

On Sunday we talked about who our leaders are and how we make decisions in the Presbyterian Church. We started by looking at what it means to be protestant.

What's a Protestant?

- Protestant is a branch of Christianity which is made up of different denominations who do not recognize the authority of the Pope.
- Instead of following the Pope, Protestant denominations follow the Reformed tradition. (Remember Martin Luther and John Calvin? They started the reform tradition)

So, which denominations are Protestant? Any denomination that does not recognize the authority of the Pope—so think: Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists and yes Presbyterians.

As Presbyterians, instead of following the leadership of the Pope—we function as a **representative democracy**—which means we elect members of the church to “represent” us, provide leadership and make the best decisions they can for the church.

The word Presbyterian even comes from the Greek word “Presbuteros”

- Presbuteros means “elder”—which is another way of saying “leader”
- Presbyterian=elder/leader

There are three kinds of elders/leaders in the church

- **Elders**—elders are members of the church who are chosen to be leaders—these leaders focus on making decisions for the whole church. Decisions like how to take care of our building, what agencies we’re going to give money too and support, when we’re going to have communion and much more.
- **Deacons**—deacons are members of the church who are chosen to be leaders—these leaders focus on taking care of our members who are in need of extra care: people who’s loved ones have died, or who are sick and need some extra help, or members who, because of illness or limited mobility, can’t get to church but still want to take communion.
- **Pastors**—people who have gone to seminary and have been formally trained to preach, teach and preside over the sacraments (Baptism and Communion)

Members who are elected as Elders attend a monthly meeting called “session”. It’s during this meeting that the Elders, along with Pastors, make decisions for the church. Decisions like, when we will celebrate communion in worship, what kind of mission agencies we will support, how we can take care of the church building and much more.

So—instead of being governed/led by one leader (like the Pope)—we are led by our Elders, Pastors and Deacons—people who were all elected and called to be leaders by the members of the church.

What does it mean to be a member of the church?? Every member of the church has one vote. This is huge—everyone, regardless of age, is given the same power as members of the church. Everyone’s voice is equal.

The Congregation votes on two things: Who will be the pastor and who from the congregation will serve on Session and as Deacons

How do we make decisions in the Presbyterian



So...what's the point??

As a denomination, the PC(USA) believes that, through the Holy Spirit, God is working in the church. We often say that as a denomination “we are Reformed, but always reforming” meaning, **while we follow the Reformed tradition, we also know that God isn't done with us—together we make decisions about where we believe God is leading us, which means sometimes things change!**

This also means that we are led by people like YOU—that's right—in the PC(USA) YOU are part of the decision-making process. **As a member of the church, your voice and opinion matter—not only can you vote during congregational meetings, but you can also become an elder and serve on session.** You could even be a delegate to General Assembly...Just think—you could help make decisions for the whole denomination—because, **as a representative democracy, the power is in the hands of the members not just one person.**

There's no Homework this week!! See you Sunday 😊