, which is composed of *presbuteroi* (elders): a teaching elder (pastor) and ruling elders, elected by the congregation.

The scriptural titles "pastor/ shepherd, teacher, bishop/ overseer, presbyter/ elder" simply denote different functions of the same office (See Acts 20). Equally, the church is served by elected deacons.



Presbyterian churches are part of regional presbyteries composed of ordained ministers and nominated ruling elders of local parishes in the presbytery. Presbyterian churches confess the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and catechisms by Scottish Presbyterians, English Independents and Puritans as the system of doctrine given in the Bible.

The *WCF* emphasizes God's absolute sovereignty over all things; Humanity's total depravity in sin; a person's unconditional election by God; Christ's substitutionary death for His people; God's irresistible grace in salvation and the final perseverance of God's elect people to a glorious end of history.

What is a "Reformed" Church?

Beginning with Martin Luther October 31, 1517 in Germany, and later by John Calvin, the Reformation began as a reforming movement within the Roman Catholic church and emphasized:

- *sola scriptura*: Holy Scripture alone is the infallible standard of truth in all things.
- *sola gratia*: human salvation is only by God's grace to whomever God may choose, unearned by human actions, will or merit.
- *sola fide*: the only means of salvation is faith, given to whomever God chooses.
- *solus christus*: Christ, fully God and fully man is the only sufficient mediator between God and man.
- *solus deo gloria*: all things exist for the glory of God alone.

The Reformed churches in their formation differed over church government, the nature and use of the Lord's Supper, and the nature, mode and administration of baptism. However, all churches historically descendent from the Roman Catholic Church initially affirmed the above five principles for what we consider "Protestantism," and it must be remembered that the Reformers intent was not to split from the Mother Church, but to reform it from perceived un-Scriptural teachings. Hence, all historically Protestant churches consider themselves to be part of the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church", as the Nicene Creed confesses. In essence, we consider ourselves to be "Reformed Catholics."

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rock presbyterian church (est. 1770)



history, heritage, truth & tradition



about us

Rock Presbyterian is a Parish of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and a member of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic.

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The Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Rock Presbyterian is a Parish of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and a member of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. The EPC is a conservative split from the former, United Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1981. The motto of the EPC is "In essentials, unity, in non-essentials, liberty, in all things, charity." This is the essence of our denomination and we believe it; there are just some things not worth fighting about. However, the EPC does maintain its convictions as a church reformed in doctrine, Presbyterian in polity and evangelical in spirit-- we do believe whole heartily in missions and the giving of the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people, beginning with Post-Christian America and to all the world.



What is the worship service like?

Our Sunday morning worship is traditional, reformed worship; our liturgy reflects the worship of the Church of Scotland (a middle road between Anglican and Baptist). The order of service is printed in the bulletin. The services begin with the sounding of the bells at 11:00 AM and typically last no more than an hour. Please dress as you feel comfortable.

As an aid to our worship experience, we observe the Christian Year as a means of reflection on the Life of Christ and the life of discipleship. Rock Church uses the *Hymnbook* (1955) for our worship services.

What is the basis of the Church's doctrine, belief and practice?

As a conservative Church, we believe the Bible to be the only infallible and inerrant source of authority in all matters of faith, godliness, facts and truth. Our church confesses the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and subscribes to the *Westminster*

Confession of Faith (1903) and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Bible. Equally, Rock Church affirms the "Essentials" statement by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church as a summary statement of Confessional and Evangelical doctrine.

Are children allowed during the worship service?

We welcome children to the worship service so that they may observe their parents and model their worship; there is a nursery available for those children in infancy to 4 years-old.

How often does the church celebrate the Eucharist (Lord's Supper) and who may participate?

We observe the Lord's Supper the first Sunday of the Month. All baptized Christians are welcome to the Lord's Table (commonly called "Close Communion"). Rock Church leaves the responsibility of children coming to the table to the heads of household (see the EPC position paper "Children and the Lord's Table")

What are the church's education and fellowship opportunities for the family?

We offer regular Sunday School at 10:00 on Sunday Mornings. The Men of Rock and Women's Circles meet once a month. Also, we offer Communicants class for ages 5-9 and Confirmation classes (ages 13+) for those desiring to profess their faith and become voting members of the church.

We also have Quarterly Sunday Breakfast at 9:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall. The WIM host a Back to School Bash for students returning to school in the Fall; in addition, we have a Fall Fling in October, as well as our Reformation Sunday evening fellowship. We have a Thanksgiving Luncheon in November. We begin Advent with the hanging of the Greens and end with Lessons and Carols followed by

a Service of Lights and Communion before Christmas.

Preparing for Holy Week in the Spring, we observe Lent beginning with Ash Wednesday and look forward to our Easter Sunrise Vigil at the end of Holy Week. We also enjoy a Valentine's Dinner, celebrate St. Patrick's Day and have an Easter Egg Hunt and crafts on Holy Saturday. In the Summer, we plan a Vacation Bible School for the children.

What is Rock Presbyterian's practice regarding baptism?

We practice adult baptisms upon their profession of faith. Equally, we believe that the children of believing adults should be baptized. Rock church normally practices "sprinkling" but we will try to accommodate the needs of those being baptized. *Please call the church office (864.229.4222) if you are interested in scheduling a baptism.*

How does one join Rock Presbyterian Church?

Please contact the church office if you are interested in membership. We ask that you and/or your family meet with the Elders of the church and give testimony to your faith in Jesus Christ and provide information on your family's Christian experience. The Pastor teaches an Inquirer's Class for those new to the Presbyterian church.

According to the EPC *Book of Order*, "The Church Session may not deny membership for any reason not related to profession of faith and obedience" (9-2). Individuals and families may transfer by letter, or by profession of faith. Upon reception into Rock Church, if one has not been baptized, this normally takes place in the following worship service.

What version of the Bible do you use for preaching and teaching?

We use the *English Standard Version*, as an essentially literal translation. The ESV is in the translation tradition of the RSV and the KJV.