

How do you spell "Presbyterian?"

If you just did an internet search for "a Presbyterian Church" - you could have typed in "presbeterion, presbaterian, presbitarian, presbyteryan, prasbityeriyen" and many more combinations to find Bethany!

It's a strange word (pronounced prez-bi-teer-ee-uhn) - but the letters of it explain a lot about what is the Presbyterian Church.

"Presbyteros" is the Greek word for "elder."

The New Testament of the Bible was written in Greek - and the early church uses "presbyteros" to describe a particular spiritual gift and leadership role in ministry. Pastors are one form of "elder" and "laypeople" who demonstrate a passion for ministry, reconciliation, justice, the Word of God, and other spiritual gifts for leadership, are also ordained to be "elders."

The Presbyterian Church is organized as a democracy - that elects these elders as its central leaders - led by Christ and inspired by the Spirit.

Other denominations of the Church entrust their leadership to individuals, like bishops, cardinals, even individual pastors. The Presbyterians entrust *their* leadership to a council of elders, the pastors being part of that leadership team. "The nature of the Presbyterian order is such that it shares power and responsibility" (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order G-4.0302).

To be a member of the Presbyterian Church includes blessings that range from taking part in the common life and worship of a particular church to praying and studying Scripture to working in the world for peace, justice, freedom, and human fulfillment (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order G-5.0102).

Find out more about the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) - and what it means to be part of the global family of the Presbyterian Church at www.pcusa.org.

