

## What Can You Expect from Oaklands Church?

*When people think about visiting a church that is new to them, they often have questions that they wish they could ask before they get there. Here are a few. If you have others, please feel free to call 301/776-5833. We want to feel comfortable.*

### *About Your Worship Services –*

#### *How long do they last?*

The early service (8:30 am) is the shorter of the two services lasting about 45 minutes. This service has music accompaniment but no choir so some music selections are not included.

The later service (11am in the winter, 10:30 am in the summer) is a longer service because of the more robust music program (choir and special musicians). This service can last from one hour to one and one quarter hours depending on the program and if communion is served. This service is followed by a coffee hour which everyone is encouraged to attend and socialize.

Four times a year, Oaklands has a congregational Sunday where both services joined at 10am. This service will last an hour and is followed by a brunch.

#### *What do people wear? Do I dress up?*

It's pretty much up to you. You will see both casual clothes and folks dressed up in both services.

#### *Can I sit anywhere?*

Certainly. If you are uncertain, just ask one of the ushers to help you.

#### *Can we bring children to worship services?*

Certainly. We also have a special setting area in the Narthex that a family can sit if small children become restless. At the later service (11 am) , we have a nursery that is attended by a parent and hired professional that you are welcome to use.

#### *What Christian Education opportunities are there on Sunday mornings?*

From September to June we offer Sunday school at 9:30 am for an hour. The Adult Sunday school classes are studying lessons from the Thoughtful Christian website. We explore as Christians, how we can address contemporary issues we face in our everyday lives.

*Do I have to believe in a certain creed to come to your worship services?*

Not at all. We hope that you are seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ, even if you do not know him very well. We are all seekers in various stages of our journey to God. What is important to Christ is that we all seek to make him Lord of our lives. He knows our hearts without having to necessarily listen to what we process.

*Do I have to stand and say anything?*

Relax. You will not be called on to stand up by your selves. Out of respect for the Lord, we do stand together at certain points in the service to say what we believe, sing or read the gospel. You are not required to stand if you do not wish to.

*Do you kneel?*

No.

*What are your customs with communion (Sacrament of the Lord's Supper)?*

You do not have to be a member of Oaklands or be a Presbyterian to participate in the Lords Supper. We offer both wine and grape juice. No one is required to partake.

During the early service, communion is served at the end of the service, with everyone wanting to partake, gathering in a circle around the communion table. Grape juice is serve in individual cups, wine is served in a communion goblet.

The late service only serves communion **several times a year**. Elders come up to the communion table and serves communion to the members in lines.

*Do you take up a collection (and how much should I give)?*

The early service has a collection plate by a baptismal font that attendees drop in their donation. The later service has ushers that pass a collection plate during the service. Each offering is a free will donation – a time to give back to the Lord a small portion of what he has given to us. You are the sole judge of how much to give. Most members make an annual pledge so the church can build a yearly budget. They honor this pledge in weekly envelopes. Extra envelopes are available during the year for new members. Yearly statements are provided to those who donate in envelopes for income tax purposes.

*Do you expect your members to come every Sunday?*

We do not have quotas, standards or guidelines but we do report a head count. However, there is a strange thing among those who attend church fairly often: they more they go, the closer they seem to grow to God and to the love and power of Jesus Christ; and the more they want to be there. All we ask of our members is what God asks of us all – be faithful.

## About visiting the church –

### *Where do I park?*

Oaklands has a large parking lot on site.

### *Is it handicapped accessible?*

Yes. Parking (special spaces) and the church is all on one level without steps. The restrooms are also handicap accessible. Large print church programs are available with advanced request.

### *Are you so big that I'll feel lost?*

We do not think so. The early service (Sunday 8:30 am) is small and very intimate. The later service (Sunday 11am Winter – 10:00 am Summer) is larger but it is followed by a coffee hour where we encourage our members to socialize.

### *Will somebody call on me, or on us, after we visit?*

If you sign the guest book on the desk near the front entrance and request someone to call, we will be glad to visit you or to call you.

### *How do I find out more about the church?*

Just stop in. One of the best ways is to come to one of the Sunday morning services and visit during the coffee hour after the late service. You will find our ushers and members will be glad to answer your questions.

### *How would I join the church?*

If you are curious about Church membership, speak to the pastor after the service. Oaklands holds a new member class about four times a year that usually consists of three meetings. You can learn more about church membership without making a commitment or you can choose to join.

## About Presbyterians –

### *What does the word Presbyterian mean?*

Presbyterian comes from the Greek word presbyter which literally translated means elder. It refers to the way we govern ourselves. People like you are elected by the congregation to help the pastor guide and direct the spiritual life of the congregation. They are the presbyters or the elders of the church.

### *Are there other Presbyterian Denominations?*

Yes. There are several. We are part of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA). We are the oldest and largest of the Presbyterian denominations, but others have split from us over matters of belief and practice.

For example, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Westminster Presbyterian Church and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are known as Presbyterian churches, but we believe differently about some key issues. We believe that we are all inclusive of the Presbyterian denominations. We believe in allowing a wide range of opinions on various issues, and we decide where God is leading us through the study of the Bible and open discussion of these issues.

### *What sets Presbyterians apart?*

Probably our diversity. Our Book of Confessions includes eleven different expressions of Christian faith or Creeds from eleven different periods of history. Our heritage is Scottish and Irish in the Reformed tradition from the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, we encompass a wide range of beliefs and opinions. Some have described us as “a thinking person’s church.” We move forward in the creative tension that Jesus Christ is Lord and reveals his will for our lives through our dialogue with the Bible and each other.

### *Why should I be interested in becoming a Presbyterian?*

We would rather you be interested first in living a faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Presbyterian is simply one expression of a faith in Christ that can make a difference in your life. Becoming a Presbyterian or part of Oaklands simply means that these are the people and this is the place where you can live out the implications of the faith in worship and service.

### *What is a More Light Presbyterian?*

Oaklands Presbyterian Church is a More Light Presbyterian church which has membership that believes in the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of faith in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA). We are committed to the full participation of all persons in our community without regard for sexual orientation, race, personal background or human condition.