

## Welcoming New Members

Are you interested in becoming a member of First Presbyterian Church? Benefits include a voice and vote at congregational meetings and the opportunity to serve our church as a Ruling Elder or Deacon.

The FPC Session intends to welcome new members in February. If the Spirit is moving you to consider membership, please talk to Pastor John right away.

In Jesus Christ, God calls people to faith and to membership in the Church, the body of Christ. Baptism is the visible sign of that call and claim on a human life and of entrance into the membership of the church.

- The baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith.
- The baptism of those who enter the covenant of membership upon their own profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior witnesses to the truth that God's gift of grace calls forth a response of faithfulness.

Thus, the triune God, incarnate in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, gives to the Church not only its mission but also its understanding of membership.

1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church welcomes all persons who trust in God's grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the fellowship and ministry of his Church. No one is denied membership for any reason not related to profession of faith. The Gospel leads us to extend the fellowship of Christ to all persons. Failure to do so constitutes a rejection of Christ himself and causes a scandal to the Gospel.

People enter into active church membership in the following ways:

- Public profession of faith, made after examination by the session in the meaning and responsibilities of membership; if not already baptized, the person making profession of faith shall be baptized
- Certificate of transfer, when a person is a member of another Christian church at the time of transfer
- Reaffirmation of faith, for persons previously baptized in the name of the triune God and having publicly professed their faith.

Membership in the Church of Jesus Christ is a joy and a privilege. It is also a commitment to participate in Christ's mission. A faithful member bears witness to God's love and grace and promises to be involved responsibly in the ministry of Christ's Church. Such involvement includes:

- proclaiming the good news in word and deed,
- taking part in the common life and worship of a congregation,
- lifting one another up in prayer, mutual concern, and active support,
- studying Scripture and the issues of Christian faith and life,
- supporting the ministry of the church through the giving of money, time, and talents,
- demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the church,
- responding to God's activity in the world through service to others,
- living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
- working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment,
- participating in the governing responsibilities of the church,
- and reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one's membership, and considering ways in which one's participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.

The membership of the congregation includes:

- Baptized Members – Persons who have received the Sacrament of Baptism, whether in this congregation or elsewhere, and who have been enrolled as a baptized member by the session but who have not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Such baptized members receive the pastoral care and instruction of the church, and may participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
- Active Members – Persons who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, have been received into membership of the church, have voluntarily submitted to the government of this church, and participate in the church's work and worship. In addition, active members participate in the governance of the church and may be elected to ordered ministry. Active members shall regularly, after prayerful consideration, recommit themselves to the disciplines and responsibilities of membership outlined above. The session shall have responsibility for preparing those who would become active members of the congregation.
- Affiliate Members – Member of another congregation of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who have temporarily moved from the community where the congregation of membership is situated, have presented a certificate of good standing from the appropriate council or governing body of that congregation, and have been received by the session as an affiliate member. An affiliate member may participate in the life of the congregation in the same manner as an active member except that an affiliate member may not vote in congregational meetings or be elected to ordered ministry or other office in the congregation.
- Other Participants – Persons who are not members of, or who may have ceased active participation in, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are welcome and may participate in the life and worship of this church and receive its pastoral care and instruction. The invitation to the Lord's Supper is extended to all who have been baptized, remembering that access to the table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. Confessing members of other Christian churches may present children for baptism.