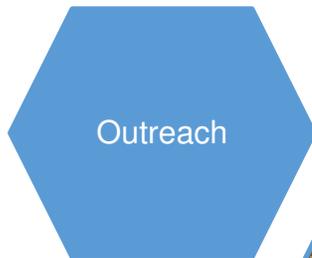
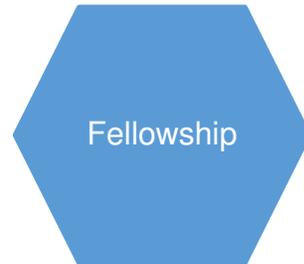
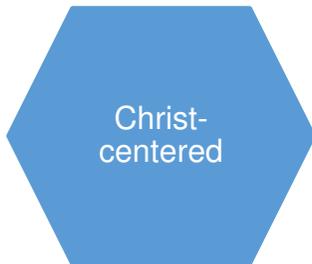
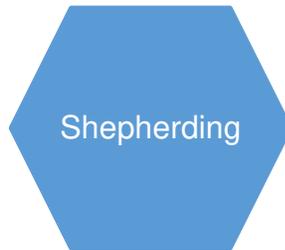
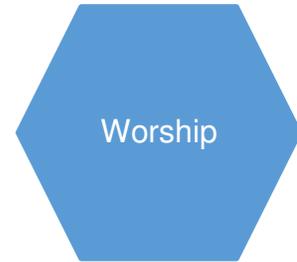


Roebuck Presbyterian Church

Beliefs and Mission



ROEBUCK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Beliefs and Mission

Welcome to Roebuck Presbyterian Church. The purpose of this booklet is to introduce you to what our church believes and the mission we are aiming to fulfill. In short, our beliefs center on what the Bible teaches about Jesus and his gospel, and our mission is to strengthen God's people and to evangelize the world with that good news.

One of the first questions you may have when attending our church is, "What do you believe?" Our foundational belief is that the Bible is God's Word, and that it is the ultimate standard for what we believe and how we live. Everything we believe and do should either be expressly stated in Scripture or necessarily deduced from it.

Building on that foundation, we also want to answer the question, "What do you believe the Bible teaches?" We have adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Westminster Larger Catechism, and the Westminster Shorter Catechism as our secondary standards, and they define our beliefs in key areas of Christian faith and practice. We commend them to you as a faithful

explanation of biblical doctrine and piety.¹ This booklet attempts to distill the main ideas of those documents as a handy reference.

Furthermore, Roebuck Presbyterian Church (RPC) is a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a denomination that seeks to be faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.² This booklet overviews core ideas and practices of Presbyterians.

What does Roebuck Presbyterian Church believe?

We can summarize our beliefs in terms of Christian essentials and Presbyterian distinctives.

Christian Essentials: Adherence to the gospel constitutes the most essential mark of a Christian and a Christian church (Rom 1:1–7, 16–17). Consequently, the following truths are essential in order to maintain the integrity of the gospel (1 Cor 15:1–11). As a church, we embrace these truths as foundational to our Christian identity and

¹ You can read the Westminster Standards online at <http://www.pcaac.org/resources/wcf/>.

² For more on the PCA, visit the denomination's website at <https://pcanet.org/>.

hold these beliefs in common with other Christian churches.

The Bible: the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired and inerrant Word of God, the ultimate standard for faith and practice (2 Tim 3:16–17).

God: there is one God (Deut 6:4; 1 Cor 8:6) who eternally exists as three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19; Mark 1:10–11; John 1:1; 8:58; 10:30; Acts 5:3–4; Col 2:9; Heb 1:3; Rev 1:8, 17b–18).

Man: God created humans, both male and female, in his image and with authority over his creation (Gen 1:26–28). God gave man the obligation to obey him (Gen 2:15–17), but Adam and Eve sinned against God by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen 3:1–7). Humans are now born into a state of guilt and corruption (Rom 3:10–20; 5:12–21).

Sin: all humans sin by breaking God's law (Rom 3:23; 1 John 3:23). Death and corruption entered creation because of sin (Gen 2:17; 3:16–19), sinners are spiritually alienated from God (Eph 2:1–3) and the punishment for sin is death in hell forever (Luke 12:4–5; Rom 6:23; Rev 20:11–15).

Jesus Christ: the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, took on genuine human flesh (John 1:1, 14; Phil 2:5–11), was born of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:35; 2:7), lived a life of perfect obedience (Rom 5:12–21; Gal 4:4–5; Heb 4:15), died in the place of sinners (Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 9:28; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 4:10), and bodily rose from the dead (Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:1–58). Jesus also ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9–10) and will one day return in the same body (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:13–18; 2 Thess 1:5–10).

The Spirit and salvation: the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, applies salvation to believers (John 3:5–8; Rom 5:5; Titus 3:5). Salvation is received on the basis of grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone (Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8–9; 10:9–13). Believers are justified (pardoned and accepted as righteous before God; Rom 4:4–5) and adopted into God’s family (John 1:12; Gal 4:5–7). Believers evidence their faith by their good works (Eph 2:10; Titus 2:11–14; James 2:14–26).

These truths have been expressed throughout the church’s history, especially in the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed.³ The five *solas*

³ The Nicene Creed defines the true church with the attributes “one, holy, catholic, apostolic.”

of the Protestant Reformation also summarize these foundational ideas: Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.⁴ If you affirm these truths, then it is your privilege and responsibility to be a member of a church that confesses these beliefs.

Presbyterian distinctives: RPC considers the following truths to be important for the well-being of the church. A person can disagree with these and still be a Christian, but we believe they are worth affirming for the health of our church and the gospel (Acts 20:27). We require our elected officers (elders and deacons) to subscribe to these beliefs, and we will lovingly disciple you in accordance with these truths.⁵

The sovereignty of God in salvation: the Triune God plans, accomplishes and applies salvation to the elect people of

⁴ The Protestant Reformers spoke of the marks of the true church as the preaching of the Word, the right administration of the sacraments and the faithful exercise of church discipline.

⁵ If you'd like to read more on Presbyterian beliefs and history, see Ken Golden. *Presbytopia: What it means to be Presbyterian* (Geanies House, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015), and Sean Michael Lucas, *On Being Presbyterian: Our Beliefs, Practices, and Stories* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006). See also the short booklet by Stephen Smallman, *What is a Reformed Church*, Basics of the Faith Series (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003).

God. A convenient summary of this idea uses the acronym TULIP, otherwise known as the five points of Calvinism.

- Total depravity: man is spiritually corrupted (Gen 6:5; 8:21; Rom 3:11) and does not have the inherent ability to choose God (Rom 8:7; 1 Cor 2:14).
- Unconditional election: before God created the world, he unconditionally chose who would be saved, not on the basis of foreseen faith or good works, but according to the pleasure of his good will (Rom 8:29–30; Jer 1:5; Eph 1:4–5; Rom 9:11–18; Acts 13:48; Rev 13:8).
- Limited atonement: Jesus' death pays for the sins of his people and purchases the gift of the Spirit, who effectively calls the elect to faith in Christ (John 6:37–40; 10:14–15; 17:9; Rev 5:9).
- Irresistible grace: the Holy Spirit effectively gives new life to those whom God has chosen, successfully enabling them to respond in faith to the good news about Jesus (Rom 8:30; John 6:44; Rom 9:19; Acts 13:48; 16:14; 1 Pet 1:23; John 3:3–5; Ezek 36:25–27).
- Perseverance of the saints: those whom God saves continue to believe the gospel and grow in the faith until God calls them home (Rom 8:30; Phil 1:6; John 10:28).

Covenant theology: God enters into relationships with humans by means of covenants, a relationship that God establishes and guarantees by his Word. The first covenant God made with mankind was the covenant of works, in which God promised Adam, as the federal head of humanity, life if he obeyed and death if he disobeyed (Gen 2:15–17; Hos 6:7; Lev 18:5; Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:21–22, 45).

To rescue sinners from death, God has instituted the covenant of grace, in which he promises to save all who repent and believe (Gen 3:15; John 6:37–40; Rom 10:5–8). The covenant of grace is progressively administered through biblical history (Gal 3:1–29; Eph 2:11–21).

Church government: The Bible affirms the importance of governing the church well (1 Cor 14:40). The church of Jesus Christ is the manifestation of the people and kingdom of God in this age (Matt 16:18–19; Gal 6:16; Eph 2:11–22; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:4–6). Jesus rules the church through his officers (Luke 22:29; Matt 16:19; 18:18; Eph 2:20; 4:11–13; Acts 14:23; 20:28).

Presbyterian churches are primarily governed by elders, men who are chosen by the congregation to oversee the spiritual life of the church, to preach and teach the Bible,

and to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper (Titus 1:5–9; 1 Tim 3:1–7; Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1; James 5:14; 1 Tim 5:17; 4:13, 16; 2 Tim 4:2). Local churches are interconnected and represented by their elders at the regional (presbyteries) and national level (the general assembly; Acts 15:1–30; 16:4; 1 Tim 4:14). Deacons are men chosen by the congregation to oversee the temporal needs of the church (1 Tim 3:8–13; Acts 6:1–7).⁶

Worship: Worship is the expression of our dependence on, submission to, and adoration of God (Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:26; 19:4). In worship, God's people meet with God for his glory and their good (Heb 12:22–24, 28–29). Heaven and earth meet as God speaks through his Word and his people respond (2 Chron 5–7; Rev 4–5; Ps 95:1–2, 6–7).

God commands us to worship him according to his Word (Lev 10:1–3; Deut 12:31–32). The entire service of worship is a ministry of the Word (John 4:21–24; Rom

⁶ Elders and deacons in PCA churches subscribe to the Westminster Standards as their confession of faith and operate according to the rules of the Book of Church Order. You can read the BCO here: <https://www.pcaac.org/resources/bco/>.

10:14–17). Therefore, we fill our worship services with the Word of God through the following elements:

- God calls us to worship through his Word (Ps 95:1–2; Ps 50), and we respond by praying (1 Tim 2:1–7), including the Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9; Luke 11:2).
- God calls us to confess our sins (Deut 6:1–2; 1 John 1:8) and pronounces his pardon on all who repent and believe (1 John 1:9).
- We sing and say God’s Word to one another, including affirming our faith through creeds (Col 3:16; 1 Tim 3:14–16).
- We read and preach the Word (1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 3:16; 4:2) and see the Word in the administration of baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Rom 6:1–4; 1 Cor 10:16–17; 11:23–27).
- God pronounces his blessing on us through the benediction and dismisses us back into the world to serve him (Num 6:23–26; Luke 24:50).⁷
- Sunday is the day God has given us to worship him. We treat Sunday as a holy day by gathering to worship and resting from unnecessary labors (Exod 20:8–11; Lev 23:3). Biblical worship results in the

⁷ See also 1 Cor 14 for a good example of “liturgy in the Bible”: there are particular activities (teaching, singing, giving of thanks, etc.) that are organized by the church’s overseers for the spiritual good of the people (so also 2 Chron 5–7).

salvation of unbelievers (1 Cor 14:24–25) and the building up of believers (1 Cor 14:26; Acts 2:42–47).

Sacraments: in the church, Christ has ordained two sacraments, that is, two visible sermons that set forth the truths of the gospel and function as confirming pledges of God's promises (Rom 4:11).

Christian baptism proclaims God's promise to give new life to dead sinners through the work of the Spirit and to cleanse them from sin (Ezek 36:25–26; John 3:3, 5; Titus 3:5). Christian baptism is the mark of those who belong to God's covenant community through profession of faith or through corporate identification with a believing parent (Gen 17:10–11; Acts 2:38; 16:14–15; Rom 4:9–11; Col 2:11–12; 1 Cor 1:16; 7:14). Therefore, we baptize those who credibly profess the Christian faith and their children.

The Lord's Supper proclaims Christ's death for the sins of his people (Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor 11:23–26). Believers spiritually commune with the risen Christ by faith when they partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 10:16). We invite those who are members of a Bible-believing, evangelical church, and not under church discipline to partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:27–29).

What is the mission of RPC? Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he commissioned the church to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). The church strives to fulfill this mission by calling sinners to turn from their sin and to trust in the work of Christ for their salvation (Acts 28:16; Rom 1:5), by identifying believers and their children with Christ in baptism (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 7:14; Gen 17:9–10; Col 2:11–12), and by teaching them to obey God’s Word (Matt 28:16–20). The regular ministry of the local church equips believers to fulfill this mission (Eph 4:7–16). The book of Revelation envisions a successful mission with its picture of a redeemed community from the whole world worshipping the Triune God upon his throne (Rev 5:6–10).

Therefore, RPC exists to glorify God by strengthening believers and evangelizing unbelievers (mission). We strive to be a gospel-centered church that produces mature disciples for Roebuck, Spartanburg County and beyond (vision). Such mission and vision give shape to our ministry, determining what we do and do not do as a church, and how we use our resources. Roebuck Presbyterian Church: strengthen the church, evangelize the world.

Roebuck Presbyterian Church implements our mission through the following activities and emphases (core values):

1. **The importance of the Word and worship.** The preaching of the Word of God is the means by which God creates and sustains faith (Rom 10:14–17). God has gifted his church with preaching and teaching officers that bring the body of Christ to maturity, defined as doctrinal stability and love (Eph 4:7–16). Our ministry of the Word centers on Jesus and his gospel as the sufficient message for salvation (Rom 1:16–17) and spiritual growth (Rom 16:25–27). Therefore, RPC meets frequently to teach and preach the Bible, to administer the sacraments, to pray, and to worship as a welcoming family in services that are filled with God’s Word (Acts 2:42–47; 1 Tim 1:3–11; 18–20; 2:1–7). Worship produces both discipleship and evangelism.
2. **The importance of shepherding and holy living.** Encountering God in his Word and worship produces growth in the believer in righteousness and holiness (Eph 4:22–24). The believer delights to follow God’s laws (Rom 13:8–10), while always becoming more conscious of sin (1 John 1:6–2:2). God has given shepherds (pastors and elders) to his church to lead his people in this growth (Eph 4:11–

13; 1 Tim 4:16; 1 Thess 4:12).

Therefore, the elders at RPC seek to know the people who worship with us so that we can lead them in following Christ and correct them when they stray (Matt 16:17–19; 18:15–20).

3. **The importance of fellowship and relationships.** The church is a family that helps one another bear the burdens of fighting sin and following Christ (Gal 6:1–5). We also care for one another materially (1 Tim 5:1–16; James 2:1–13; Matt 25:31–46), and our deacons provide leadership and opportunities in this area (Acts 6:1–7). In addition, every believer has a spiritual gift that contributes to the growth of the church (1 Cor 12–14). We exercise these gifts and fulfill these duties not only in corporate worship and under the oversight of the elders, but also by getting to know one another and building relationships with each another.

Therefore, we aim to get to know one another at meals and activities, so that fellowship can lead to friendships which lead to relationships centered around what God is doing in our lives. We also disciple different parts of the body through children's ministries (Deut 6:6–7), women's ministries (Titus 2:3–5), and men's ministries (Titus 2:6–8).

4. **The importance of evangelism and community**

service. The church has good news for the world and we take this good news into the community where the church is located as well as where its members live (Acts 1:8). We also seek to serve our communities with deeds of mercy and justice (Gal 6:10).

Therefore, believers live out their identity as Christians in whatever calling God gives them (Col 3:18–25; 1 Tim 6:1–3) and we share the good news in our daily lives (Col 4:5–6). We also organize outreach and community service, and support church planters and missionaries who take the good news beyond Roebuck into greater Spartanburg county and beyond.

If you are new to Christianity, church or the Bible, please visit or contact our church. We would love to meet you, learn more about you, and share with you the good news about Jesus.

If you are a Christian and are looking for a church home, we want to help you grow in your faith and provide a church home where you can worship God and exercise the gifts he has given you. We believe that church membership is the right and responsibility of every

believer (Matt 16:13–20; 18:15–20; John 15:1–8; WCF 25). We invite into our membership those who assent to the following declarations (BCO 57-5):

1. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner 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 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 yourself to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

If you are a member of our church, then God has given you desires and gifts that can be used for the good of the church. In addition to the ordinary worship and ministries of the church, you can serve in the following ways:

- Greeters at services
- Communion preparation and cleanup

- Singing in the choir or playing an instrument in worship
- Running sound and video equipment during the services
- Website maintenance and development, church social media
- Church meals: preparing, serving, clean up
- Women in the church (WIC)
- Men's Prayer Breakfast
- Sunday School teacher and assistant, Bible study leader
- Church maintenance or decorating
- Nursery worker
- Youth group helper (games, meals)
- Fellowship activities
- Outreach activities (evangelism), missions
- Church and kitchen supply shopping
- Hospitality: hosting visiting missionaries and preachers and their families, church activities, wedding and baby showers
- Bereavement
- Community service
- Other areas of interest? Speak to an elder!

Thank you for taking the time to read this material. For more information about our church, including our order of worship, calendar of events, sermons and other helpful information, visit our website at www.roebuckpca.com.

Notes

Roebuck Presbyterian Church

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Sunday School 9:00am | Sunday Worship 10:00am & 6:00pm