

**The Standards  
of the  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
EVANGELICAL SYNOD**

VOLUME II

*Form of Government*  
*Book of Discipline*  
*Directory of Worship*

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## *DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP*

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# Directory of Worship

## PREFACE

It is to be recognized that the Scripture presents certain elements of worship, such as prayer, the reading of the Word, preaching, singing, and the sacraments, which are to be a part of Christian worship today. The Directory of Worship, which includes these elements, give guidelines for further amplification in the use of these principles in Christian worship. (This preface calls attention to the true elements of worship set forth in Scripture and to the place that the Directory can have in giving additional guidelines for worship).

## Chapter I

### OF THE WORSHIP OF GOD

1. Religious worship is: (1) Personal and secret; (2) Social and private in families; (3) Social and public in the ministry of the Word and the sacraments.

In social and public worship, however, it must be remembered that worship is an inward experience not just an outward observance.

2. Man was created for the glory of God. He was formed by his Creator as a rational and accountable being with the capacity for worshipping God in an active manner through prayer and praise. This endowment distinguished him from the inanimate creation and all irrational creatures which can only in a passive manner proclaim the glory of God.

3. As a result of the fall, man lost his capacity for the proper worship of God and cannot in his natural state please God with any attempt to worship. Unregenerate man has not, however, lost his religious nature nor his inclination to worship. He has misdirected it in the worship of false gods. The worship of any person or object other than the God of the Bible—God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is idolatry. Only through regeneration, accompanied by the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit, is man's capability of worshipping God restored to him.

4. The Creator seeks the worship of the redeemed, those who will worship Him "in spirit and in truth." Man finds his greatest blessedness in exercising the distinguishing privilege of declaring by word and deed that God is glorious. Redeemed mankind is in a special sense subject to the moral government of the Holy God whose character is revealed in His law as well as in His loving provision of salvation from the curse of the law. Through this revelation the redeemed come to realize the absolute worth of God. It is this recognition which must find acknowledgement and expression in the private and public worship of God.

## Chapter II

### OF PERSONAL AND FAMILY WORSHIP

1. It is the solemn duty of each individual in seclusion, and every family in the home, to pray and to worship God.
2. Personal worship is specifically enjoined by our Lord. In private devotions everyone, apart by himself, surely will profit greatly by spending some time each day in prayer, reading the Scriptures, holy meditation, and serious self-examination. In this worship the multitude of the Lord's mercies are to be gratefully remembered, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving expressed, and the teaching and challenges of His Word heeded. The many advantages arising from the practice of personal worship are best known to those who faithfully maintain a regular time for the private worship of God.
3. Family worship, which ought to be performed in every Christian home at a convenient time at least once during each day, consists in prayer, reading the Scriptures and singing praises. The burden of leadership in family worship rests with the head of the family, who is to lead and order the worship so that all members of the household may duly attend and give close and reverent attention to every part of the devotions.
4. The heads of families should regularly and carefully instruct their children, and all others in their household, in the principles and doctrines of our holy faith. Catechizing, including instruction in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, is part of the duty of the head of the family. The Lord's Day is generally a proper time for this exercise but practice of this on a daily basis is to be encouraged. The head of the family should see to the spiritual instruction of those under his charge that they grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, that they receive no heretical or false doctrines but be given the pure Word of God that they may be spiritually fed.
5. Any practices that interfere with family worship should be avoided or dropped.

## Chapter III

### OF THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE LORD'S DAY

1. It is a duty imposed on the people of God that they shall remember the Lord's Day and prepare beforehand for its proper observance. Temporal duties and business ought to be previously arranged and laid aside, so far as possible as not to hinder the sanctifying of the day as the Scriptures prescribe.
2. The entire day is to be commemorated as holy to the Lord, both in public and in private, as a day of divine worship and holy resting. To this end, it is requisite that there be a complete cessation from all unnecessary labors and an abstinence from those sports and forms of recreation which may be lawful on other days.
3. Provision for the support of the family on the Lord's Day should be so ordered that those who must labor and all members of the household be not detained insofar as possible from public worship or hindered from properly sanctifying the day.
4. There should be private preparations of every person and family, by prayer for themselves, and for God's assistance of the minister, and for a blessing upon his ministry, and by such other exercise as may adequately provide a profitable communion with God in His public ordinances.
5. After the public worship has been concluded, the worshippers should set aside a time for the reading of the Word, meditation upon the sermons, catechizing, conversations concerning spiritual things, prayer for blessing upon the public ordinances, singing of hymns and spiritual songs, visiting the sick, witnessing to the lost, relieving the needy, and similar duties of true piety, love, and mercy.

## Chapter IV

### OF THE BEHAVIOR IN THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD

1. That God is to be worshipped publicly in the congregation of His saints is clearly taught in the Scriptures. His worship is instituted by Himself. All manner and order of public worship as can be found in the Word of God is to be carefully considered in the worship of the Lord.
2. Appearing before God in His sanctuary is a most solemn thing. The worshippers approach there the awesome presence of God in acts of religious devotion and should come near with reverence and deep humility.
3. At the time appointed for public worship, all the people ought to come and join therein, not absenting themselves from the worship service through negligence, nor for any other reason they cannot conscientiously give to their Lord.
4. The whole congregation should assemble promptly that all may be present at the beginning and solemnly join together in all parts of the public worship; unless necessary, none should depart until after the benediction.
5. As the people enter the church they should take their seats in a prayerful and reverent manner, remembering at all times that they are in the Lord's house. During the time of public worship, all should attend with sincere reverence and refrain from all behavior that would annoy other worshippers or detract from the divine worship of God.
6. During the time of public worship, it is desirable that children be with their parents, and that the members of the family sit together in the house of God, thus emphasizing the scriptural view of the family.
7. In addition to the regular meetings and services of the Lord's Day, congregations are urged to conduct young people's meetings, Bible study classes, midweek prayer services, periodical evangelistic and missionary meetings, and such other services as will advance the cause of Christ.

## Chapter V

### OF THE ORDER OF PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD

1. God is a God of order. In the Scripture, He has instructed believers to conduct themselves “decently and in order” in the house of worship. It is important, therefore, that a proper Order of Worship should be established and used.

2. While in the Reformed tradition we do not have a strict liturgical heritage, this does not mean that it is fitting to neglect those proper and scriptural elements of worship which have been transmitted by the church through the centuries. The great reformers sought to purify rather than destroy traditional patterns of worship. Great care must be exercised to avoid the meaninglessness of so much which appears in some worship services. There is all too often an unconscious flouting of the very definite theological, biblical, historical, and psychological factors which are necessary components of authentic Christian worship. It is the responsibility of the minister so to structure the Order of Worship that there will be an enlightened movement on the part of the congregation from one element of the service to the next. When each act of worship is full of meaning, the order of the parts will assume an authentic form.

3. Because no one is fully prepared for the high and holy experience of public worship, and when believers assemble together for this experience they are beset by diverse interests and passions, it is necessary that they should be called away from all worldly distractions, properly prepared in their hearts, and united together for a common spiritual experience. To this end, each service should begin with a very meaningful Call to Worship designed to still the hearts of the people and remind them of their purpose and privilege. After a proper response on the part of the congregation either in a hymn, prayer, or appropriate Scripture, the service should continue with some form of a prayer of confession and assurance of pardon so that each worshipper will be reminded that God can only be properly worshipped with a pure heart. If there is to be a period of silent prayer, it is desirable that it be preceded by some



audible prayer, song, or suggestion of special subject for prayer, so that the thoughts of all may be properly oriented.

4. After the preparation of the people in the early moments of worship, a meaningful service will consist of two principal elements: the fellowship of prayer in word and song, and the proclamation of the Word. Frequently added to these will be the sacraments of baptism for those newly received into the household of faith, both believers and their covenant children, and the Communion of the Lord's Supper for communicant members of the family of God.

## Chapter VI

### OF THE PUBLIC READING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

1. The reading of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in the congregation is part of the public worship of God and ought to be performed by ministers and teachers in such a manner that all may hear and understand.
2. The extent of Scripture read at one occasion is to be left to the discretion of the minister. He should read as much at one time as will clearly give to the worshippers a complete account of the Scripture portion selected, pertinent to the reason for its choice. The minister, having regard to the time, should see that neither reading, singing, praying, preaching, or any other ordinance, be disproportionate one to the other, nor the whole rendered too short, or too tedious.

## Chapter VII

### OF THE SINGING OF PSALMS, HYMNS, AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

1. It is the duty of Christians to praise God publicly by singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs together in the congregation and also privately in the family. God's people should sing with understanding and with grace in their hearts, making melody unto the Lord. They should remember also that part of their purpose in singing is the teaching and admonishing of one another. Therefore, great care should be exercised in the choice of the Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs which they use so that the songs will express those specific truths which are appropriate at the time of their use in the service.

2. The Psalms of the Old Testament have from the earliest days of the church been used in the public and private worship of Christians. Because of the availability of excellent metrical versions of the Psalms and the scriptural injunction to use Psalms in worship, it would seem wise to include them frequently as an important part of the worship service. The leading idea of the Hebrew word "Psalms" is that of a musical accompaniment. Many of the Old Testament Psalms call for the praise of God with instruments. It is, therefore, altogether fitting to sing with musical accompaniment.

3. Those songs of praise composed by Christians on distinctively Christian themes are appropriately designated hymns in Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:18. Spiritual songs would include both Psalms and hymns and some less restricted forms of thoroughly biblical songs. In the choice of songs for worship in the church, careful attention must be given to make sure that the music is appropriate to the words and to the occasion and that the words themselves are devotional and scriptural as well as lyrical. It is entirely proper that Christians should cultivate some knowledge of the rules of music so that they may praise God in a becoming manner with their voices and musical instruments as well as with their hearts.

4. The proportion of time allotted for singing in the public worship

should be left to the prudence of the minister. While there is nothing more important than the preaching of the Word, let all who worship the Lord ever keep in mind that a singing heart is a heart receptive for God's truth. This joyous spiritual exercise should have a large place in all public worship.

## Chapter VIII

### OF PUBLIC PRAYER

1. After the singing of Psalms or hymns, it is proper, before the sermon, that an appropriate prayer be offered by the minister containing such features as adoration unto the living God; thanksgiving for all of His mercies; confession of sin; the making of earnest supplication for pardon of sin and peace with God through the Blood of the atonement; pleading the merit and intercession of our Saviour; intercession for others; confessing the sins of the nation and the defections of church members; entreating that the Lord may bless His own ordinances, send the illumination of His Spirit, and grant aid and assistance to His ministering servants in the propagation of the Gospel; imploring the divine pity in behalf of the poor and needy; and that all spiritual and temporal blessings may be bestowed according to their need upon all the people of God. Prayer after the sermon ought to have generally a relation to the subject that has been treated in the discourse, and all other prayers to the circumstances that give occasion for them.

2. While we do not approve of confining ministers to set or fixed forms of prayer for public worship, yet it is the indispensable duty of every minister to prepare and qualify himself for this part of his duty in the minister's office, as for preaching. He ought, by a thorough acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, by proper reading, by meditation, and by a life of communion with God in secret, endeavor to acquire both the spirit and the gift of prayer.

3. It is desirable that in public prayer the usual pronouns of reverence be used in addressing deity. However, it is proper too that the familiar nonreverential pronouns be used. Consistency in the use of the one or the other pronoun forms is desirable.

## Chapter IX

### OF THE PREACHING OF THE HOLY WORD

1. The preaching of the Word is commanded by our Lord and is the power of God unto salvation, and therefore it is one of the greatest and most excellent works belonging in the ministry. It should be performed in such a manner that the minister in faithfulness to the Word of God shall prove himself to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2. The subject of the sermon should be some verse or verses of the Scriptures, usually within that selected for the Scripture reading, and its object should be to explain and to apply some part of the system of divine truth, or to point out the nature, and state the bounds and obligation, of some Christian duty. A text should not be looked upon as merely a motto, but should have in it the doctrines proposed to be dealt with in the sermon. It is proper, also, that large portions of the Scriptures be sometimes expounded and particularly explained for the instructions of the people.

3. True, edifying, scriptural preaching requires laborious, painstaking study, much meditation and prayer. Therefore, every minister ought to prepare his message with great care, and not indulge in loose, extemporary harangues, nor serve God with that which costs him nothing. He should keep to the simplicity of the Gospel, always using language agreeable to the Scriptures, and adapted to the understanding of all the hearers. Ministers ought also to adorn by their lives the doctrine which they teach, and to be examples for believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. They ought also to be careful not to make their sermons so long as to interfere with or exclude the important duties of prayer and praise, but preserve a just proportion between the several parts of public worship (as expressed in Chapters V and VI).

4. The sermon being ended, the minister is to pray and return thanks to Almighty God; then let a psalm or hymn be sung and the assembly dismissed with the apostolic benediction.

5. It is expedient that no person be asked or introduced to preach in any of the churches in our fellowship, unless by the consent of the pastor (or moderator) and church session.

## Chapter X

### OF THE WORSHIP OF GOD BY OFFERINGS

1. It is the privilege of God's people to honor God with their substance. The people of the Lord are bidden to give as the Lord has prospered them, and indeed are even exhorted to abound in the grace of giving. Therefore, in order that all the members of the congregation may be trained to give of their substance systematically, as the Lord has prospered, to promote every phase of the work of the church, it is proper and desirable that an opportunity be given for offerings by the congregation every Lord's Day; and that, in accordance with the Scriptures, the bringing of such offerings be performed as a solemn act of worship to Almighty God. The minister should precede or immediately follow the taking of the offering with a brief prayer, invoking the blessing of God upon it.
2. The disposition of all such offerings should be handled by either the trustees or deacons under the supervision of the church session.
3. It is the duty of every minister of the Gospel to cultivate the grace of liberal giving in his congregation, that every member thereof may offer according to his ability, whether it be much or little. In following the Scriptural method of Christian giving the minister should impress upon the minds of the people the principle of tithes, offerings, and gifts.



## Chapter XI

### OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM

1. Baptism should not be unnecessarily delayed, and only under unusual circumstances should it be administered by any but an ordained minister of the Gospel. It is usually to be administered at a regular church service. The minister, in consultation with the session, shall decide as to the expediency of performing the rite at any other time.

2. *Of the Administration of Baptism to Adults.*

When upbaptized persons are to be admitted into the church, they shall, in ordinary cases, after careful examination as to their knowledge and acceptance of the Gospel, make public profession of their faith in Christ by baptism.

Before the baptism, the minister should state briefly the institution, nature, and purpose of the sacrament: that it was instituted by Christ; that He commanded His disciples to baptize believers of every nation; that it is a sacrament wherein the washing with water seals and signifies our engrafting into Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

The minister shall then propound the following, or similar, questions to the person to be baptized:

**"Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God?"**

**"Do you acknowledge Him as your Saviour, and do you promise to live a life that will please and honor Him?"**

When these questions have been answered in the affirmative, then shall the minister baptize the person saying, **"I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."**

The service shall be concluded with prayer.

3. *Of the Administration of Baptism to Infants.*

After previous arrangement, the child shall be presented by one or both parents, signifying a desire that the child shall be baptized. The

minister should give some words of instruction as to the institution, nature, and purpose of this ordinance, pointing out that: It was instituted by Christ; it is the seal of the righteousness of faith; the children of believers have the same right to it under the Gospel as the children of Abraham had in the case of circumcision under the Old Testament; that our Lord blessed the little children, declaring that of such is the kingdom of heaven; that our children are within God's holy family covenant; that we are by nature sinful, and have need of cleansing by the blood of Christ and the sanctifying of the Spirit of God.

The minister should exhort the parents as to their duty:

To pray with and for the child, setting an example of true godliness before him, teaching him, in time, to read the Word of God, and instructing him in the principles of our most holy faith as set forth in our Confession and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and endeavoring, by God's help, to bring up their child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The minister should ask them publicly if they are willing to assume these duties before the Lord, and having received an affirmative answer, proceed with the baptism.

Following prayer for God's blessing upon the occasion, the minister should say, "... **child of the covenant, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.**" As he pronounces these words, he is to baptize the child with water, and afterwards conclude with prayer.

## Chapter XII

### OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. The communion should be held frequently; how often is to be determined by the session of each congregation.
2. Undiscerning and scandalous persons are not to be admitted to the Lord's Supper.
3. Notice should be given to the congregation at least a week previous to the administration of this ordinance. It is usually wise to arrange for a preparatory service, to take place the week preceding communion, for the preparation of the hearts of all who will attend the communion service on the day announced.
4. Following the sermon, the minister should read the words of institution either from the Gospels or from 1 Corinthians 11. Then, in a few words, he may point out that this is an ordinance instituted by Christ, to be observed in remembrance of Him, to show forth His death till He come; that it is of value in strengthening, encouraging, and comforting God's people. The minister should warn the ignorant and those living in known sin not to partake.
5. After the bread and the fruit of the vine have been uncovered, they are to be set apart to their holy use by prayer and thanksgiving. After the elders have served the minister, they may now distribute the bread to all who desire to commune. Then the minister will serve the elders, and shall say:

**"Our Lord Jesus, on the same night in which He was betrayed, having taken bread, and blessed and broken it, gave it to His disciples, as I, ministering in His name, give this bread to you, saying, 'Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.'"**

(As these words are completed, all may partake the bread together; or the congregation, after these words, may then be served and partake of the bread immediately upon receiving it.)

Likewise, after the elders have distributed the cups, the minister shall say:

“After the same manner our Saviour took the cup, and having given thanks, as has been done in His name, He gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it.’ ”

(As he finishes saying these words, all may partake of the cup together; or, following the words, the congregation may then be served and partake of the cup immediately upon receiving it.)

The service shall be concluded with prayer.

## Chapter XIII

### OF THE ADMISSION TO FULL COMMUNION OF PERSONS BAPTIZED IN INFANCY

1. Children, born within the pale of the visible church, and acknowledged as numbered among the Lord's people in baptism, are under the care and government of the church. They are to be taught to read and repeat the Catechism, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. They should be taught God's way of salvation through faith in Christ, and should be urged to accept Him as their personal Saviour and to yield to Him a full obedience. When they come to the years of discretion, if they have received Christ as Saviour, be free from any serious misdemeanor, have a serious interest in spiritual things, and have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they should be informed that it is their duty and privilege to come into full communion with the church and come to the Lord's Supper.
2. Since the age of discretion in young Christians cannot be definitely set, this matter is left for the session to decide in each case.
3. When persons baptized in infancy are to be received to full communion with the church, they shall be examined by the session as to their knowledge and Christian experience, and shall make a public profession of their faith before the congregation.

## Chapter XIV

### OF THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE

1. Although we hold that marriage is not a sacrament, and is not peculiar to the Church of Christ, but common to all mankind—yet, because the Scriptures declare that Christians ought to marry only in the Lord, and have special need of instruction, direction, and exhortation from the Word of God, in order that their entering into this new and solemn relationship may be blessed of Him, it is therefore proper that the marriage be solemnized by a duly ordained minister, who shall counsel beforehand with the parties to be married as to the nature of the union and the responsibilities involved.

2. Parents ought not to force their children to marry without their free consent, nor deny their own consent without just cause. God's redeemed people are to marry "only in the Lord." There should be no exception to this rule.

3. Ministers are admonished to emphasize the need of spiritual and ecclesiastical compatibility in marriage. Lack of harmony on the part of parents in the training of their children when they differ in the essentials of the faith endangers the happiness of a truly Christian home. Also all ministers are urged to exercise due care, that in this matter of marriage neither the laws of God nor of the community shall be transgressed. To that end the parties applying should be properly certified to the minister.

4. When the parties present themselves for marriage, the minister shall proceed to give them some instruction from the Scriptures respecting the institution and duties of this state, showing:

That God has instituted marriage for the comfort and happiness of mankind, in declaring that a man shall forsake his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and that marriage is honorable in all; that He has appointed various duties which are incumbent upon those who enter into this relation, such as high esteem and mutual love for one another; bearing with each other's infirmities and weaknesses (to which human nature is subject in its present lapsed state); to encourage each

other under the various ills of life; to comfort one another in sickness; in honesty and industry to provide for each other's temporal support; to pray for and encourage one another in the things which pertain to God and their eternal welfare, and to live together as the heirs of the grace of life.

In due course the minister shall cause the bridegroom and the bride to join their hands, and shall pronounce the marriage covenant, first to the man, in these or like words:

**"Do you take this woman, whose hand you have taken to be your lawful and married wife; and do you promise and covenant, in the presence of God and these witnesses, that you will be to her a loving and faithful husband as long as you both shall live?"**

The bridegroom shall express his consent by saying, **"I do."**

Then the minister shall express himself to the woman in these or like words:

**"Do you take this man to whom you have given your hand, to be your lawful and married husband; and do you promise and covenant, in the presence of God and these witnesses, that you will be to him a loving and faithful wife as long as you both shall live?"**

The bride shall express her consent by saying, **"I do."**

At the end of the service the minister shall say:

**I pronounce you husband and wife, according to the ordinance of God and the law of the State. Whom, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder."**

The minister will then conclude with a prayer or benediction suitable to the occasion.

5. Ministers should keep a careful record of all marriages. There should be at least two witnesses present, and a certificate of marriage, signed by the officiating minister and the witnesses, should be given to the contracting parties.

6. All ministers who are requested to marry divorced persons should exercise great care lest they join together those whose marriage the Church cannot sanction. In case a minister be in doubt as to the propriety of a proposed remarriage, he may seek the advice of the Presbytery through its Moderator or through a committee appointed for that purpose. (Chapter XXIV of the Confession of Faith should be carefully studied.)

## Chapter XV

### OF VISITATION

1. It is the duty of the minister with the elders not only to teach the people committed to their charge in public, but also privately; and particularly to admonish, exhort, reprove and comfort them, upon all seasonable occasions, so far as their time and strength will permit. Times of sickness and affliction are special opportunities put into their hands by God to minister a word in season to needy souls.

2. Especially, when the people of the church are critically sick, it is their duty, before their strength and understanding fail them, to send for their minister, and with prudence make known to him their spiritual state, or to consult him on the concerns of their precious souls. And it is his duty to visit them, at their request, and to apply himself, with all tenderness and love, to administer spiritual good to their souls. He shall pray for the sick, instructing them out of the Scriptures, administering to them consolation, conviction, support, or encouragement, as each case may seem to require.

3. In addition to visitation of the sick, it is the responsibility of the minister, and the elders of the church, to visit the congregation and others and minister spiritually to them through reading of the Scriptures, prayer, and spiritual counselling.



## Chapter XVI

### OF THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

1. When any person departs this life, his earthly body should be taken care of in a Christian and decent manner, and kept a proper and sufficient time before interment.
2. When the appointed time for the funeral comes and the service is concluded, the body of the deceased should be respectfully borne and attended to the place of interment. During the solemn occasions of the funeral service and burial, those in attendance should conduct themselves with becoming gravity, and apply themselves to serious meditation. The minister should exhort all present to consider the frailty of life, and the importance of being prepared for death and eternity.

## Chapter XVII

### OF FASTING, AND OF THE OBSERVATION OF SPECIAL DAYS OF THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

1. Under the Christian economy we are commanded to keep no other particular day holy, except the Lord's Day, which we designate the Christian Sabbath. Nevertheless, we may observe certain days of fasting and thanksgiving, as the extraordinary dispensations of Divine Providence. Such observance is both Scriptural and rational. Fasts and thanksgivings may be observed by individual Christians or families in private and by particular churches; also by a number of churches contiguous to each other; and by churches under the supervision of the Presbytery, or by the whole Church.
2. If at any time the civil power deems it proper to appoint a day for national fasting, thanksgiving, and prayer, it is well and proper for ministers and people to respectfully recognize the time it shall designate. Public notice ought to be given to the congregation a sufficient time before the day of fasting, thanksgiving, and prayer, in order that the people may so direct their temporal affairs that they may not be hindered in engaging in these spiritual duties.
3. On these special occasions of fasting, thanksgiving, and prayer, let the minister point out the authority and providence calling to the observation thereof. It is the duty of people in these days to rejoice with holy gladness of heart, but also to let seriousness be combined with joy so that no one indulge in unbecoming levity.

## Chapter XVIII

### OF MAINTAINING THE PEACE AND PURITY OF THE CHURCH

1. Every true and faithful follower of our Lord ought to take a definite stand against the apostasy of the day and to admonish and reprove all movements and persons who compromise with those in or out of ecclesiastical bodies who attack the deity and atoning work of Jesus Christ or who disregard the teachings of our Confession of Faith and Catechisms.
2. As to the practice of holiness in the Christian life, all of God's ministers and people should follow the admonition laid down in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."
3. The attention of the ministers, officers, and members of the denomination is called to Synod's Resolution on the Christian Life and Testimony (adopted as a part of the Plan of Union, 1965).

## SUPPLEMENT

The following, more complete forms of the Administration of the Lord's Supper; the Baptism of Infants; and the Marriage Service than those found in the Directory for the Worship of God are included in this supplement, although they are presented in abridged form. The simplicity of the services given here is quite evident, but they have been used with dignity and great blessing in many Presbyterian bodies.

They are offered here with the hope that they may be found useful to many, especially to our younger ministers.

1. Form and Order for Infant Baptism.
2. Form and Order for Administration of the Lord's Supper.
3. Form and Order for the Solemnization of Marriage.

### *A Form for Infant Baptism*

"Infants descending from their parents, either both or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within the covenant, and are to be baptized."—Larger Catechism, Ans. 166. See also Directory for Worship, Chapter XI, Sections 1 and 3.

While the parents are bringing the children to be baptized, an appropriate hymn may be sung or the following Scriptures may be read by the minister: Luke 18:15-16; Matt. 18:10, 14; Acts 2:39.

When the parents and child have taken their appropriate place, the minister shall say:

**Beloved in Christ: Baptism is a sacrament given by our Lord to His Church as a sign and seal of the remission of sins and our union with Christ. It is to be administered not only to believers, but also to their children, to signify their membership in the household of faith. Our Saviour welcomed the parents who brought their infants to Him, and blessed them, saying: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:15).**

**Forasmuch as you desire and claim this blessing for your child, you**

will now engage, on your part, to perform those things which God requires of you, that the good will and pleasure of your heavenly Father may be known to your child.

Here the minister will address the following questions to the parents; and the parents, each of them, shall make answer:

Question: **Do you acknowledge your faith in Christ and therein consecrate your child to Him?**

Answer: **I do.**

Question: **Do you promise to instruct your child in the principles of our holy faith, as contained in the Scriptures, and pray with him and for him, and bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?**

Answer: **I do.**

Then the minister shall say:

**Grant, O Lord, to these Thy servants grace to perform the things they have promised before Thee. Sanctify with thy Spirit this child now to be baptized according to Thy Word; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Then the minister (taking the child in his arms, or leaving it in the arms of the parent), dipping his hand in water and then placing his hand on the child's head, and using the full given name of the child, shall say:

**N. . . . ., child of the covenant, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.**

The congregation, reverently standing during the baptismal ceremony, is at this juncture addressed by the minister:

**This child, who in your presence has just been baptized in the name of the Triune God, is commended to your love and care. "Whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me."**

Then the minister shall offer a prayer and, if desired, close by leading the people in the Lord's Prayer. He shall conclude with the Apostolic benediction.

### *A Form for Administration of the Lord's Supper*

After the public recognition and reception of any who may for the first time come to the Lord's table, the congregation shall unite in singing an appropriate sacramental hymn. During, or at the close of, the

singing of this hymn, the minister shall pass from the pulpit to the communion table, and the elders shall come forward and take their seats on either side of him.

Then the minister shall say:

**Hear the words of the institution of this Holy Supper of our Lord, as they are given by the Apostle Paul (quote 1 Cor. 11:23-26).**

Here the minister may make a brief address, such as the following, if further word of counsel or comfort be thought desirable.

**Dearly beloved, as we draw near to the Lord's Table to celebrate the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, we are gratefully to remember that our Lord instituted this Sacrament—**

**For the perpetual memory of His dying for our sakes and the pledge of His undying love;**

**as a bond of our union with Him and with each other as members of His mystical Body;**

**as a seal of His promises to us and a renewal of our obedience to Him;**

**for the blessed assurance of His presence with us who are gathered here in His name;**

**and as a pledge of His coming again.**

Seeing therefore what great benefits Christ has prepared for us in this communion, for this cause let us bow our knees unto the Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

That He would grant us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith;

That we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

After this the minister shall extend invitation to the Lord's Supper, saying:

**All who, sensible of their lost and helpless state by sin, depend**

upon the atonement of Christ for pardon and acceptance with God, and who are duly instructed in the Gospel doctrine so as to discern the Lord's body, and who desire to renounce their sins, and are determined to lead a holy and godly life, are invited to partake of this supper.

Here the congregation may audibly repeat with the minister the Apostles' Creed.

Then the minister shall offer the prayer of consecration, setting the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine apart from common to sacred use.

The bread and the cup being thus set apart by prayer, the minister shall take the bread, and say:

**Our Lord Jesus Christ on the same night in which He was betrayed, having taken bread and blessed and broken it, gave it to his disciples, as I, ministering in His name, give this bread unto you, saying (here the bread is to be handed to the elders), "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."**

Then the elders shall proceed in the orderly distribution of the bread to the people, the minister himself receiving the bread of one of the officers.

After the elders have returned from distributing the bread, the minister should ask any who may have been passed by in the distribution to manifest it by the uplifted hand or rising. These, if any, should then be served. Then the minister should take the bread and pass it to each of the elders for their participation, saying:

**"This is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."** (As these words are completed, all partake of the bread; or, each member of the congregation may partake of the bread immediately upon receiving it.)

Then the minister shall take the cup, and say:

**After the same manner, our Saviour also took the cup; and having given thanks, as hath been done in his name, he gave it to his disciples: saying (here the cup is to be handed to the elders), "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." And the Apostle added, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."**

Then the elders shall proceed with the distribution of the cup after the same order as with the bread. The minister should then ask any who

may have been overlooked in the passing of the cup to make it known. These, if any, should then be served. He will then proceed to distribute the cup to each of the elders, saying:

**This cup is the new testament in the blood of Christ, which is shed for many unto remission of sin: Drink ye all of it.** (As these words are completed, all partake of the cup: or, each member of the congregation may partake of the cup immediately upon receiving it.)

When all have communed, the bread and cup have been replaced on the table and reverently covered, the minister shall say:

**The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.**

After a prayer of thanksgiving to God, the minister shall pronounce the following, or some other Gospel benediction:

**Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

*Order for the Solemnization of Marriage*

(See Directory for the Worship of God, Chapter XIV)

The persons to be married shall present themselves before the minister, the man standing at the right of the woman. Then, all present reverently standing, the minister shall say:

**Marriage was ordained of God in Eden, and was confirmed at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, by the gracious presence and miraculous blessing of Christ. It is to unite two hearts and lives, blending all their interests and sympathies and hopes. It involves mutual compromise, loving sufferance, and holy trust.**

**I entreat you therefore, in entering upon and sustaining this hal-  
lowed union, to seek the favor and blessing of Him whose favor is life,  
whose blessing maketh rich and addeth no sorrow.**

**I charge you both before the great God, and Searcher of men's  
hearts, that if either of you know any reason why they may not  
lawfully be joined together in marriage, ye do now confess it. For be  
well assured that if any persons are joined together otherwise than as  
God's Word allows, their union is not blessed by Him.**



Then, if no obstacles appear, the minister shall say: "Let us pray."  
(Here an appropriate prayer for God's blessing may be offered.)

Then the minister shall say to the man:

**M. . . . ., wilt thou have this woman to be thy wife, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to her, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her and cherish her, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?**

The man shall answer: "I will."

Then the minister shall say to the woman:

**N. . . . ., wilt thou have this man to be thy husband, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to him, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with him and cherish him, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?**

The woman shall answer: "I will."

Then the minister shall say:

**Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?**

Then the father, or guardian, or any friend of the woman, shall put her right hand into the hand of the minister, who shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand and to say after him as follows:

**I, M. . . . ., take thee, N. . . . .; To be my wedded wife; And I do promise and covenant; Before God and these witnesses; To be thy loving and faithful husband; In plenty and in want; In joy and in sorrow; In sickness and in health; As long as we both shall live.**

Then shall they loose their hands; and the woman with her right hand taking the man by his right hand, shall likewise say after the minister:

**I, N. . . . ., take thee, M. . . . .; To be my wedded husband; And I do promise and covenant; Before God and these witnesses; To be thy loving and faithful wife; In plenty and in want; In joy and in sorrow; In sickness and in health; As long as we both shall live.**

If a ring is to be used in the ceremony the minister shall ask:

**What token do you give in pledge that you will faithfully perform these vows? (Here the minister receives the ring and holding it before them says:) This ring is an emblem of eternity. The gold in it speaks of**

that which is least tarnished and most enduring; it is to show how lasting and imperishable the faith now mutually pledged. (Then returning the ring to the man, the minister instructs him to place the ring on the bride's finger and repeat after him:) **With this ring I thee wed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Then the minister shall offer an appropriate prayer closing with the Lord's Prayer in which all the people may join if so desired.

The minister shall then request the bride and groom to again join right hands while he makes the following pronouncement:

**By the authority committed unto me as a minister of the Church of Jesus Christ, I declare that . . . . . and . . . . . are now husband and wife, according to the ordinance of God and the law of the State: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.**

If desired, the bride and groom may kneel while a song of dedication is sung, followed by the benediction:

**The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Amen.**