

**“Why Presbyterian? A Six Week Series on the Past, Present, and Future of the PCUSA”**

*Pastor Bryan Burton*

**Introduction**

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word “Presbyterian”?
2. What is the first thing others think when they hear the word “Presbyterian”?
3. What do you perceive to be ‘positive’ about Presbyterianism?
4. What do you perceive to be ‘negative’ about Presbyterianism?

**A Brief Overview of the Class**

**1/8 Introduction to Presbyterianism and A Brief History**

**1/15 What do Presbyterians Believe and Why? #1**

**1/22 What do Presbyterians Believe and Why? #2**

**1/29 What Makes our Worship Presbyterian?**

**2/5 How do Presbyterians Get Things Done? (Polity)**

**2/12 What is the Future of Presbyterianism: The PCUSA and Beyond**

**I. A Brief History of Presbyterianism**

- A. The historical roots of Presbyterianism in Europe
- B. The past and present of Presbyterianism in the British Isles
- C. The past and present of Presbyterianism in the USA and Canada
- D. The past and present of Presbyterianism around the World

**II. Presbyterian Identity**

- A. Theology: Reformed theology from John Calvin to today
- B. Polity: Representative democracy through Presbyters (elders)
- C. Worship: Reformed worship

**III. By What Authority? The Issue of Authority in the PCUSA**

- A. Jesus Christ is our **ultimate authority**
- B. The Bible (Old and New Testaments) tells us who God is in Jesus Christ and is our primary authority in matters of Christian faith and practice
- C. The **creeds, confessions, and catechisms** guide us as to how Presbyterians read their Bibles and therefore as to what we believe and why about who God is in Jesus Christ
- D. Our **polity** holds us accountable to one another to be **faithful** in our Presbyterian witness to God in Jesus Christ