



First
Presbyterian
Church
of Waynesboro, Virginia

The Columns *Online*

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PC(USA) 2022 statistical report shows membership declining, new worshiping communities growing

The PC(USA) lost another 50,000 members in 2022, but new worshiping communities grew by 20.

By Dartinia Hull, *Presbyterian Outlook*. Membership within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) continues to dwindle, with about 50,000 fewer members in 2022 than in 2021, according to the denomination's annual statistical report. The numbers released Monday by the Office of the General Assembly were gleaned from some 80% of churches submitting statistical data that represents 90% of PC(USA) membership, and they show a loss of 53,105 members as well as a drop of 108 churches in the denomination. This follows a nearly 60-year trend of shrinking membership as people leave the denomination or die. The 2021 report showed a loss of 51,584 members, although baptisms in 2021 increased, likely due to delays in the sacrament caused by pandemic-induced church closings.

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	Difference
Active Members.....	1,302,043	1,245,354	1,193,770	1,140,665	(53,105)
Membership Adjustments ¹	-4,162	-4,642	-5,143	-4,227	(916)
Elders	61,405	58,002	56,923	54,447	(2,476)

Current PC(USA) membership is 1,140,665. Peak membership was in 1965, with 4.25 million members in the two denominations that merged in 1983 to form the PC(USA).

A 2020 Gallup poll showed a national downward trend across the board, with 47% of Americans saying they belonged to a house of worship. In 1999, 70% said they had membership in a church, mosque or synagogue.

Despite the overall denominational losses, the numbers of new worshiping communities and small churches have grown. The PC(USA) added 20 new worshiping communities, continuing a year-over-year trend since 2016. And the number of small churches with fewer than 50 members has also increased over time, from 3,510 in 2019 to 3,752 in 2022.

The number of the largest PC(USA) churches, those with memberships greater than 800 members, also decreased. In 2019, those churches numbered 199. In 2022, that number sat at 170.

Churches by Size:	2019		2020		2021		2022	
0 – 25	1,649	18.2%	1,718	19.2%	1,770	20.1%	1,836	21.1%
26 – 50.....	1,861	20.6%	1,877	21.0%	1,908	21.6%	1,916	22.0%
51 – 100.....	2,115	23.4%	2,104	23.6%	2,062	23.4%	2,024	23.3%
101 – 150.....	1,152	12.8%	1,079	12.1%	1,020	11.6%	992	11.4%
151 – 300.....	1,280	14.1%	1,216	13.6%	1,180	13.4%	1,128	13.0%
301 – 800.....	785	8.7%	745	8.3%	699	7.9%	639	7.3%
801 – 1,600.....	152	1.7%	142	1.6%	136	1.5%	129	1.5%
1,601 or more	47	0.5%	44	0.5%	40	0.5%	41	.5%

Racially, the denomination's membership is predominately White, at 89% overall, and older, with about a third of the membership age 71 or older, the report shows. Numbers around gender show women as the majority of members, at about 61.5%.

The report shows the median presbytery with a membership of 5,231 people, and the average presbytery consists of 109 ministers, 52 churches and five candidates.

Music Notes for May 21.

This Sunday marks the Ascension of Jesus. The hymns, *Come, Christians, Join to Sing* and *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*, celebrate the glory as He rises to meet the Father.



Messiaen (1908-1992)

The anthem will be *Hail Thee, Festival Day*, a hymn which celebrates Easter, Ascension or Pentecost; the 54(!) stanzas of the original text from c.567-576 marked many, many more church holidays! In the early 1900s, Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) edited, harmonized and arranged music for *The English Hymnal*. He also composed four original tunes for the 1906 publication, including *For All The Saints* and *Hail Thee, Festival Day*.

The postlude will be from Olivier Messiaen's four movement organ work, **L'Ascension**. The title of the third movement is "*Transports de joie d'une âme devant devant la gloire du Christ qui est la sienna*" (Outbursts of Joy From a Soul Before the Self-Fulfilling Glory of Christ), and, oh, does this toccata burst forth with elation!

Worship for Ascension Sunday

John 17:1-11

Acts 1:6-14

Sermon: *Witness*.



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This Week in History.



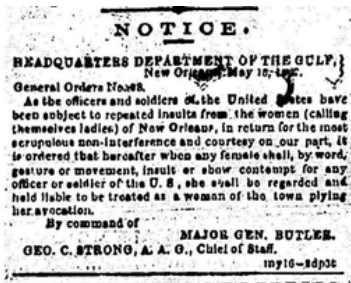
Settlers recruited from Plymouth, England by the Virginia Company establish *Jamestown*, the first permanent English settlement in America.

May 14, 1607



Alabama Governor George Wallace is shot four times while campaigning for the presidency in Laurel, Maryland.

May 15, 1972



Union General Benjamin Butler, military governor of New Orleans, issues General Order 28, which states in part, "it is ordered that hereafter when any female shall by word, gesture, or movement insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States she shall be regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation."

May 16, 1862



Napoleon Bonaparte crowns himself Emperor of France, having snatched the crown from the hands of Pope Pius VII during the coronation ceremony.

May 18, 1804



Nguyen That Thanh is born in Kim Lien, Viet Nam. In 1930, he organized the Indo-Chinese Communist party and later adopted the name *Ho Chi Minh*, meaning "he who enlightens." In 1945, he proclaimed the independence of Vietnam and served as president of North Vietnam from 1945 to 1969, leading the longest and most costly war during the 20th Century against the French and later the Americans.

May 19, 1890



The first ecumenical council of the Catholic Church is convened at Nicaea by Constantine I, first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire. With nearly 300 bishops in attendance, the council condemned Arianism which denied Christ's divinity, formulated the Nicene Creed and fixed the date of Easter.

May 20, 325