

*Trinity
Presbyterian Church
(TPC)*

Membership and Membership Classes Policy

*Trinity Presbyterian Church
1666 Village Green, Crofton, MD 21114
443.302.9645
www.trinitypres.us*

Trinity Presbyterian Church

Membership and Membership Classes

Why Be Concerned With Church Membership?

A few of the biblically-solid reasons for being a member of a Christ-focused, gospel-centered church are provided here¹, and can be discussed in greater detail with any of the Trinity Presbyterian Church (TPC) Elders or Pastor:

1. TPC is a church, and the Bible uses the metaphor of a body to describe the church, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12). It’s a beautiful illustration of how we’re each created to serve different functions, we need everyone to function in order to be a healthy body, and all of us as separate parts find purpose and unity under Jesus, “the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18). Members are the church (Eph. 2:19-22).
2. In joining a church you make visible your commitment to Christ and His people. You state before God and others that you are part of this local body of believers. It’s easy to talk in glowing terms about the invisible church—the body of all believers near and far, living and dead—but it’s in the visible church that God expects you to live out your faith (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 2:19). Making a church commitment makes a powerful statement in a low-commitment culture.
3. Church membership keeps us accountable to each other. When we join a church we are offering ourselves to one another to be encouraged, rebuked, corrected, and served. We are placing ourselves under leaders and submitting to their authority (Heb. 13:7).
4. Joining the church will help your Pastor and Elders be more faithful shepherds. Hebrews 13:17 says, “They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.” See also Acts 14:23 and James 5:14.
5. Joining the church gives you an opportunity to make and keep promises. Hebrews 13:17 also says, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.” When you become a member of TPC, you make promises to pray, give, serve, attend worship, accept the spiritual guidance of the church, obey its teachings, and seek the things that make for unity, purity, and peace, and we ought to hold each other to them. Should you decide to not join TPC, you may miss an opportunity to publicly make these promises, and in so doing, invite the Elders and the rest of the body to hold you to these promises—which would be missing out on great spiritual benefit, for you and for us.

¹ Adapted from “Why Bother With Church Membership?”, Kevin DeYoung, University Reformed Church.
<http://www.universityreformedchurch.org/members/church-membership/why-bother-with-church-membership.html>

Membership Classes

The purpose of membership classes is to (1) inform potential members about the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), (2) inform potential members of the history and philosophy of ministry of Trinity Presbyterian Church (TPC), (3) ascertain the credibility of their expression of faith / testimony, (4) inform potential members of the responsibilities of membership at TPC, and (5) discuss potential members' spiritual gifts and explore ways they might serve the TPC body.

Membership Class Attendance

If a potential member is a new believer, regardless of their church attendance or affiliation elsewhere, they must take the membership classes for the reasons identified above.

If the potential member is coming to TPC from another non-PCA church they must also take the membership classes for the reasons identified above.

If the potential member is a member of a different PCA church in good standing, it is recommended that they take the membership class to refresh their memory of the purposes above, however, the Elders reserve the right to waive the membership class requirement and instead to have the person(s) meet with at least two Elders (Teaching Elder and/or Ruling Elders) to ascertain the credibility of their expression of faith / testimony.

Membership at TPC

Membership at TPC is best summarized in the membership vows discussed during the membership class, reiterated with Ruling Elders of the Session following their credible testimony of faith, and reiterated again when welcomed publically into the body of faith at TPC.

Those vows consist of the following questions, to which prospective members positively affirm:

1. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope, except through His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and trust Him alone for salvation?
3. Will you, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, try to live as a follower of Christ?
4. Do you promise to support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to strive for its purity and peace?