

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church



Membership at Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church can be a rich and rewarding experience. You may have worshiped with us; perhaps you have participated in a church activity or mission project. Maybe you are interested in becoming more involved and joining us as a member of our community of faith.

THE MEANING OF MEMBERSHIP

When Jesus invited people to be his disciples, he did not ask them to take a twelve-week membership class and then determine if they were fit to be members. Jesus simply said, “Come and follow me.” At Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church, we view membership as a tool to help you follow Jesus. When you join Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church it does not mean that you are perfect or that you understand everything about God; it means that you have a growing desire to identify yourself as a Christian. It means that you are seeking a community of faith in which your spirit can be nourished in God’s love and thus be encouraged to follow Christ into the world and share that love with all.

BAPTISM

The Sacrament of Baptism signifies our incorporation into the body of Christ. It is a sign of inclusion in God’s grace and covenant. Baptism gives us our identity in Christ and informs our membership by calling us to a life of Christian discipleship. In the Presbyterian Church, we recognize and welcome baptism from any Christian denomination by any method. If you have previously been baptized, you do not need to be baptized again. We believe that baptism is a gift from God that signifies God’s faithfulness and not our faithfulness. We believe that faith is an up and down journey. Human beings constantly need to renew their commitment to God. Yet, baptism only needs to occur once since God’s love is eternal and needs no renewal. Baptism signifies the beginning of life in Christ, not its completion. Thus, we believe it makes no difference whether it is received as an infant or as an adult. In baptism, we are constantly called to respond to God’s gift of grace by committing ourselves to Christ in *every* moment of our lives.

WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER OF A CHURCH?

Jesus!!! – Although the Church isn’t perfect, it is the only organization in the world that is all about Jesus! And, Jesus reveals God’s love for this world in the most amazing and hope-filled way! Jesus has commissioned the church to be his hands and feet in the world. Jesus has called the church to help usher in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus invites the church to participate in a kingdom where there is healing and hope for all. Jesus organized the church to share his love, his grace, and his peace for the entire world. How awesome it is to be a part of that!!!

Community - Not only is the church awesome because it is the only organization in the world that is all about Jesus, but it is also awesome because it brings us into a community of relationships built upon the love of Christ. The friendships we make through the church are incredible! At church, we share some of the greatest moments of our lives. As you grow and mature, in sickness and in health, in good times and bad, the Church is place where you can be surrounded with love and support. Of course, there is a personal dimension to the gospel, but there is also a social dimension. We are not meant to live life alone. The writings of the New Testament are always addressed to living out Christian discipleship within the context of a community. And, you know, heaven is never described as personal; it is always communal.

Purpose – Again, for Jesus, there was no such thing as private spirituality. Jesus was about bringing people together. And, Jesus wanted people to come together so that this world might be transformed by the love of God. Someone once said, “There are two great days in your life: the day you are born and the day you discover why.” At Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church, you will be challenged to discover who you are and what it means to participate in the love of God. You will be challenged to work together in serving others, to pray, to give, to learn, and to grow. Gathering here every Sunday, reminds us that there is so much more to life than our own little world that we concoct for ourselves. Gathering here every Sunday reminds us of the resurrection hope – that God’s love is stronger than darkness and death. Gathering here every Sunday reminds us that God is good and that there really is meaning and purpose to it all.

MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

As with many things in life, you get out of membership at Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church what you put into it! As you search for a church home, we invite you to prayerfully consider making a commitment to God, yourself, and your church family. Every member is a minister and is encouraged to accept Christ's call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of the Church. Such involvement includes activities such as:

- + 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 and love in the world through service to others,
- + Living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural, and social relationships of life,
- + 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, and considering ways in which one's participation in the worship and service of the church may be increased and made more meaningful.

"Active Members" of Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church are people who have made a profession of faith in Christ, have been baptized, have been received into membership by the Session, and actively participate in the church's work and worship. An "Active Member" is entitled to all the rights and privileges of the church, including the right to present children for Baptism, to take part in meetings of the congregation, and to vote and hold office. (Persons who are not members of, or who may have ceased active participation, are always welcome and can still participate in the life and worship of this church and receive its pastoral care and instruction. The invitation to the Lord's Supper is extended to all who trust in Jesus no matter their church affiliation). Furthermore, in keeping with the Reformed understanding of the priesthood of all believers, every member is to be viewed as a minister. We are all equally important participants in the body of Christ. It is our intention that the special gifts and abilities that God has given each "minister member" will be valued and incorporated into the whole life of the church.

GROWING IN CHRIST

We believe that the ultimate goal is for all people through Christ to grow together in an ever-deepening relationship of love with our Creator. We are to grow in Christian love and discipleship not only as individuals, but also as a church, with the community around us, and with the entire world. Most importantly, growth begins with God's grace. There are many ways to grow and respond to God's grace. However, there are some foundational habits of discipleship which can help to create an environment for growth and love. We encourage every church member to:

- + Read at least one verse of scripture every single day.
- + Participate in some sort of small group with Christ-centered relationships.
- + At least once a month, invite someone who you don't know very well to share a meal with you.
- + Volunteer in an area where you have a God-given passion to make a difference.
- + Pray continuously.
- + Give generously.
- + Worship regularly.

"Remember, wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are, our Lord has a purpose in your being there. Christ who indwells you has something he wants to do through you. Believe it and go in God's grace and power."

– Richard Halverson, former Chaplain of the U.S. Senate.

NAME: _____ SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

THE VOWS YOU MAKE WHEN YOU JOIN THE CHURCH

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life? I DO

Do you confess your need of the forgiveness of sins and with a humble and contrite heart put your whole trust in the mercy of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? I DO

Do you intend to be Christ's faithful disciple, being in fellowship and peace with the people of God, and obeying Christ's Word and showing his love? I DO

Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, share in its worship and ministry through your prayers and gifts, your study and service and so fulfill your calling to be a disciple of Christ Jesus? I WILL, WITH GOD'S GRACE

WAYS TO BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR CHURCH

Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church welcomes all who desire membership. You can become a member of our church in four ways. *Please check the one box that applies to you.*

BAPTISM AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

If you have never been baptized, we would be glad to help you as you begin your Christian journey as an active member of the Church.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH FOR THOSE PREVIOUSLY BAPTIZED

If you were baptized as a child, but have never made a profession of faith or have never officially joined a church as an active member, then we invite you to affirm your faith in God and participate as an active member of Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church.

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSFER

We believe that every church and every Christian denomination is a part of the body of Christ. In God's eyes, we are all members of the same Church. So, if you have been a member of any Christian church, you may request a certificate of transfer. We will send a letter to your previous congregation to notify them of your desire to transfer your membership from their rolls.

Name of Previous Church _____

Address of Previous Church _____

REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH

It is sometimes the case that persons who were members of another church are unable to secure a certificate of transfer or other evidence of church membership. If this is the case, you can become an active member of our church by making a reaffirmation of your faith.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full Name _____

Preferred Name _____ Birthdate (m/d/y) _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

Cell Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Hobbies _____ Occupation _____

Please list the members of your family who live in your household.

Name (and relation)	Birthday	Baptized? / Church Affiliation?
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How did you originally hear about Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church, and why are you choosing to make SMPC your church home?

What areas of ministry and service give you the most joy?

Have you previously been ordained an elder/deacon/pastor?

Is there anything else that you would like our congregation to know about you?

We would like to include a short bio of each of our new members in our newsletter. Please let us know what you feel comfortable for us to include about you. This info will only be sent to members, but it is sent through both a hard copy and an email copy.

If you are comfortable sharing, we would like to make it look like the following:

Name: Brad Busiek

Tell us about your family. I am married to Amy with two children: Ben (10) and Phoebe (8). I have one brother and my parents live in Texas.

Share a little bit about your background: I grew up in Houston, TX and learned to play baseball in the hot and humid Texas heat. I attended a United Methodist Church until I left to go to college in San Antonio. I majored in biology with plans to go to medical school, but I felt called to go seminary in New Jersey. I was a pastor in Charlotte, NC for 14 years.

What do you do for fun? I like to be outside hiking, camping, and playing sports. I enjoy baseball, basketball, golf, tennis, and skiing.

Why church? Without Jesus and without a Christian community, I think I would feel so alone and hopeless in this world. I like being a part of SMPC and how we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

What is your contact info? 2474 SE Jasmine Way; Gresham, OR 97080; bradbusiek@yahoo.com; 503-539-3277

Name:

Tell us about your family:

Share a little bit about your background:

What do you do for fun?

Why church?

What is your contact info?