

The Presbyterian Church

Who are we?

Catholic Not Roman Catholic, but catholic as far as part of the one, holy, catholic, apostolic church (the classic marks of the Church).	Orthodox Emphasis on doctrine: that which has been believed by all Christians at all times in all places. The faith of the great ecumenical creeds (e.g., Apostles' Creed faith). Especially Trinity and Calcedonian statement regarding Christ, namely, that Christ was truly God and truly human.
Protestant Part of the third major schism, this one in the sixteenth century. Attempt to reform the western church in doctrine and practice. Main features: Sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide.	Evangelical From the New Testament Greek word for "good news". In our context, evangelical means emphasis on Bible, cross, conversion, evangelism.
Reformed Emphasis on the Sovereignty of God and the utter inability of fallen humanity to do anything to please God apart from God's grace. The doctrine of predestination is part of this emphasis on God's Sovereignty.	Presbyterian The name pertains to church government, as opposed to Episcopal or congregational. But doctrinally, Presbyterians have generally held to covenant theology, with its correlate view of the sacraments, namely, the baptism of the infants of believers and the real presence in communion.

The Reformation

Being "reformed" is both a historical and a spiritual term. Before Luther's act of defiance, the church had been selling "indulgences". Literally selling the privilege of entering heaven upon death for money and denying heaven to those who would not or could not pay. (They sold a lot of them and with the proceeds they built St. Peter's in Rome).

Luther and other pastors were rightly grieved, because such practices gave people false hope for salvation. They were deceived into thinking that being religious (going to church, contributing to church, or buying indulgences) could save from them sin. They knew that salvation is found only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Luther and others sought to "reform" the teaching of the Church so that it was based on Christ and His Word, the Bible, not on the whims of church leaders or church builders.

Being "reformed" does not mean "being right". The sad reality is that it is easy for people and churches to drift into sin and error. Being "reformed" means that we are to be repentant sinners who find our salvation in no other place than in Jesus Christ.

What Do We Believe?

Basic Evangelical Doctrines

God the Creator has a sovereign purpose in the world.

[Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3]

Scripture is the inerrant Word of God.

[Matt. 24:35; 2 Peter 1:20; 2 Tim. 3:16; Rev. 22:19]

The Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

[Gen. 1:26; Matt. 3:16,17; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14]

The nature of man -

Man is created in God's image.

[Gen. 1:27]

Man is fallen because of the original sin.

[Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23]

The Person and work of Christ -

Christ is virgin born.

[Matt. 1:18-25; Gal. 4:4]

Christ led a perfect, sinless life.

[John 8:46]

Christ is the divine Son of God.

[John 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-18]

Christ is substitutionary atonement.

[Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18]

Man's need of personal salvation.

[Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 2:8,9]

The Church is God's primary focus in today's world.

[Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; Matt. 24, 25]

Christ will return in great glory and in judgment.

[2 Cor. 5:6-8; 1 Thes. 4:17; Luke 16:19f; Luke 23:43; 2 Peter 2:9]

Several Presbyterian Distinctives

Covenant Theology recognizes the unity of Scripture and God's people.

Dispensationalism creates arbitrary disunity of Scripture.

The Old Covenant is fulfilled in Christ in the New Covenant.

The Two Sacraments

The Lord's Supper is in remembrance of Christ's atoning work for us.

[1 Cor. 13:23; Matt. 26:26f; John 6:53-58]

Baptism is a seal of God's covenant promise to children of believers and an expression of faith and identity with Christ when applied to believers.

[Matt. 28:19f; Acts 2:41; Rom. 4:11; Gal. 3:29; Rom. 6:3-4]

Predestination - Election. God has first chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

[Eph. 1:3f; Rom. 8:29, 30; John 6:37; John 15:16]

Perseverance of the saints - God perseveres for us, and keeps us onto eternal salvation.

[John 10:27-30; John 6:35-40; Rom. 5:8-10]

God has revealed all that is essential for salvation and godly living.