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Dear Tenth Inquirer,

I am delighted that you are considering membership with the Tenth Church body. Committing to a church body is an essential component in your own spiritual growth for two basic reasons. One, you need what the church offers: the teaching, the sacraments, the shepherds of the elders, the service of the deacons, and the nurturing support of your fellow brothers and sisters. Two, you need, for your own sake, to make a commitment to others—to identify with them as followers of Christ, to be there for them providing nurturing support and service. We all need to be in a place where we can count on the help of others and others can count on us.

This class is designed to help you understand Tenth Church before making that commitment, as well as for church leaders to get to know you. Elders and ministers will be dropping in and teaching the class. Hopefully, you will meet the elder known as your parish elder at the first class. And at the end, if you decide to pursue membership, you will give your Christian testimony to elders in a group setting.

There is but one requirement for joining the church, which is to demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You are not required to hold to all of Tenth’s doctrinal stances. If, however, you have questions about our beliefs and practices, do not hesitate to meet with an elder or pastor. This also holds true if you have private concerns. As one of Tenth’s pastors, I am available to meet with you.

The lessons are put together in such a way as to address the questions of membership. Those questions are:

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving his displeasure, and without hope save in his sovereign mercy?

2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered in the Gospel?

3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?

4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?

5. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

I trust that you will find the classes profitable. May the Lord’s blessings be with you.

In Christ,

Liam Goligher
Senior Minister
THE GOSPEL

Membership questions considered:

1. Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving his displeasure, and without hope save in his
   sovereign mercy?

2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for
   salvation as he is offered in the Gospel?

The Gospel

It is good to join a church. Even so, one can pass their whole life in a church never understanding the gospel, and consequently believing they are accepted by God when they have never known him. That sounds extreme, but it is worth considering. Here are six types of people who join churches.

Moral Person—The good moral person lives under high standards for a moral life. He upholds the Ten Commandments; he believes that it is critical to live by a code of conduct. He accepts that he must be responsible in the way that he lives.

Church Person—The church person faithfully attends church and tries to be involved in church activities. He knows that God expects people to attend church and pay due tribute. Church is also the place to learn how to be a better person.

Thinking Person—The thinking person enjoys intellectual pursuit, which includes God or religion. He sees good reason for believing in God and concurs after reflection that Jesus deserves his respect. God “makes sense” in his understanding of reality.

Sincere Person—The sincere person acknowledges that he is not outwardly as good and self-disciplined as the others, and yet he points out that what really matters is the heart. It is better to be good hearted and to mean well, than to be cold hearted and upright.

Polite Person—The polite person accompanies his spouse or children to church and goes along with them out of politeness. Church is good for people who need that kind of thing, and he is willing to be supportive.

Works Person—The works person believes that God has placed each of us on earth to do something good. What matters is putting what you believe into action. God helps those who help others, and so, get involved.

All of these traits are good traits to have. It is good to be moral, to faithfully attend church, to think carefully, to be sincere and polite, and to do good works. But all of these persons have a fatal flaw: they place their trust for salvation in themselves. The moral person trusts that God will accept his moral character. The church person trusts that God will accept his church attendance. The thinking person trusts that God is pleased with good reasoning. The sincere person trusts that God will accept his innate good heart. The polite person trusts that God is a gentleman and will accept someone who also shows courtesy. And the good works person trusts that God will accept his good works.

This common trust in something about themselves makes the gospel a stumbling block. For the gospel requires a mindset that changes the very way we approach God and salvation, and that requires what is most difficult—humility.
Other religions and philosophies teach that God or salvation is something we reach through effort. I attain salvation through good works or moral living or fulfilling religious duties or at least by going along good-naturedly with what others want of me. I know God through clear reasoning or by listening to my heart. The gospel, however, says that there is nothing I can do to earn God’s acceptance. Learning the requirements expected of me and then working to accomplish them will do me no good. This is what I mean when I say that we have to change the way we approach God.

Hearing that self-effort is not the way to God makes the gospel difficult to accept because of what it implies about us. We cannot reach God by self-effort because our sinful condition makes us incapable of any effort that pleases God. Indeed, as far as the gospel is concerned, our sinful condition has not merely made us sick spiritually, but dead. We can do as much for ourselves spiritually as the dead can do to make themselves come back alive.

What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. 

As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one…” Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin…There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God…(Romans 3:9–10, 19, 20, 22, 23)

The gospel requires that we admit that such is our condition. How do you feel about this? Does it bother you to be told that you are bad and that you are helpless to do anything about it? Do you claim that God is pleased with what he sees in you or at least that you are not as bad as made out to be? If so, then you do not understand the gospel, and you are not spiritually alive to receive salvation. If you were, you would be in full agreement that your sinful condition was your plight. If you have yet to know Christ’s salvation, you will be feeling miserable about your condition. If you do know his salvation, you will be feeling thankful to him for saving you.

Knowing your condition is the first step in the right direction to knowing God and his salvation. The essential next step is to acknowledge your only remedy, which is the work of Jesus Christ. What is that work? It is his death on the cross by which he saved us from the guilt of our sins. In order to be saved from your sins you must have faith in Jesus Christ.

Consider these passages from the book of Ephesians which helps put these concepts of sin, Christ’s work, and our faith in perspective.

In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace… In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory…

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved…For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast...(Ephesians 1:7,13–14; 2:1–7,9).

We are redeemed, i.e. our sins are forgiven through Christ shedding his blood on the cross for us. Upon hearing the gospel of this salvation and believing in Christ, that salvation is applied to us. Even the believing, though, comes from God’s grace because we are dead in our sins and would not respond with God’s Spirit at work in us.

Faith—believing in God and in Christ’s work—is a scandalous means of salvation to many. Some say it is foolish. Believing that we are saved by faith places wishing or feeling over knowledge. Others say the idea is unjust. It places
profession over heart or action. Why should right belief excuse wrong behavior? Shouldn’t one be judged by the heart rather than the intellect? Shouldn’t one be judged by action rather than profession?

Others say that salvation by faith is harsh, for it condemns honest doubt or other honest belief in other viewpoints. Why should one be condemned for not believing a set of propositions? Why condemn honest doubt? Faith by definition concedes lack of conclusive proof; why then condemn the doubter? Why condemn other “faiths”?

Let’s think this through. What is saving faith? It has three components: believing, obeying, and trusting.

First, it is believing. Believe what? You must, as Paul and Silas told the jailer, Believe in the Lord Jesus... (Acts 16:30–31). What does that mean? Believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior, that he has done the work that saves us from our sins. Paul summed it up this way in 1 Corinthians 15:1–4:

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

What you believe matters, and it is this insistence that we believe rightly that offends people. It seems wrong to base salvation on beliefs and not on right living or “good hearts.” How can we link a saving relationship with God to a belief system? God does because the belief system is revealed by God and is about God himself. And this is why believing is so important to him. Let’s look at this further.

Believing is about whom you believe. To believe the gospel is to believe God. To reject the gospel is to reject God. The unbeliever says, “I’m not rejecting God; I just need more evidence that what the Bible claims about God is true.” But the Bible teaches otherwise. It claims that people do not believe because they refuse to. The famous verse John 3:16 is part of a fuller discourse on this subject:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light... (John 3:16-19).

We are not objective about the gospel. This isn’t hard to understand. Jurors are disqualified if they are personally related to a case because of natural bias. How much more difficult is it to form an objective opinion about a matter that will upset everything in your life, which is what the gospel does? And this is God’s point. The truth of the matter is that we don’t want to believe in his gospel. It is too costly and too humbling, whatever we may say otherwise.

Believing the gospel also reveals what we believe about God. These ideas of the gospel are, after all, about God—who he is, what he says about us, what he has done for us, and what he requires of us. To reject them is to reject him. Again, he takes it personally, just as we would. Take, for example, a man, wooing a woman. He says to her, “It’s not important for me to know you as you are or even as you want to be known; I have a particular image of you and that is what’s important to me. As long as I show you love that should be enough for you.” Will the woman be enraptured? No, she will be insulted that the man is merely using her to satisfy his own fantasy. He can do all the good works for her—give her gifts, be romantic—but the bottom line is that those things are meaningless if he is not interested in who she really is.

Take another example. A man takes his fiancée to see a beautiful piece of property and says to her, “I am going to build for you here your dream home.” He pulls out the drawings, shows how he has financed it and the schedule for
the work.” She replies, “Dear, you are just dreaming, but I love you anyhow.” Will he be happy that she expressed her love? No, he will be offended that she did not believe him, or rather, believe in him.

That is what we say to God when we do not believe. “God, your evidence is not enough. The Bible is not enough. You are not doing a good enough job to satisfy me. I would like to believe, but you’ve got to do a better job.”

Faith also involves obeying. It is one thing to say we believe; it is another to act on belief. A person shows what he believes by how he lives. The objection—I should be judged by my actions, not my beliefs—presupposes that the two can be separated. Profession of beliefs and actions can be separated, but not true belief and actions.

In Isaiah 29:13, God complains These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.

We understand God’s position. His people profess faith in him, but their actions prove otherwise. The financial advisor will say that if you want to know what a person’s real priorities are, look at his checkbook. The marriage counselor will say that if you want to know how much a husband loves his wife, observe how much time he spends with her.

Finally, faith includes trusting. Trusting is believing, but it brings out an aspect of belief that speaks to a relationship, specifically about feeling. To believe that God is our Creator is to trust him to do what he promises. To believe that God has sent his Son to save us from our sins is to trust him to save us. To believe God is to trust him to know truth that we cannot know, to know reality that we cannot see, and then to act upon that trust with confidence he will carry out his will.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5–6).

Do you think religion should be a matter of the heart? Belief is a matter of the heart. Your heart will take you where it places its trust. Consider the scene at a fire. A young child is in a second story window with fire shooting up from the first floor. A fireman is on the ground coaxing the child to jump out of the window, over the flames, into his arms. It goes against his reason. He is safe now where there are no flames, and he is being asked to jump into danger. But something in the fireman’s voice, and perhaps his looks, gives him enough confidence to trust this man, and he jumps against the evidence.

To believe God, to obey him, to trust him—that is what saving faith is about. It is a personal matter that reveals the heart and produces action.

Why is faith essential? Because it glorifies and honors God fully. Faith gives all the credit to God as he should have. Skeptics ask, What does it matter to God if he gets the credit or not. If God is satisfied in himself, what does he care what we think, or why should he hold against us what we are too small or dysfunctional to believe properly? How big of a deal can glorifying God be?

It is what we were made for. “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever,” as the first answer in the Westminster catechism explains. The first chapter in Ephesians harps on this theme: God predestined us in love to be his sons...to the praise of the glory of his grace...We...have been predestined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory...the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory (5–6, 12–13). Glorifying God is what life is about; it is the highest good and the highest joy.

Faith also best demonstrates the riches of God’s grace. Let’s read again from Ephesians.
As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins…Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (1–9).

How should we respond to such an act of God? “Thanks, God. Let me pay you for this.” No! The great God of the universe has given us a gift, and not just any gift—the sacrifice of his only Son to remove the guilt of our condemning sins. We have offended the holy God and he has not merely spared us, he has lifted us up with Christ. We are seated with him now by faith in glory, and someday we shall dwell in glory. And all by his grace to show his incomparable riches to us! How could we even consider making an offer?

There will be works from us, to be sure. As Paul goes on to say: For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (10). Our works, though, will not be payment for, but rather testimony to the riches of God. Nothing but faith can be the appropriate response that glorifies God.

Now, again, what is your response? Do you feel dissatisfied with this understanding of faith? Do you insist that more needs to be done? Then the gospel remains a stumbling block and you do not grasp its truth. To know God, you must regard faith as essential and personal. You must apprehend the helplessness of your condition, and put your trust fully in the power of God.

See how the gospel’s salvation is the easiest and hardest offer to take? All you have to do is believe, the easiest thing to do. But to believe, you must fully humble yourself, the hardest thing to do. And yet, with it comes the greatest reward—the joy of your salvation and peace with God.
Membership question considered:

3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?

Doctrine

Critical to following Christ is understanding how the gospel applies to a life of discipleship. There can be a tendency to downplay doctrine, as though it is peripheral to Christian living. We think that what matters is knowing the things we must do to stay on the right course. But it is knowledge of God and what he has done and is doing that enables us to live as disciples. As the Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers:

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come (Ephesians 1:15–21).

If we do not understand our God; if we do not know what is the hope to which he has called us, we will stumble in our path no matter how sincere or zealous we may be. What are the things that we are to know? Tenth Church believes these things are wrapped up in what are commonly known as the “doctrines of grace.” The theology is Reformed theology, growing out of the Reformation and crystallized in the teachings of John Calvin. Thus it is often called Calvinism. Our official creeds which set forth these doctrines are The Westminster Confession of Faith, The Larger Catechism, and The Shorter Catechism. Popular summaries are the Five Points of Calvinism and the Five Sola’s.

Here are the Five Sola’s.

Sola Scriptura. The foundational principle for Reformation is sola Scriptura, or “Scripture alone.” The importance of this principle should be obvious from everything we have said about being a biblical church. Sola Scriptura simply means that the Bible alone is our only ultimate authority. The Roman Catholic Church taught (and continues to teach) that church tradition has equal authority with the Bible. As Presbyterians, we acknowledge that the church has true spiritual authority. However, we believe that the Bible alone—not the church, not a confession, and certainly not our own private judgment—is our ultimate authority for faith and practice. Other authorities must all submit to Scripture, and to the extent that they depart from biblical teaching, they are to be resisted.

Solus Christus. The next reformational principle is solus Christus, or “Christ alone.” Every church says it is committed to Christ. The problem in the Middle Ages (and also today) was that people were adding other things to Christ as the basis for their salvation. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus Christ has done everything that needs to be done to save us, keeping God’s law to make us righteous before God and dying in our place to atone for our sins. Our hope is the same as that of the apostle Paul, who wanted to “gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith” (Philippians 3:9). Salvation is not our work, or even Christ’s work plus our work, but Christ’s work alone.

Sola gratia. The salvation we have in Christ is given to us sola gratia, or “by grace alone.” As sinful human beings we have no claim on God’s mercy. As a matter of strict justice, the only thing God owes us is wrath against our sin. So if he does save us, it is only because of his sovereign mercy, which he shows to some but not to all. This doctrine is in sharp contrast to the many people today—including many evangelicals—who believe that human beings are
basically good, that God owes everyone a chance to be saved, and that salvation ultimately depends on our own good decision to follow God. But human beings are not basically good, and apart from God’s saving grace, no one would ever be saved. In our lost and fallen condition, we are not capable of earning, seeking, or even cooperating with God’s grace. The initiative in salvation always comes from God as his Spirit convicts us of sin, causes us to understand the gospel, calls us to faith in Christ, and gives us new spiritual life. Since all of this happens by grace alone, there is no human method or technique we can use to save ourselves or anyone else. Conversion is a gracious and supernatural gift from God.

Sola fide. Even our faith is a gift from God, because it is only by his grace that we are able to believe the gospel. Here we come to what is perhaps the best known of all the Reformation slogans—what John Calvin called “the main hinge on which salvation turns:” *sola fide*, or “faith alone.” The Reformers used this phrase as a convenient way to summarize their teaching about salvation. How does God save sinners? The full answer is that we are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Or to put it more simply, we are justified by faith alone. Justification is God’s holy declaration that a person is righteous in his sight. Since we are sinners, we cannot be justified on the basis of our own righteousness; we can only be declared righteous on the basis of what Jesus has done. And the way his righteousness becomes ours is by faith: “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe” (Romans 3:22). We are not justified by anything we can do, but by believing in what Christ has done. Righteousness is a gift from God. As the Scripture also says, “By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Soli Deo gloria. The fifth great doctrine of the Reformation—and the goal of all the others—is *soli Deo gloria*, or “to God alone be the glory.” This doctrine rightly acknowledges that the supreme purpose for everything is for God alone to receive all the honor and praise. Our salvation is all from God, so that he and he alone will receive all the praise. According to the opening answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, in words so often quoted from the Tenth pulpit, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.” Rather than claiming any credit for ourselves, our deepest desire is to see God glorified in everything we do. To him be the glory forever!

These five great doctrines continue to nourish our faith. As Dr. Boice wrote, “Without these five confessional statements—Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, and glory to God alone—we do not have a true church, and certainly not one that will survive for very long. For how can any church be a true and faithful church if it does not stand for Scripture alone, is not committed to a biblical gospel, and does not exist for God’s glory? A church without these convictions has ceased to be a true church, whatever else it may be.” So we at Tenth continue to hold these convictions. We honor the principle of *sola Scriptura* by making God’s Word the foundation for our worship, teaching, and witness. We honor the principle of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone by denying any merit of our own and putting complete trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ. And we honor the principle of *soli Deo gloria* by making the glory of God our ultimate aim in all we do.

There is one further principle for reformation that we seek to honor, and that is *semper reformanda*—“always reforming.” Reformation is not a bygone era in church history, but a biblical imperative. We are not content with our progress in ministry, but like the Reformers, seek a continual reformation by the life-transforming power of God’s Spirit.

The Five Points of Calvinism are another convenient summary of the teachings of the Reformation, specifically regarding their teaching about the salvation of Christians. These doctrines are usually identified as Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and the Perseverance of the saints. The first letters of

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3 For a full biblical exposition of these doctrines, see James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken, *The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2002).
these phrases form the acronym TULIP, which is another way these doctrines are identified. What do these
doctrines teach?

Total depravity. This doctrine does not mean—as it is sometimes thought—that we are all as bad as we can possibly
be. Nor does it mean that we are wholly evil in everything we do. Rather, it means that nothing we do is ever
completely good. Sin pervades every part of our physical, intellectual, and emotional makeup, so that nothing we are
or do is completely free from sin. In this sinful state we have no inclination to seek God, and therefore cannot seek
him, or even respond to the gospel when it is presented to us. As the Scripture says, we are “dead in our trespasses
and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). We cannot even see our need for Christ until God first gives us spiritual understanding.

Unconditional election. If we are totally depraved, then salvation must be a work that God accomplishes and applies
without any assistance on our part. Left to ourselves, we will never seek him, so he must reach out and save us (if, in
fact, we are to be saved). And this is what God does. The first step is his choice to save us, which is what the word
election refers to. The salvation of any individual Christian is determined by the prior decision of God, who “chose us
in Christ before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). “Unconditional” indicates that God made this
decision apart from anything good that he might have foreseen in us. If election were based on anything that sinners
might be or do, then ultimately salvation would depend on human merit. But in order to prove that salvation is all
of grace, election is a loving act of God’s totally sovereign will.

Limited atonement. The doctrine of limited atonement does not mean that somehow the death of Christ did not
accomplish everything it was supposed to accomplish (thus the word “limited” is somewhat misleading; it is more
accurate to call the doctrine “definite atonement” or “particular redemption”). Rather, it means that the atonement
had a specific object in view—namely, the salvation of those whom the Father had given to the Son before the
foundation of the world—and that it was effective in saving those persons. By dying on the cross, Christ did not
merely make salvation possible, but actually achieved it. He made real satisfaction for the sins of his people, offering
himself as their perfect substitute. His death truly atoned for their sins, but not for the sins of those who never
come to him in faith. In keeping with God’s plan, the cross only has saving efficacy for the elect.

Irresistible grace. Somehow the benefits of Christ’s atoning work must be applied to the elect. This is the work of God
the Holy Spirit, whose inward operation enables sinners to repent and believe in Christ. In addition to the outward
call of the gospel, which by God’s command is made to everyone, the Holy Spirit issues an inward call to salvation.
This inward calling is made only to the elect and inevitably draws them to faith in Christ. Because God is sovereign
in their salvation, it is not possible for them permanently or effectively to reject his effectual calling. God’s grace is
irresistible and invincible; the Spirit never fails to accomplish his saving purpose in the minds, hearts, and wills of
God’s chosen people.

The perseverance of the saints. This doctrine has two parts. First, it teaches that God perseveres with his people,
remaining faithful to the very end. As the Scripture says, “he who began a good work in you will bring it to
completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). The perseverance of the saints depends on the perseverance
of their Savior. Second, the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints teaches that because God perseveres with us,
we also persevere. The saints are simply God’s people, who are considered holy through the work of his Son.
Perseverance means that God’s true saints will never fall away, but will persevere to the very end and inherit eternal
life. For those whom God “predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom
he justified he also glorified” (Romans 8:30). As this verse implies, the perseverance of the saints is really the
preservation of the saints, for our perseverance depends on God’s preserving grace. It is God’s faithfulness, rather
than our own, that will bring us to glory.

Together these five Presbyterian doctrines preserve the sovereignty of God’s grace. Rather than emphasizing what
human beings can do to choose God or remain faithful to him, we believe that from beginning to end salvation is
all of God, and all of his grace. God really does save sinners! We are dead in our sins, and therefore could do nothing
to save ourselves, but God has done and will continue to do everything necessary for our salvation: choosing, redeeming, calling, and preserving. Thus the one point of Calvinism that together the Five Points aim to demonstrate is that every aspect of salvation is the absolutely gracious work of our totally sovereign God.

Consider the difference these doctrines make in our efforts to follow Christ. Paul opens his letter to the Ephesians expressing these doctrines:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved (1:3–6).

What is filling Paul with thankfulness to God? It is that he and his fellow believers had been chosen by God before the foundation of the world. God knew his people—he knew us—all along. There never was a time in which our salvation was in doubt. We did not get saved through a lottery system. And God was never in a position in which he was left to “do his best” to try and save us. We have always been safe in his hands. Is that not a comforting thought? It is meant to be. It is meant to be a joyous thought that leads to praise.

What else? God chose us to “be holy and blameless before him.” This is a rich concept. God did not choose us to be pretty good, to get along the best we can. He chose us to be holy and blameless. But isn’t that a discouraging thought, considering how unholy and blameworthy we still are? It could be, if we thought that this was merely the expectations God has for us and not what he has done and is doing in us.

In Jesus Christ, we are holy and blameless. That is what it means to be justified by Jesus’ work on the cross. The great exchange that took place on the cross was that Jesus took the guilt of our sin and gave to us his righteousness. We are made righteous by his work and by the faith we exercise (by God’s gift of the Holy Spirit) in that work (Ephesians 2:8–9). Romans 3:24–26 teaches:

[we] are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

So, the Holy Spirit works faith in us to believe in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross to justify us—i.e. to cover us with his righteousness and place us in a legal state of being holy and blameless before God. The struggle to prove ourselves worthy enough to be accepted by God is over. Isn’t that comforting to know? God is not angry with us. We are not his enemies; we are not the black sheep of the family whom he has to accept begrudgingly. In Christ, we are counted as holy and blameless.

Even so, God does not leave us to struggle alone in the very real remnant of sin that encumbers us in this life. He gives us his Holy Spirit to sanctify us, who is furthermore the seal of our salvation, assuring that we will receive our “inheritance until we acquire possession of it” (Ephesians 1:14). Do you become discouraged that you will never overcome sin? Do you worry that you might not finish the race and fail to receive your inheritance? Rest assured that “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

God has chosen you to be his in Christ before you were born. He has sent Jesus Christ to accomplish the work of your redemption. He has sent his Holy Spirit to awaken you so that you would repent of your sin and turn to Christ in faith. That same Spirit remains in you to assure that you do finish the race set before you and enter into glory. This is the hope set before you. This is what the doctrines of grace are about. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit do the work necessary to make you, who once were “dead in [your] trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1) alive in Christ and reconciled to God.
Again, does this not comfort you to know that God has done and is doing all the work necessary for your salvation? Does it not comfort you know that the matter of receiving your glorious inheritance rests not on your ability to be faithful but upon God's ability? It is not comforting to know that you have been adopted through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of God's will and that he now accepts you as his child, that he has not placed on you the burden of having to keep proving yourself worthy to be accepted?

Does it not lead you to give glory and praise to God? As you grasp this blessed truth, you see furthermore, how God works all things for his purposes and good will. You recognize that he is sovereign; he is in control of all things and of everyone, which itself is a freeing realization. For if God is in control, you do not have to relive the past, bemoaning about the “ifs” of life. You do not need to fear the future, again worried about what might happen if. You may rest; you make take comfort in the wisdom and power of God.

How does such knowledge impact your ability to live as a follower of Christ? It is the difference of walking a path in fear and in confidence. The greater the fear, the more likely you will stumble. But the more confidence that you have in Christ, the more capable you become in following him. The more you rest in belonging to your Father, the more active you will become in serving your Father. Indeed, you now serve for the right reason—to glorify God, rather than to appease him. You serve out of love rather than fear.

You also put confidence and boasting in the right place. Because you know you were dead in your sin and trespasses and that you could do nothing to save yourself, that even the exercising of faith is a gift; because of such knowledge you are less likely to stumble over your own pride. All boasting is in the Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26–31).

Understanding the doctrines of grace, then, leads to glorifying God, to rejoicing in God, to taking comfort in God. Such knowledge gives the freedom to live as followers of Christ in confidence that is founded in who God is and the work he has done and still does. It is to live out the first question and answer of The Shorter Catechism: What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.
Church Government & Discipline

Membership question to consider:

5. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

Church Government

Though this is the last membership question asked, it is this question that separates church members from church attenders and needs to be understood before moving too far along in the membership process. As church attenders, you may participate in the life of the church—attend worship, serve in most ministries, even receive pastoral care. But it is as a member that you submit yourself to the government and discipline of Tenth Church. To understand what this step involves, you need to know whom you would be submitting to and what discipline entails.

If we were to diagram church government structures, we would see that Presbyterianism differs markedly from Roman Catholic/Episcopal form and Congregationalism. Rule in the Roman church assumes a top-down, hierarchical system of popes, archbishops, bishops, etc. In Congregationalism, the people of the congregation assume authority in the church. Presbyterianism, on the other hand, allows for a limited democracy whereby the elders serve as representatives of the congregation.

To guide the leadership of the Presbyterian Church, three major doctrinal documents are used: The Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The Book of Church Order provides the leadership of the church with a form of government, rules of discipline and a directory of worship. Presbyterian principles include the following: (1) that church government must be in accord with general principles set forth in Scripture; (2) Jesus Christ is Lord of the Church; and (3) church governance is by a parity of elders.

Within Presbyterian churches, there are two governmental offices: elder and deacon (1 Timothy 3:1–7). Elders oversee the welfare of the congregation and shepherd the members (1 Peter 5:1-2). Two types of elders serve on the governing board called the Session, each having the same authority but focusing on different gifts. Teaching Elders are ordained ministers called primarily to be teachers of the Word. Ruling Elders are lay leaders elected by the congregation and ordained for life. At Tenth, they may serve on the Session for three year terms (with a sabbatical after two consecutive terms.

The office of deacon is one of sympathy and service, after the example of the Lord Jesus. They minister to those who are in need, particularly to meet temporal needs (Acts 6:1–6). Like the elders, they are elected for a three year term by the congregation. The congregational provides a benevolence offering to assist the deacons in meeting the needs of the poor, widows and downcast. At Tenth, deaconesses (Roman 16:1) are also chosen to come alongside the deacons in service, especially helping other women.

Church government extends beyond the local church. There is the Presbytery, a geographical area of local churches. All the teaching elders are members of a presbytery, and all the churches send ruling elders to serve at presbytery meetings. Presbyteries provide oversight of the local churches. Our presbytery is Philadelphia Presbytery. Finally, there is General Assembly, composed of all the churches in the Presbyterian Church in America. Elders attend General Assembly yearly to deliberate on matters pertaining to the denominational wide church. Sessions, presbyteries, and General Assembly are referred to as courts.

What do elders do? Here is the description from The Book of Church Order (8-3).

It belongs to those in the office of elder, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to his charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. They must exercise government and
discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the Church generally when called thereunto. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. They should set a worthy example to the flock entrusted to their care by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted and make disciples. All those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock.

The first responsibility of the elders is to assure that both teaching and behavior in the church is biblical (Acts 20:28–30). Members—especially ministers and elders—may not teach what is not scriptural. For Tenth, as a Presbyterian church, our three confessions listed above, guide us in understanding what biblical teaching is.

Elders are to exercise government. As the Session, they set the policies and principles of the church. They receive new members and transfer memberships to other churches. They approve and adopt the budget. All church ministries receive their approval, and all pastoral staff are responsible to them. They determine and approve what may take place in worship.

The board of elders at Tenth (called the Session) is composed of 18 Ruling Elders who are elected by the congregation, and the 4 Teaching Elders who were called by the congregation to serve as pastors. In our church Ruling Elders are elected for three year terms to serve on Session. Even so, once elected and ordained, they remain elders of the church for life.

The Board of Deacons is composed of 30 Deacons who also are elected by the congregation to serve three-year terms on the board. Like elders, they remain ordained deacons for life. Tenth also elects Deaconesses who are non-ordained assistants serving alongside the deacons.

Church Discipline

Elders, furthermore, are to exercise church discipline. Church discipline is exercised by the elders of the church, who are empowered by Christ “to proclaim, to administer, and to enforce the law of Christ revealed in the Scriptures” (BCO 3-3). Officers exercise this power individually by preaching the Word, administering the sacraments, reproving those in error, visiting the sick, and comforting the afflicted. The power given to the church is also exercised by elders jointly while serving on church courts.

The church session has the responsibility to exercise discipline over church members. The elders are to model God, who as a Father, lovingly disciplines all his children for their eternal good (Hebrews 12:5–6). As such, discipline is to be exercised in love, with gentleness and humility (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 7:1–5). The purpose of discipline in the church is never for retribution or vengeance. The concern should be always for the honor of God and his Church, and to lead disobedient members to repentance and restored fellowship with Christ and his Church. Discipline exists to glorify God, to ensure the purity of the church, and to restore the sinner. Discipline in all its forms is instruction in Scripture, so that one of the primary forms of church discipline is the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, not only the law, but the gospel of grace.

It is critical to understand that the elders are responsible for the public beliefs and practices of their church members. In a society that is increasingly at odds morally with the church, this may catch members off guard. For example, Tenth does not accept the common sexual practices of our society as biblical. Sex outside of marriage between a man and a woman is not condoned for members of the church. Married couples are expected to remain married and should seek the counsel of the elders before proceeding toward divorce. Abuse within the home is answerable to church discipline. If you believe that the church elders do not have a right to hold you accountable for these and similar behaviors, then
membership would not be appropriate. You are encouraged to discuss with an elder or pastor any concerns about this area or other practices that you are not sure are in accord with our standards.

What are the means of discipline used by the elders? The first takes place every week through the preaching and teaching of the Word. As we sit under the teaching of ordained teaching elders and receive the counsel of ruling elders, we are receiving a discipline of instruction. The other means are admonition, by which elders or an elder gives a formal word of admonition; suspension from the Lord’s Table; and the final step is that of excommunication, by which one is removed from church membership. These latter forms of discipline are not exercised lightly or impulsively by elders but usually occur after a long period of working with individuals.

Our “Rules of Discipline” make clear that “the power which Christ has given the church is for building up, and not for destruction. It is to be exercised as under a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath.” A major reason for someone to join a church is to receive the support and the accountability to grow in sanctification and to walk in faithfulness to the Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

As shepherds of their flock, elders furthermore come alongside church members to comfort and to encourage. They may visit in homes; when members are sick, they visit in the hospitals. They are available for prayer and for counsel from the scriptures.

As you can see, the elders bear much responsibility, and their responsibility is to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the chief shepherds. Thus, Hebrews 13:17 says, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.”

Purity and Peace

The last part of the fifth question of membership asks if you “promise to study its (the church’s) purity and peace? “To study” seems an odd way of phrasing the question. Think of as being studious toward purity and peace. In other words, will you promise to uphold the purity of church teaching and practice, and will you also promote peace within the church?

How is this done? The first step is to refrain from being divisive. Proverbs 15:1 teaches: “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” It is by speaking the truth in love that we grow together in the body of Christ (cf. Ephesians 4:15). If we have grievances, or if we see someone in sin, we are to approach them privately (Matthew 18:15) and gently (Galatians 6:1). If we have grievances about practices in the church, we are to take them to the elders. They are the ones who have been given responsibility by the Chief Shepherd to oversee the church.

But more than refraining from being divisive, we are called to encourage one another, to actively promote peace and to encourage one another toward a faithful walk with the Lord. In a world filled with conflict and with attacks against our faith and practice, all the more we need to be actively building up our brothers and sisters in our church family.

Finally, we are to have a desire to grow in knowledge of God’s Word. This occurs in church through the faithful hearing of God’s Word preached from the pulpit. It also takes place in the Bible school classes and in small group Bible study. If you find yourself disagreeing with what is taught, again, take it to your elders for understanding.

The discussion of government and discipline can seem somber and complicated, but the experience of Tenth Church over its nearly 200-year history is that having a clear structure that follows biblical teaching and patterns has allowed for a stable, positive environment. Knowing who to turn to for settling differences and for guidance in one’s personal Christian walk has helped individuals find stability in an ever increasing unstable culture. In any church family, as with all families, friction can lead to greater trouble and division. But having a biblical structure
that provides for handling of differences has proven its value in keeping the church from fracturing. Indeed, it has allowed the church to carry out the intention Christ intended as described in Ephesians 4:11–16.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
WORSHIP & PREACHING

Membership question considered:

4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?

The following are principles that explain Tenth’s approach to worship and “the means of grace.”

WORSHIP

Worship is the identifying activity of the church. There are three fundamental activities of every church—worship, nurture, and outreach. If a church fails to provide teaching and fellowship, it is an unhealthy church. Likewise, if it fails to reach out with the gospel, it is unhealthy. But if it fails to worship, it is not a church. It may be a para-church organization that provides a specific service, but it cannot be classified as a church if it does not worship. Furthermore, how a church worships sets its guidelines for how it carries out its other activities of nurture and outreach. Thus, worship is not a mere activity among several in a church. It is the identifying mark of the church.

Worship is for God. Our Book of Church Order states: “The end of public worship is the glory of God. His people should engage in all its several parts with an eye single to his glory” (BCO 47-3). Though a church should consider its constituency and be mindful of unbelievers who may attend worship services, worship is held for the purpose of pleasing God. Public worship is the response of God’s covenant people heeding his call to glorify him. It is a spiritual sacrifice offered to God for his pleasure.

Worship is regulated by Scripture. If worship is for God, then it stands to reason that we should look to God’s revealed Word to guide us in our worship. Our Book of Church Order instructs us: “Since the Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice, the principles of public worship must be derived from the Bible, and from no other source. The Scriptures forbid the worshipping of God by images, or in any other way not appointed in his Word, and requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his Word” (BCO 47-1). The Book of Church Order goes on to identify acceptable elements of worship: “The Bible teaches that the following are proper elements of worship service: reading of Holy Scripture, singing of psalms and hymns, the offering of prayer, the preaching of the Word, the presentation of offerings, confessing the faith and observing the Sacraments; and on special occasions taking oaths.”

Acts 2:42 presents the basic elements: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Thus, we have every Lord’s Day worship preaching and prayer, and on a regular basis (every other month in the morning and monthly in the evening) the Lord’s Supper. It is clear in both Old and New Testaments that singing was a part of worship, which is a musical expression of either prayer, praise, or instruction.

Worship is Christian when it is done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Worship in recognition of the Trinity distinguishes true Christian worship from that of any other religion and false Christian sect. “A service of public worship is not merely a gathering of God’s children with each other, but before all else, a meeting of the triune God with His chosen people. God is present in public worship not only by virtue of the Divine omnipresence but, much more intimately, as the faithful covenant Savior” (BCO 47-2).

We cannot approach God the Father in worship except through God the Son who covers us with his blood; and it is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us and moves us to offer worship that is acceptable to God. When we worship God, we worship all three Persons, acknowledging the great mystery that they are God the Three-In-One.
Public worship recognizes the presence of Christ's body, i.e. his gathered covenant people. A public worship service is not done as a convenient method of providing worship for lots of people. It is not like a movie theater where strangers happen to be gathered in the same location to watch the same event. It is the gathering of God's covenant community, and even more mysterious, it is the gathering of Christ's body brought together to give worship to God together. Therefore, in public worship we do acknowledge one another, pray for each other, and encourage each other in our worship. We attend worship not only for our sake but for the sake of others that they may be encouraged in their worship.

Worship must have substance. God is truly worshipped, not by mere stimulation of emotions, but by informing the mind. As the worships hears God's Word read, proclaimed, and sung, he is then able to respond to God as the Lord desires. Thus, the worship service will have a substantial amount of Scripture read; the hymns will have fully developed messages; the prayers will be biblically informed; and the sermon will focus on presenting the message of the scripture text.

Worship must be followed up by obedience and service. We are not to be mere hearers of the Word, but doers. If worship does not lead to maturing in our faith, to becoming more diligent disciples of Christ; if it does not result in our serving the Lord throughout the week, then worship becomes a judgment upon us. Worship is to be done by the heart and not merely an outward exercise; and worship of the heart is revealed not by emotion during the worship service, but by the attitudes and actions revealed afterwards. We demonstrate our love to God through our obedience.

Means of Grace
We believe that the Holy Spirit commonly works in worship to bring salvation and to aid in sanctification those who are saved through the “ordinary” means of grace that our Lord has given to the church. Those means are preaching (the proclaiming of God's Word), prayer, and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper (also called Communion). The sacraments will be discussed in the next lesson. The following are brief explanations of the practices of preaching and prayer in worship.

PREACHING

Preaching is to be expository. Preaching is the exposition of God's Word. The goal of the preacher is to unveil the message of Scripture. At Tenth, we normally preach through whole books of the Bible. This is necessary so that we will receive the complete counsel of God's revealed Word. By preaching systematically through Scripture, more topics are likely to be covered than by choosing topics. More importantly, the topics that God deems important will be covered. A presupposition of expository preaching is that the worshippers should come with the attitude of waiting upon God to present what he wants the worshipper to hear from his Word. The preacher is relying upon the Holy Spirit to know what each worshipper needs to receive. The expository preacher often does not know his topic, and never knows what he will say, until he has studied the scripture text. It is that text that drives his message.

Preaching is to be Christ-informed, Gospel-informed, and Grace-informed. Because the preacher goes systematically through a book, the topic and focus of his message will vary from sermon to sermon. Even so, he is to unveil where Christ, the gospel, and grace are present, and to turn his hearers to Christ at the end. Christian worshippers must hear again and again the gospel; they must always be turned to Christ; and they must be reminded of God's grace even as God's law is pronounced. The overriding message from the pulpit is not what we must do for God, but what God has done for us through Christ Jesus.

Preaching is worship because God is honored by listening to his spoken Word. No greater honor can we pay God that to listen to him. Though we look to benefit from the preaching of the Word, we are primarily worshipping
through our reverent receiving of the Word. The sermon is not to be received critically or lightly, but with due diligence and respect.

PRAYER

A typical morning worship service will include an opening prayer called an invocation, a prayer of confession, and a pastoral prayer.

The invocation is a prayer “invoking” God, that is, calling upon God to receive the worship that we bring before him and to bless it so that it may be honoring to him and will build up his people.

The prayer of confession recognizes that, though we come to him as his redeemed people who have been justified and forgiven of our sins, nevertheless we are still encumbered with the sins we continue to commit. Therefore, as we approach him in worship, we are honest about those sins and do not want to appear hypocritical, as though we have done nothing wrong. It is also opportunity to hear yet again the forgiveness that we have received once and for all through the work of Jesus Christ.

The pastoral prayer takes the time to reflect on the gospel and the majesty of God, and to bring before our heavenly Father our petitions. It reminds us that “every hour [we] need” our God to provide and to protect. As such, it is a prayer that glorifies him as the Sovereign Lord who alone provides for his people.

Other prayers include the offering prayer and prayer following sermon. The offering prayer acknowledges that our giving is an act of worship, offering to God what he has already given to us in Christ. The prayer following the sermon will touch on the message given and asking God to apply it in our lives.

The benediction is not actually a prayer, and you are welcome to open your eyes. The minister, acting in his calling as a Minister of the Gospel, passes on the gospel blessing of God to his people.
Membership question considered:

4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?

Introduction

The two sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper are signs and seals of the covenant of grace. They both signify the gospel and serve as seals to us that we belong to the gospel of Christ.

Baptism

Baptism signifies union with Jesus Christ, specifically in his death, burial and resurrection. Thus the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 6:3–5, “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.” This is what the water of baptism symbolizes, both the cleansing of our sins by the blood of Christ and the washing of regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

Baptism identifies us a belonging to the Lord. Thus, Paul writes in Galatians 3:27, “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” In another passage the Bible teaches that baptism points to our entry into the one body that is the church. “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Similarly, baptism signifies to us the Christian life of holiness. “In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature... having been buried with him in baptism” (Colossians 2:11–12).

Baptism is also a seal. Like the wax seal placed on ancient documents to denote ownership, baptism is God’s mark of ownership upon us. By means of baptism, therefore, we receive God’s promise to be our God, to forgive our sins through faith in Christ, of our engrafting into Christ, and of life eternal through him. Through baptism, God engages us to walk in newness in life. Thus, we may summarize the meaning of baptism by saying it is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace.

Baptism points not to what the recipient has done (such as believing or giving testimony), it points not to the efficacy of what the minister is doing but signifies the covenant of grace by which the recipient relates to God by his grace. No longer do we stand before God on the basis of our works as judged by the law, but God promises deliverance to sinners through the work of the redeemer upon the condition of faith in him, even Jesus Christ.

Our church baptizes adults upon profession of faith, and baptizes children presented for baptism by one or more believing members of the church. Infant baptism is based upon the continuity between New Covenant baptism and the Old Covenant rite of circumcision. A considerable amount of Scripture upholds this continuity. In Romans 4:11, the apostle Paul notes that circumcision was the seal of “the righteousness of faith.” In Colossians 2:11–12, Paul points to the same spiritual reality (separation from the sinful nature) by means of both circumcision and baptism. Furthermore, the privileges of the New Covenant are hardly less than those of the Old Covenant. The inclusion of children in the covenant is not rescinded under the New Covenant, but is directly affirmed in Jeremiah 31:33 and in Acts 2:38–39. Finally, Galatians 3:27–29, one of the key texts on baptism, relates baptism to circumcision by rejoicing that not only men but women may receive the covenant sign, not merely Jews but Greeks, etc.
By baptizing infant children of believers, we take seriously the promise at the core of God’s covenant: “I will be your God and the God of your children after you” (Genesis 17:7; Exodus 19:5–6; Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2; Jeremiah 31:33). We take seriously Jesus’ words regarding the little children, as found in Matthew 19:13–14:

*Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.*

This is not just a story about how Jesus was nice to little children. These are the covenant, circumcised children of Israel (at least the boys were circumcised). And here is the Messiah, the Lord of the Covenant, laying His hands on them for blessing and praying for them to the Father. What an encouragement this is for us to bring our children to receive the blessing of the covenant sign of our Lord.

Along similar lines, we note that children of believers are accountable as members of the covenant. In Ephesians 6:1, 4 and Colossians 3:20–21, the apostle Paul commands children to obey their parents “in the Lord.” Parents, he says, are to bring their children up “in the training and instruction of the Lord.” Here we find that the children of believers are treated as Christians, to receive the benefits and obligations thereof. Furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 7:14, in a passage discussing marriage and divorce, Paul remarks that children of a believing parent are “holy.” Paul is not saying that these children are automatically saved or that they automatically come to faith in Christ; however, he is saying that such children are set apart in God’s sight.

Finally, we take note of the household baptisms seen in the New Testament (Acts 16:15, 33–34; 1 Corinthians 1:16). Of only twelve actual baptisms recorded in the New Testament, three of them are household baptisms. Scripture does not tell us that infants were baptized in these occasions, nor does it say that all who were baptized believed. Indeed, the clear inference from these household baptisms is that those under the headship of the head of the house received a benefit from his/her belief. That benefit was baptism, and a public identification with the church.

It is because of this biblical data that our church, along with the whole of the Reformed tradition, baptizes infants of believing adults. In so doing we gratefully lay hold of the promise of our God, when he says: “I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a god to you and to your seed after you” (Deuteronomy 29:10–13).

**The Lord’s Supper**

The Lord’s Supper is like baptism in possessing all the elements of a sacrament. But it is unlike baptism in that baptism is an initiatory sacrament (it testifies to a primary identification with Christ without which one is not a Christian at all), while the Lord’s Supper is a continuing sacrament meant to be observed again and again (“as often as you drink it”) throughout the Christian life. This character of the Lord’s Supper is seen in its past, present and future significance.

The past significance of the Lord’s Supper is made clear by the word remembrance. In the Lord’s Supper we look back to the Lord’s death. We remember his substitutionary atonement, first of all; it is this that the bread, representing the Lord’s body, and the wine, representing his shed blood, most clearly signify.

We also look back to something that Jesus suggested when he spoke of the wine as the “blood of the covenant” (Mark 14:24) and as “the new covenant which God has established a new covenant of salvation with his redeemed people. A covenant is a solemn promise confirmed by an oath or sign. So when Christ spoke of the cup as commemoration a new covenant he was pointing to the promises of salvation that God made to us on the basis of Christ’s death. It comes to us by grace alone.
The Lord’s Supper has a present significance. First, the sacrament is something in which we repeatedly take part, thereby remembering the death of the Lord again and again until he comes.

Second, it is an occasion for examining our lives in the light of our profession of faith in his death. Paul says, “Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself” (2 Corinthians 11:28).

At the heart of the present significance of the Lord’s Supper is our communion or fellowship with Christ, hence the term “communion service.” In coming to this service the believer comes to meet with Christ and have fellowship with him at his invitation. The examination takes place because it would by hypocrisy for us to pretend that we are in communion with the Holy One while actually cherishing known sin in our hearts.

What is the manner in which Jesus is present in the communion service? We hold that Christ is present in the communion service, but spiritually rather than physically. John Calvin called this “the real presence” to indicate that a spiritual presence is every bit as real as a physical one. Today his resurrected body is in heaven.

The efficacy of the Savior’s presence may be different in the way of imparting more or less of saving grace, according to the nature of the ordinance, and the degree of the believer’s faith. But the manner of that presence is the same, being realized through the Spirit of Christ, and to the faith of the believer. Some well-known verses in John 6 also speak of faith in Christ and of a spiritual feeding on him, though they do not speak literally of the Lord’s Supper, since that sacrament had not yet been instituted.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed” (John 6:53–55).

If we want synonyms for “eat” and “drink,” we find them in John 6 in such concepts as believe (vv. 29, 35, 47), come (v. 35), see (v.40), hear and learn of (v. 45). All indicate a response to Jesus. The terms eat and drink stress that this feeding by faith is to be as real as literal eating.

The third significance of the Lord’s Supper is future. Paul said, “As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). The Lord suggested the same when he told the disciples who were eating the last meal with him, “Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God (Mark 14:25).

We speak of the real presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the service as we know it now, and we seek to respond to him and serve him. We readily admit that there are times when this is difficult and the Lord does not seem to be present. Whether because of sin, fatigue or simply lack of faith, Jesus often seems to be far away. Though we continue on in Christian life and in service, we long for that day when we will see him face to face and be like him (1 John 3:2). The communion service is a reminder of that day. It is a foreshadowing of the great marriage supper of the Lamb. It is an encouragement to faith and an impulse to a higher level of holiness.
**Public Sacraments**

One final word should be said about both sacraments—that they are intended to be observed publicly with God’s covenant people. Baptism marks the entry into covenant membership of Christ’s body. It denotes not only communion with Christ but with all of his people who belong to him. That is why it takes place in the presence of the church body gathered for worship.

The Lord’s Supper also denotes communion with one another. The very scandal of the Corinthian Church was that it had turned what was intended to express love and unity into an opportunity to express arrogance and division. Because we are united to Christ, we are united to one another. Therefore, it too is observed in the context of Christ’s people worshipping together. Circumstances such as illness or being a shut-in allows for private observance, though even then it is to be presided by a minister of the church and ordinarily an elder who represents the congregation. Likewise, a minister should officiate and an elder be present when circumstances force a baptism to take place outside of a church’s worship.
THE CHURCH & COMMUNITY LIFE

Membership question considered:

3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?

Concept of Church

It may seem odd to approach the third question of membership by discussing the church community life. After all, it is a question about us each living as followers of Christ, and the last two questions are the ones that speak of the church. Understanding what the church is about may put this in perspective.

Ephesians 4:11–16 presents a concise purpose statement for any church.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

The church exists to promote growth in Christ. Note who is to grow—both individual believers and the church as a whole. Individuals are to grow, not only in faith and knowledge, but in unity of faith and knowledge. In that unity, through every individual doing his or her part, the church, which is the body of Christ, is to grow as a true expression of Christ’s body.

To put this in context of membership question number 3, we live as becomes the followers of Christ by attaining unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, and by serving in the church with our fellow believers so that we are able to build up one another and build up the church as a whole. We cannot separate our individual faith walk from our dependency on and obligations to the church, of which Jesus Christ is the Head.

Neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament recognizes the concept of an individual following God or Christ as a lone individual. In the Old Testament, individuals are members of a covenant and belong to the covenant people of God. In the New Testament, they are members of the church. On the day of Pentecost, after Peter preaches his sermon, and the people respond, we are told that they are baptized, then that they meet in homes together and acted as a church:

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts 2:41–47).

The story of the book of Acts is the story of the expansion and growth of the church. As individuals are saved, they are added to the church. As they travel and settle in new areas, they form local churches. As the Apostle Paul travels on his missionary trips, he establishes churches. There is no recognition of saving individuals who are then to follow Christ by themselves. To “endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ,” individuals need the church, and individuals have obligations to fulfill toward the church.
Why We Need the Church

Why do we need the church? Why is it essential for faithful following of Christ?

For one thing, we need the church’s community. Hebrews 10:23–26 exhorts us:

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Note the train of thought. We are to hold fast to our confession. We are also not to continue in sin. How do we keep our faith and keep from sinning deliberately? By meeting together so that we might stir up one another to love and good works, and to encourage one another.

The concept of the rugged individual who makes his own way through sheer determination is not a biblical concept. The biblical concept is to make our way together. From the beginning, it was not good for man to be alone. From the beginning of his ministry Christ called about him disciples, even desiring their companionship in Gethsemane. From the beginning of the Holy Spirit’s work in Acts, believers were saved into the church. We need community to run the race set before us.

We also need the church’s teaching. Our own Westminster Confession of Faith teaches that “those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them” (WCF, chap 1, part 7). We may, and should, study God’s Word privately. Even so, Christ “gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11) whose very calling to is teach the Word of God (Acts 6:4). It is given to the church to teach and to preach the Word. Thus Titus (Titus 2:1) and Timothy (2 Timothy 4:2), as ministers, are instructed by Paul to teach and preach the Word.

And then, we need the church’s accountability both for what we believe and how we live. The recurring refrain in the book of Judges for how the covenant people of God went astray is that “everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6). Accountability comes in two ways through the church. There is the oversight of the elders who are to assure that right doctrine is taught. They are overseers, keeping watching over the flock on behalf of the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 5:1–2; Hebrews 13:17; 2 Timothy 4:2). There is also the accountability of the brothers and sisters in the church. And so, in the church, we strengthen one another in the faith, bear one another’s burdens, and restore those in sin (Acts 16:5; Galatians 6:1–2).

Our Obligations to the Church

The reasons we need the church are the same obligations that are upon us. If we need community, we need also to provide community. We need to be stirring up one another in the faith and in good works. We need to strengthen our family members who are weak in the faith. We need to be comforting and rejoicing with them. As we need the gifts of the church body to build us up in Christ Jesus, we are to use our gifts for the sake of others (Romans 12:6). The faith of our brothers and sisters is constantly under bombardment by the world. We need to be present when the church body gathers so that we might shore up one another’s faith. We need to be reaching out within the church to encourage and to sharpen one another.

We are obligated to worship together. 1 Peter 2:4–5 says:
As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Together we are built up as a spiritual house. Together we offer spiritual sacrifices.

We also must bear witness together as a church for the sake of Christ. 1 Peter 2:9–10 continues:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

It is as a people together that we proclaim the excellencies of our God.

Other lessons in this class will discuss more fully our obligations, but the basic understanding is that we are not permitted by Christ to live as mavericks, going our own way. We are not granted by Scripture the excuses that we so easily make to avoid our obligations, such as the church is hypocritical or sinful. The New Testament epistles point out clearly the sins of the churches, but do not then encourage or permit Christians to live apart from them.

Is Membership Necessary?

Is membership necessary? There was membership in the New Testament churches. How else could elders be appointed over a flock that no one belonged to? How could a person be removed from a church that he did not belong to? In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul distinguishes between those inside the church and those outside. How can one be in or out of something that has no membership? Paul speaks specifically in 1 Timothy 5:9 of a roll for widows. Undoubtedly there were rolls to account for everyone who was identified with a church.

Can we not be involved in a church without joining? One can, but the question is why do so? Why refrain from membership? What reason, based on wanting to honor Christ, would one give? How would we honor Christ, who is the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18), by refraining from joining a local church? How would we be showing respect to the church we attend and participate in, if at the same time we refuse to be identified with it and to make a commitment to it? And if we are willing to be identified with a church, why would we refuse the accountability that it exercises?

To be a follower of Christ is to be identified with the Church that he has founded. It is to join outwardly what one becomes a member of through the inward work of the Holy Spirit—namely, Christ’s body. To humbly rely upon the grace of the Holy Spirit is to rely upon his means of grace provided in the context of the local church, such as the preaching and teaching of the Word, receiving the sacraments, prayer, and even church discipline. The Holy Spirit is in each of us and also joins us together, so that together we will “grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).

In summary, to be a follower of Christ is to be an active member of his body, the Church. Disciples of Jesus Christ need one another to follow our Lord.

Here are the means that Tenth has for providing community and pastoral care.

Worship

To build a strong fellowship, we have to start with worship. It is the worship and preaching that occurs week in and week out that provides the most important care of all. We may not normally think of worship as a time of pastoral care, but through preaching your pastor is feeding you. Additionally, the means of grace offered through the administration of the Lord’s Supper is another important form of ministry. Through the pastoral prayer, you are
being lifted up before God, as well as directly being ministered to. The very act of corporate worship is the strongest spiritual medicine to be given for any believer who is struggling with faith, especially in services that highlight the gospel every Sunday.

Parish System

The parish system is the structure for pastoral oversight of resident church members. Tenth Church is divided into six geographical districts called parishes. The six parishes are led by one or two Parish Elders, who are responsible for the members residing in their districts. You may call on your Parish Elder for prayer, biblical counsel, and other support you may need. The parishes also encourage community by sponsoring parish-wide activities and providing small groups. Parish councils, made up of officers and other leaders, meet monthly to discuss parish matters and to work together to minister to their parish community.

Here are geographical boundaries of the parishes. See the appendix for more information.

- **Parish One: Center City/South Philadelphia** This parish includes Center City proper plus the Art Museum area and South Philadelphia (Girard Avenue south, river to river).

- **Parish Two: Northern Tier** This parish includes Philadelphia north of Girard Avenue, plus Bucks and Montgomery Counties.

- **Parish Three: West Philadelphia** This parish includes Philadelphia west of the Schuylkill River, Southwest Philadelphia, and the suburbs of Lansdowne, Yeadon, Upper Darby and other small towns included within those zip codes.

- **Parish Four: Main Line** This parish extends to the west beyond Philadelphia generally between Route 3 and the Schuylkill River and includes West Chester.

- **Parish Five: Western Suburbs** This parish includes portions of western Delaware and southern Chester Counties and the state of Delaware (generally south of Route 3 to West Chester and then south of Route 1).

- **Parish Six: New Jersey** This parish includes the state of New Jersey, from which the majority of its members reside south of Princeton.

Pastoral Care by the Elders

The elders are the shepherds of God’s flock. (Note that the term “elders” also includes the ordained pastors who are regarded as “teaching elders”). Every elder’s priority is to give personal attention to the church’s members through prayer and ministering God’s Word. Tenth members may seek such pastoral care from any elder. Are you sick or struggling through a particularly difficult time and would like elders to anoint with oil, lay hands and pray over you (James 5:14)? Elders routinely meet between morning services for such prayer. Just let an elder know. If you cannot leave home, they can visit.

If you call in to the church, a pastor or pastoral staff person will take your call. The pastoral staff are assigned days to be the Pastor of the Day for this purpose. If you are in the hospital, arrangements will be made for you to receive a visit from an elder or pastoral staff person.
**Diaconal Care**

The Diaconate provides practical help to many church members. The deacons, and deaconesses who assist them, help members work through practical problems affecting their health and livelihood as well as provide benevolence assistance. Medical bills have been met; rent and utility bills paid; groceries provided; and unexpected bills. Deacons and deaconesses provide financial counseling to help you manage your budget. The first step to take is to speak to a deacon or deaconess about a particular need you are facing. If you do not know whom to speak with, your Parish Elder or any of your pastors will help make the connection.

**Small Groups**

Small groups have long been an emphasis at Tenth because they provide the personal community support all Christians need. They provide interactive study of Scripture, mutual prayer support, and very often become the primary spiritual support system for the participants. How do you get connected with a group? Every parish has a small group coordinator, who can help you find and connect with the group closest or most suited for you. See the appendix for information.

You can also go the church’s website (tenth.org) and access the link for small group information to see where the groups are and ask to be contacted.

**Community and Support Groups**

You may build close relationships and find good support through the following fellowship/affinity groups in the church.

- **Maranatha** is a fellowship group for teenagers and meets Sunday evenings. They also have small groups in the parishes. The director is Dora Phan and can be reached at dphan@tenth.org.

- **Bridge-Builders** meets the third Sunday of the month for lunch and a talk. Formed to support those who have experienced separation, it now welcomes everyone. Contact Joe Welch, jwmusic1@aol.com.

- **Tenth College Fellowship** reaches out to students among the numerous schools in the Philadelphia region. They hold a morning Sunday school class, lunches, retreats, and small groups. Gavin Lymberopoulos is director and can be reached at glymberopoulos@tenth.org.

- **Tenth City Network** provides fellowship for young adults in their 20’s and 30’s, both single and married. They have a Saturday night meeting that includes teaching from the Senior Minister. They also hold special outings, join together for Sunday meals, and have small group Bible studies. Gavin Lymberopoulos is director and can be reached at glymberopoulos@tenth.org.

- **Tenth International Fellowship** (TIF) ministers to international students, scholars, and others who have settled here from abroad. TIF has a Sunday morning worship service and monthly luncheons; it provides free conversational English classes, weekly Bible studies, and several social activities. Contact Enrique Leal, eleal@tenth.org.

- **Tenth Women** facilitates connections among women in the church and to encourage their spiritual growth through Bible studies, classes, and other programs. Contact Sabita Balgobin, sandrabalgobin@verizon.net. For Sparrows ministry events, where women connect with girls, contact Amy Voorhis, amy@johnandamy.net.
• **Medical Campus Outreach** provides fellowship for medical and healthcare students. Small groups are on or near most of the medical schools and there is a monthly Sunday luncheon at Tenth. Contact Lauren Abt at mco.smi.tenth@gmail.com.

• Families of special needs children have found **Children with Special Needs Ministry** to be of great support both in providing attending for their children and in providing a support system. The contact person is Kristen Harnly at tenthcsn@msn.com.

**Bible School Education**

Bible school education for our children has an enduring and strong foundation upon which it continues to build. Our children receive systematic teaching through the Scriptures, and memorize Scripture, our catechisms, and hymns of the church. Contact Doug DeLong, douglasdelong@comcast.net

Bible school education extends to our adults as well. Along with the steady diet of studying books of the Bible, there are selections in theology and in Christian practice. These classes allow for in-depth study of Scripture, theology, and practice. They complement the pulpit preaching by providing further investigation into Scripture and addressing a variety of topics. Classes meet at the 9:00 and 11:00 Sunday morning hours. Brochures are available in the lobbies. Contact Patrick Canavan, pcanavan@tenth.org

**Biblical Counsel**

Our pastors and elders provide biblical counsel. Please call upon them. At times, however, some needs are well served through the care of professional counselors. In such times, pastors and elders have referred members to counselors and other professionals. Our Minister of Pastoral Care, Carroll Wynne, oversees the counseling process. He can be reached at cwynne@tenth.org.

**Internet**

You have a great resource in the church website. Tenth.org is the prime source for accessing both current and archived material such as sermons, classes, and articles. All of our ministries and activities are posted on the site. Are you ill and unable to attend church? You can tune into the worship service live, as well as listen to past sermons. Some Bible school classes have also been posted. The church bulletin is posted every Friday. Many church members check the website blog daily to keep up with news about the church community. Be sure to sign up with Elizabeth Carlson, ecarlson@tenth.org, to receive e-blasts.
Membership question considered:

4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?

Ephesians 4:11–12 teaches that Christ “gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

Our good works, our work of ministry, is given to us to build up the body of which we are now members. We build up the body by outreach—reaching outside the body of Christ and bringing in the lost. And we build up the body by discipleship and service that strengthens the faith of believers and their walk with Christ.

What can you do? The possibilities are endless. Below are the organized ministries of Tenth. But before you can do one act of service, you must be service minded. You must desire to serve. You must, again, be consciously thinking how you will take all that good knowledge you are learning and turn it into service.

**ACTS Ministries**

ACTS Ministries’ goal is to encourage congregational members to become more mercy-minded and to network with other churches, missions, and agencies. ACTS Ministries presents the gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole person—physical, social, psychological, and spiritual—utilizing the talents and resources the Lord has given to Tenth’s congregation. From its beginnings in 1984, ACTS was designed as a faith ministry and is not a part of Tenth’s budget. Because of that, the ministry relies on the voluntary giving of Tenth members and others.

ACTS Ministries also seeks to serve the church by training volunteers for ministry and discipleship. Its ministries encourage its volunteer staff to grow as they seek to imitate Jesus while assisting people in need. Training is done through various workshops, seminars, and conferences on diaconal ministry and outreach to the poor and homeless.

Contact David Apple, dapple@tenth.org or 215.735.7688x224 regarding any of the ACTS ministries listed below or go to www.activecompassionphilly.org.

- **Nursing Home Ministry**
  This ministry serves two nursing homes in Philadelphia: Penn Center for Rehab, 36th and Chestnut, in University City, and Powerback Rehab, 16th and Lombard, in Center City. Three Sundays per month at 2:30 PM members of Tenth provide worship and visitation to the residents.

- **Prison Ministry**
  The prison ministry began in the summer of 2000 in the new Center City Federal Detention Center (FDC), on the corner of Seventh and Arch Streets, Philadelphia. Tenth provides several Bible studies every Tuesday at 7:00 PM in the cell blocks where a correctional officer is present.

- **Community Dinners**
  The Community Dinner Ministry is our alternative to the soup kitchen. Once a month, Fellowship Hall is set up, to provide a banquet for approximately 75 of our homeless or poor neighbors. The ministry begins at 1:00 PM with our guests worshipping at a special service in the sanctuary and then at 2:00 PM dining with church members (two at each table) whose sole ministry is to sit, eat, and talk. Each month, one of the church parishes “sponsors” the dinner. The parish sends a delegation to help with setting up, preparing food, hosting, serving, or cleaning up. Youth groups from other churches serve all the food and drinks.

- **Fellowship Bible Study**
  This Bible study consists of Tenth members and homeless, addicted men and women. It began in 1989 as an outgrowth of the relationships that had been established in the Community Dinner ministry where hosts invited
guests to study the Word of God. The study is another non-intimidating way Christians can come alongside their homeless neighbors in order to establish involvement, trust, and hope. It is in the format of a regular small group Bible study and includes a meal. It meets at 4:00 PM each Sunday in the Catacombs.

• **Bridge Builders**
  At its monthly luncheon and speaker series (third Sundays at 1:00 PM), Bridge Builders creates space for fellowship and relationship-building within the church. It originally was a fellowship providing support for individuals who had gone through divorce, separation, or other form of loss. It is now open to anyone and draws many who are on the fringes.

**Building Committee**
This committee plans and oversees projects regarding safety, maintenance, design, and renovation of Tenth facilities. Volunteers with expertise in these areas are always needed. Contact Dot Boersma, dboersma@tenth.org or 215.735.7688x233.

**Children’s Ministries**
Volunteers are needed to serve as teachers, teacher assistants, and care providers for the various ministries. They include for Sunday mornings: Children’s Bible School, Nursery, Praisemakers, and Praisemakers Plus (worship preparation for children age 4–grade 2); for Sunday evenings: Nursery, the summer WOW program (age 4–grade 6), Catechism Club (ages 4–5), and Tenth Children’s Music (grades 1–6). Contact Pat Canavan, pcanavan@tenth.org or 215.735.7688x231.

**Children with Special Needs**
CSN provides support to children (and their families) with developmental disabilities and chronic illness. Support includes providing “buddies” to be with children in Bible school, special classes, and activities. Contact Kristen Harnly, tenthcsn@msn.com.

**Design Review Committee**
This committee reviews physical plant designs that affect the visual image of the church. Volunteers with expertise may contact Mary Berzinsky, berzinsky@aol.com. Those with expertise in publications and other graphic materials may contact Dot Boersma, dboersma@tenth.org or 215.735.7688x233.

**Diaconate Assistants**
The Diaconate can use volunteers to help support the Sunday worship services by helping with ushering and preparing the elements for the Lord’s Supper. Contact Brian McLelland at Brianmclelland01@gmail.com.

**Fellowship Teams**
These teams work together to provide the refreshments between the morning worship services. They also provide support at the congregational dinners and receptions. Contact Steve and Ruth Neild at curran-neild@verizon.net.

**Greeting and Welcome Center**
Greeters at the entrances welcome worshippers to Tenth’s services. Volunteers also host a table in the Narthex each Sunday to welcome visitors and provide requested information. Contact Anne Tartikoff, bettsa75@hotmail.com.

**IT and Media**
The Information Technology Committee supports the IT needs of the church and helps with sound engineering and webcasting (including sound editing). Contact Steve Kohler, skohler@tenth.org, if you can serve in the sound room. Contact John Voorhis at john@voorhis.us, if you have expertise with supporting our IT needs.
Library
The church lending library maintains a collection of books, videos, and CDs. The library is open between the Sunday morning services. Contact Sylvia Duggan, syduggan@verizon.net or 215.222.7947, if you can help staff the library.

Maranatha
Maranatha is a fellowship of junior and senior high students who meet weekly on Sunday evenings. To get involved, contact Dora Phan, dphan@tenth.org or 215.735.7688x242.

Music Ministry
We need singers for Tenth Church Choir and Men’s Choir; musicians for Tenth Chamber Players, and special events; teachers for Praisemakers and Tenth Children’s Music. Contact Colin Howland, chowland@tenth.org

Neighborhood Playgroup
Volunteers are needed for preparation and for assisting on Wednesday mornings. A typical morning will have 60 children, parents, and care givers. Contact Crystal Hanrahan, crystalhanrahan1@gmail.com.

Office Volunteers
Weekly volunteers staff the front desk during staff meetings on Tuesdays or stuff bulletins on Fridays. Other occasional office volunteers help prepare mailings or fill in at the front desk. Contact Dot Boersma, dboersma@tenth.org or 215.735.7688x233.

Conversational English Class and Tenth International Fellowship
Philadelphia is a major educational center with many future world leaders being trained here. Tenth evangelizes internationals and disciples global leaders by providing a full church experience through Tenth International Fellowship. TIF can offer international students a church-within-a-church experience and instill global vision into students. Volunteers are needed to help with conversational English classes on Friday nights. TIF also encourages Tenth members to attend Sunday worship and other activities so as to provide hospitality. Members are asked to open their home for holiday meals. Contact pastor Enrique Leal, eleal@tenth.org

Global Outreach is a critical dimension of Tenth Church. We currently support over 70 missionary units, locally and internationally. Tenth supports missionaries and national workers on five continents. Each year the amount given sacrificially for the Easter Sacrificial Offering has increased, as we have partnered with ministries to provide mercy to those in great need. Each year, a growing number of Tenth members participate on short term trips and return with a better understanding of God’s work in the world. Along with giving to the Global Outreach fund, you are encouraged to:

• Pray, using the monthly prayer calendar that is placed in the bulletin and in both lobbies.
• Become informed by attending the monthly Around the World in 80 Minutes luncheon on fourth Sundays
• Adopt a partner by having your small group take one or more partners to pray for and correspond with.
• Go on a short-term mission trip. Usually three to four opportunities are provided each year, led by the GO minister or other Tenth leader.
• Consider God’s calling for long-term mission work. The GO minister and commission can come alongside you for counsel and support.
1. **What is stewardship?**

   Stewardship is managing another’s resources. Since God owns everything (Psalm 24:1), everything we have is his. When we give to God, whether it is our time, talent, or resources, we are really giving back to him what is already his (1 Chronicles 29:14, 16). Good stewardship, therefore, consists not simply in managing our own resources well, but in managing the resources God has entrusted to us as caretakers.

2. **Why should I give?**

   As God “did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all” (Romans 8:32), so our posture toward God and others in response to his love should be one of cheerful sacrifice and generosity. The Bible tells us to give, from the tithe prescribed in the Old Testament to the call in the New Testament for us to be cheerful givers (2 Corinthians 9:7); Scripture teaches us to give a portion of our income to the work of God’s kingdom. Your faithful giving undergirds the work of gospel ministry as it is expressed and carried out in and through Tenth Presbyterian Church.

3. **Why such strong emphasis on giving?**

   Giving is tied to your growth as a believer in Christ. It will motivate you toward a more godly and prayerful life as you adopt kingdom priorities. You will likely develop a more generous spirit and feel more connected to the body of Christ. You will give more prayer to the kingdom work you are supporting and will more likely get involved. Generosity leads to more joy and greater contentment.

4. **In what ways can I give?**

   There are a variety of ways you can give to Tenth:
   
   a. Check or cash in the offering plates
   b. Use of offering envelopes
   c. Online payment service provided by your bank
   d. Online giving through Tenth: go to [www.tenth.org/about/giving](http://www.tenth.org/about/giving).

5. **How can I calculate my giving?**

   As soon as you receive your paycheck, set aside your offering in the same way you would payment of your monthly bills. Figure out how much to set aside for your offering by using the following formula:

   \[ \text{My giving} \% \times \text{gross amount of income} \div \text{52 weeks} = \text{my weekly offering} \]

6. **How frequently should I give?**

   Planned, consistent giving is much preferred over random giving. For most people, giving without a plan usually results in giving less than one would if they practiced planned, consistent giving.

7. **Does God want me to give my full tithe to Tenth?**

   There are many other excellent ministries in the Christian community, many of them closely related to our members. There is no scriptural imperative that says your full tithe needs to support your church.

8. **I prayerfully manage my money so I can give as much as possible, but it is still less than 10%. Is this ok?**

   Our aim should always be to give at least a tithe. Please note Christ’s teaching in Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42 which reinforces the tithe principle from the Old Testament. Ultimately, your stewardship is a matter between you and God alone.

9. **I have prayed about giving, but just don’t see how I can afford to give much. Can Tenth help me review my expenses to see how I can give more?**
Yes, the diaconate provides basic financial counseling to help establish a budget and track expenses so a member can see how much they might be able to give.

10. **Does God want me to sacrifice providing for my family so I can give more to the church?**
No. Scripture teaches that a head of a household should provide for their family.

11. **God has blessed me financially so I can save. Does the church provide help so I can save wisely and give as much as possible?**
The PCA, the denomination to which Tenth belongs, provides a free service for planning your estate. You will need to engage the services of a financial planner, an investment advisor, and/or a lawyer to fully develop a saving and giving plan. Tenth encourages each member to be a careful steward of the resources God has entrusted to them, big or small.

**Financial matters: Part 2—Budgets**

1. **What are the three main budgets of the church?**
   Church Ministry, Outreach, and Building

2. **What is included in the Church Ministry budget?**
The Church Ministry budget includes most staff compensation, operational expenses, such as insurance and utilities, and most in-house ministry expenses, such as Music, Bible School, Maranatha, etc.

3. **What does the Outreach budget support?**
   Outreach is divided into two concerns: Global outreach is for all of our global partners and also includes Tenth staff compensation associated with Global/International work. The Metro outreach supports our regional and local ministry partners and also includes Metro staff compensation. All partners are screened and chosen by the Global and Metro commissions, which are comprised of church members and chaired by Tenth elders.

4. **What does the Building fund support?**
The Building fund supports the work involving large building projects that requires more funding than smaller operational projects. Examples are the sanctuary leaded glass project, the Spruce Street steps, and other façade projects. These projects are approved by the congregation and managed by a committee of church members chaired by an elder/trustee.

5. **May someone give to a ministry in addition to these three main budgets?**
Although it is preferable to have donations go directly to these three main budgets, we do accept and process donations made to individual ministries as long as they are a specific ministry of Tenth Church such as TIF, MCO/SMI, Deacons, ACTS, Project of the Month, and the Capital Campaign. Throughout the year, you will be given opportunity to give to specific causes, such as the Easter Sacrificial Offering, the Thanksgiving offering, and various missions trips.

6. **May church members support an individual through their Tenth giving?**
No, even if the donation is targeted to an individual covered in our budgets, the church cannot allow targeted giving for the benefit of an individual, as this is a violation of IRS regulations.

7. **How does one decide which budget to support?**
Ideally, it is best to support all three budgets so your donation can have the most impact. You can determine the % of your giving by the size of each budget. If, for example, there is a 70%-25%-5% divide with Church ministry/Outreach/Building respectively, then you may want to divide your contribution three ways using that % proportion as a guide.
8. **What is a non-budget fund?**

   Non-budget funds are separate from our operating budgets and are a mix of bequests, designated gifts, and ministry expense lines for events that require registration fees. These funds are not used for everyday operational expense, but they can be used as seed money for new efforts or to support specific ministry projects.

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**Financial matters: Part 3—Envelopes**

1. **What are the white envelopes in our envelope box and the pews used for?**
   
   The white envelopes are the main giving tool for members and regular attenders. They contain lines which signify Church Ministry, Outreach, and Building (explained in part 1). There is an “other” designation which allows the donor to give to specific or designated ministries as long as they are a ministry of Tenth Church such as MCO/SMI, TIF, ACTS, Deacons, Project of the Month, and the Capital Campaign.

2. **Why are the boxed envelopes numbered?**
   
   They are numbered to allow processing and accounting of donations to be more efficient. A donor does not have to write a name on the outside of a numbered envelope. The number tells our counting staff who you are. The generic envelopes you find in the pews are unnumbered. A donor will need to write his/her name on the envelope to receive proper credit for taxes.

3. **Who may use boxed envelopes?**
   
   Church members upon joining church will have the option of receiving boxed envelopes for their convenience in giving. Regular attenders may also request envelopes if they find it more convenient to do so.

4. **Will I receive a report on my giving at the end of the year for tax purposes?**
   
   Everyone who donates to Tenth using envelopes, checks, or cash donations in an envelope will receive a statement from the church by January 31 for the previous year’s giving activity. Please check the accuracy of this statement before you include it on your tax return. The report is generated by our church accountant and these amounts are held in the strictest confidence.

5. **What are the yellow envelopes for?**
   
   The yellow envelopes in your envelope box and in the pews on select Sundays are called Deacon offering envelopes. They are used on Sundays when we have morning communion. They are collected during a second offering in those services and they help support Tenth families in need.

6. **What purpose do the Easter and Thanksgiving envelopes serve?**
   
   The Easter envelope is used for our Easter Sacrificial Offering (ESO) in the Easter season. The ESO is dedicated to several overseas causes the Global Outreach Commission identifies as works to support. Likewise, the Thanksgiving offering is dedicated to several domestic causes the Metro Outreach Commission identifies as works to support.

7. **Will my donations be held in confidence?**
   
   The Elders and Trustees do not know how much you contribute to Tenth. However, they do know whether you give or not as it is a key component of church membership and Christian discipleship.
APPENDIX

PARISHES

The parish is the primary system for ensuring individual pastoral care for the members of the congregation. The Parish Elder is a Ruling Elder who has responsibility for the parish and coordinates the parish pastoral ministry. He provides for and moderates a monthly parish council meeting attended by elders, deacons, deaconesses of that parish and others he appoints. The * by some elders’ names indicate they are not presently serving on the church Session, but they remain active shepherds of the church.

Parish One: Center City/South Philadelphia

This parish includes Center City proper plus the Art Museum area and South Philadelphia (Girard Avenue south, river to river). The parish has approximately 337 communicant members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elders</th>
<th>Deacons</th>
<th>Deaconesses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frank Harder, Parish Elder</td>
<td>Alex Garcia</td>
<td>Stacy Brantley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doug Potts, RE</td>
<td>Tom McCobb</td>
<td>Hannah Horine</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Michael Kennedy, RE</td>
<td>Clark McCutcheon</td>
<td>Lynda Weber</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Bob Sharrar, RE</td>
<td>Tad Morrison</td>
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<td>*JT Tartikoff, RE</td>
<td>Chris Oeste</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ted Voboril</td>
<td>Matthew White</td>
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Small Group Coordinator: Tom McCobb and Kathleen Lewis
Parish Two: Northern Tier

This parish includes Philadelphia north of Girard Avenue, plus Bucks and Montgomery Counties. The parish has approximately 402 communicant members.

**Elders**
- Dan Kunkle, Parish Elder
- Steve Bachman, RE
- David Fiori, RE
- Nasrat Ghattas, RE
- Jerry McFarland, TE
- Paul Shultes, RE
- *Doug DeLong, RE*
- *Gordon Palmer, RE*
- *Tim Peterman, RE*
- *David Skeel, RE*

**Deacons**
- Joe Brydges
- Brian McLelland
- SueJean Choi
- Fiona Davenport
- Vanessa Fiori

**Deaconesses**
- Ellen Bachman
- Jennifer Choi
- Fiona Davenport
- Vanessa Fiori

Small Group Coordinator: Kristen Schafli

Parish Three: West Philadelphia

This parish includes Philadelphia west of the Schuylkill River, Southwest Philadelphia, and the suburbs of Lansdowne, Yeadon, Upper Darby and other small towns included within those zip codes. The parish has approximately 169 communicant members.

**Elders**
- Gregg Olmstead, Parish Elder
- Ron Hoch, Elder
- Bruce McDowell, TE
- Carroll Wynne, TE
- *Bob Kempf, Elder*

**Deacons**
- David Apple
- Tom Denier
- Dave Estabrook
- Tom Jackson
- Jesse Ruhl
- Dan Venutolo

**Deaconesses**
- Maxine Young
- Tom Denier

Small Group Coordinator: Mary Berzinsky
Parish Four: Main Line

This parish extends to the west beyond Philadelphia generally between Route 3 and the Schuylkill River and includes West Chester. The parish has approximately 169 communicant members.

**Elders**                        **Deacons**                        **Deaconesses**
Paul Grant, *Parish Elder*        Jim Favino                          Katherine Preston
Dave Allen, *RE*                  Frank Pulcini                       Kristina Pulcini
Pat Canavan, *RE*                 Paul Reimold                        Katherine Soulé
Tom Derby, *RE*                   
Clive Stockdale, *RE*             

Small Group Coordinator: Kristina Pulcini

Parish Five: Western Suburbs

This parish includes portions of western Delaware and southern Chester Counties and the State of Delaware (generally south of Route 3 to West Chester and then south of Route 1). The parish has approximately 94 communicant members.

**Elders**                        **Deacons**                        **Deaconesses**
Dave Collins, *Parish Elder*      Bob Lang                            Barbara Kasper
George McFarland, *RE*            
*Vic Ellison, *RE*                
*Bert Fink, *RE*                  

Small Group Coordinator: Tony Borrelli
Parish Six: New Jersey

This parish includes the State of New Jersey, from which the majority of its members reside south of Princeton. The parish has approximately 366 communicant members.

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<tr>
<th>Elders</th>
<th>Deacons</th>
<th>Deaconesses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Fletcher, Parish Elder</td>
<td>Keith Bennett</td>
<td>Shaunessy Hanrahan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve Forde, Parish Elder</td>
<td>Guy Elzey</td>
<td>Kathy Pisani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam Goligher, TE</td>
<td>Ken Jones</td>
<td>Sarah Staley</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Hala, RE</td>
<td>Scott Sweeney</td>
<td>Annalee Thompson</td>
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<td>Russ Pfeifer, RE</td>
<td>John Voorhis</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Daryl Bird, RE</td>
<td>Greg Warburton</td>
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<td>*Dave Dugan, RE</td>
<td>Bob Yang</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Ron Ferner, RE</td>
<td>Andy Zamora</td>
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<td>*Bruce Gunther, RE</td>
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<td>*Elmer Snethen, RE</td>
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Small Group Coordinator: Julia Hatley
TENTH HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

HISTORY

Tenth Presbyterian Church dates back to the early nineteenth century when Philadelphia was the second largest city in the country. At that time the entire city was quite small, surrounded by farmlands and situated between two rivers, the Schuylkill and the Delaware.

The original Tenth Church, founded in 1829 and designed by William Strickland, was located on the northeast corner of Twelfth and Walnut Streets. It established a daughter church in 1855–1856 called the West Spruce Street Presbyterian Church on the southwest corner of Seventeenth and Spruce Streets. The two churches worked together, with the ministers exchanging pulpits each week. Due to membership decline in the original Tenth Church caused by population shifts, the two churches merged in 1893 at the Seventeenth and Spruce Streets location, taking the name of the older church (Tenth Presbyterian Church).

Tenth Church was designed by John McArthur, Jr., the architect who later had the distinction of being chosen to design City Hall. He was a member of the West Spruce Street Presbyterian Church and also its first deacon. Like a great number of architects at the time, he was able to design competently in a variety of European styles. Tenth's exterior is a free adaptation of the Lombard Romanesque, a style of architecture prevalent in Western Europe from the ninth to twelfth centuries, with a portico front opening into a narthex (vestibule), round-headed windows and entrance openings, pilaster strips (column-like structures that project only slightly from the wall), a corbel table (the parts that project just below the eaves), a roof crest, and two steeples in differing architectural styles. The east tower with its spire rose to 250 feet in height. The west tower and spire were 120 feet high. When it was built, Tenth Church was the tallest structure in the city. The spires were built of white pine. Over the years, storm damage and resulting structural problems necessitated their removal in 1912—neighbors petitioned Tenth to remove the towers because they could not get insurance for fear of the steeples falling on their properties. The monochromatic brick and brownstone façade is characteristic of the architectural style. Much of the “brownstone” was actually wood painted with sand paint.

The two-story Sunday School and Lecture Building (the Middle Building) attached to the south side of the Sanctuary Building was also constructed of brick as designed by John McArthur, Jr. The Lecture Room (today known as Reception Hall) was completed first. Originally it was furnished with pews facing a pulpit at the west end of the room; it did not have the two center support columns, which were added in the 1980’s. The congregation met here while the sanctuary was being completed.

The Sanctuary, or Audience Room, was originally highly ornamented Italianate. Below the vaulted coffered ceiling were white pine archivolts with perforated panels. The Sanctuary was originally lit with gas fixtures. Its galleries were supported by slender cast iron columns extending to the roof. These columns are hidden within the plaster columns and still support the structure today. The original pews had doors, and pew rent was charged.

1893 RENOVATION

In 1893, when the two churches merged, the notable Frank Miles Day was hired to perform major alterations in the structure and the interior decoration. (The nearby 245–247 S. 17th Street row homes are another example of his
architectural work.) This included lowering the balcony side walls about five feet and changing the roof structure. The interior you see today is in the Neo-Byzantine style, which was fashionable at that time. On the soffits and in the apse are hand-stenciled geometric and symbolic designs that provide a heightened worship experience. The columns were plaster-clad, and color was worked into the wet plaster to achieve the marble-like finish (this faux marble is called scagliola). Their capitals, delicately formed with vines and lotus flowers, and the apse decorated with gold-leaf traceries of multi-sized star-flowers on a dark green background, speak of the Byzantine influence taken from the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. A massive 700-pound Venetian-style chandelier was suspended above the center of the Sanctuary. Each link of the chandelier chain weighed five pounds. Other smaller chandeliers hung over the pulpit and from the two southern groin vaults on either side of the pulpit. New white oak pews that matched the other wood furniture were installed. The renovation increased Tenth’s seating capacity, necessary to accommodate the additional members from the old Tenth Church. The church is undertaking renovations to restore the space to this period.

MEMORIALS

Two splendid windows by Tiffany are on either side of the interior Sanctuary front. They were installed as memorial gifts in the 1890’s. The west window shows the Presbyterian coat of arms with its burning bush on backgrounds of blue etched glass with the Scottish thistle and the French fleur-de-lis. The east window, showing a great angel presence in a field of lilies, transmits an arresting atmosphere of peace and tranquility. Its lighter colors of blues, white, and light peach-tans stress the sense of purity and compassion. The window incorporates the use of folded glass in the angel’s garments. The studio signatures can be found in the lower right corner of each window.

The cast stone pulpit is a memorial to one of the five Bs (senior ministers who served over 25 years and whose last names all begin with B), Dr. William P. Breed (1856–1889). The pulpit, platform, and surroundings were designed by architect Frank Miles Day. The daughters of Henry D. Sherrerd had the current baptismal font of Westerly granite placed in the church in 1889, a memorial to their father. On either side of the pulpit are wall-mounted memorials to Morris Patterson (designed by Theophilus Parsons Chandler) and Gustavus S. Benson. Other wall-mounted memorials honor three of the other Bs: Dr. Henry Augustus Boardman (1833–1876), Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse (1927–1960), and Dr. James Montgomery Boice (1968–2000). The church has a contribution to install a memorial to the other, Dr. Marcus A. Brownson, (1897–1924) in the future.

OTHER RENOVATION/RESTORATION

Renovations in the 1980’s include excavating the Catacombs for an assembly hall and six classrooms, all equipped with video equipment; updating the Fellowship Hall kitchen; improving the Reception Hall and nursery areas; installing a new staircase to the Catacombs, a handicap bathroom; and a handicap ramp. In 1993, reinforcement of the massive sanctuary roof trusses was undertaken and completed. The roof had been bearing down on the side walls from the onset, but roof truss failure was causing the walls to bow out to the point of possible roof collapse. In 1995, the Sanctuary and Middle Building exteriors were cleaned, painted, and bird-proofed. Tiffany window restoration was completed in 1996. In 1997, lightning rods were installed over all the buildings, the Seventeenth Street east entry doors were re-grained to the white oak specification, and the entire three-building facility was
rewired to accommodate modern telecommunications equipment. Air conditioning was installed in 1999–2000. Beginning in 2008, capital campaign projects provided for new catacombs bathrooms, choir loft renovations and a new organ, new Sanctuary tile and carpet, an elevator, renovated nursery areas, a new kitchenette and handicapped accessible bathrooms off Reception Hall, and a renovated Fellowship Hall kitchen, as well as property acquisition. We desire our historically registered landmark to be preserved and used for God’s glory for generations to come.

OTHER BUILDINGS

Tenth Church had ties to the 1701 Delancey Building at the beginning. The original church lot extended from Spruce Street to Delancey Street. The southern end at Delancey was given to John McArthur, Jr., in payment for his services. He built a four-story dwelling on the property that faced Seventeenth Street (314 S. 17th Street; it is visible in the old photograph of the church in which the church still has its towers and the iron fence extending across the front). Over time, the house had a number of different owners and was eventually demolished in 1899 by Arthur and Sophie Remington, who then built the current mansion facing Delancey (becoming 1701 Delancey Street). For a brief time, this was the home of the late Donald Grey Barnhouse, a long-time minister at Tenth. It eventually became law offices. The church purchased the property in 1982, and it now houses its administrative offices and Bible school classes. Tenth Church purchased 315 S. Seventeenth Street for use as classroom space in 2000. Tenth purchased 1716 Spruce Street from the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals in 2012 as part of a capital campaign. Tenth bought 1710–12 Spruce Street in 2015.
Introduction: The Biblical Rationale for Presbyterianism

When you join a Presbyterian church, you recognize that Jesus Christ is the Lord of his church. Those who join a church realize that Christ has commanded us to make disciples, baptize and teach (Matthew 28:19–20). Those who follow Christ join with a local fellowship of believers and should obey him in these activities. In Acts 2:42–47 we find the activities which the early church did to fulfill the Great Commission: ministry of the word, fellowship, sacraments, prayer, ministry to the needy, and evangelism. As you join Tenth Church, these should become a part of your life more and more.

Like the church of the Apostles, the church afterward continued to maintain the essential ingredient of the ministry of the word and the focus was still upon the cross of Christ, by which men are saved from their sin (see Acts 20:28b). Unlike the church of the Apostles, the church afterward provided for rule over the congregation (with doctrinal oversight) and pastoral care by elders. If one compares the Apostle Luke’s use of presbyter as used in Acts 20:17 with ἐφεσκόπως and pastor (as used in Acts 20:28), we find that essentially there is not a difference between elder, bishop, shepherd and overseer. These all are inherent to the definition of a presbyter. As given by the early apostles for rule, so Presbyterianism maintains that its form of rule has definitive biblical injunctions.

Early Beginnings: Presbyterianism in the European Context

The Early Church after the Acts of the Apostles, however, did not follow the guidelines as given by the Apostles. In the years between 200 to 1500, the Medieval Church introduced numerous innovations in the church; one of the most noteworthy was that within the church government. A whole hierarchical system began to emerge which consisted of elders, pastors, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and pope. This hardly was consistent with the canonical record for a specific type of rule. The New Testament gives us a record of the Apostles’ teaching in Acts, as well as qualifications for elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3.

At the end of the Medieval Age, people in the church began to question this structure of church government (along with other practices in the established church). The guide for such investigation was the Holy Scriptures, by which the Reformers pointed to the practice of the early church as well as the New Testament directives. Thus, Presbyterianism rose out of the Protestant Reformation during the 16th century. Through his careful study of the Scriptures, John Calvin is often considered the “father of the Reformed faith,” for it was this Genevan pastor who taught and preached the doctrines which were adopted by later Presbyterians. The governing of the Reformed churches meant that a hierarchy of church courts (similar to the courts as developed by John Calvin) was practiced as the biblical pattern. Above the local congregational “session” were the presbytery, the synod, and the “general assembly.” Each of these had fixed duties and responsibilities and usually definite geographical boundaries. His explanation of the definition of elders and deacons, which is contained in The Institutes of the Christian Religion, provided followers of Calvin with offices for a Presbyterian form of church government.

John Knox of Scotland studied the doctrines of Calvin in Geneva. The pattern he developed more precisely matched the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 (see verses 2b, 6, 22)—a representative eldership with limited democracy (which would become a comparative structure of our own American government). Church government should be carried out by a parity of elders. Through Knox’s efforts, early Presbyterianism took root in Scotland in the 16th century and continued to grow in the century to follow. Thus, Knox is considered the “father of Presbyterianism.”

Presbyterianism in America

The first American Presbyterian Church was founded in Snow Hill, Maryland in 1684. Francis Makemie, a native-born Scotchman, came to America to “submit to the sovereign providence of God who has been pleased unexpectedly to drive me back to this poor desolate people.” Between 1684 and 1705 he helped set up a number of
churches in Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. In 1692 he visited Philadelphia and saw the need for a Presbyterian church.

It was not until after 1700 that men in the American colonies with Presbyterian aspirations thought about erecting a Presbyterian Church. The particular need was that most ministers in America were foreign-born and ordained. The hope was that ministers ordained in America would most likely remain in the new developing land. The first Presbyterian missionary to the New World was Francis Makemie, who would oversee the first ordination of an American Presbyterian on American soil. The first Presbyterian minister (native-born) in Pennsylvania was Jedidiah Andrews in 1701. Along with a group of other Presbyterian ministers, the first American presbytery met in 1706 in Philadelphia. Makemie was well suited for bringing together differing elements at that first meeting. Meeting with him were one Scottish, two Scotch-Irish and three New England ministers. The churches represented were also quite diverse: most were from scattered Puritan churches of Long Island, Delaware, and New Jersey, all of whom felt a need for interchurch connections. In this sense, the early Presbyterian Church took on a “New England” form.

In the 1720’s William Tennent, Sr. organized a “log college” (later Princeton College) in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania to train Presbyterian ministers. Such preachers stressed an emotional “new birth” revivalism which conflicted with the old creedal Calvinists. Eventually, the denomination was split between the “old side,” who opposed the revivalism of the Tennents, and the “New Side” who favored ministers who were regenerated and not necessarily well trained. These groups were reunited in 1757. One year later in 1758, there were 94 ministers in the Presbyterian Church with 200 congregations. A member included John Witherspoon, later to become president of Princeton and be the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence.

After the American Revolution, Presbyterians and Congregations worked together to include a more diverse group of people who were moving westward. This cooperation, however, contributed to the division between the “Old School” and “New School” perspectives. Issues of discipline and the expenditure of missionary money led to four New School synods being expelled.

A far graver split occurred between the southern and northern Presbyterians over the issue of slavery. The Old School delegates regarded slavery as no bar to Christian communion; New School ministers opposed slavery. Following the outbreak of the Civil War, 47 Southern presbyteries met to form the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. After the war, these churches met to form the PCUS. The Old School and New School groups of the northern Presbyterian Church were united in 1870 on the basis of the Westminster Confession. In the time between 1920 and 1950 an emphasis on theology was realized in a liberal/conservative struggle. The deeper wounds were healed when the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was formed in 1983.

The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), of which Tenth is now a member, was formed in 1973 when southern delegates withdrew from the southern Presbyterian Church. Issues such as the ecumenical involvements, the ordination of women and theological liberalism encouraged the delegates to found a new Presbyterian order. The PCA accepts the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and the Shorter Catechisms as its doctrinal standard and teaches that the Holy Spirit guided the writers of the Scriptures so that the writings are free of error of fact, doctrine, and judgment.

Tenth Presbyterian Church

Tenth Presbyterian Church was founded in 1829 on the corner of 12th and Walnut Streets. Its name comes from being the tenth Presbyterian church to be formed in Philadelphia. The first minister was Thomas McAuley who served four years. The congregation called a young minister out of seminary named Henry Augustus Boardman, who did not want to serve in the city. He would serve the church for 43 years, beginning a unique feature among ministers whose last names begin with “B.” William Breed would join him in 1856 to pastor the new daughter
church, West Spruce Street Presbyterian Church, built at 17th and Spruce Streets. Breed would serve for 33 years. In 1893, the mother church’s membership had declined and was united with West Spruce. The original name of Tenth was retained and the sanctuary was renovated. Marcus Brownson came in 1897 and served 27 years. The church still faced decline until the calling of a young evangelist, Donald Grey Barnhouse in 1927. A familiar name as preacher and evangelist, Barnhouse was one of the pioneers in radio ministry, as well as a world traveler. The church again grew to strong numbers under his preaching. His death in 1960 ended 33 years at Tenth.

Tenth gained an international reputation through Barnhouse, but it would be under the next minister, Mariano Di Gangi, that attention would be given to being a city church. Di Gangi left in 1967, and the next “B” minister was called, a young editor from Christianity Today, James Montgomery Boice. He would serve for 32 years until his death in 2000. Boice matched Barnhouse’s preaching gift and Di Gangi’s passion for the city. He also developed a world-renown ministry on the radio and through traveling, but also turned the congregation’s focus on the city, so that numerous outreach ministries developed. By his death, the church had grown to 1,400 members. Boice was succeeded in early 2001 by Philip Graham Ryken, who had already been serving on staff as the evening preacher. He served until 2010 when he was called to serve as president of Wheaton College. Our present senior minister Liam Goligher came in 2011 from England, where he pastored Duke Street Church in Richmond, England.

Until 1981, Tenth was a church of the United Presbyterian Church, USA. The church left over two issues. Though the denomination had increasingly embraced liberal views and causes, it had allowed conservative churches to maintain their teaching and practice of conscience. However, that changed as churches were being required to ordain women as teaching and ruling elders. We also felt a line had been crossed when the denomination upheld the ordination of a minister who denied the deity of Jesus Christ. Tenth joined the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, which soon merged with the Presbyterian Church in America.