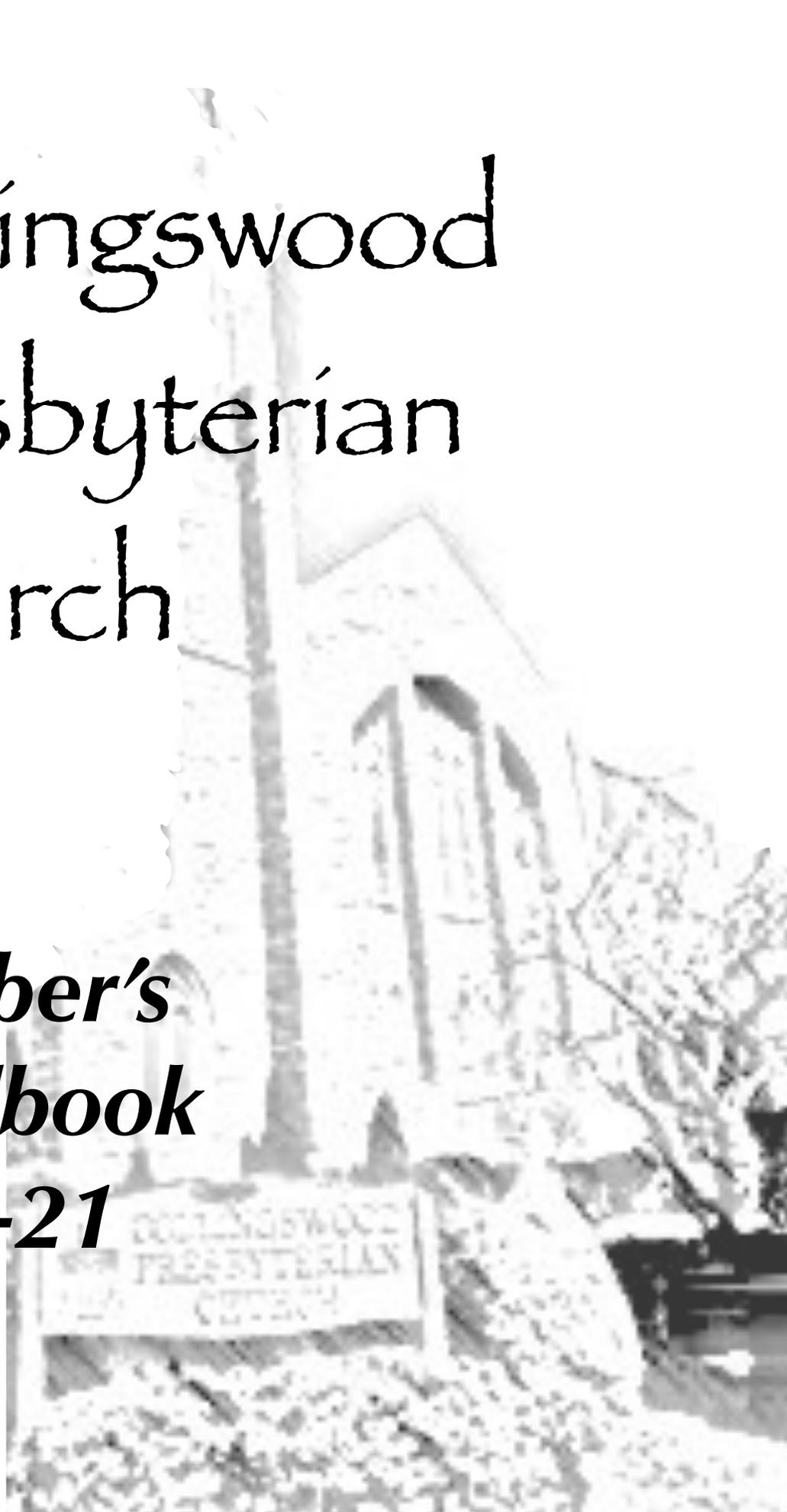


Collingswood Presbyterian Church

***Member's
Handbook
2020-21***



Credits:

“New Member’s Class” First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor, MI

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Who are you?

We like to start with the broad questions! Who are you?

In some ways, the answer to this question is straightforward. Practically, we can frame our identity in terms of our name, our home, our social status, our age, the activities that fill our day. Theologically, however, we can frame our identity as children of God. As people created by our loving God, claiming this identity emphasizes our common and constant place in creation. Everything else about us may change; this will not. At the very core of our being, we are children of God, created in the image of God. It is a skin we cannot shed no matter how hard we might try.

Understanding what that means, individually and communally, can take time. Collingswood Presbyterian Church welcomes all who are willing to wrestle with that question. To do so is at the heart of a life of faith. To do so is to step forward and say, “Here I am,” and open yourself to what God might do next.

On the subject of faith, Presbyterian Theologian Frederick Buechner said, “Faith is better understood as a verb than as a noun, as a process than as a possession. It is on-again-off-again rather than once-and-for-all. Faith is not being sure where you’re going, but going anyway. A journey without maps.” For reasons such as these, you may hear people at Collingswood Presbyterian refer to “faith journeys.” Your faith journey is less about what state you lived in or what church you attended there and more about what God was doing in your life during that time. Your faith journey may be filled with landmarks and road-side attractions, or wide open spaces. Your faith journey may feel full speed ahead, or paused a rest stop, or even broken down on the side of the road. It’s all part of the process. And we get through it together, by the grace of God. Wherever you are on this journey, you are welcome to travel with us.

Companions on a faith journey are essential. We are designed to be in community with one another. About this, the Bible is clear. “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name” Jesus said, “I am there among them.” We can’t do it alone because life is hard. Together, we are infinitely more than the sum total of our individual parts. Together, we can hold each other up when one of us falters. Thankfully, we can draw on the strength we need from one another. Each of us has particular strengths, skills, and gifts that are uniquely our own and that contribute to our life together.

First Corinthians reminds us, “There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are varieties of services, but one Lord; and there are varieties of activities but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (12:4-7).

At Collingswood Presbyterian, we are committed to helping people identify and develop their spiritual gifts. Some of these gifts are in the forefront of our life together: preaching and teaching, for example, or leading groups of people. Some gifts are quieter in nature, such as listening and prayer. Some share their gifts of nurture and hospitality by baking cookies for

Collingswood Presbyterian Church

Sunday morning or preparing meals for members struggling with illness. Some are encouragers, providing a supportive word where it is needed most; some are helpers who travel to other countries to provide aid; some are singers who lead the community in song; some are laughers who help us and joy. Others organize, study, create, envision, or heal. All are equally important, God-given abilities. All are needed, here and in the world around us. And all are welcome here. We hope that at some point in your spiritual journey, you may wish to share a bit about the faith experiences and questions that have led you to CPC.

Who are we?

Collingswood Presbyterian Church is not (just) a building.

Collingswood Presbyterian Church is a community of people.

- 100+ members — all ages, families couples, and singles
- Pastor, program staff, administrative staff
- 6 Elders, 6 Deacons, 5 Session Committees
- We have a rich history — we signed our charter 120 years ago. The groundbreaking for our current sanctuary was in 1920. It still requires upkeep!

CPC is not made up of perfect people. (Surprise!)

- CPC is made up of people committed to growing as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- How? Worship, prayer, bible study, acts of mission and caring, nurture of people at all stages of their faith — children, youth, college students, empty nesters, mature adults, etc.
- Collingswood Presbyterian Church does not expect everyone to think or believe the same things.
- CPC values and appreciates people who are at different places in their faith journey. We are diverse! Some are very sure, some are not so sure. Some are seekers, some are content believers, some are bible scholars, some are new explorers of God's Word. All have a voice. All can come to the Table.

Collingswood Presbyterian Church does not have complicated membership requirements.

- Baptism is required to join. If you've been baptized and are a member of another church, our church office will ask for your letter to be transferred. If you have not joined another church or it been a very long time, you simply profess your faith by asking simple questions as a part of the new member liturgy.
- CPC encourages people to deepen their experience of Jesus Christ through worship, fellowship, mission, learning, and prayer.
- We ask all who are joining to first attend new member's classes.
- Those presenting a child for baptism are asked to attend baptism classes (membership required of at least one parent).
- We offer education for people of all ages about our theology and our practice of faith.

CPC is not an exclusive club.

- Collingswood Presbyterian Church welcomes all who wish to worship the Triune God.
- There are no dress requirements! No tests to pass! All backgrounds and races are welcome.
- Some give a great deal in time and talent and treasure, some give just what they can. Some have lives that revolve around church, others have their heart centered in Sunday worship.
- Different seasons bring different levels of participation in the vital congregational life we share — but all are welcome! We want you to belong.

CPC is not a civic organization with a Board of Directors.

- Collingswood Presbyterian Church has Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church, and we are a family seeking to follow the one Lord faithfully.

Why join a church?

Belonging? Commitment? Modeling? Duty? Obligation? Tradition?
Openness? Calling?

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. e baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith. e 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. (from the Book of Order, G-1-304)

Expectations of Membership:

(from the Book of Order, G-1.0304)

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 personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships, working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment,
- participating in the governing responsibilities of the church, reviewing and evaluating regularly the integrity of one's membership,

How can you be engaged in these?

What we promise:

The congregation will support you. Deacons will engage with you and encourage you. Your Elders will follow up on pastoral care needs and invitations to fellowship.

Our mission:

Our Mission is to Worship and Serve the Lord as we constantly seek renewal through God's Grace and Wisdom; to welcome and reach out to all of God's community; to provide for education in Christian and Presbyterian principles; to minister to everyone through community and worldwide mission; and to share the Christian message as expressed in the Gospels.

Questions of membership:

- Who is your Lord and Savior? Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.
- Do you trust him?
- Do you intend to be his disciple, to obey his Word, and to show his love?
- Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, giving of yourself in every way, and will you seek the fellowship of the church wherever you may be?

How are we governed?

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is governed by a constitution. It has two parts.

The Book of Confessions - is book includes statements from different times and contexts that express what the church believes. New statements of our faith can be added to the Book of Confessions over time. Some well-known confessions and creeds found there include — the Apostle's Creed, the Westminster Catechism, and the Barmen Declaration

The Book of Order - is book includes the rules which we use to order our life together. These rules can be amended every two years. We have a new section to the Book of Order, a new Form of Government, that just took effect recently.

The Book of Order describes how Presbyterians relate to each other and make decisions. Presbyterians are essentially representative, trusting in elected groups of ministers and elders to make decisions for the full body. A helpful analogy can be the structures of the US government (which, in fact, was largely designed by Presbyterians!):

A local church is governed by its **session**. The session is a group of **elders** elected by the congregation to oversee the church. The session, not the pastor, is responsible for most of the decisions made in a local congregation.

All of the churches in a geographical region gather together in a **presbytery**. The presbytery meets regularly, often monthly, and has responsibility for overseeing property, ordaining and overseeing ministers, and assisting congregations in their ministry.

Several presbyteries in a state or region make up a **synod**. Synods may meet a few times in a year. Presbyteries send representatives to **General Assembly**. General Assembly meets every two years and is the church's highest governing body.

A Brief History of the Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church was founded on the ideals of the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation's official beginning was signaled by Martin Luther tacking 95 Theses on a church door in Germany in 1517. These statements attacked alleged false doctrine and practice by the Roman Catholic Church. Sentiment for reform then spread rapidly throughout Northern and Central Europe. Those who led this Reformation were called Reformers, and the churches that grew out of the movement today comprise churches of the Reformed tradition.

The father of Presbyterianism was John Calvin. Calvin, who studied theology, languages and law in France, fled to Switzerland when he experienced opposition to his religious views. There he wrote his theological masterpiece, Institutes of the Christian Religion, which became a guidebook for Protestants and established Calvin as the leader of Reformed thought, an influence that lasts to today. Among Calvin's beliefs are the sovereignty of God, the priesthood of all believers, that God alone is Lord of the conscience and the centrality of Scripture.

During the 1500s Presbyterianism spread from Switzerland, particularly Geneva, to France, the Netherlands and the British Isles, especially Scotland, where John Knox was the early church's leader. From Scotland Presbyterianism was taken to Northern Ireland, from where many settlers in the American colonies emigrated in succeeding centuries.

The history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States began in the 1600s on the eastern seaboard. During those years Presbyterian churches were concentrated from New York to Georgia. The father of American Presbyterianism was Rev. Francis Makemie, who came from Ireland to the Middle Atlantic States. The Eighteenth Century was a time of growth for the Presbyterian Church with many churches chartered and the first presbytery, synod and General Assembly organizing and meeting.

In the 1800s, as the newly formed United States of America grew, cities like Philadelphia attracted more and more people. Collingswood Presbyterian Church were organized in part by neighboring congregations like the Presbyterian Church of Haddonfield. Thanks to early missionary activity during the nineteenth century, even today Presbyterian churches are quite evenly distributed throughout the continental United States and Alaska.

Just as the nation split over the Civil War, so too did Presbyterians. Today there are a variety of branches of churches who call themselves Presbyterians. Collingswood Presbyterian Church of Collingswood is a member of the Presbyterian Church (USA), by far the largest branch of Presbyterian churches. The denomination claims about 2.5 million members. Collingswood Presbyterian, with a membership of around 100, is a member of the Presbytery of West Jersey and the Synod of the Northeast (composed of churches in New England, New York, and New Jersey).

Presbyterian, a word coming from the Greek word for elder, refers to choosing leaders from among the wisest members of the Church. The church is led by the Session, composed of elders who serve three year terms. Members of the church's Board of Deacons live out their ministry through pastoral care and service within the congregation.

The Presbyterian Church, as a denomination and within the context of a local congregation, is at its best when it embraces and lives out a two-legged gospel of individual spirituality and community involvement. Its members are called to worship, learn, share fellowship, pray, share the Good News and be involved in mission locally and globally, always embracing the love and justice of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church.

How we worship

Collingswood Presbyterian members seek to serve the Lord, worship with our whole hearts, and become more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in thought, word, and deed. We are a very easygoing congregation even though the church looks formal with all the stained glass windows. Our Sunday morning worship at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary is traditional with prayer, hymns, scripture readings, and a sermon. Our worship service also has a cheerful vibe that reflects our community. During the service, after the Children's Message, the children leave to attend Sunday school. If desired, childcare is available during worship.

What happens when I come to a worship service?

Before entering the sanctuary, you will receive a bulletin from one of our church members. You may sit wherever you want. The worship service is in the bulletin along with announcements. The worship service is easy to follow and hymnals are available in the pews. We stand for items marked with an asterisk. However, feel free to stay seated if you are unable to stand.

After the worship service, we have coffee hour. Feel free to join us.

What should I wear?

We do not have a dress code. You will find that some people dress up and some people dress casually. We want you to be comfortable. All are welcome!

When is communion?

We celebrate the sacrament of communion on the first Sunday of each month. Everyone is welcome at the communion table where we remember Jesus' last supper and how he died for us. At CPC, we celebrate communion by intinction. When you come forward, you will take a piece of bread or a gluten free wafer, dip it into the grape juice, serve yourself, and return to your seat.

Where do I enter and park?

The main entrance to the church is the middle set of doors on Fern Ave. There are more entrances in the back of the church.

The church has a small parking lot. However, there is plenty of on street parking.

Is the sanctuary handicapped accessible?

There is a handicapped entrance and handicapped parking in the back of the church which may be accessed via Maple Ave.

What happens if I am new?

We want you to enjoy the service and feel comfortable. Join us and know that you will not be asked to introduce yourself or be singled out in any way. We look forward to meeting you.

Children and Youth Ministry

Gretchen Kolecki Director of Christian Education

Collingswood Presbyterian is committed to providing a strong church school program in which children can learn the fundamentals of Reformed faith and begin a lifelong spiritual journey based on

Biblical literacy. We offer curriculum, training, and support to our teachers, who are the members and friends of Collingswood Presbyterian willing to explore and share their faith. Parents and many others are needed to assist in this all-volunteer effort to communicate Christian values to our children. We also offer families regular opportunities for fellowship, to celebrate children and strengthen ties within our faith community.

Sunday Programs and More

Sunday mornings, infant and toddler childcare is provided by consistent and paid vetted child care providers and church volunteers at the 10:30 a.m. service from September through May.

Family Worship -- Approximately once a month, we have a "Family Worship," when children are encouraged to worship with their families in the Sanctuary, to participate in Communion, and to celebrate special seasons in the church year.

Family Celebrations - We also offer families regular opportunities to celebrate children and strengthen ties within our faith community. Many of these occasions are annual traditions, such as:

- All-church picnic and family potlucks
- Craft-making festivals during the Advent and Lenten seasons
- Family fun activities
- A Christmas Pageant

Sunday School teachers needed. Collingswood Presbyterian has adopted a Child and Youth Safety Policy.

Youth Ministry

That ONE Youth Group meets weekly for fellowship, Christian Education and Community Mission.

Confirmation is a new member class designed for students in 7th -9th grades, in which the essential questions of faith are explored by lessons and small group time with Christian mentors. These mentors seek to demonstrate the Christian faith as lived in the real world by people seeking an authentic relationship with Jesus Christ as demonstrated by active worship, ministry, and mission.

Mission Events for Youth

Local Mission Projects – our high schoolers are active in the community, from conducting food drives to helping clean up local parks!

Kaleidoscope Kids

Kaleidoscope Kids Preschool is a non-sectarian outreach of Collingswood Presbyterian Church. We welcome diversity in race, religion, and cultural background. The mission of Kaleidoscope Kids Preschool is to serve families in the greater Collingswood area with a high quality, curriculum-based preschool for children 2 1/2 - 5 years.

In a safe and nurturing environment, our preschool fosters a love of learning, exploration, and diversity. Our teachers are dedicated to developing socially-conscious, lifelong learners.

We offer a preschool program with small classroom sizes, a diverse, evolving curriculum, and opportunities for daily discoveries. We realize that each child is full of wonder and questions. We have built our program around these qualities and hope that each child will thrive here.

Your child's morning schedule may include music, yoga & movement, art/creativity, library, cooking, language development/reading readiness, as well as fine and gross motor activities.

The afternoon schedule may include activities such as art, stories, and music.

Come take a tour of our school and visit our newly renovated gym and library!

Adult Education

Sundays 9:30 a.m. — “Contemporary Concerns” class

Online Bible study via Zoom

There are many ways to grow here! Have in-depth conversations about Scripture, theology, spirituality, church history, and issues of church and culture.

Mature Adult Programs

Though we are all seeking to become spiritually mature in Jesus Christ, CPC has an active group of nearly retired and retired members. Between the ages of 55 - 100 (or more)!, our members and friends and more than communal worship and Christian nurture — they find opportunities to use their particular gifts, talent, and increased time, to share their wisdom with those who are coming after them in the faith, and express particular needs that can be met by the gift of belonging to a church family.

Tea and Talk is a fellowship outreach once a month on Wednesday evening. People are invited to gather for a light supper, fellowship, and a craft project.

Music Ministry at CPC

Catherine Lavell, Director of Music

The Ministry of Music at Collingswood Presbyterian is an integral part of the worship life of the congregation. It seeks to glorify God and express our love for God and God's love for us. It endeavors to enhance the worship experience through inspiring and artistic expressions of praise.

Marj Miller leads two bell choirs, one for youth and one for adults, which offer anthems periodically throughout the year! New ringers are always welcome.

Ours is a rich tradition of musical excellence at Collingswood Presbyterian. Many great works for choirs and orchestra have been performed in our sanctuary on Sunday afternoons which draw in our community. Recognizing the interdependence of spiritual and musical growth, our Music Ministry endeavors to offer learning opportunities for participants of all ages and abilities, both choral and instrumental. In doing so, we strive to enrich the lives we touch, both musicians and listeners, and to gather into the congregation those who believe in and work to advance the message of God's redeeming love.

There is a place for anyone in the Collingswood Presbyterian Music Ministry who wishes to learn, grow, serve, and praise God through music. Please join us in making a joyful noise to the Lord!

Mission At CPC

For Collingswood Presbyterian Church and its members, mission and outreach activities are a form of worship and an expression of our Christian commitment. As members of Collingswood Presbyterian, we believe that we are beginning to appreciate fully that it is in the nature of the church to be sent out rather than to expect the world to come to us. We believe that the church is not a building or an institution, but rather a group of people sent into the world.

We are committed to following Jesus' charge as expressed in John 20:21, "As God has sent me, so I send you." The mission programs at Collingswood Presbyterian are just one way in which we at Collingswood Presbyterian express our efforts to fulfill that charge. These are some of the ways to participate:

Local Mission:

- School supply book bag collection
- Operation Gratitude for families of soldiers
- Toy collection
- Interfaith housing network
- Christmas Hat, mitten and scarf collection
- Book drive for Camden County Pop-up library -
- Noisy Change Collection - for various mission projects in the region
- Blanket Sunday

National and International Mission:

- We are active with the mission work of West Jersey Presbytery. Recently one of our members journeyed to Cuba to help with a clean water project.
- We are active in the annual CROP walk addressing local, national and world hunger issues.

Key Website information:

www.collingswoodpres.com — you will find, bulletins, sermons, up-to-date information, links to registration materials.

Facebook [CollingswoodPresbyterianChurch](https://www.facebook.com/CollingswoodPresbyterianChurch)

Twitter — [@Collingswoodpr2](https://twitter.com/Collingswoodpr2)

Discovering Your Place as a Disciple of Christ in the Church

Scripture Readings

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Ephesians 4:11-16

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning cravenness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Questions to Consider:

- What are you most passionate about?
- When have you felt closest to God?
- What types of faith activities do you enjoy?
- What do you see as your gifts?
- In what areas would you like to grow?
- How have you served in the past (both in and outside the church)?
- How did you get connected in your previous church?
- Can we help you discover how to use your passions/gifts/talents at CPC?

Reformed Theology 101

Cynthia Rigby, ‘one of the great theologians of our time,’ lays out Reformed beliefs during an hour-long webinar

by Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE — The mystery of the Reformed faith is not that God is unknowable — it’s that the unknowable God, from the Reformed perspective, has made God’s Self known.

In an hour-long webinar created last week, the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Rigby, the W.C. Brown Professor of Theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, lays out that assertion along with other basic tenants of Reformed theology. The Presbyterian Mission Agency’s Office of Christian Formation and the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators put on the free webinar; a recording is available here.

During the webinar, Rigby, called by the Dallas Morning News “one of the great theologians of our time,” discussed six basic teachings of Reformed theology.

The sovereignty of God

Not a sparrow falls to the ground without God knowing it. Without God’s sovereignty, the reformer John Calvin said, life would be unbearable.

“It’s not that God causes things to happen,” Rigby said, “but that God is with us even when horrible things happen.”

Still, people of faith can well grow frustrated when problems persist over the years.

“Why isn’t God solving this? We have been praying the Lord’s Prayer for 2,000 years. Show us the money already, O God!” she said.

The sovereignty of God authorizes us to keep hoping, to keep pushing, she said, because “we have something better than a right — we have an identity,” she said, quoting Jacquelyn Grant in “White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus”: “When black women call Jesus Lord, they are saying the slaveholder isn’t.”

The goodness of Creation

We sometimes attach negative attributes to Creation and sex, eating good food and drinking good wine and otherwise enjoying this world, but “nothing could be further from the truth,” Rigby said.

“We believe everything was created good. That’s what makes the Fall more serious,” she said. “The good news built into the fabric of Creation is who we really are.”

The fact that Jesus did not sin makes him more human than we are, not less human. Jesus was tried in every way that we are, and we can hold one another accountable. “We can approach

each other and say, 'Hey Cindy, you aren't being who God made you. I insist you correct that behavior,'" she said. "We are laying claim to our created goodness."

The centrality of Christ

Before he was Abraham, Abram believed God, who "reckoned it to him as righteousness," according to Genesis 15. God's word is huge and it's ubiquitous, "even as it was present in Jesus," Rigby said. "Abram was saved through the same word we know through Jesus Christ," which has some implications for further inter-religious dialogue, Rigby said.

When Rigby gets to heaven and sees her father, she'll also be glad to greet her Buddhist friend, "because Jesus was able to save him, too." She labeled Jesus a priest, judge prophet — and, to the poet Emily Dickinson, a "tender pioneer" who bushwhacks through the forest and claims victory over sin and death so we might live an abundant life.

The tenacity of Grace

This is difficult to discuss, Rigby said, because there are few human analogies. Grace is unfathomable, but the theologian Barbara Brown Taylor has this story to help explain what grace is: A Yankee visits a southern diner and orders two eggs over easy with wheat toast and bacon. The plate is served with what is to the Yankee an unknown substance oozing out of every other item ordered. The customer asks about it, and the waitress replies, "Oh honey, those are grits. Grist comes whether you order it or not."

"Grace is like grits," Rigby said. "It comes whether you order it or not."

"We talk about gratitude and response, but we still fall into the pattern of thinking about grace transactionally, and we need work on that," she said.

Theologian Karl Barth notes that when Jesus says on the cross, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise," it's not clear he's speaking just to the criminal who asks him, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

"Barth says, 'Aren't those thieves lucky? They participated in Jesus' life and death, and they get to participate in his resurrection.'"

The inseparability of Word and Sacrament

Christians are good at lifting up pairs of things that are simultaneously true, she said: Jesus is fully human and fully divine. We are at the same time righteous and sinners. The Trinity is one in three, three in one.

At the Synod of Alexandria in 362 CE, participants were warring about the Trinity. In the end, leaders told both sides they were right, "and people were mad about that, because they wanted a better answer," Rigby said. "The oneness of God and the three-ness of God are not in tension."

The PC(USA)'s Directory for Worship says word and sacrament are inextricably intertwined. Rigby pointed to a New Testament miracle as proof: Jesus lectured the 5,000, and then he fed

them. “The bigger miracle,” she said, “was this important man stopped talking long enough to serve lunch.”

The transforming work of the Holy Spirit

Reformed theologians get a “bum rap,” she said, for not caring enough about the work of the Holy Spirit. For Calvin, “the Holy Spirit sealed the deal on the truth of who Jesus Christ is and God’s benevolence,” Rigby said. “Without the Holy Spirit, we can know nothing.”

For Calvin, part of the work of the Holy Spirit is to help people know they are God’s Elect “so that they can live the abundant life God wants them to live,” she said. “Calvin said to treat everyone as though they are the Elect. That’s up to God, not us.”

The forgiveness of sins “is not only a possibility, but a requirement of Reformed theology, and there’s a lot of misunderstanding about that,” Rigby said. “If we could model forgiveness better, it could make a real difference in the world.”

And as we go out into that world, “remember we are part of the Reformed tradition,” Rigby said as a benediction to close the webinar. “To whom much is given, much will be required. We are all in it together as a community of faith.”

This Article: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/reformed-theology-101/>

Webinar: <https://apcenet.org/project/basics-of-reformed-theology/>

Questions about the Resurrection of Christ? You’re not alone. Here is an article in which you may be interested: <https://collingswoodpres.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/skeptic.pdf>

Share your faith

