

What is the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)?

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is the largest of some half a dozen U.S. Protestant denominations with roots in the Reformed theological movement. Years ago many Presbyterians came from Scotland and northern Ireland and settled in the Piedmont area of what became the United States. The PC(USA) is the product of a 1983 merger between Northern and Southern streams that had separated before the Civil War. The General Assembly, a gathering of ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament, ordained congregational leaders known as elders, and other interested persons, meets every two years to help set denominational policy.

Today the PC(USA) incorporates:

- 2,209,546 members
- 10,820 congregations
- 16 synods and 173 presbyteries
- six national General Assembly agencies (Board of Pensions, General Assembly Council, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation)—all but one of these based in the Louisville, Kentucky metropolitan area
- 11 General Assembly permanent committees
- 12 related seminaries

The **Board of Pensions** operates pensions and benefits systems and an assistance program for ministers and other church workers. The **General Assembly Council** is the denomination's national mission agency and also provides services to congregations, presbyteries, and synods. The **Office of the General Assembly** plans the General Assembly meetings, provides staff support for General Assembly committees, and provides legal advice for presbyteries and the PC(USA) stated clerk. The **Presbyterian Foundation** holds and invests funds for individual Presbyterians and for congregations, presbyteries, national agencies, and other Presbyterian-related organizations. The **Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program** also provides investment opportunities and loans invested money to Presbyterian organizations so that they can build, renovate, and expand their facilities. The **Presbyterian Publishing Corporation** prints and sells books and other print and Web resources of special interest to Presbyterians.

Starting in 2003, each General Assembly has established a committee to review the work of two of the six national agencies. In 2008 the Assembly instead established a committee to review the work of the PC(USA) as a whole, highlighting in particular the work of the six national agencies and the relationships among those agencies.