

**THE**  
**DIRECTORY**  
**OF**  
**WORSHIP**

**FOR**  
**THE REFORMED CHURCH**  
**IN THE UNITED STATES**

**TRADITIONAL ENGLISH VERSION**

Second Edition 1998

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Second Edition: November 1998

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface to Second Edition	Page 3
Preface to First Edition	Page 6
Public Worship	Page 8
Infant Baptism	Page 15
Adult Baptism	Page 19
Lord's Supper	Page 23
Ordination of Ministers	Page 28
Installation of Ministers	Page 34
Ordination of Elders and Deacons	Page 39
Confirmation	Page 45
Public Profession of Faith	Page 49
Excommunication	Page 51
Restoration	Page 54
Marriage	Page 58
Burial of the Dead	Page 63
Thanksgiving for a Church Building	Page 68

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The first edition of this *Reformed Directory of Worship* was published by the Eureka Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States in 1970. This second edition is being published by the Synod of the Reformed Church in the U.S. which was constituted out of the Eureka Classis in 1986. By that time the Eureka Classis had grown from a regional ecclesiastical assembly to embody churches all across the United States.

Although several noteworthy changes from the first edition appear in this second edition of the *Directory*, the purposes for it are much less fundamental and comprehensive than were those for the first edition of 1970. As can be seen from the preface to the first edition which appears below, it was designed to replace earlier directories which were not only no longer available, but which embodied a less than thoroughly Reformed and biblical theology and perspective on worship. The *Directory* of 1970 was then truly a first edition. It was a new Directory based on other Reformed sources.

The need for the first edition found its roots as far back as the middle of the 19th Century when the Reformed Church in the U.S. was wracked by a liturgical controversy brought on by the introduction of sacramentalist and other unreformed ideas into the worship of the Church by professors at its own seminary, Rev. Philip Schaaf and Dr. John Nevin. Since the seminary of the Reformed Church was then located at Mercersburg, PA, the theology created by these professors was called the "Mercersburg Theology," a theology more compatible with Lutheran and Episcopalian teachings on the sacraments

#### Preface to the Second Edition

than with Reformed doctrine. Although there was great opposition in the Church to the Mercersberg Theology and the *Provisional Directory of Worship* which applied its principles to worship and sacraments, the Church eventually produced compromise directories which sought to mediate between Reformed and Mercersberg teachings.

It was to replace these mediating directories still in use that the Eureka Classis decided to produce a truly Reformed directory of worship. The 1970 *Directory* has been in use in our churches for over a quarter of a century. During this span of time certain deficiencies in the *Directory* have been noted, and accordingly it was decided at the 1992 Synod meeting of the Reformed Church in the U.S. to appoint a committee to "study the *Directory of Worship* to update its language, (and) to update its forms with respect to content." This committee was augmented at the 1993 meeting of Synod and instructed "to study the *Directory of Worship* to recommend changes it deems necessary to make the language understandable in the present culture," (and to use biblical material quoted from the New King James Version in order to eliminate old English verb forms while retaining the flavor of the King James Version). This second edition of the *Directory of Worship* was declared fully adopted by the 1998 meeting of Synod, having been ratified by all of the Classes of the Reformed Church in the U.S. during the previous year. It is being published in a Traditional English Version as well as a Modern English Version.

As with the First Edition, the Reformed Church in the U.S. again acknowledges its indebtedness to other Reformed denominations for liturgical language, forms and style which we have freely incorporated into our *Directory*. In particular, we thank the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Church for their contributions. Our special thanks also to Rev. Robert Grossmann who did the computer typesetting for these directories.

## Directory of Worship

The Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States sends forth this second edition of the *Directory of Worship* with the hope that it will help our congregations to worship our covenant Lord in spirit and in truth, in the beauty of holiness — the only worship acceptable to the God of the Bible.

Norman Jones  
Norman Hoeflinger  
Robert Grossmann  
David Dawn  
Marvin Olivier

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

This Reformed *Directory of Worship* represents a completely new work and is not a mere revision of the previous *Directory*. The Reformed Church in the United States in 1964 was convinced of the need of a new *Directory* and formed a special committee to produce one.

After four years of work by the committee and corrections by the Eureka Classis, the present edition is now the officially approved *Directory*. We prayerfully hope that these new liturgical forms will be found theologically accurate, spiritually profitable and aesthetically pleasing to the Reformed Church in her worship of God.

The reason the Reformed Church in the United States, Eureka Classis, authorized this new *Directory* was to comply with the Constitution of the Church which stipulates that the official liturgy of the Reformed Church in the United States is to be used in the administration of the sacraments and rites of the church (Articles 198, 199, 203, 208). Two drawbacks prevented even general compliance with this Constitutional requirement. First, the last official edition of the *Directory of Worship of the Reformed Church in the United States* (1926) was out of print and difficult to obtain. Second, the official edition of the *Directory* was theologically unacceptable, having been corrupted by unreformed views which had crept into the thinking of the church. Thus it was essential that a new *Directory of Worship* be compiled.

The Committee wishes to emphasize that this work is indeed a compilation rather than an original composition; the latter procedure would have been both unnecessary and presumptuous. Our Reformed *Directories* of 1887 and 1926 provided the basic model for our work, but excellent sections

### Directory of Worship

from the Orthodox Presbyterian Directory of Worship were also incorporated with slight modifications in some instances. These sections are found in: The Nature of Public Worship, The Scriptural Elements of Public Worship, the Sacraments (Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper), Profession of Faith, the Marriage Form, the Burial Service and the Dedication of a Church Building. We hereby express our thanks to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for these productions. To the Rev. Emil Buehrer we are indebted for his translation of the old German Reformed forms for the Ordination and Installation services, which we used extensively, and also for personally seeing this book through the preliminary and final printing.

May the Spirit of Christ be pleased to use this instrument to direct our Reformed Congregations in the public worship of the Triune God, that all parts of our service may be done decently and in order according to his truth. May God be glorified as His people regularly meet before His holy face.

Directory Committee,

Ministers:

Norman Jones, Chairman

Emil Buehrer

Robert Grossmann

Norman Hoeflinger

Hessel Stevens

Elders:

Harry Hieb

Lenhart Neifer

Preface to the First Edition

## Directory of Worship

# PUBLIC WORSHIP

### I. THE NATURE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

Since the end of the creation week, God has commanded that one day in seven be set aside as a day of rest and worship (Gen. 2:4). In New Testament times the Lord's Day, which commemorates the resurrection of Christ, has become the weekly day of rest which is to be kept holy in accordance with the Fourth Commandment (Heb. 4:9) and is to be dedicated to God's glory by the gathering of His people in public worship. Such public worship services held each Lord's Day and on other occasions at the call of the Consistory are official church gatherings at which all of God's children are required to be in attendance unless providentially hindered (Heb. 10:25).

Since the Word of God itself restricts God's people only to such practices in worship which his Word specifically sanctions (Deut. 12:30; John 4:23-24), the principles of the public worship of God must not be derived from any other source than the Bible, nor may they depart from its teaching.

A service of public worship is not merely a gathering of God's children with each other, but above all else a meeting of the Triune God with his chosen people. God is present in public worship not only by virtue of the divine omnipresence but, much more intimately, as the faithful covenant Savior (see Heb. 12:18-25). The Lord Jesus Christ said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

The purpose of public worship is the glory of God. His people should always engage in all its several parts with their eyes focused on his glory. Public worship has as its aim the building of Christ's Church by the perfecting of the saints and the addition to its membership of those who are being saved — all to the glory of God. Through public worship on the Lord's Day, Christians should learn to serve God all the days of the week in their every activity, remembering, whether they eat or drink or whatever they do, to do all to the glory of God.

Public worship is rightly said to be *divine* because God is its beginning and its end. It is of him and through him and unto him.

Public worship is Christian when the worshippers recognize that Christ is the only Mediator by whom they come to God, when they honor Christ as the great Head of the Church who rules over public worship, and when their worship is an expression of their faith in Christ and of their love for him.

Public worship must be performed in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Externalism and hypocrisy stand condemned. The forms of public worship have value only when they serve to express the inner reverence of the worshipper and his sincere devotion to the true and living God. Only those whose hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit are capable of such reverence and devotion.

The Lord Jesus Christ has prescribed no fixed forms for public worship but, in the interest of life and power in worship, has given his Church a large measure of liberty in using the elements of worship sanctioned by Scripture. It may not be forgotten, however, that there is true liberty only where the

## **Public Worship**

rules of God's Word are observed and the Spirit of the Lord is. All things must be done decently and in order, and God's people should serve him with reverence and in the beauty of holiness. From its beginning to its end a service of public worship should be characterized by that simplicity which is an evidence of sincerity, and by that beauty and dignity which are a manifestation of holiness.

Public worship differs from private worship in that in public worship God is served by the saints united as his covenant people, the Body of Christ. For this reason the covenant children should be present so far as possible as well as adults. For the same reason no favoritism may be shown to any who attend, nor may any member of the church presume to exalt himself above others as though he were more spiritual, but each shall esteem others better than himself.

It is necessary for God's people to come into his presence with a deep sense of awe at the thought of his perfect holiness and their own great sinfulness. They are to enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise for the great salvation which he has so graciously provided for them through his only begotten Son and has applied to them by the Holy Spirit.

## **II. THE SCRIPTURAL ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP**

1. As a service of public worship is in its essence a meeting of God and his people, the parts of the service are of two kinds: those which are performed on behalf of God, and those which are performed by the congregation. In the former the worshippers are receptive, in the latter they are active. It is reasonable that these two types of elements be made to alternate as far as possible.

2. The public reading of the Holy Scriptures is performed by the minister as God's servant. Through it God speaks most directly to the congregation, even more directly than through the interpretation of Holy Scripture in the sermon. For this reason the minister does well to refrain from interspersing the reading of God's Word with human comments, and the congregation should attend to the reading with deepest reverence. Certain portions of Scripture may be read in response by the congregation when appropriate.

3. In the sermon God addresses the congregation by the mouth of his servant. It is a matter of supreme importance that the minister preach only the Word of God, not the wisdom of man, that he declare the whole counsel of God, and that he rightly handle the Word of truth. To fulfil these goals the sermon must be prepared with the utmost care. A text may not be used merely to introduce a sermon but must be painstakingly expounded. In the sermon the minister should explain the Word of God for the instruction of his hearers and then apply it for their exhortation. Care should be taken in preaching that Christian duty not be divorced from Christian truth. That minister fails to perform his task as a God-appointed watchman on Zion's walls who neglects to warn the congregation of prevalent soul-destroying teachings by enemies of the gospel. The minister shall seek to build up the saints in the most holy faith and in Christ's stead should beseech the unconverted that they be reconciled to God. Nothing is more necessary than that the gospel of salvation by grace be proclaimed without any adulteration or compromise, in order that the unsaved may rely for salvation on the grace of God only, to the exclusion of their own works or character, and that the saints may ascribe glory for their salvation to God alone. Let the consistory give diligence that no person enter the pulpit concerning whose doctrinal soundness or knowledge of Scripture there is reasonable doubt.

## Directory of Worship

4. It is proper that the minister at the beginning of the service extend a welcome to the congregation in God's name by the use of the apostolic salutation "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." At the conclusion of the service the minister shall pronounce in God's name either the high priestly benediction, "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee; the LORD make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace," or the apostolic benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." If, however, the minister considers another scriptural benediction more fitting for a particular occasion, he may use it. The salutation and benediction, as pronounced in God's name, are properly used only by an ordained minister and in a gathering of Christ's church.

5. It is entirely fitting that, before the service, each person in the congregation engage in silent prayer. In public prayer the minister is the voice of the congregation. He should pray in such a way that the whole assembly of God's people may pray with him, and the members of the congregation not only are bound to listen as he prays but should themselves pray in their hearts. For these reasons it is desirable that the minister prepare himself for public prayers by previous meditation. Early in the service he shall offer a brief invocation, humbly imploring for the congregation and himself the guidance of the Holy Spirit in worship. At some point before the sermon there shall be a comprehensive prayer comprising adoration of God's perfections, thanksgiving for his mercies, confession of sins, supplication for the pardon of sins through the blood of the atonement and for renewal by the Holy Spirit; intercession for the poor, the sick, the dying, the mourning, the persecuted, the erring, the rising generation, the aged, the churches of the denomination, Christian missions at home and abroad, Christian education and other Christian activities, the Church universal, the civil rulers, the community, human society in general or other worthy causes. Public prayer must be offered with deep humility and holy reverence, and should be free from vain repetition or display of words.

6. Since it is the purpose of public worship to glorify God, prayer and praise should predominate in congregational singing. Let every member of the church take part in this act of worship. It should be performed not merely with the lips but with the spirit and the understanding. Since the metrical versions of the Psalms are based upon the Word of God, they ought to be used frequently in public worship. Great care must be taken that all the materials of song are in perfect accord with the teaching of Holy Scripture. Let the tunes as well as the words be dignified and elevated. The stately rhythm of the chorales is especially appropriate for public worship. No person shall take a special part in the musical service unless he is a Christian and adorns his profession with a godly walk.

7. The bringing of tithes and offerings into God's house is a solemn act of thanksgiving to almighty God. It is the duty of the minister to cultivate the grace of biblical giving in the members of the church by calling their attention to the scriptural admonition that everyone should give as the Lord has prospered him. He should remind them of the assurance of Scripture that God loves a cheerful giver, and of the blessed example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, became poor in order that poor sinners through his poverty might become rich. The consistory shall take care that the offerings of the congregation are used only for the maintenance of public worship, the preaching of the gospel throughout the world, and other Christian objectives. If a member of the church designates his gift to a particular cause, the consistory shall respect his wish unless it is convinced that the specified cause is unworthy, in which case the gift shall be returned to the donor.

## Public Worship

### III. A SUGGESTED ORDER OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

The elements of worship set forth in the Scriptures may be used in the service of public worship in the order here suggested:

Call to Worship  
Salutation  
Invocation  
Psalm or Hymn  
Scripture  
Prayer  
Psalm or Hymn  
Sermon  
Prayer  
Offering  
Psalm or Hymn  
Benediction  
Doxology

These specific elements may also be used in the service of public worship when desired: the reading of the Law, the Apostles' Creed, reading from the Heidelberg Catechism, the Lord's Prayer, the Gloria Patri, and congregational readings from the Holy Scriptures.

¶ The prayers in this Directory are suggested only. Extemporaneous prayers may be used, if desired. Singing of one or more of the biblical Psalms is recommended for every worship service.

## Directory of Worship

### THE SACRAMENTS

¶ Since the sacraments are ordinances of the visible church, they are not to be administered except under the oversight of the government of the church. Moreover, in ordinary circumstances they are properly administered only in a gathering of the congregation for the public worship of God, baptism signifying solemn admission into the visible church, and the Lord's Supper constituting the communion of believers with Christ and with each other as members of his Body, the Church. Nevertheless, if a Spiritual Council judges that very unusual circumstances obtain in a particular instance, the sacrament may be administered elsewhere; but in any event, the church must be represented in the service.

## I. HOLY BAPTISM

### A. *The Baptism of Infants*

¶ Before the administration of the sacrament of baptism, the minister shall give instruction as to the institution and nature of this sacrament.

BELOVED CONGREGATION IN THE LORD JESUS: Hear the words of the institution of the sacrament of Holy Baptism: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

¶ If the minister desires, he may use instead of the following two paragraphs on the nature of baptism and the baptism of infants, questions and answers 69 through 74 of the Heidelberg Catechism or Article 34 of the Belgic Confession.

Baptism is a sacrament ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sign and seal of the inclusion of the person who is baptized in the covenant of grace. Teaching that we and our children are conceived and born in sin, baptism witnesses and seals unto us the remission of sins and the bestowal of all the gifts of salvation through union with Christ. Baptism with water signifies and seals cleansing from sin by the blood and the Spirit of Christ, together with our death unto sin and our resurrection unto newness of life by virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ. Since these gifts of salvation are the gracious provision of the Triune God, who is pleased to claim us as His very own, we are baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And since baptized persons are called to assume the obligations of the covenant, baptism summons us to renounce the devil, the world and the flesh and to walk humbly with our God in devotion to his commandments.

Although our young children do not yet understand these things, they are nevertheless to be baptized. For the promise of the covenant is made to believers and to their seed, as God declared unto Abraham, “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.” In the New Testament no less than in the Old, the seed of the faithful, born within the church, have, by virtue of their birth, interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it and to the outward privileges of the church, for the covenant of grace is the same in substance under both Testaments, and the grace of God for the consolation of believers is even more fully manifested in the New Testament. Moreover, our Savior admitted little children into his presence, embraced and blessed them, saying, “Of such is the

## Baptism of Infants

kingdom of God.” So the children of the covenant are by baptism distinguished from the children of unbelievers and solemnly received into the visible church.

¶ Addressing the parents, the minister shall say:

Beloved in Christ the Lord, you have heard that baptism is an ordinance of God to seal his covenant to us and our seed. Therefore it must be used for this purpose and not out of custom or superstition. That it may be manifest that you are thus-minded, you are to answer sincerely the following questions:

First: Do you acknowledge that, although our children are conceived and born in sin and therefore subject to condemnation, they are holy in Christ, and as members of his Church ought to be baptized?

Answer: *I do.*

Second: Do you promise to instruct your child in the principles of our Christian faith as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as summarized in the *Heidelberg Catechism*; and do you promise to pray with and for your child, to set an example of piety and godliness before him (her) and to endeavor by all the means of God’s appointment to bring him (her) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Answer: *I do.*

PRAYER:

Almighty and eternal God, who according to thy severe judgment didst punish by the flood the unbelieving and impenitent world, and who according to thy great mercy saved believing Noah and his family, and who didst drown Pharaoh and all his hosts in the Red Sea and didst lead thy people Israel through the midst of the sea upon dry ground — by which baptism was foreshadowed — we beseech thee through thy boundless mercy graciously to look upon this covenant child. Implant him (her) by thy Holy Spirit into thy Son, Jesus Christ, that he (she) may be buried with him in his death, and rise with him in newness of life by daily following him. May he (she) faithfully bear his (her) cross, and cling to Christ by true faith, firm hope and fervent love, so that he (she) may cheerfully depart from this life, and at the last day appear without fear before the judgment seat of Christ, thy Son, who with thee and the Holy Ghost, the one and only God, liveth and reigneth for ever, Amen.

¶ Thereupon the minister shall baptize the child, saying:

N———, I baptize thee into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, we thank thee that we could present this child for holy baptism. Accept for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ this child as thine own, implanted into Christ’s death and resurrection, and make him (her) to increase in wisdom and grace with God and men. Lead him (her), O Jesus, as a lamb of thy fold. We commit him (her) to thy gracious protection and guidance. Grant him (her) thy Holy Spirit, to know thee, to love thee, to follow

## Directory of Worship

thee, and to inherit with thee eternal blessedness. Amen.

¶ This prayer may be followed with the Lord's Prayer.

BENEDICTION:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

## Baptism of Infants

### ***B. The Baptism of Adults***

¶ Before the administration of the sacrament of baptism, the minister shall give instruction as to the institution and nature of the sacrament.

BELOVED CONGREGATION IN THE LORD JESUS: Hear the words of the institution of the sacrament of Holy Baptism: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Amen.

¶ If the minister desires, he may use instead of the following paragraph on the nature of baptism, questions and answers 69 through 73 of the Heidelberg Catechism or article 34 of the Belgic Confession.

Baptism is a sacrament ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sign and seal of the inclusion of the person who is baptized in the covenant of grace. Teaching that we and our children are conceived and born in sin, it witnesses and seals unto us the remission of sins and the bestowal of all the gifts of salvation through union with Christ. Baptism with water signifies and seals cleansing from sin by the blood and the Spirit of Christ, together with our death unto sin and our resurrection unto newness of life by virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ. Since these gifts of salvation are the gracious provision of the Triune God, who is pleased to claim us as his very own, we are baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And since baptized persons are called upon to assume the obligations of the covenant, baptism summons us to renounce the devil, the world and the flesh, and to walk humbly with our God in devotion to his commandments.

Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded his Church to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The baptism of adults must await their own profession of faith in Christ. Having come to years of discretion, they become heirs of salvation and members of the visible church only by way of personal belief in and submission to Christ as Lord and Savior.

¶ Then the minister shall address the person to be baptized:

N———, BELOVED IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: We thank God for the grace which was given you, in that you have become partaker of the covenant of grace.

You are now requested to answer sincerely the following questions:

**First:** Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the inerrant and infallible Word of God, and its doctrine, summarized in the confessions of this Church, to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?

Answer: *I do.*

**Second:** Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself

## Directory of Worship

but in Jesus Christ alone?

Answer: *I do.*

**Third:** Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord; and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature, and to lead a godly life?

Answer: *I do.*

**Fourth:** Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church, and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline?

Answer: *I do.*

### PRAYER:

Almighty and eternal God, who according to thy severe judgment didst punish by the flood the unbelieving world, and who according to thy great mercy saved believing Noah and his family; thou who didst drown Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, and didst lead thy people Israel through the midst of the sea upon dry ground — by which baptism was foreshadowed — we beseech thee according to thine infinite mercy, graciously to look upon thy servant, implanted by thy Holy Spirit into thy Son, Jesus Christ, and buried with him in his death, and risen with him in his resurrection in newness of life. Grant that he (she), daily following him, may joyfully bear his (her) cross, and cleave to him in true faith, firm hope and fervent love. Grant, further, that he (she) may cheerfully depart this life, and at the last day appear without fear before the judgment seat of Christ thy Son, who with thee and the Holy Spirit, one only God, liveth and reigneth for ever. Amen.

¶ **Then the minister shall administer baptism, saying:**

N———, I baptize thee into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

### PRAYER:

We thank thee from our hearts, dear heavenly Father, that thou didst give unto this brother (sister) the grace to know his (her) sinfulness, to give himself (herself) in true repentance and faith to Jesus Christ as his (her) only Savior, to confess him before men, and to receive in holy baptism the seal of the forgiveness of his (her) sins and his (her) acceptance as thy child. Help him (her) now, O Lord, that he (she), being buried and risen with Christ, henceforth may walk in newness of life and finally inherit thy eternal kingdom with all the elect, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be praise and dominion for ever. Amen.

¶ **The minister shall conclude this part of the service by saying:**

### **Baptism of Adults**

Beloved, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I welcome you to the privileges of full communion with God's people, and in particular to participation in the sacrament of the Holy Supper. I charge you that by the faithful use of the means of grace, the Word of God, the sacraments and prayer, and in humble reliance upon the grace of God, you continue steadfastly in the confession which you have made. Rest assured that if you confess Christ before men, he will confess you before his Father in heaven. May the God of all grace, who called you into his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish and strengthen you. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

## Directory of Worship

### II. THE LORD'S SUPPER

¶ A preparatory service is considered appropriate prior to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and is to be held at the discretion of each church.

¶ After the sermon, the bread and the wine having been uncovered, the minister shall address the congregation, giving instruction about the institution and nature of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

BELOVED IN THE LORD JESUS: Hear the words of the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. "The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

¶ If the minister desires, he may use instead of the following paragraph on the nature of the Lord's Supper questions and answers 75 through 82 of the Heidelberg Catechism or article 35 of the Belgic Confession.

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. Until his coming again it is to be observed for a perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death. The physical elements, representing the broken body and the shed blood of the Savior, are received by true believers as signs and seals of all the benefits of Christ's sacrifice upon the cross. They signify and seal remission of sins and nourishment and growth in Christ, and are a bond and pledge of the communion of believers with him and with each other as members of his spiritual Body, the Church. As signs and seals of the covenant of grace they not only declare that God is faithful and true to fulfill the promise of the covenant, but they also summon us to all the duties of the children of God, and call us to renewed consecration in gratitude for his salvation.

In order that we may celebrate the Lord's Supper to our comfort, it is first necessary that we properly examine ourselves. A true examination of ourselves consists in these three parts: First, let everyone consider by himself his sins and accursedness apart from Jesus Christ, that he may be displeased with himself and humble himself in the presence of God. Second, let everyone examine his heart whether he believes this certain promise of God that all his sins are forgiven only for the sake of Jesus Christ. Third, let everyone search his conscience whether he is minded henceforth to show his gratitude to God the Lord all the days of his life and to walk uprightly before him.

It is my solemn duty to warn the uninstructed, the profane, the scandalous, and those who secretly and impenitently live in any sin, not to approach the holy table, lest they partake unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body, and so eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Nevertheless, this warning is not designed to keep the humble and contrite from the table of the Lord, as if the supper were for those who might be free from sin. On the contrary, we who are invited to the supper, coming as guilty and polluted sinners and without hope of eternal life apart from the grace of God in Christ, confess our dependence for pardon and cleansing upon the perfect sacrifice of Christ; we base our hope of eternal life upon his perfect obedience and righteousness, and humbly resolve to deny ourselves, crucify our old nature, and follow Christ as becomes those who bear his name.

## The Lord's Supper

### PRAYER:

Merciful God and Father, we beseech thee that in this supper, in which we cherish the blessed memory of the bitter death of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, thou wilt so work in our hearts through the Holy Spirit that we with true confidence might give ourselves up, more and more, unto thy Son Jesus Christ, in order that our burdened and contrite hearts, through the power of the Holy Spirit, may be nourished and refreshed with his true body and blood, yea, with him, true God and man, the only heavenly bread. We pray that we may no longer live in our sins, but that Christ may live in us, and we in him, and so we may truly be partakers of the new and everlasting testament, the covenant of grace. We do not doubt that thou wilt forever be our gracious Father, nevermore imputing our sins unto us, but providing us with all things needful for body and soul, as thy dear children and heirs.

Grant us also thy grace that we may take up our cross cheerfully, deny ourselves, confess our Savior, and in all tribulation, with uplifted head, expect our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, where he will make our mortal bodies like unto his glorified body, and take us unto himself in eternity.

Be pleased also, O Lord, to bless these elements of bread and wine, that we, receiving them in remembrance of the passion and death of thy dear Son, may by faith be made partakers of his crucified body and shed blood with all his benefits to our spiritual nourishment and the glory of thy holy name. Amen.

¶ Then the minister, breaking the bread and pouring the wine, shall repeat the words of institution:

“The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it,

¶ (here the minister shall break the bread),

and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.  
After the same manner also he took the cup, and when he had supped,

¶ (here the minister shall pour out the wine and take the cup),

saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”

¶ In distributing the bread the minister shall say:

“The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”

¶ In giving the cup he shall say:

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?”

¶ After the people assembled at the table have communed, the minister shall dismiss them with the following or another suitable blessing:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all; depart in peace. Amen.

## Directory of Worship

### PRAYER AFTER ALL HAVE COMMUNED:

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his

## The Lord's Supper

### THE RITES

#### I. Ordination and Installation

##### *A. Ordination of Ministers of the Word*

¶ After the sermon the presiding minister shall begin thus:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

DEARLY BELOVED IN CHRIST JESUS: We are gathered here to ordain this brother according to apostolic order by prayer and the laying on of hands to the office of the ministry of the Word of God. But since we can do nothing without the Lord, let us therefore unite in calling upon him.

PRAYER:

Almighty and eternal God, who according to thy gracious good pleasure dost gather out of the whole human race, by thy Word and Spirit, a chosen Church unto eternal life, and who hast commanded us by thy dear Son to pray to the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest, we beseech thee, grant us and all thy servants a rich measure of thy Holy Spirit that we may understand and proclaim thy Word and worthily administer the holy sacraments, and that our office may also serve to comfort thy people and to edify them in true faith. Be with us also in this hour, and bless thy servant whom we shall now ordain to the office of Minister of the Word of God. Let him be a man after thine own heart, and may many be won for thy kingdom through his ministry . Amen.

¶ The presiding minister shall then address the candidate for ordination:

BELOVED BROTHER IN THE LORD: You stand here in the presence of God to be publicly and solemnly ordained to the office of the holy ministry. It is proper for you, therefore, earnestly to consider the dignity and responsibility of the office, that you may enter upon it with a lively consciousness of your own sins and inadequacies and an ardent longing for divine help. The Lord himself ordained this office when he said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

## Directory of Worship

Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

The apostle Paul also testifies: “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.” “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

The Lord, who has promised to be with us even unto the end of the world, has upheld this office among us to the present time; and since we are about to ordain you to this office, hear further the apostle Paul to Timothy: “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity... Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

The apostle Peter admonishes likewise: “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

Dear Brother, you are therefore as a servant of Christ to feed the flock of God; to preach the Word in season and out of season; to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort with all longsuffering and humility; to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the afflicted, to strengthen the weak, to seek the lost; to instruct the youth, to continue in prayer and supplication, to administer the holy sacraments, and to maintain good discipline and order in the Church of God.

Be watchful in all things; be a good soldier of Jesus Christ; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of your ministry; fight the good fight of faith: then the God of peace will be with you; and the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give you a crown of righteousness at that day.

And now we request you in the name of God to answer the following questions:

**First:** Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, are the Word of God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and therefore are infallible and inerrant, and are the only and perfect rule of our Christian faith and life?

Answer: *I do.*

**Second:** Do you honestly and in good conscience before the Lord declare that you believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine in the confessions of this Church, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt, are in complete and accurate agreement with the Word of God; and do you promise to teach and defend the same in good faith and reject all doctrines conflicting therewith?

Answer: *I do.*

**Third:** Do you believe with your whole heart that you are called of God to this office, and do you rely in the performing of its duties upon the grace and help of the Holy Spirit?

Answer: *I do; this is my belief.*

### **Ordination of Ministers**

**Fourth:** Do you promise to be faithful in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn your profession of the gospel by a life of exemplary piety wherever you may be?

Answer: *I do.*

**Fifth:** Do you acknowledge the rightful authority of the Reformed Church in the United States, and do you promise to perform your office faithfully in the same and to show all proper regard for its laws and ordinances, and all suitable obedience to its government in the Lord?

Answer: *I do acknowledge and promise it; may the Lord help me.*

#### **PRAYER:**

Thou, O Lord, hast heard the confession and the oath of thy servant who, looking to thee, will accept the office of Minister of the Word of God. Consecrate him through the Holy Spirit to thy service and grant him grace and strength that he may rightly divide the Word and be an example in all things, and may lead many souls into thy kingdom through Jesus Christ. Amen.

¶ Here the candidate shall be directed to kneel, the ministers and elders shall lay their hands severally on his head, and the presiding minister shall say:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and in reliance upon his help, we now ordain you to the holy ministry: to proclaim the gospel, to administer the sacraments, to maintain Christian discipline and order in the church, and to be an instrument of the Lord in saving immortal souls. The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be and abide with you now and for ever. Amen.

¶ He shall rise, and the presiding minister shall say:

We offer you the right hand of fellowship to partake with us in this ministry.

¶ Each minister and elder present shall also offer the right hand of fellowship.

¶ When the new minister is to be installed at the same time as pastor of the congregation (or charge) in which he has been ordained, the Installation Service shall now proceed according to the form provided for that purpose. If there is no Installation Service, the presiding minister shall pray as follows:

#### **PRAYER:**

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise thee for thy love manifested to thy people. Lord Jesus, Prophet, High Priest and King, we thank thee that thou didst purchase thy Church with thy blood and didst establish it on thyself, the Eternal Rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. We thank thee that thou didst uphold this brother until now and didst call him to be a shepherd and teacher of thy church. We pray thee, anoint him with thy Holy Spirit and make him to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. O Holy Spirit, thou Comforter, who leadeth into the truth, enlighten and lead him in all his ways that his ministry may abound to the honor of God and the edification of the

### **Directory of Worship**

church. Sanctify his heart and mind that he may walk worthily in the gospel. And when his course is ended here below and his work finished, then let him enter into the joy of his Lord where the wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. Now unto thee, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God be honor and glory for ever. Amen.

¶ **The service shall be concluded with this 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.

¶ **The congregation shall sing the Doxology.**

## Ordination of Ministers

### *B. Installation of Ministers*

¶ Immediately after the ordination of a new minister, if this is to take place on the same occasion, or in any other case after the sermon, the presiding minister shall address the congregation as follows:

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD JESUS: You have called N——, now present, to become your pastor. He has accepted your call. After full inquiry and deliberation, the N—— Classis, under whose supervision and care you stand, has resolved that the proposed pastoral relationship shall be established; and being here at the present time for that purpose by its appointment and order, we now proceed in the name of the Lord to install him as pastor of this charge.

¶ Here the pastor-elect shall present himself, and the presiding minister shall address him as follows:

DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER IN THE LORD: Since the pastoral office which you have accepted was solemnly and divinely instituted by the Lord and Head of the Church, therefore it is your solemn and important duty faithfully to exercise the same by looking to the Lord that you may with joy give an account of your stewardship. The tasks and duties imposed upon you in this office are clearly evident in the meaning of the names applied to those who minister in the Word and doctrine, such as: shepherd, bishop, teacher, steward. The Lord himself says: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

The apostle Paul, deeply conscious of the importance and sacredness of this high calling, addressed those who are occupied in this work thus: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” Hold fast the faithful Word as thou hast been taught, that thou mayest be able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince the gainsayers. “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity...Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

In agreement with this divine instruction, it is now your duty, dear brother, to give yourself wholly to the ministry of the Word and prayer, to administer the sacraments, to instruct the youth and to lead the church, over which the Holy Ghost has set you, to watch over this flock, and in conjunction with the elders and deacons to preserve discipline, order and peace in the same for the comfort of the saints and the edification of the church. And now, if you shall perform this holy task in the mind of Christ, then the blessing of the Lord shall rest upon you and this flock, and you shall dwell together in peace and harmony.

¶ Directing all the members of the congregation in which the minister is being installed to rise, he shall say:

## Directory of Worship

BELOVED IN THE LORD, officers and members of this congregation (these congregations): you have just heard what important duty was laid upon him whom you called as your pastor and teacher; hear now also what the Word of God says to you, how you are to receive him and what your mind shall be toward him. “We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.” “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?”

From these divine instructions you see that you are to love, honor and obey in the Lord this servant of Christ, and to submit to his doctrine, admonitions and corrections; and for his service in the spiritual things you owe him his bodily necessities, that he may give himself wholly to the ministry of the Word without any cares about his sustenance. Receive him, therefore, in the Lord; and assist him with counsel and supplication, so that by your common labor the church might be edified and the kingdom of Christ extended.

¶ **The presiding minister shall address this question to the pastor-elect:**

And now, dear brother, I ask you in the presence of God and this congregation (these congregations), do you accept the oversight and care of this congregation (these congregations) to perform faithfully and conscientiously the duties which rest upon you as pastor and teacher, and to foster this fold in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ in accordance with your ordination vows?

Answer: *I do promise this by the grace and help of God.*

¶ **Then the presiding minister shall address this question to the congregation:**

BELOVED IN THE LORD: You have heard this solemn vow. I ask you as officers and members of this congregation (these congregations) in the presence of God: Do you receive this minister as your pastor and teacher, and do you promise to love and honor him, and to be obedient unto him in the Lord?

Answer: *We do.*

¶ **Here the presiding minister shall install the pastor-elect with these words:**

On the ground of the mutual promises, and by the authority of the Honorable N——— Classis, we install you, N———, as pastor and teacher of this congregation (these congregations), and herewith we give the same to your care and oversight in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

¶ **The presiding minister shall call all of the ministers and elders present to come forward and extend the right hand of fellowship to the newly installed pastor.**

PRAYER:

## **Installation of Ministers**

Gracious God and heavenly Father, we thank thee that thou hast established thy Church here on earth and hast preserved the same until the present time. We are thankful that thou hast blessed us with all spiritual gifts and heavenly benefits, and hast established the office which proclaims reconciliation and thine infinite mercy. Be pleased to fill this thy servant, whom thou hast set over this flock, with thy gifts of grace and Spirit that he may fulfill his calling for the edification of thy saints and the conversion of sinners. Bless, O Lord, the members of this congregation with thy heavenly gifts in Christ Jesus; grant that they may be diligent hearers and doers of thy Word, and make them fruitful in all good works to the glory of thy name. Bless the present covenant now established between this shepherd and flock, and bring them and us all finally to the fellowship of thy redeemed in the kingdom of thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ **The newly installed pastor shall pronounce the following or similar 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.

¶ **The service shall be concluded with the singing of the Doxology.**

## Directory of Worship

### *C. Ordination and Installation of Elders and*

### *Deacons*

¶ Those parts of the following form are to be used which fit the particular circumstances in each congregation as to the number to be ordained or installed, or both.

¶ After the sermon the minister shall say:

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD: This (These) person(s) has (have) been solemnly chosen and called by you, as a Christian congregation, to take part as elder(s) and deacon(s) in the care and service of the church. He (They) has (have) accepted your call. No one has come forward to urge any just objection to his (their) being set in office. I therefore proceed, in the name of the Lord, to ordain him (those) who has (have) not been ordained previously, and to set each apart to his own office, to the work of the ministry among you.

#### PRAYER:

O God, who by thy Holy Spirit hast appointed diverse offices in thy Church; set apart, we beseech thee, this (these) thy servant(s) to the work whereunto thou hast called him (them) by the voice of thy people. Bestow upon him (them), we beseech thee, thy heavenly grace, that he (they) may be a good man (good men), full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, and in all things, may he (they) faithfully serve thee. Grant this, we beseech thee, O heavenly Father, for the sake of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ Then addressing the candidates, he shall say:

BELOVED BROTHER (BRETHREN): As it is a great honor to bear office in the Lord's house, so it is also a solemn trust, which no one should take upon himself rashly or lightly. For although your election has been by the free choice of your fellow members, yet the office(s) to which you have been called is (are) not of human origin or authority, but was (were) instituted by Christ himself, who preserved it (them) in the Church to the present time. You are, therefore, to regard yourself (yourselves) not the mere servant(s) of men, but as the servant(s) of Christ, appointed in his name and by his authority to the work entrusted to your care. From this you may see how much is comprehended in your present induction into office, and how needful it is that you should magnify your office, and make high account of its duties as a service to be rendered unto God, and not simply to men.

ELDERS are appointed to assist and support the minister of the Word in the general government of the church. They form, with the minister, in each particular congregation, a council in common for the spiritual supervision of the flock which is committed to their care. They are bound to take part, accordingly, in the work of the ministry, so far as it has to do with the pastoral oversight and care. They are to be the advisors and counsellors of the minister in the discharge of his holy office; they are to be to him as hands and eyes, acting with him and for him throughout the congregation. It is their duty to go before the flock in the way of Christian example, to watch over it in the Lord, to take an active interest in its spiritual welfare, to share the responsibility for its condition, to be at hand in all circumstances with spiritual aid for its necessities and wants. It belongs to them, in virtue of their

### Ordination of Elders and Deacons

office, to visit the sick and afflicted, to instruct the ignorant, to admonish those who are out of the way, to warn the unruly, to command and rebuke with authority in Christ's name. To them, moreover, in conjunction with the pastor, belongs the whole discipline of the church, its power of the keys, as exercised both in the form of censure and in the form of restoration.

DEACONS are appointed to assist and support the pastor and elders in those ministrations which pertain to the more outward needs of the general household of faith. On them falls the honorable charge of caring for the poor and needy and of seeing that the charities of the church are properly dispensed. They are to aid in securing funds necessary for the support of the church in its various activities. They are to labor among the people in making known to them the needs of the church, fostering the principle of stewardship, and thereby cultivating the spirit of liberal and cheerful giving. In discharging these duties, however, they must not lose sight of the true spiritual character of their office, which, although it may be thus occupied with outward and temporal things, yet remains always a proper branch of the Christian ministry, the purpose of which in all things can only be the eternal salvation of men in the world to come. Hence it is that so much stress is laid, in the New Testament, on the character and life of those who are called to take part in this work. They must be men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, who may be able, both by word and example, to help forward the great purpose of the gospel, making their ministrations to the bodily necessities of the poor the occasion and means of a still better benefit to their souls. The apostle Paul, writing on this subject in his first epistle to Timothy, expressly requires of them the same virtues which are needful for the office of elder.

¶ **The minister shall now address these questions to the candidates:**

And now, brother (brethren), having well considered the nature and design of this (these) office(s) to which you have been called by the voice of this congregation, please answer the following questions:

**First:** Do you accept the call as coming to you from God, and are you willing to undertake the work and service it sets before you, in the name and for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Answer: *Yes.*

**Second:** Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, are the Word of God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and therefore are infallible and inerrant, and are the only and perfect rule of our Christian faith and life?

Answer: *Yes.*

**Third:** Do you honestly and in good conscience before the Lord declare that you believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine in the confessions of this Church, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt, are in complete and accurate agreement with the Word of God; and do you promise to teach (deacons: "promote") and defend the same in good faith and reject all doctrines conflicting therewith?

Answer: *Yes.*

**Fourth:** Do you promise to be faithful in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and church officer,

## Directory of Worship

endeavoring to adorn your profession of the gospel by a life of exemplary piety wherever you may be?

Answer: *Yes.*

**Fifth:** Do you promise to exercise your ministry, as elder(s) and deacon(s), among this people, with faithful diligence, according to what you have now declared to be the rule and measure of your faith, showing all proper regard for the lawful authority of the church, and taking heed to your own lives, that you may adorn the gospel of God our Savior by word and practice answerable to the place you occupy in Christ's house?

Answer: *Yes.*

¶ **Then the presiding minister shall address this question to the congregation:**

BELOVED IN THE LORD: You have heard this (these) solemn vow(s). I ask you as the members of this congregation in the presence of God: Do you receive this (these) elder(s) and deacon(s) as your officers and do you promise to love and honor him (them), and to be obedient unto him (them) in the Lord?

Answer: *We do.*

¶ **Here those who have not been previously ordained to the office in which they are now called to serve shall be ordained. They may be directed to kneel, and the minister and elders shall lay their right hands upon each one in succession. The minister shall say:**

Take authority to execute the office of Elder (Deacon) in the church of God, which office I now solemnly commit unto you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

¶ **After the candidates have arisen the minister shall install both those now ordained and those previously ordained, using the following form:**

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority belonging to me in his Church, I now install you in the charge and service to which you have been called by this congregation; and may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, rest upon you, abide with you, and strengthen you in your ministry always with all might through the Spirit unto every good word and work. Amen.

¶ **The other consistory members may now be called upon to give the right hand of fellowship to the newly installed officers.**

PRAYER:

O Lord, our heavenly Father, who hast been pleased of thy great goodness to call these thy servants to office and authority in thy church; send down upon them, we beseech thee, thy Holy Spirit, by whose power alone they can be made to fulfill the ministry now committed unto them. Make them wise and faithful, humble, tender, modest, and yet bold, constant, patient, and persevering in their appointed work. In all their words and works may thy precepts shine forth; may they hold the testimony of a good conscience, and prove themselves a good example unto all thy flock, to the glory of thy holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Ordination of Elders and Deacons

¶ The service may then be concluded with this benediction and the singing of the Doxology.

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.

## Directory of Worship

### II. Confirmation

¶ After the sermon the catechumens shall present themselves before the minister who shall begin thus:

BELOVED OF THE LORD: the following persons, (Names ————), have been instructed in our most holy faith, and have sustained a satisfactory examination before the elders of the congregation(s), and now are to be received publicly into communicant membership of this congregation (their respective congregations) through confirmation.

The rite of confirmation is the solemn and joyful acknow-ledge-ment by the congregation that God has confirmed his covenant promise of salvation, signified and sealed to these children in baptism, by granting them repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ upon their coming to the age of understanding and commitment.

As children of the covenant they were presented in their infancy by their parents for holy baptism, thus receiving the sign and seal of the sonship of God. As joint heirs of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord, they have enjoyed the blessings of the means of grace and special instruction in the doctrines and duties of our faith. They now earnestly desire to publicly confess their faith, to enter into full fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and his church by partaking of the Holy Supper, to assume the obligations of communicant membership in the church of Jesus Christ, and to persevere in the fellowship of his people. Therefore, they stand now before God and this congregation in this solemn manner to be publicly received by the church and to be admitted to all her blessings.

¶ Here the minister shall address the catechumens:

BELOVED IN THE LORD JESUS: We thank God for the grace which has been given you, in that, having come to years of understanding, you have accepted God's covenant promise which was signified and sealed unto you in your infancy by holy baptism. (Your knowledge of God's grace and promise has been strengthened by the godly example and instruction of your parents and teachers.) You are now to confess publicly your hearty trust in Christ your Savior, which trust the Holy Ghost has worked in you by the gospel, that not only to others, but to you also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, for the sake of Christ's merits.

You are now requested to answer sincerely the following questions:

**First:** Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the inerrant and infallible Word of God, and its doctrine, summarized in the confessions of this Church, to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?

Answer: *I do.*

**Second:** Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself but in Jesus Christ alone?

## Confirmation

Answer: *I do.*

**Third:** Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord; and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature, and to lead a godly life?

Answer: *I do.*

**Fourth:** Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church, and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline?

Answer: *I do.*

Beloved, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I welcome you to full communion with God's people, and in particular to participation in the sacrament of the Holy Supper. I charge you that by the faithful use of the means of grace — the Word of God, the sacraments, and prayer — and in humble reliance upon the grace of God, you continue steadfastly in the confession you have made. Rest assured that if you confess Christ before men, he will confess you before his Father who is in heaven. May the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish, and strengthen you. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

¶ Here the minister shall extend a hand of greeting, and may present a certificate of reception to each new communicant.

### PRAYER:

Most merciful Father, we give thee hearty thanks for the great goodness thou hast been pleased to show toward these thy servants by giving them grace to own and accept for themselves thy covenant of salvation which was signified and sealed to them earlier in the sacrament of baptism. And now, O Lord, we beseech thee, perfect the good work which thou hast begun in them. Fortify them against the assaults of sin and hell. Let not Satan prevail against them. Keep them from the evil that is in the world. Help them to walk in the Spirit, that they may not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Defend them from all heresy and schism, from all apostasy and unbelief. Let them never draw back to perdition. Make them faithful unto death, that no one take their crown from them. And grant, O most merciful Father, that, having continued thus steadfast in faith and hope to the end, they may be counted worthy to be joined with thy saints in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

¶ Here the confirmed catechumens shall be dismissed with this or another suitable benediction:

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Directory of Worship

### III. Public Profession of Faith

¶ After an appropriate announcement of the names of those who are to be publicly welcomed into the congregation by profession of faith, the minister shall proceed by saying:

BELOVED IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: We thank our God concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that you were made desirous of professing your faith publicly, here in the presence of God and his holy church, and of obtaining the privileges of full communion with the people of God.

You are now requested to answer sincerely the following questions:

**First:** Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the inerrant and infallible Word of God, and its doctrine, summarized in the confessions of this Church, to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?

Answer: *I do.*

**Second:** Do you confess that because of your sinfulness you abhor and humble yourself before God, and that you trust for salvation not in yourself but in Jesus Christ alone?

Answer: *I do.*

**Third:** Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord; and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature, and to lead a godly life?

Answer: *I do.*

**Fourth:** Do you agree to submit in the Lord to the government of this church, and, in case you should be found delinquent in doctrine or life, to heed its discipline?

Answer: *I do.*

I charge you then, beloved, that you, by the diligent use of the means of grace and with the assistance of your God, continue in the profession which you have just made. In the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, I now welcome you to full communion with the people of God. Rest assured that the privileges of such communion are now yours.

PRAYER:

## Public Profession of Faith

Almighty and most merciful God and Father, we thank and praise thee that thou hast forgiven all our sins through the blood of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and hast adopted us to be thy children through the work of thy Holy Spirit. We beseech thee for the sake of Christ, that thou wilt always govern this brother (sister) by thy Word and Spirit so that he (she) may lead a Christian and godly life, and may grow and increase in grace. May he (she) learn to acknowledge thy fatherly goodness and mercy which thou hast shown to him (her) and to us all. Grant that he (she) may live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King and High Priest, Jesus Christ, and may manfully fight against and overcome sin and the devil, to the end that he (she) may eternally praise and magnify thee, thy Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the one only true God. Amen.

¶ **The minister shall close with this or another suitable benediction:**

And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

## Directory of Worship

### IV. Discipline

#### A. *Excommunication*

¶ Before the minister announces the excommunication, he shall inform the congregation of what the Spiritual Council did in this present case, and why it is considered necessary to exclude the guilty person from the communion of the church, that all might know the justice of the sentence.

BELOVED IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head and King of the Church, commanded that if a brother trespass against us we go and tell him his fault between us and him alone. If he shall not hear us, then we should take with us one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word be established. And if he shall neglect to hear us, then we are to tell it unto the church. If he shall neglect to hear the church, we shall consider him as an heathen man and a publican. The apostle Paul likewise commands us in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we should withdraw ourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from us. If any man, that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, we should report him and have nothing to do with him, that he might be ashamed.

(We have previously made known to you that) N——, a member of this church, has been leading an immoral and ungodly life (or, has been holding and teaching false doctrine — or, has been holding and teaching false doctrine, and leading an immoral and ungodly life), and has by his sin given great offense to the church of Christ. According to the command of our Lord, we have kindly told him his fault, both alone and in the presence of one or two witnesses; we have warned him of the consequences of his heinous offenses against God and the church, and admonished him to repent. But it is with deep sorrow of heart that we announce to you that thus far we have received no proof of true repentance and reformation of life. On the contrary, he has hardened his heart and continues in stubbornness and disobedience.

Wherefore, in order that this erring member of the church may not endanger the whole body, and that the name of God be not blasphemed among us through him, we are now in duty bound, by the command of our Lord, to proceed to the use of the last remedy, and cut him off from the membership of the Church.

We, therefore, the minister and elders of this church, assembled in the name and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, do hereby announce to you that N——, because he will not forsake his sin, is excommunicated from the Church of God; he is separated and cut off from the communion of the saints, and from the use of the sacraments, so long as he continues without repentance.

Moreover, we admonish you, dearly beloved, that you hold no Christian fellowship with this person, so that he may be led to a deep sense of his fall and separation from the Church of Christ. We beseech you, however, not to treat him as an enemy; but admonish him and pray for him, that he may be brought to repentance, and restored to the communion of the Church. Remember also that you yourselves are beset by temptations; and let the fall of this man be an example to you, and a warning of your danger.

You have seen how he began to depart from the ways of truth and righteousness, and by degrees fell away more and more into error and sin. Observe, therefore, how cunning the great adversary of souls is in leading men to destruction. The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Wherefore, let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. Be sober, watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. Let everyone be truly

### **Excommunication**

sorrowful for his sins, that God may not humble us again by the fall of any other member of this church. Beloved brethren, let your fellowship be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

#### **PRAYER:**

O righteous God, most merciful Father, we bewail our sins before thy most high Majesty, and confess that we have deserved the sorrow and pain which we have felt in the separation of a member of thy Church. For Christ's sake, be thou gracious unto us and forgive our iniquities, over which we mourn. Work in our hearts a godly sorrow for sin, that we may fear the judgments which thou dost send upon the stiffnecked and rebellious. And as thou hast no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but wilt have all men to be converted and live; and as the door of thy Church is always open to those who return to thee in true repentance; we pray, O most merciful Father, for grace to walk before thee in all holiness, and with humility and love to admonish him, upon whom this judgment has now come, that through thy good Spirit, he may be brought to repentance, and restored to thy favor. May we soon have cause to rejoice over him for whom we now have sorrow of heart, that thy name may be praised, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Directory of Worship

### **B. Restoration**

¶ An announcement is to be made to the congregation, at least a week prior to the public restoration, that the excommunicated person has given evidence of repentance and that he desires to be restored to the communion of the church. If anyone has an objection to the restoration, he is to bring it to the Spiritual Council in the time allocated. At the time of this announcement the minister shall say:

BELOVED CONGREGATION IN THE LORD: It is my privilege to announce to you today, that N——, who was excommunicated from our membership has, by this remedy, as also by good admonitions and your prayers, through the grace of God, come so far, that, being ashamed of his (her) sins, he (she) now desires to be restored to the fellowship of the Church.

We have made diligent inquiry into his (her) spiritual state and manner of life, and have good reason to believe that he (she) has forsaken his (her) wickedness, and returns to the Lord with a broken and contrite heart. Nor has anyone brought a further charge against him (her). Since then, we are in duty bound, by the command of God, to receive such persons with joy, and yet it is necessary to proceed herein according to good order, we do hereby make known to you that we propose on

¶ (Here the time of public restoration shall be stated.)

to loose him (her) from the bond of excommunication, and restore him (her) to the fellowship of the Church. Let everyone thank the Lord for the mercy shown to this brother (sister), and beseech God to perfect his work in him (her) to his (her) eternal salvation. Amen.

¶ At the time set for the public restoration, if no cause has been shown to prevent it, the minister shall call the brother and the elders before the congregation and say:

BELOVED BRETHREN: We have, on a previous occasion, informed you of the repentance of N——, who was cut off from our communion, in order that, with your knowledge and approval, he (she) might be restored to the fellowship of the Church. And inasmuch as no one has, in the mean time, brought any charge against him (her), we now proceed to his (her) formal and solemn restoration.

Our Lord Jesus Christ declares that whatsoever his Church shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven; whereby he gives us to understand that, when any person is excommunicated from the Church, he (she) is not at once cut off thereby from the hope of being saved, but may again be loosed from the bonds of condemnation. And as God declares in his Word, that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live, the Church always hopes for the return of her backslidden children, and keeps her bosom open for those who truly repent. Accordingly, the apostle Paul commands that the offender, who by his direction had been cut off from the Church, should be again received and comforted, lest perhaps such an one might be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

Our Lord teaches us, also, that such forgiveness, being pronounced according to the Word of God, is by him accounted sure and firm: for as Christ says, Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them. Therefore no one who truly repents ought to doubt in the least that he is assuredly received by God in mercy.

¶ Then, addressing the penitent, he shall say:

NOW, THEREFORE, I ask you, N——, do you declare with all your heart, before God and his Church, that you truly repent for the sin for which

## Restoration

you have been excommunicated, and do you desire to be restored to the communion of the Church of Christ, and promise henceforth to live in all godliness, according to the command of the Lord?

Answer: *I do, by the grace of Christ.*

¶ Then the minister shall further say:

And now, in the name and by the authority of Christ and his Church, I release you from the bond of excommunication; receive you in this church and restore you to the fellowship of Christ, the communion of the saints, and the use of the holy sacraments. The God of all grace, who has had pity upon you, and who has given you repentance unto life, confirm you therein unto the end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Seeing then, beloved brother (sister), that God has received you in His grace, be careful to watch henceforward continually that Satan, the world, and your flesh may not cause you to fall again into sin. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance; and, as God has forgiven you much, love him much, and walk before him in newness of life.

And you, brethren, receive this brother (sister) with joy and tenderness; praise God for his (her) return, and rejoice with the angels of heaven over this sinner who comes today to repentance. Since God has forgiven and received him (her), let no one despise him (her); look no longer upon him (her) as a stranger, but love him (her) as a brother (sister), and count him (her) a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God.

PRAYER:

Let us return thanks unto the Lord.

Merciful God and Father: we give thee hearty thanks, that thou hast given to our brother (sister) repentance unto life and hast restored him (her) to thy Church. O Lord, grant him (her) the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that he (she) may not again be entangled in the cords of Satan, and help him (her) to walk in newness of life, and in all godliness serve thee in holiness and righteousness. And grant to us all the grace of thy Spirit, that we may constantly look up to Jesus Christ, the great Author and Finisher of our faith, to walk in the way of life, and to let our lights so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father in heaven; help us to watch and pray, and to work with fear and trembling, that we might be saved, and keep us in the fellowship of Christ Jesus unto eternal life. Amen.

## Directory of Worship

### V. Marriage

¶ The form here presented for the marriage service is preferred; however, any other form in harmony with the Word of God and Reformed practice is permitted. Weddings are under the jurisdiction of the Spiritual Council.

¶ At the time and place appointed for the solemnization of matrimony, the persons to be married shall take their places before the minister, the man having the woman at his left, and all present reverently standing.

¶ The Minister shall say:

DEARLY BELOVED: We are gathered here in the presence of God to join together this man (or, N———) and this woman (or, N———) in holy matrimony.

¶ The minister shall say, if appropriate:

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Answer: *I do.*

¶ The minister shall ask the congregation to be seated and shall continue, saying:

Marriage was instituted by God himself in the time of man's innocency and uprightness. The Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Thereupon God created woman of man's own substance and brought her unto the man. Our Lord Jesus Christ honored marriage by his presence at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. And he confirmed it as a divine ordinance and a union not to be severed when he declared, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Moreover, the apostle Paul set forth the sacred and exalted nature of marriage when he likened it to the spiritual union of Christ and his Church.

The purpose of marriage is the enrichment of the lives of those who enter into this union, the propagation of the race, and the extension of Christ's Church to the glory of the covenant God.

Let us reverently hear what the Holy Scriptures teach concerning the duty of husbands to their wives and of wives to their husbands:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies."

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church: and he is the savior of the body."

¶ At this point the sermon may be preached, after which the minister shall say:

## Marriage

These two persons are come to be joined in this holy estate of marriage. If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be married, let him now declare it, or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

I require and charge you both that if either of you know any cause why you may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, you do now confess it.

PRAYER:

Most holy and most merciful Father, at once the God of nature and of grace, Creator, Preserver and Redeemer of mankind, fill these thy servants (N— and N——) with a sense of the solemnity of the vows they are about to make. May they look to thee for thine assistance, and enter into these sacred obligations in humble dependence upon thine enabling grace. Grant this, O Father, with the forgiveness of our sins, through Jesus Christ, thy Son. Amen.

EXCHANGE OF VOWS:

¶ (The couple may face each other, joining hands): Then the minister shall say to the man:

N——, will you have this woman (or, N——) to be your wedded wife, to live with her after God's commandments in the holy estate of marriage? And will you love her, honor and cherish her, and keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live?

¶ The man shall answer:

*I will.*

¶ The minister shall say to the woman:

N——, will you have this man (or, N——) to be your wedded husband, to live with him after God's commandments in the holy estate of marriage? And will you love him, cherish and obey him, and keep yourself only for him, so long as you both shall live?

¶ The woman shall answer:

*I will.*

¶ Then the man may say, or repeat after the minister:

I, N——, take you, N——, to be my wedded wife, and I promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful husband in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, as long as we both shall live.

## Directory of Worship

¶ Then the woman may say, or repeat after the minister:

I, N———, take you, N———, to be my wedded husband, and I promise and covenant before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful wife in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, as long as we both shall live.

RING CEREMONY:

¶ Then the man shall put the ring on the third finger of the woman's left hand, and shall say after the minister:

This ring I give you as a symbol and pledge of constant faith and abiding love.

¶ Then the woman shall put the ring on the third finger of the man's left hand, and shall say after the minister:

This ring I give you as a symbol and pledge of constant faith and abiding love.

¶ In the case of a single ring ceremony, the minister shall say to the woman:

Do you, N———, receive this ring as a token of your pledge to keep this covenant and perform these vows?

¶ The woman shall answer:

*I do.*

¶ The minister shall now offer a suitable prayer.

¶ After the prayer, the minister shall say:

By virtue of the authority committed unto me by the Church of Christ and the law of the State, I now pronounce you, N——— and N———, husband and wife in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

¶ The minister shall cause the husband and wife to join their right hands, and he shall say:

“What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

¶ The minister may now say to the couple:

"You may now kiss each other."

BENEDICTION:

### **Marriage**

The Lord our God fill you with his grace, and grant that you may long live together in all godliness and holiness. Amen.

¶ A sermon shall be included, and suitable Christian music and hymns are appropriate parts of the wedding service.

## Directory of Worship

### VI. Burial of the Dead

¶ This burial service is for believers and children of believers. When other persons are to be buried, the service should be modified accordingly.

¶ When the people have assembled, the minister shall begin the service with one or more of these passages from the Holy Scriptures.

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” *Ps. 124:8.*

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” *Ps. 103:13,14.*

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” *1 Tim. 6:7.*

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” *Job 1:21.*

“For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” *Job 19:25–27.*

“I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” *John 11:25,26.*

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” *2 Cor. 1:3,4.*

#### PRAYER:

Almighty and gracious God, our Father in heaven, thou art our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: lead us, we pray, to put our trust entirely in thee. We come to thee in the name of thine only begotten and well beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, who died for our sins and rose again. Grant us, we beseech thee, through his precious blood, peace and pardon, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And seeing that we have in Christ an High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, may we come boldly unto thy throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in this time of need.

We thank thee for the precious promises of thy Word. We praise thee for the light of the gospel. We acknowledge thy sovereign will and thine infinite compassion. Be pleased, therefore, to look upon our sorrow, and for the sake of thy dear Son, enable us to hear thy holy Word, so that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope. Grant us the consolation and peace of the Holy Ghost. May we hold fast our confidence in thy forgiving

## Burial of the Dead

mercy and the blessed assurance of eternal life, through Jesus Christ who bore our sins in his own body on the tree and rose from the dead and is exalted at thy right hand. Amen.

¶ The following elements of worship may then be used, including an obituary, if desired. The order is merely suggested.

¶ A hymn may be sung.

¶ An obituary may be read.

¶ Scriptures of comfort shall be read. Appropriate Scriptures are these: Pss. 23; 39:4–13; 90; 103:13–17; 130; of the gospel message of salvation through Christ: John 3:16, 17; 10:9–11 and 27–30; Rom. 5:1–11; 8:1–11; of a fruitful Christian life: Prov. 4:18; Dan. 12:3; Mal. 3:16–18; Matt. 25:34–40; Heb. 10:23–25; Jas. 5:19, 20; of the gospel promise of resurrection and the life everlasting: Matt. 18:10; Mark 5:35–39; 10:13–16; John 14:1–3, 15–20 and 25–27; 1 Cor. 15:20–28 and 35–58; 2 Cor. 4:16–18; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:13–18; 5:1–11; 1 Pet. 1:3–9; Rev. 7:13–17; 21:1–4 and 22–27; 22:1–7.

¶ A sermon shall be preached.

¶ Another hymn may be sung.

### PRAYER:

Almighty and most merciful God, the consolation of the sorrowful, and the support of the weary, who does not delight in grieving or afflicting the children of men; look down in tender love and pity, we beseech thee, upon thy servants, the bereaved household, whose joy is turned into mourning; and according to the multitude of thy mercies be pleased to uphold, strengthen, and comfort them, that they may not faint under thy fatherly chastening, but find in thee their strength and refuge; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ The Lord's Prayer may be used, if desired.

¶ The burial service shall then continue at the grave, where the minister shall say:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” *Job 19:25–27.*

“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” *1 Thess. 4:13,14.*

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” *Job 1:21.*

## Directory of Worship

### PRAYER:

Almighty God, who by the death of thy Son Jesus Christ hast destroyed death; by his rest in the tomb has sanctified the graves of the saints; and by his glorious resurrection hast brought life and immortality to light, so that all who die in him abide in hope as to their bodies, and in joy as to their souls; receive, we pray thee, our unfeigned thanks for the victory over death and the grave which he has obtained for us and for all who sleep in him; and keep us who are still in the body, in everlasting fellowship with all that wait for thee on earth, and with all that are around thee in heaven, in union with him who is the resurrection and the life, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

### COMMITTAL:

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of this world the soul of our deceased brother (sister), we therefore commit his (her) body to the ground; looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ **Here shall the minister say:**

“I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” *Rev. 14:13.*

¶ **Or in the case of a child:**

“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.” *Mark 10:14.*

¶ **Then the minister shall close the service with this or another appropriate benediction:**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

¶ **Appropriate questions and answers from the Heidelberg catechism may be used in the service at the grave, if desired; such as questions 1,42,45,57,58,60.**

## Thanksgiving for a Church Building SPECIAL SERVICE

### *Thanksgiving for a Church Building*

¶ The congregation may stand, and the following portions from the Psalms may be read by the presiding minister and/or the people. It should be noted by the presiding minister that references to the House of God are in the New Testament to be understood as references to the Church which is God's people and not a building.

“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” *Psalm 100*

“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.” *Psalm 122*

“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” *Psalm 84:1-4,10*

“The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.” *Psalm 24*

¶ The minister shall say:

BELOVED IN THE LORD: We are gathered to set apart this house for the worship of the one living and true God. Let us therefore dedicate this place to our use for His worship.

Minister: In gratitude for the gracious keeping of the divine covenant throughout past generations; in reliance upon the promise that the gates of hell shall

## Directory of Worship

not prevail against the Church; in the hope of the eternal glory of the Church triumphant:

People: We dedicate this house for the worship of God in praise and prayer; for the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God and for the celebration of the Holy Sacraments.

¶ Then the minister shall say:

Beloved in the Lord: Seeing that it has pleased Almighty God to prosper us in our undertaking to build (secure) a house for his worship, let us now invoke his abiding blessing, to the end that pure apostolic doctrine and order may be maintained herein, and that the Holy Spirit may make his own ordinances effectual. In so doing let us reverently look to him in prayer:

PRAYER:

Almighty and everlasting God, Maker of heaven and earth, we thank thee that thou dost dwell in the high and holy place, but also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit. We adore thee for thy manifold perfections, for the infinite majesty and glorious beauty of thy being, and for the truthfulness and sanctity of thy divine revelation.

We give thanks unto thee for thine infinite mercies to us, and in particular, for the gift of thy Son to be our Savior. We praise thee for the Church of God, of which he is the only Head and King and of which we are humble and imperfect members. We acknowledge that we are not worthy to receive from thee hard the blessings of thy good providence; and especially do we recognize the abundance of thy great goodness in granting to us, through thy particular grace, membership in the Church universal, the spiritual Body of Christ.

Thou hast put it into our hearts to prepare this house of worship where men may gather in thy service. We earnestly beseech thee that thou wilt watch over and protect this place which we have dedicated in thy name. We ask that here may be preached only the pure gospel of the free grace of God. May all that is proclaimed be firmly grounded upon the unchanging foundation of Holy Scripture. Grant that no portion of thy sacred revelation may be neglected, but that thy servants who minister here shall give to all its parts due regard which will exhibit its majesty and scope. We pray that by the favor of thy Spirit sinners may be converted unto thee in this house, and that the saints of God, the members of thy holy body, may be built up and edified by the proclamation of thy matchless Word.

May the Holy Spirit of God ever be present to guide and illumine those who teach here. May he prepare the hearts of the hearers to receive with meekness the instruction which is presented, so that their lives may truly adorn the doctrine of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

May this house serve the extension of the kingdom of God. Teach us so to look for the return of the Lord of glory that we shall be renewed in our present service of him. May we always be prepared to greet him and to enter in with him to the marriage supper of the Lamb, forever to dwell not in this earthly house but in that holy city where there is no candle neither light of the sun for the Lamb is the light thereof.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## Thanksgiving for a Church Building

- ¶ An appropriate Psalm or hymn may be sung.
- ¶ Sermon
- ¶ Benediction and Doxology.