



The Presbyterian of The Presbytery of Elizabeth



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There are nine different conferences involved in the Big Tent. Choose just one or design your own Big Tent:

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- [Evangelism and Church Growth Conference](#)
- [Healthy Ministry Conference](#)
- [National Elders Conference](#)
- [National Multicultural Church Conference](#)
- [Peacemaking Conference](#)
- [Presbyterian Communicators Network National Conference](#)
- [Racial Ethnic and Immigrants Convocation](#)
- [Engage Conference Aug. 8-11-2011 St. Pete Beach, Florida](#)

Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have approved a new Form of Government

Louisville—While the Office of the General Assembly awaits official tallies, it appears that a majority of the 173 presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have approved a new Form of Government.

At its meeting on Tuesday, June 7, 2011, Trinity Presbytery became the 87th presbytery to approve an amendment that will replace the current 18-chapter Form of Government with a new version that is six chapters in length. The Form of Government is one section of the Book of Order, which is part of the PC(USA) Constitution.

Along with the new Form of Government will be a new section of the Book of Order entitled "Principles of Presbyterian Polity," which contains a large majority of the content of the first four chapters of the current Form of Government.

The proposed new Form of Government (FOG) was approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA). Two years earlier, a proposed revision had been presented to the 218th General Assembly (2008) by the FOG Task Force. That assembly reconstituted the task force and asked it to present a revised version to the 219th GA based on the feedback received at the 218th GA.

This is the first full revision of the Form of Government since the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America reunited to form the PC(USA). The current Form of Government had been amended over 300 times since reunion in 1983.

The new Form of Government will take effect July 10, 2011, one year after the adjournment of last summer's assembly. It is anticipated that the transition from the current to the new FOG will take time.

In response to the vote, denominational leaders issued a letter to all congregations of the PC(USA). In it, they write, "While the new Form of Government will help the PC(USA) to be a faithful and responsive church in the 21st century, it also has a dimension of bringing us back to a truly constitutional document that contains broad governing and theological principles and emphasizes function over structure."

The letter continues, "Many Presbyterians will see nothing suddenly or dramatically different with a new Form of Government. Worship services will go on as usual, and congregations will continue to teach the faith, serve their communities, reach out to those in need, and work to further God's realm on earth. However, what will be different is that congregations, presbyteries, and synods will have the opportunity to tailor mission and ministry to fit their own particular contexts and challenges."

Resources and guides about the new FOG, including "Frequently Asked Questions," are available at <http://oqa.pcusa.org/formofgovernment>

Presbyterian Purchasing Partnership

The Presbyterian Purchasing Partnership, formalized in April 1998, is a cost-saving purchasing program designed for use by Presbyterian congregations and affiliate agencies, institutions and organizations. This partnership is a stewardship effort with goals of offering high quality products and services at attractive, competitive prices. Some negotiated agreements also may be used by members of individual congregations and staff employed by affiliate organizations. As a partnership member, you can save hundreds, even thousands of dollars on everyday purchases.

The Partnership enables all affiliate entities to receive discounts on purchases from preferred providers who offer high quality products and services on a national basis. Participation in the Partnership is voluntary. There is no application form or membership fee. You deal directly with the supplier. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) does not serve as an agent for any supplier.

Presbyterian Camps and Conference Centers Events

- [Johnsonburg Summer Camp Events: July 3-August 26](#)
- [Johnsonburg Fall Sabbath Day Wednesday, Sep. 21, 2011](#)
- [Stony Point Center's 3rd Annual Homecoming: Oct. 22-23, 2011](#)

Presbyterian Seminaries Events

Princeton Theological Seminary

- [Barth Conference 2011-Thomas Aquinas & Karl Barth: An Unofficial Protestant-Catholic Dialogue](#)

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The Partnership is sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). By combining strength in numbers and using purchasing power, we can negotiate national account pricing for the membership. Each participating supplier has met the Partnership selection criteria. Ongoing periodic evaluations of supplier performance standards are conducted by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Partnership members to ensure the highest quality of products and services possible. **It's free and yours for the asking!**

For more information visit: <http://qamc.pcusa.org/ministries/purchasingpartners>

Greeting Is No. 1

A friend took me to lunch at Bond 45, a well-established Italian restaurant near 45th and Broadway. He knew its chef when he worked uptown and followed him here. Sure enough, Brando came over to greet his old friend. After introductions, Brando looked me in the eye, shook my hand, clutched my arm, and welcomed me, too. Brando brought with him Marcello, new general manager. More introductions, more eye contact, more handshakes. A while later Marcello came back by himself, checked on our meal, and conveyed the welcome message: I will recognize you when you return. On our way out, he gave us each his card, another handshake, and a sense that we had been entered in his mental database.

Not only did I admire this deft handling of greetings, but I observed how it made me feel. I knew it was well-rehearsed but still had a level of sincerity. For this restaurant – like any enterprise – will rise or fall depending on such personal contact. I now felt a bit connected to an eatery that is one of hundreds that I walk past. It left me wanting to return, if only for the simple pleasure of being recognized.

I share this extended parable because it speaks to a critical and often neglected reality: the number one job of the pastor on Sunday is to greet people. Preaching and leading worship matter, too, but the enterprise will rise if the pastor is a warm, sincere and effective greeter, and it will fall if the pastor stays hidden, is rushing around as people arrive, or exchanges distracted greetings whose unmistakable message is: "Go away."

The message of a poorly handled greeting is clear: the pastor doesn't care. That message will undermine excellent preaching and worship, not to mention lay ministries. I know an Episcopal parish in Manhattan whose rector grew the church by standing on the sidewalk every Sunday, welcoming his people and inviting strangers to come on in, too. The mere sight of him said, Sincere, warm, welcoming.

Whether your congregation is small, medium or large, here is what needs to happen:

- Before the first worshipers normally arrive, the pastor should be outside the main entrance, vested for worship, ready to greet people. If your church has multiple entrances, station another clergy or lay leader at each one. (This is an ideal ministry for retired and non-parochial clergy, by the way.)
- Greet people by name, if you know their name. Otherwise, ask for their name. No one expects the pastor of a large congregation to know every name. Recognizing faces, however, is expected.
- Shake hands with everyone. Be cautious in hugging. A selective exchange of hugs can communicate in-crowd vs. out-crowd.
- Make eye contact with the person before you. Don't be looking distractedly ahead to the next person.
- Be sure to welcome children by name, if possible. Parents care greatly how their children are received.
- Don't engage in long conversation at this point. It takes time away from others arriving. Save the pastoral inquiry and budget chat for later.
- Don't worry about greeting every single person. People tend to arrive for worship in a rush. The sight of you standing outside and caring enough to greet people will touch everyone.

In my experience, people pay more attention to a sermon given by someone who greeted them out front. Worship is richer when people have some common bond, such as the pastor's warm greeting.

After worship, a different process should occur. Forget the long receiving-line approach. It prevents people from going where they want to go. Better to have the clergy (one or several) mingling among people as they leave. Avoid getting trapped in long conversations, don't conduct church business, and have a special eye for visitors. Ideally, several skilled lay leaders should be "working the crowd," too.

(The above article was written by the Rev. Tom Ehrich, founder of the Church Wellness Project.)



What's Happening around the Presbytery

Wondering where to take your children for VBS this Summer? Visit our website for an updated list:

www.elizabethpresbytery.org

Let us know what is happening in your church
we'll help spread the word!