



INTERFAITH
ALLIANCE
PROTECTING FAITH AND FREEDOM

5 Starter Facts About Presbyterian Christianity

1. Presbyterianism in general terms is the system of church governance by representative assemblies called presbyteries, as opposed to bishops (episcopal) or congregations (congregationalism). Presbyterians trace their history to the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation with John Calvin. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has ~1.6 million members.
2. The essence of Presbyterian faith is God's forgiving love coming as a gift through Jesus Christ. The chief distinctive features are Calvinistic Reformed theology and church governance that stresses the active, representational leadership of both ministers and church members.
3. Presbyterians were only one of the reformed denominations that dominated American colonial life at the time of the Revolutionary War. In the next century, when faced with ethical disagreement over slavery, the branch was divided into numerous denominations that still exist today either separately or reunited.
4. Presbyterians confess their beliefs through statements adopted over the years that are contained in *The Book of Confessions*. These statements reflect their understanding of God and what God expects of them at different times in history.
5. Presbyterians consider themselves pillars of advocacy and social justice, especially environmental justice, food insecurity, and human trafficking.

Learn more at:

<https://www.pcusa.org/>

These five points are not meant to be comprehensive or authoritative. We hope they encourage you to explore this spirituality more deeply and seek out members of this community to learn about their beliefs in action. In understanding our differences we will better understand our common humanity.

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