

Family Visitation is ...

...BIBLICAL. The Apostle Paul describes his ministry, “You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20).

...OFFICIAL. Your Minister and Elders are lawfully elected, ordained, and installed to “keep watch over (themselves) and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made (them) overseers” and to “be shepherds of the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). They are accountable to Christ (Heb. 13:17).

...PASTORAL. Your Minister and Ruling Elders come as shepherds, quite literally representing the Chief Shepherd, Who is deeply concerned for all of our needs (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2,4; Heb. 4:14-16). Family Visitation is not primarily “social” but “pastoral”.

...PRAYERFUL. Your Minister and Ruling Elders are called to pray (Acts 6:4; James 5:16). They pray for you before, at, and after the visit. Be ready to make particular requests for their prayer for you. They also desire your prayers for them (1 Tim. 2:1,2; Eph. 6:18,19).

...EDIFYING. The Session takes seriously the mandate of Scripture that we are to be “speaking the truth in love ... what is helpful for building others up”, to “strive after” and to “work hard to attain” peace with all men (Mat. 5:23,24; Eph. 4:15,25-32; Heb 12:14-15; Jam. 3:1ff). Family Visitation gives you a fitting opportunity to express your encouragements and concerns to the Session.

...ORDERLY. Your Minister and Elders prayerfully consider their visit beforehand so it will be orderly (1 Cor. 14:40), as a gathering which is in the presence of God (Mat. 18:20).

...REGULAR. The Session as a whole views this visit as an important part of its responsibilities, and will continue to be “faithful” in shepherding you and your family until the next Family Visitation (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:14).

Family Visitation

“I am writing you these instructions so that, ... you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.”

1 Timothy 3:14b,15

What is Family Visitation?

Family Visitation is an important ministry of the Session in which the Minister and Ruling Elders visit the members and families of the church in their homes. This brochure is written to help you understand what to expect and how you may prepare for their visit. You will find here an outlined order of their one-hour visit, a statement of the purpose of Family Visitation, and examples of questions they might ask you.

What is the purpose of the visit?

- To minister to the spiritual lives of the members
- To challenge the lives of believers to service and witness
- To promote the communion of the saints
- To encourage believers in the church's worship and the means of grace
- To build confidence in the prayerful, instructive, and authoritative care of our Elders who are called by our Lord to shepherd his sheep

Who will take part in the visit?

- Any two members of the Session will visit you, though one may be an inactive Ruling Elder.
- They are interested in all the members of your covenant home and ask that every member of your family be present.

Christ
Presbyterian
Church (OPC)
Janesville, WI
christ-opc.org

Order of the Visit

Scripture

Prayer

Purpose of the Visit

Personal and Family Matters

Church Matters

Questions for the Session

Prayer Requests

Closing Prayer

Session Members

Pastor

Patrick Morgan

Teacher

Casey Bessette

Ruling Elders:

Jim Anema

Stuart Bjork

Bill Muether

Bruce Mulder

Greg Osinga

Paul Terpstra

Brian Van Laar

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Sample Questions

Personal and Family Matters

- Do you love Jesus more than anything else?
- In what specific areas have you grown in your understanding and practice of your Christian faith this past year? In what areas have you been disappointed?
- Do you regularly read the Bible and pray? With your family as a family?
- What have you found helpful for devotions?
- What encouragements do you find in the life and ministry of the church for you personally? As a parent? As a family?
- Are there any areas of need in your life or in your family's life of which you would want the Session or Deacons to be aware?
- What has helped you to be a more faithful witness to Christ? What has prevented you?
- Do you and your family understand what we call the "Reformed Faith"?

Church Matters

- Are you faithfully participating in the worship services and the sacraments?
- Are you participating in the church's ministry of education, mercy, and fellowship as one who serves as well as benefits?
- Are there some areas in the church's life where you have a desire to serve or participate but do not at present?
- Are there areas of need in the church's life or ministry of which you believe the Session or Deacons should be aware?
- Do you have suggestions for subjects or passages of Scripture for sermons or lessons in Sunday School or Bible studies?

Preparation for Family Visitation

"The work of the church, in fellowship with and obedience to Christ, is divine worship, mutual edification, and gospel witness."

Form of Government II.4.

Encouragements and Concerns to discuss with the Visiting Elders:

Questions to Ask the Visiting Elders:

Prayer Requests for the Visiting Elders:

Prayer for the Minister and Elders:

Other Thoughts for the Visit: