

# Officers Training

January 5, 2026

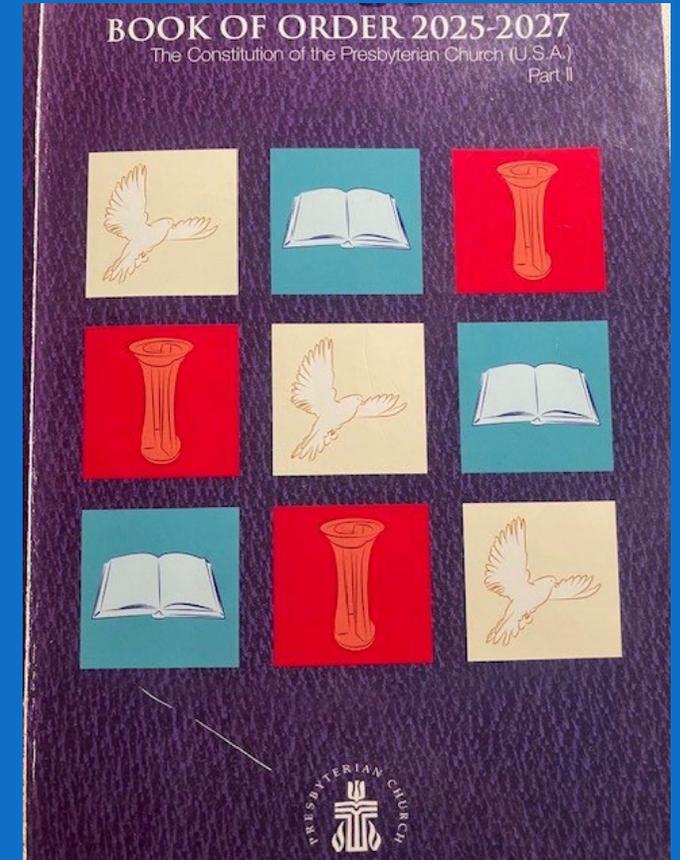
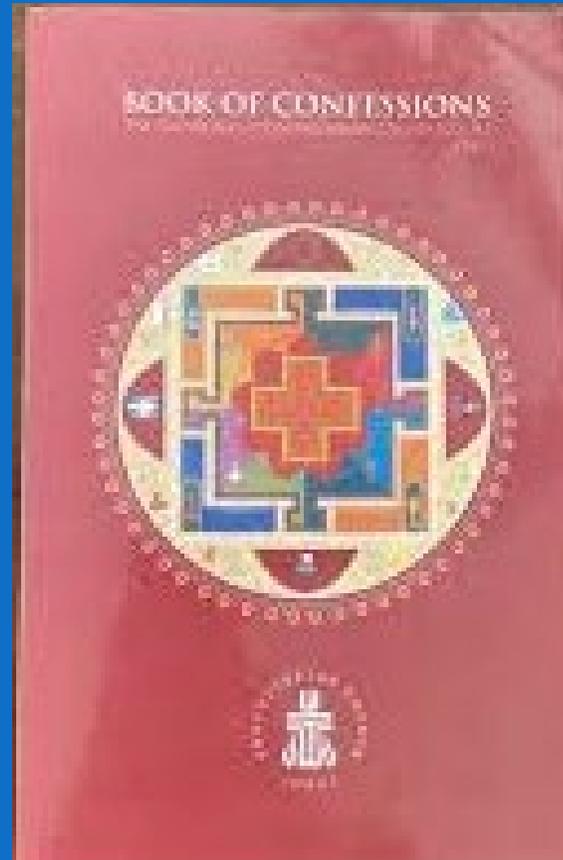
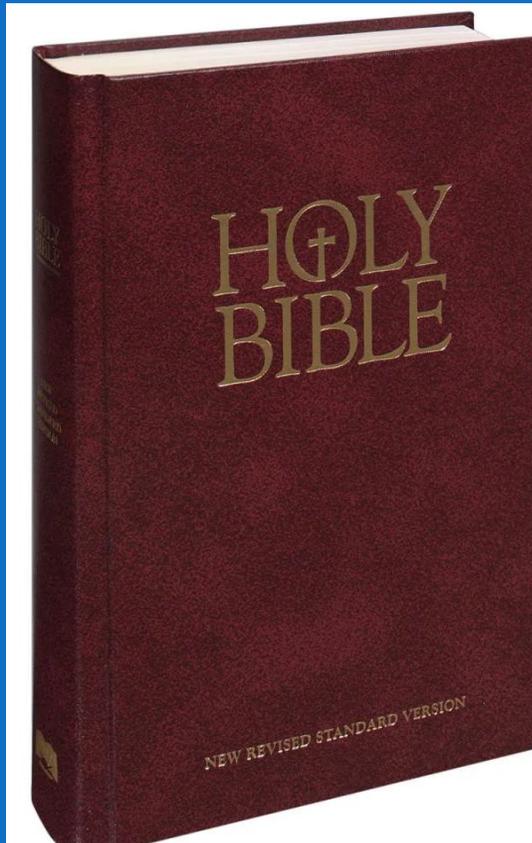


# Why have officer's training?

- When persons have been elected to the ordered ministry of ruling elder or deacon, the session shall provide for a period of study and preparation, after which the session shall examine them as to their personal faith; knowledge of the doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the church; and the duties of ministry.

- G-2.0402 ← Reference Section – Chapter, Subsection

# People of the Books



# What is church polity?

Church polity means the system of governance and administration for a church,

- defining how authority is structured,
  - decisions are made (like ordaining pastors or handling discipline),
  - the relationship between local congregations and larger bodies,
  - ensuring order and reflecting theological beliefs.
- 
- It's the framework that governs who runs the church and how, establishing accountability, often derived from biblical principles.

# Three types of Church Polity

- Congregational
- Episcopal
- Presbyterian

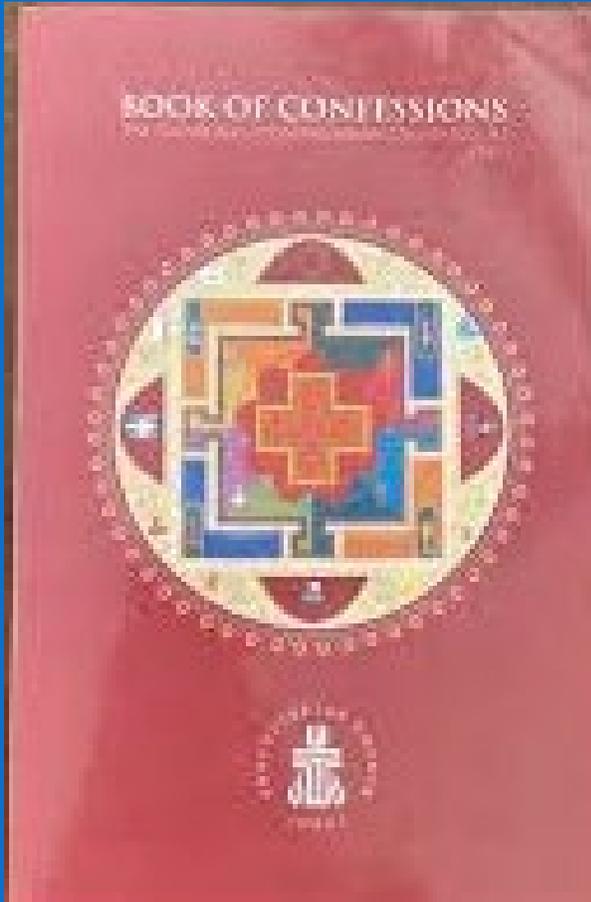
# Presbyterian polity is

- Representative [F-3.0202]
- Connectional [F-3.0203]
- Constitutional [F-3.04]

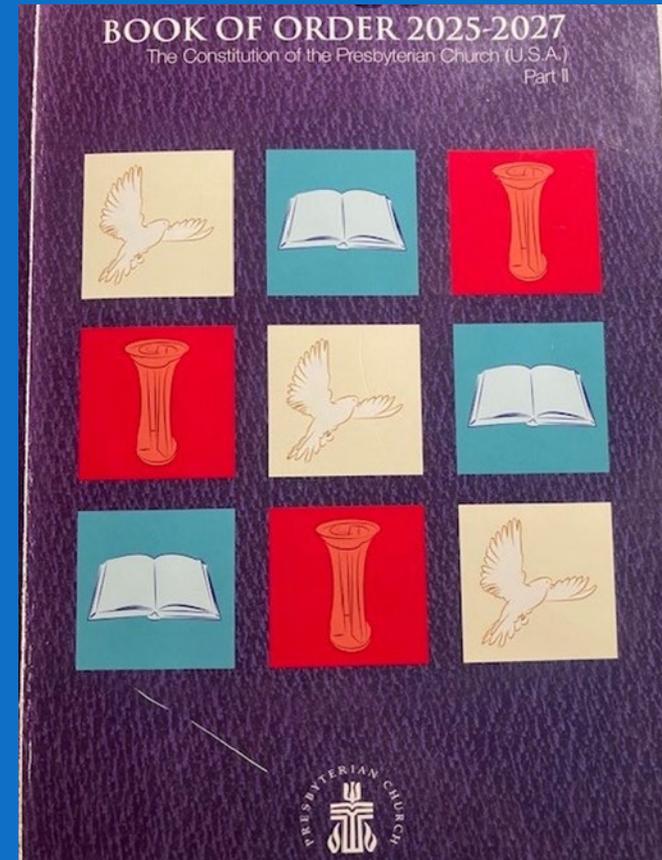


# Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

- Part I.



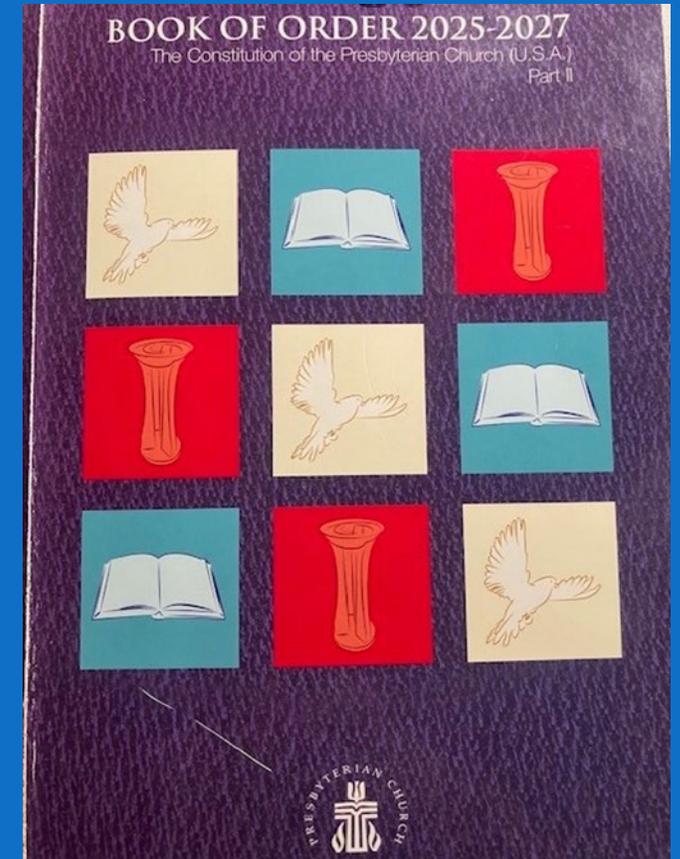
- Part II.



# Part II. The Book of Order

## Preface

- SHALL and IS TO BE/ARE TO BE are mandates
- SHOULD is recommended
- IS APPROPRIATE is suitable practice
- MAY is permissible but not required



These amendments take effect on July 2, 2025. Amendments have been made in the following places:

<i>Book of Order</i>	<i>PC-Biz, 2024</i>
F-1.0403	POL 01-1
G-1.0104	POL 03
G-2.0104b.	POL 01-02
G-2.0504b.	POL 05
G-2.0504b.	POL 08 -2
G-2.0610	ORD 05
G-2.0901	POL 08 -1
G-3.0106	POL 11
G-3.0302d.	GAP 05
G-3.0501	GAP 04
D-7.0501	POL 02
D-7.0902b	POL 04

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| F-1.0302a | d. Ps. 2:8; Rev. 7:9                  |
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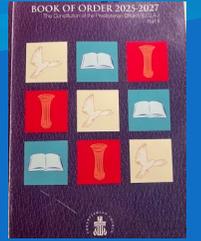
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# Part II. The Book of Order



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- G- Form of Government
- W-Directory for Worship
- D- Church Discipline

F-1.01–F-1.02

F-1.0101–1.0202

### THE FOUNDATIONS OF PRESBYTERIAN POLITY

#### CHAPTER ONE

#### THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH<sup>1</sup>

##### F-1.01 GOD'S MISSION

The good news of the Gospel is that the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—creates, redeems, sustains, rules, and transforms all things and all people. This one living God, the Scriptures say, liberated the people of Israel from oppression and covenanted to be their God. By the power of the Spirit, this one living God is incarnate in Jesus Christ, who came to live in the world, die for the world, and be raised again to new life. The Gospel of Jesus Christ announces the nearness of God's kingdom, bringing good news to all who are impoverished, sight to all who are blind, freedom to all who are oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord's favor upon all creation.

The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church. In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ. Human beings have no higher goal in life than to glorify and enjoy God now and forever, living in covenant fellowship with God and participating in God's mission.

##### F-1.02 JESUS CHRIST IS HEAD OF THE CHURCH

###### F-1.0201 *The Authority of Christ*

Almighty God, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead and set him above all rule and authority, has given to him all power in heaven and on earth, not only in this age but also in the age to come.<sup>a</sup> God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has made Christ Head of the Church, which is his body.<sup>b</sup> The Church's life and mission are a joyful participation in Christ's ongoing life and work.

###### F-1.0202 *Christ Calls and Equips the Church*

Christ calls the Church into being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission in the world, for its sanctification, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. Christ alone rules, calls, teaches, and uses the Church as he wills.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document and the Form of Government, the capitalized term "Church" refers to the Church Universal, the Church as it is called to be in Christ, except as part of a title (e.g. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)).

# F- The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity

- F-1 Chapter One- The Mission of the Church
- F-2 Chapter Two – The Church and Its Confessions
- F-3 Chapter Three – Principles of Order and Government

# F-1 Chapter One- The Mission of the Church

## F.1.01 God's Mission

The good news of the Gospel is that the triune God—  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—

- creates
- redeems
- sustains
- rules
- and transforms all things and all people. ...

# F-1.01 God's Mission

- ...This one living God, the Scriptures say, liberated the people of Israel from oppression and covenanted to be their God. By the power of the Spirit, this one living God is incarnate in Jesus Christ, who came to live in the world, die for the world, and be raised again to new life. The Gospel of Jesus Christ announces the nearness of God's kingdom, bringing good news to all who are impoverished, sight to all who are blind, freedom to all who are oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord's favor upon all creation.

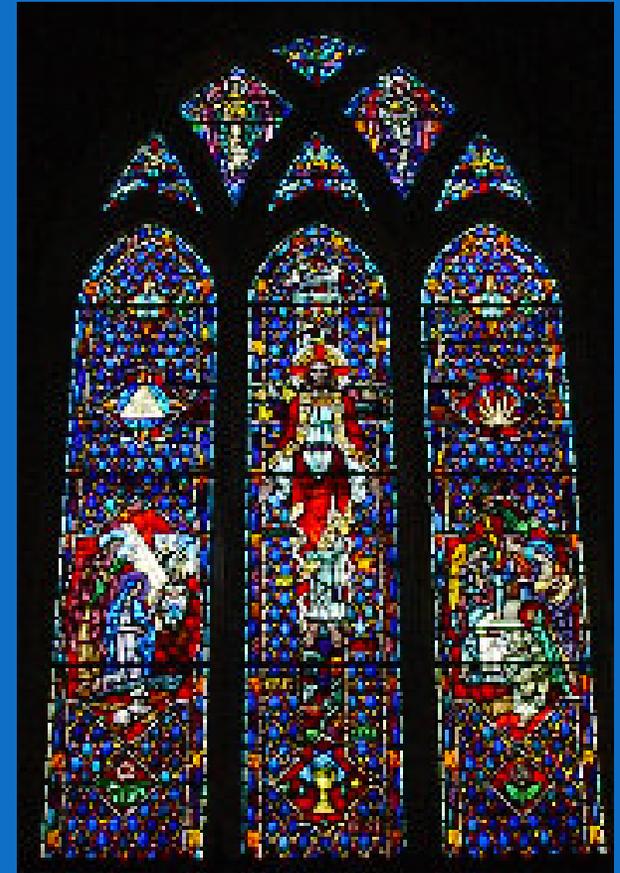
# F-1.01 God's Mission

...The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church. In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ.

Human beings have no higher goal in life than **to glorify and enjoy God now and forever**, living in covenant fellowship with God and participating in God's mission.

# Who is the head of the church?

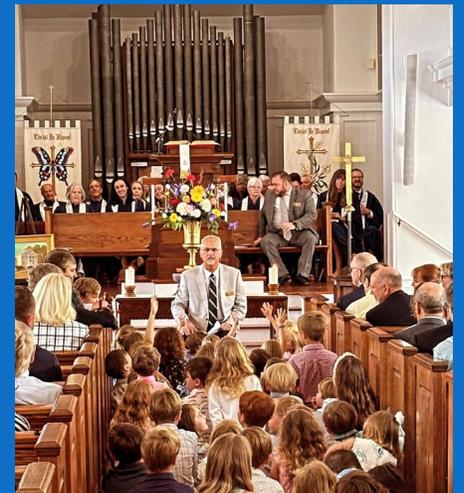
- Almighty God, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead and set him above all rule and authority, has given him all power in heaven and earth, not only in this age but also the age to come. God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has made **Christ Head of the Church**, which is his body.
- [F-1.0201]



# Christ

- Calls & Equips F-1.0202
- Gives the Church Its Life F-1.0203
- Is the Church's Hope F-1.0204
- Is the Foundation of the Church F-1.0204

- 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. [F-1.0202]
- ...as Christ's body, [the Church] is bound to [Christ's] authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God.  
[F-1.0204]



# F-1.03 The Calling of the Church

The Church is to be a community of

- Faith
- Hope
- Love
- Witness



# F-1.0302a The Unity of the Church

- Unity is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ. Just as God is one God and Jesus Christ is our one Savior, so the Church is one because it belongs to its one Lord, Jesus Christ. The Church seeks to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone. There is one Church, for there is one Spirit, one hope, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:5–6).
- Unity ≠ Uniformity

# What are we here to do?

- **Mat 28:16** Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him, but they doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

# The Notes of the Reformed Church

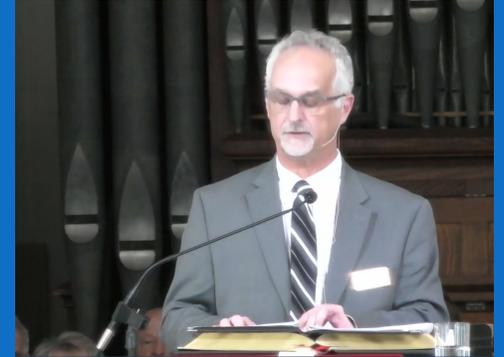
Where Christ is, there is the true Church. Since the earliest days of the Reformation, Reformed Christians have marked the presence of the true Church wherever

- The Word of God is rightly preached and heard
- The Sacraments are rightly administered, and
- Ecclesiastical discipline is uprightly ministered.  
F-1.0303



# F-1.0304 The Great Ends of the Church

- the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
- the shelter, nurture, and fellowship of the children of God;
- the maintenance of divine worship;



# The Great Ends of the Church

- the preservation of the truth;
- the promotion of social righteousness;
- and the exhibition of the kingdom of heaven to the world.

[F-1.0304]

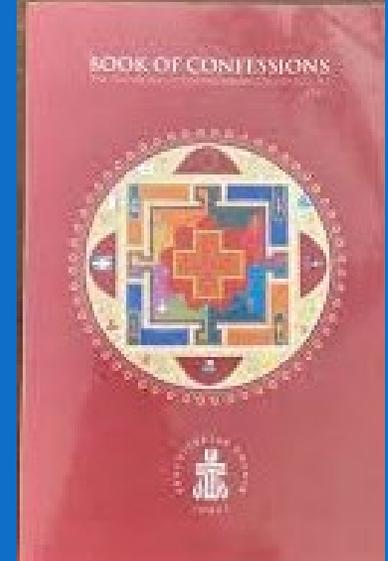


# F-2 The Church and Its Confessions

In these statements the church declares to its members and to the world

- who and what it is,
- what it believes,
- and what it resolves to do.

F-2.01



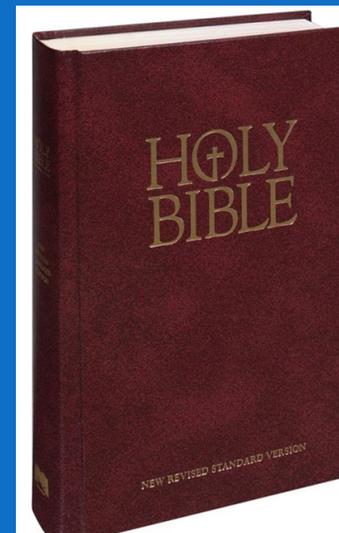
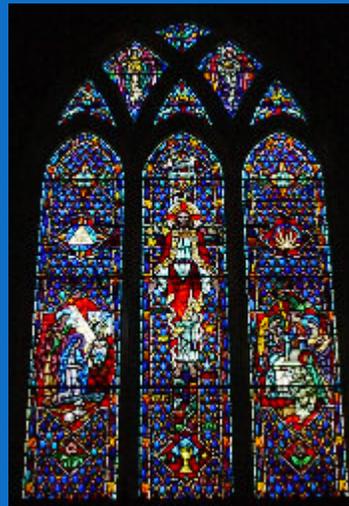
- The creeds and confessions of this church arose in response to particular circumstances within the history of God's people.

F-2.01



# F-2.02 The Confessions as Subordinate Standards

- These confessional statements are subordinate standards in the church subject to the authority of
- Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him.

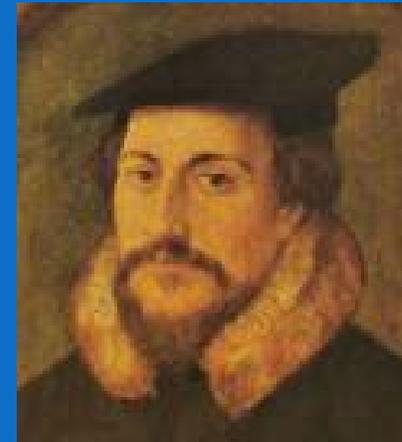


# Never say “We’ve always done it this way.”

- *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei,*

that is, “The church reformed, always reforming,” according to the Word of God” in the power of the Spirit.

[F-2.02]



# Three phrases sum up our faith:

- The Protestant watchwords ... [F-2.04]

*Sola Gratia*

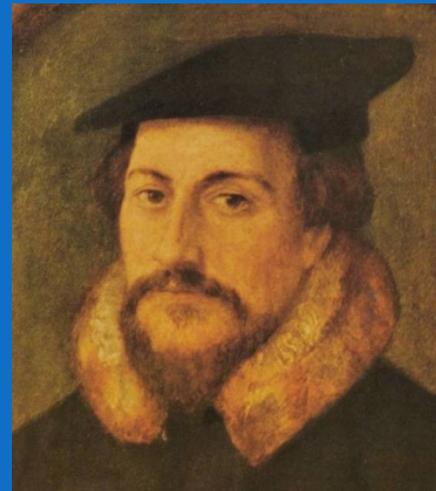
Grace alone

*Soli Fide*

Faith alone

*Sola Scriptura*

Scripture alone



# The Essential Tenets of the Reformed Faith

- Sovereignty of God
- The election of the people for service as well as salvation
- Covenant life marked by disciplined concern for order
- A faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God's creation
- The recognition of the human tendency to idolatry

# F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0101 a God alone is Lord of the conscience

# F-3.0102 Corporate Judgment

That, in perfect consistency with the above principle of common right, every Christian Church, or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed; that in the exercise of this right they may, notwithstanding, err, in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet, even in this case, they do not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only make an improper use of their own.

## F-3.0103 Officers

That our blessed Savior, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the Sacraments, but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation of both truth and duty; and that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous, observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the Word of God.

## F-3.0104 Truth and Goodness

That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness, according to our Savior's rule, "By their fruits ye shall know them." *And that no opinion can either be more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level,* and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are. On the contrary, we are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it.

## F-3.0105 Mutual Forbearance

That, while under the conviction of the above principle we think it necessary to make effectual provision that all who are admitted as teachers be sound in the faith, we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other.

Remember what you learned in kindergarten, to be nice to everyone and play fair.



- I Corinthians 14:40 “All things should be done decently and in order”

## F-3.0106 Election by the People

That though the character, qualifications, and authority of Church officers are laid down in the Holy Scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution, yet the election of the persons to the exercise of this authority, in any particular society, is in that society.

# F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0107 Church Power

...the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners

...all synods and councils may err

# F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0202 Governed by Presbyters

Teaching Elders (a.k.a. Ministers of Word and Sacrament)

Ruling Elders



## F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0202 Ruling Elders are so named not because they “lord it over” the congregation, but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and guide in its fidelity to the Word of God and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life.

## F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0202 Ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be committed in all their work to teaching the faith in word and in deed and equipping the people of God for their ministry and witness.

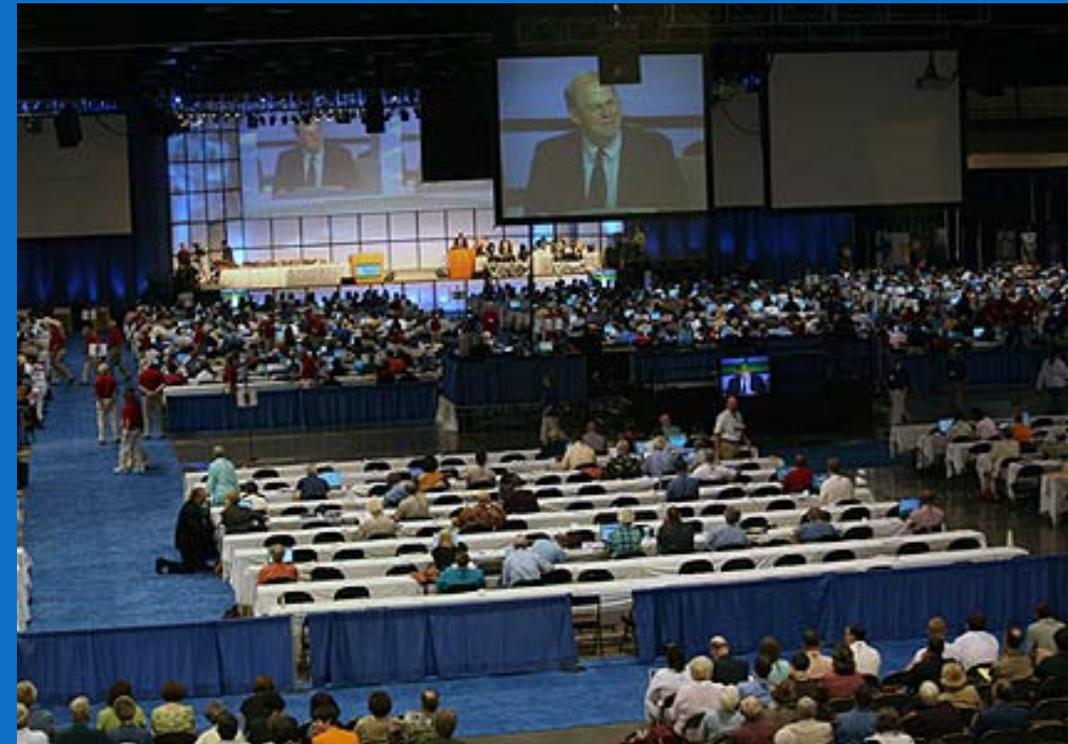
# F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0203 Gathered in Councils

These presbyters shall come together in councils in regular gradation. These councils are sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. All councils of the church are united by the nature of the church and share with one another responsibilities, rights, and powers as provided in this Constitution. The councils are distinct, but have such mutual relations that the act of one of them is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate council. The larger part of the church, or a representation thereof, shall govern the smaller.

# We are not there to vote what we think other people think.

- Presbyters are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ.
- [F-3.0204 Seek and Represent the Will of Christ]



# F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0205 Decisions by Majority Vote
- Decisions shall be reached in councils by vote, following the opportunity for discussion and discernment, and a majority shall govern.

# F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0206 Review and Control
- A higher council shall have the right of review and control over a lower one and shall have the power to determine matters of controversy upon reference, complaint, or appeal.

# F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0207 Ordination by Council
- Presbyters (ruling elders and ministers fo Word and Sacrament) and deacons are ordained only by the authority of a council.

# F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0208 Shared Power, Exercised Jointly
- Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is a shared power, to be exercised jointly by presbyters gathered in councils.

# F-3 Principles of Order and Government

- F-3.0209 General Authority of Councils
- Councils possess whatever administrative authority is necessary to give effect to duties and powers assigned by the Constitution of the church. The jurisdiction of each council is limited by the express provisions of the Constitution, with powers not mentioned being reserved to the presbyteries.

# F-3.03 Foundational Statements

- The statements contained in this section, “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity,” describe the ecclesiological and historical commitments on which the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) rests. Provisions of any part of this Constitution are to be interpreted in light of the whole Constitution. No provision of the Book of Order can of itself invalidate any other. Where there are tensions and ambiguities between provisions, it is the task of councils and judicial commissions to resolve them in such a way as to give effect to all provisions.

# F-3.04 The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is Defined

- The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consists of The Book of Confessions and the Book of Order.

