

# Communicant membership vow #2

**Last weeks:** Proto-Presbyterians → Presbyterians (1560) → American Presbyterians (1789) →

Orthodox Presbyterians (straight teaching via elders) (1936) → Grace OPC (1971)

**This week:** Communicant membership vow #2 → **Next weeks:** Vows 3–5

## Communicant church membership process

Review → Interview → Take vows publicly (profession of faith)

### 1. God's revelation

*Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?*

2 Peter 1:16–21 2 Timothy 3:16–17 Luke 24:25–32

### 2. God's revelation of himself

*Do you believe in one living and true God, in whom eternally there are three distinct persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—who are the same in being and equal in power and glory, and that Jesus Christ is God the Son, come in the flesh?*

John 14:6 Acts 4:12 Matthew 28:18–20

## Deep dive into vow #2

*Do you believe in one living and true God, in whom eternally there are three distinct persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—who are the same in being and equal in power and glory, and that Jesus Christ is God the Son, come in the flesh?*

### Counterfeit gods

- “*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*” —God in Exodus 20:3
- “*Man’s nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols.*” —John Calvin, *Institutes* I:11:8
- Everyone makes idols (other gods, counterfeit gods) to take the place of the true and living God: the mind, work, money, pleasure, sex, another person, self—anything you live for and look to as that from which you believe you receive your greatest happiness. Acts 17:22, Romans 1:18–25
- It is eternally dangerous to serve an idol rather than the true and living God. Hebrews 11:6

### The one living and true God, the Trinity

- “**Trinity**,” (tri unity) is not a word used in the Bible, is from the Latin *trinitas*, a combination of the Latin words for “three” and “one.” First used by the early church father Tertullian (c. AD 160–220).
- **HAND:** honor, attributes, names, and deeds: Look for “HAND” as you read through the Bible, especially the New Testament
- **God is one:** Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 44:6, 45:21–22, Jeremiah 10:10, Matthew 28:19 (the “name”—not names), 1 Corinthians 8:4, 1 Thessalonians 1:9
- **God is three**
  - **The Father is God:** Malachi 2:10; Matthew 11:25–30; John 4:21–23; 14:8–9 (Jesus calls God “my Father” 38 times in the four gospels); 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6
  - **The Son is God:** Matthew 3:17; 16:16; John 1:1, 14, 18; 10:30; 20:28; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:1–4; 1 John 4:9

- **The Spirit is God:** Acts 5:3–4 (lying to the Holy Spirit is also lying to God), Hebrews 3:7–12, Isaiah 63:10, Ephesians 4:30 (not an impersonal force—you can't grieve electricity or lie to gravity)
- The Bible speaks of these three (tri) persons as one (unity) God: Genesis 1:26, Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14
- “*The Trinity is the basis of the Gospel, and the Gospel is a declaration of the Trinity in action.*” —J. I. Packer

### God the Son, incarnate

Is Jesus God or man? Yes!

- WSC 21: *The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.*
- WSC 22: *Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.*
- Matthew 16:16, John 1:1–18 (especially 1:1–3, 14), Colossians 1:15–17, 2:9, 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 1:1–3, 2:14–18, 7:23–25
- Virgin birth and incarnation: Hebrews 4:14–16, 7:26–28, Isaiah 9:6, Matthew 1:23, John 1:14, Galatians 4:4 → Matthew and Luke birth narratives (Matthew 1 and Luke 1–2)

### Knowing God

- Ultimate love (1 John 4:8, 16)
- Ultimate unity
- Ultimate diversity
- Ultimate community
- Perichōrēsis
  - “*The Father is in the Son in the Holy Spirit. We can distinguish the divine persons, but we cannot pull them apart. They exist in one another, the Father dwelling completely in the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son dwelling completely in the Father and the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit dwelling completely in the Father and the Son.*”  
—Perichōrēsis article on ligonier.org
  - The love dance of the Trinity
  - From John 14:10 → 17:20–21
    - “*Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?*” —John 14:10
    - “*I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us...*” —John 17:20–21

“To us a human is primarily food; our aim is the absorption of its will into ours, the increase of our own area of selfhood at its expense. But the obedience which the Enemy demands of men is quite a different thing. One must face the fact that all the talk about His love for men, and His service being perfect freedom, is not (as one would gladly believe) mere propaganda, but an appalling truth. He really does want to fill the universe with a lot of loathsome little replicas of Himself—creatures whose life, on its miniature scale, will be qualitatively like His own, not because He has absorbed them but because their wills freely conform to His. We want cattle who can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons. We want to suck in; He wants to give out. We are empty and would be filled; He is full and flows over. Our war aim is a world in which Our Father Below has drawn all other beings into himself: the Enemy wants a world full of beings united to Him but still distinct.” —Screwtape, from C. S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters* (Letter 8, p. 50) \*\*