PCA Church Government

How We Are Led and Cared For at Christchurch Miami

Christchurch Miami belongs to the Presbyterian Church in America, or PCA. The word **Presbyterian** comes from the New Testament word for **elder**. It describes a church led by elders who serve together under Jesus Christ and His Word.

This structure helps us care for people, remain faithful to Scripture, and hold our leaders accountable.

The Head of the Church - Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. He gathers His people, provides for them, and calls them to follow Him. Every pastor, elder, deacon, and member serves under His authority.

Church leaders are called to reflect His character through humility, faithfulness, and love.

Read: Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Our Governing Documents

The Bible is God's Word and our final authority for faith and life. All our other governing documents stand under Scripture and must be understood in light of it.

- **The Westminster Confession of Faith** summarizes our understanding of the Bible's teaching on God, salvation, the church, and the Christian life.
- **The Westminster Larger Catechism** explains these beliefs in greater detail through questions and answers.
- **The Westminster Shorter Catechism** provides a concise introduction to Christian belief and duty in the same question-and-answer format.
- **The Book of Church Order** describes how PCA churches organize their leadership, conduct church discipline, and order their worship.

The Confession and Catechisms are often called the **Westminster Standards**. They help us state clearly what we believe and teach. They do not replace the Bible. PCA beliefs

Our Church Officers

The PCA recognizes two offices: **elder** and **deacon**.

Elders - Spiritual Leadership and Care

Elders shepherd the congregation through prayer, biblical instruction, spiritual oversight, and personal care. There are two kinds of elders:

- **Teaching elders**, commonly called pastors, are especially responsible for preaching, teaching, and administering the sacraments.
- **Ruling elders** share in the spiritual oversight and government of the congregation.

Teaching and ruling elders govern together. The pastor does not govern the church alone.

Deacons - Mercy and Practical Service

Deacons lead ministries of mercy and practical care. They help people facing hardship and care for the church's material resources under the Session's oversight.

Read: Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

Our Connected Church Structure

The Session - Our Local Church

The Session consists of the pastor, any associate pastors, and the congregation's ruling elders. It oversees the spiritual life of the local church, including membership, worship, and pastoral care.

Presbytery - Our Regional Church Family

Presbytery brings together teaching elders and representatives from the ruling elders of churches in a region. It oversees ministers, supports congregations, and provides accountability beyond the local church.

General Assembly - Our Denomination Together

The General Assembly brings together teaching and ruling elder commissioners from across the PCA to address matters affecting the whole denomination.

These connected bodies provide avenues for review, complaints, and appeals. PCA Book of Church Order, chapters 7-14

What This Means for You

At Christchurch Miami, we want you to know the people who care for you and feel comfortable approaching them.

- Bring spiritual questions, prayer requests, and concerns to a pastor or elder.
- Let us know when you need practical help so we can connect you with appropriate care.
- Ask questions about what we believe and how decisions are made.
- Pray for our leaders as they seek to serve faithfully.

God alone is Lord of the conscience. Church authority remains subject to His Word; membership does not require unquestioning loyalty to a human leader. PCA foundational principles

Our desire is for this structure to serve the life of the church: helping us follow Jesus, care for one another, and pursue His mission together.