

# Queens

REFORMATION  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

*a mission work of*  
the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

## WHY ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN?

### What is an Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

Perhaps you may have heard each of the pieces before: Church, Presbyterian—even Orthodox. But what do we mean by putting them together? What is an “Orthodox Presbyterian”?

Though there is a detailed history behind the name, the meaning is simple: honesty and consistency. An ‘orthodox’ person is someone who tries to live a life that honestly reflects the principles they believe. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church tries to live consistently with the principles of Presbyterian Christianity. What does this mean?

### A Christian Church

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a Christian Church. At the most basic level, this means that we believe what the Bible says and try to put it into practice. We believe that the books of the Old and New Testaments are not just reflections on religious experience, but the actual revelation of our Creator. Accordingly, we believe that every word of the Bible is true.

Though the Bible is a long book, we believe that the heart of its message is fairly simple: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life,” (John 3.16). There is one God. He exists eternally. He is three persons. In the person of Jesus Christ, this Three-in-One (Triune) God entered human history. Why? Because the entire human race had rebelled against him. This rebellion is what the Bible means when it speaks of ‘sin.’

Most of us don’t think of ourselves as ‘sinners.’ When we compare ourselves to others, we tend to think that we are “pretty good people.” But haven’t we all acted selfishly? Isn’t it easy to act selfishly? Have we ever met even a single person who didn’t act selfishly?

But according to the Bible, there is one person who never acted selfishly. Jesus entered history because he delights to rescue his enemies. He lived and died so selfish people like you and I would be delivered from our sin and selfishness, given a new heart, and transformed into new people. Who does Jesus rescue? All who respond to him in faith.

Of course, there are many other religions in the world. Most of them share at least four common concerns with Christianity: a quest for God, answers to the problem with humanity, the desire for salvation, and a hunger to know the meaning of life. Facing these questions, various world religions give different answers. But there is one thing that every non-Christian religion has in common. No matter how they define terms such as God, sin, or salvation, they are all agreed that salvation is something we must do. In other religions, success depends on our effort. Every other religion teaches its devotees to live a certain way in the hope of earning acceptance.

But isn’t this a contradiction? How can selfish people ever be devoted to something other than themselves? Isn’t selfish devotion an oxymoron—a contradiction in terms? Isn’t the very idea nauseating? Who wants to live like this? And who would reward us for it? Is there no better way?

Christianity proclaims a better way.

We are all much worse than we think, but God is far better than we imagine. All our efforts at self-deliverance are doomed. But there is good news! In the person and work of his Son, God has already done everything necessary to save us. By his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus secured forgiveness of sins and eternal life for all who desire it. He offers new life—his own resurrection life—to all people. All we have to do is trust him as our true King and only Savior.

In trusting him, we are transformed and begin to live new lives. Though our practices may at points resemble those of world religions, our motive is completely different. World religions command us to earn acceptance. Christianity teaches that we live new lives because we have been accepted already through Jesus!

This is why Christians call the message of the Bible “good news” (gospel)—because we believe it is completely different, radically better, and uniquely true. As a Christian Church, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is committed to proclaiming this gospel of Jesus Christ to all people.

## **A Presbyterian Church**

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is also a Presbyterian Church. In its essence, this means three things. We are confessional. We are connectional. We are international.

As a confessional church, we publish an official confession. Every church has some understanding of what the Bible teaches (a confession). The only question is whether they make it official by putting it in print. True to our desire to be honest and consistent, in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church we insist on being transparent about what we believe the Bible teaches. That is why we publish an official confession.

The confession of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Westminster Larger Catechism, and the Westminster Shorter Catechisms. These documents are summaries. When necessary, they may be modified. But they never take the place of the Bible, our primary standard.

How does a confession help? First, it links us to the church of history. Just as historians make use of earlier records to link their efforts to historians of the past, so our confession makes use of the labors of Christians in previous centuries. Through it, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is connected to believers from the very earliest centuries of the Christian Church. Second, it links us to each other. Just as every state in the USA must follow the United States' Constitution, so every congregation in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church must follow the Orthodox Presbyterian Church's confession.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church expresses its connectional character not only through our confession, but also by embracing an intentional structure. Just

as US citizens are led by local, state, and federal government, so congregations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are led by their session, their presbytery, and the General Assembly. A session is the elected body of men known as elders. Groups of congregations in the same geographic region send elders (also known as presbyters) to a body called the presbytery. In turn, each presbytery in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church elects presbyters to attend the national General Assembly. At every level, Orthodox Presbyterian church government provides accountability and connects each congregation to the worldwide mission of the church.

As an international church, we cultivate a global Christian identity. Recognizing that all human societies are temporary, we seek to avoid being controlled by any one national culture or political agenda. Rather, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church seeks to establish the worship of God and take the gospel of Jesus Christ to all groups of people in the world—to every face, in every race, in every place.

## **A Growing Church**

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a growing church. In North America, we plant new rural and urban churches (Home Missions and Church Extension). Overseas, we sponsor missionaries who work to raise up indigenous churches (Foreign Missions). At home and abroad, we publish books, pamphlets, and magazines aimed to help Christians follow Jesus better (Christian Education).

Perhaps this last point is the most important thing to remember about the Orthodox Presbyterian Church: we are committed to following Jesus better. In making this commitment, we recognize that there are many ways in which we fall short. We are not a perfect church, nor are we the only Christian church. Yet it is our sincere desire to be honest and consistent in our life, worship, and witness—an Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

## **REFORMATION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

*meeting at*  
Public School 173  
174-10 67th Avenue  
Fresh Meadows  
Queens, NY

Worship 10:00 AM  
Coffee Break 11:15 AM  
Sunday Study 11:45 AM

**Jon Shishko, Pastor**  
718-404-9410  
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Reformation Pulpit sermons  
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