

1983
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GENERAL SYNOD
of the CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES,
to be convened in Cloverdale, B.C.,
November 1983.

Committee on the Trans-
lation and Revision of
Forms and Prayers.
Hamilton, Ont.
April 7th, 1983.

Esteemed brethren,

1. In accordance with Acts 1980, Art. 128, sub D, 3a and b, and 4, the Committee on the Translation and Revision of Forms and Prayers, appointed by Synod Smithville 1980, streamlined the Forms for the Excommunication of non-communicant members, and of communicant members.

2. The Committee appointed a Sub-committee for language and style, consisting of the brothers Rev. R. Aasman, W. Horsman and N. Vandooren, with the mandate to examine the Forms and Prayers with regard to vocabulary, style, punctuation and readability. The sub-committee did so and the proposed changes passed our committee.

3. The Committee published the Forms separately, since the Prayers had to be revised yet and the Book of Praise Committee was not ready to publish a revised edition of Psalms and Hymns. In addition to publishing, Premier Printing also took care of the distribution of the "Section Liturgical Forms" of the Book of Praise to the churches. Ample copies were forwarded to the Deputies for Correspondence with Sister Churches Abroad for distribution to Deputies of Sister Churches.

4. In the "Introduction" to the above mentioned section the Committee wrote: "Recommendations for changes and corrections may be made, for consideration by the Committee, until September 1, 1982." The churches at Barrhead, Burlington-East, Burlington-West, Calgary, Fergus, and Watford submitted proposals and so did Rev. W.W.J. VanOene at Fergus and brother W. Helder at Hamilton.

Reviewing its mandate, the Committee became aware of it that Synod Smithville had not authorized the Committee to ask the churches for comments and to make recommendations on such comments to Synod Cloverdale. Initially it was, therefore, decided to pass on all the remarks to Synod Cloverdale, but reconsideration of the matter led to the conclusion that the Committee would serve the churches and Synod Cloverdale better by studying the proposals and by submitting recommendations whereby the work of Synod might be facilitated.

We pass on the letter of the church at Smithers, d.d 17-2-83, as a response to the revised prayers.

Accordingly we submit to you:

- a. The "Section Liturgical Forms 1981" as published.
- b. the comments of churches and church members on the Forms as adopted by Synod Smithville 1980.
- c. the Committee's recommendations on these comments. As to the submission of Dr. W.Helder the Committee incorporated several suggestions of Dr.Helder in its final draft but was not able to act upon all his comments.
The Committee RECOMMENDS that Synod take the submission of br. Helder into further consideration.
- d. the completed final draft of the Forms in which all the recommendations of the Committee have been incorporated.
- e. a complete, linguistically corrected draft of the Prayers with accompanying letter to Synod as sent to the churches in December 1982.
6. The Committee RECOMMENDS that Synod appoint Dr.W.Helder in Hamilton,Ont., an acknowledged language expert, as final editor for the linguistic aspects of the Forms and Prayers so that a uniform text and punctuation may be achieved.
7. The Committee did not receive and could consequently not work with the proposals of the churches at Cloverdale and London, which were to be forwarded to the Committee by Synod Smithville (Acts, Art. 123, III,D,4).
8. In closing the Committee likes to mention the highly appreciated help of Dr. J.Faber who was willing to serve the Committee as substitute member during the leave of absence of Rev. Stam.

Wishing you the Lord's blessing and the guidance of His Spirit in your work,

with brotherly greetings,

the Committee

C. Stam, convener

M.Werkman

 L.Selles, secretary.

P.S. Please find also enclosed a letter from the church at Chilliwack d.d. March 30, '83 with comments on the Forms.

P.S.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSLATION AND REVISION OF FORMS AND PRAYERS

1983
18e
10 pages

Recommendations to Synod Cloverdale 1983 regarding proposals and comments submitted by churches and churchmembers on the liturgical forms.

I Church at Burlington West (Br. L. VanZandwijk)

Form for the Baptism of Infants

- p.2 Proposal: 1) To insert between 'nor continue in sin' and 'Baptism is a seal' (line 13/14) the conjunction 'for'.
Recommendation: To do so, to bring out the coherence between the contents of the two sentences.
- p.2,3 Proposal: 2) To change 'to cleave' (p.2, line 7) into 'to cling' and 'infinite' (p.3, line 16) into 'boundless' as more appropriate and consistent.
Recommendation: Not to do so since no convincing reasons are brought forward.

Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper

- p.23 Proposal: 1) To add the passages from Romans 5 and 8 of the long form to those of Psalm 103 in the doxology of the abbreviated form.
Recommendation: Not to do so since the form concerned calls for some abbreviations.
- p.23 Proposal: 2) To adjust the capitalization of Scripture quotations to those of the rest of the form.
Recommendation: Not to do so since the capitalization of quotations is done in agreement with the printing in the Revised Standard Version.

Forms for ordination of ministers, missionaries, elders and deacons

- p.38 (43,49) Proposal: 1) To change the 'I do' of the answer to the questions, since it is not in agreement with the first question 'are you convinced...'
Recommendation: To change 'Are you convinced in your hearts' into 'Do you feel...' on the above mentioned ground.
- p.49 Proposal: 2) First question change '...in your hearts' into 'heart' and 'these offices' into 'this office' because an individual answer is expected.
Recommendation: Not to accept since the collective address is individualized in the personal question.

II Church at Fergus and the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

Form for the Baptism of Infants

- p.2 Proposal: 1) To insert 'because' between 'nor continue in sin' and 'baptism is a seal', for coherence' sake.
Recommendation: See Burlington West p.2.
- p.2 Proposal: 2) At the beginning of the second paragraph change 'Lord' into 'LORD'.

- Recommendation: Since the spelling LORD is used in the R.S.V. of Genesis 17:1, the same spelling should be used in the introduction to the quotation of Genesis, 17:1.
- p.3 Proposal: 3) Change 'for our comfort' (line 5) into 'to our comfort' considered to be better.
Recommendation: Not to do so since it is no real improvement.
- p.3 Proposal: 4) Change 'use this sacrament' (3 lines from bottom) into 'seek this sacrament' as more proper because parents seek sacrament for their child.
Recommendation: Not to change, since meaning is perfectly clear in the context.
- p.4 Proposal: 5) To restore the words 'as soon as they are able to understand' of the old form, "the third question of the new form."
Recommendation: To accept, because the words make clear that the instruction should be given as soon as this is possible.

Form for the Baptism of Adults

- p.5 Proposal: 1) Change 'For the administration...' into 'With the administration...' (line 7).
Recommendation: Not to do so since the meaning of 'For' is clear in the context.
- p.9 Proposal: 2) To add at the end of 'Fifthly' the words found at the top of p.11: 'if you should become delinquent in doctrine or life (which God graciously may prevent)' in order to bring the two forms in harmony with each other.
Recommendation: To add: 'if it should happen, and may God graciously prevent it, that you become delinquent either in doctrine or in conduct.' (See Helder p.11)

Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper

- p.12/
13 Proposal: 1) To change the admonition. See also proposals Barrhead and Watford.
Recommendation: As there is no unanimity on the matter within the committee no recommendation can be made.
- p.12 Proposal: 2) line 9 from bottom of page restore the word 'offensive' between 'following' and 'sins', since serious sins are meant whereby offence is given.
Recommendation: Not to do so, because from the sequence of the paragraph wherein the words 'who lead offensive lives' are used (p.13, line 9) it is clear what kind of sins are meant.
- p.17,
22 Proposal: 3) Change 'was broken for the complete forgiveness' (line 12) into 'was broken unto....' since 'unto' expresses both purpose and result.
Recommendation: Not to do so because the preposition 'for' is used in the R.S.V. in Matthew 26:28, and 'for' renders the Greek text adequately.

Form for the Excommunication of Non-communicant members

- p.25 Proposal: 1) To change 'we elders and overseers of the church of God' line 6 ff into 'we overseers of the church of God' since 'elders' includes both what we call elders and deacons. (See also p.29 middle of page; p.45 line 13 from bottom).
Recommendation: Not to do so, because no proof is advanced that the word elders does indeed refer to both elders and deacons.

Form for the Excommunication of Communicant members

- p.29 Proposal: 1) Change 'He (She) has no part anymore' (line 14 from bottom of page) into 'He (She) no longer has any part...'
Recommendation: Not to do because the proposed reading is not a real improvement.
- p.32 Proposal: 2) Change 'this brother (sister)' (line 10) into 'this person' since he or she has not yet been readmitted.
Recommendation: To do so, on the ground mentioned and in agreement with the old Form for Readmission, Book of Praise, p.522.

Form for the Ordination of Missionaries

- p.42 Proposal: 1) To add to 'Second, he ought to baptize...and of the Holy Spirit' the words 'those who have come to the faith' since in the present form the verb 'to baptize' has no object.
Recommendation: To read: 'Second, he ought to baptize believers and their children into the name...'
- p.43 Proposal: 2) To delete 'until the holy city, the new Jerusalem has come down out of heaven from God' (line 10/11) because the new Jerusalem is coming down, and is not something of the future.
Recommendation: Not to accede since the coming down of the new Jerusalem is mentioned in the vision of the consummation Revelation 21:1 and passim.

Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons

- p.45 Proposal: 1) See Fergus p.25.
- p.46 Proposal: 2) To delete: 'Apostles and elders gathered together to take decisions to which the Churches had to submit' (line 13/14) because the idea of a higher assembly might be behind that sentence.
Recommendation: To maintain the sentence, since the content is in agreement with Acts 15:28.
- p.47 Proposal: 3) To delete 'the presbytery' (line 17) because 'presbytery' is the term by which all the officebearers are denoted.
Recommendation: Not to do so because no evidence is submitted that 'presbytery' is indeed a denotation of ministers, elders and deacons.

p.50 Proposal: 4) To delete: 'Let us do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith' since this is not the meaning of Galatians 6:10 and we should not give the impression as if it refers to the work of the deacons.

Recommendation: To maintain the sentence since the translation 'let us work that which is good' includes acts of mercy, and though the ministry of mercy is not restricted to the deacons it is anyway given to the deacons.

Proposal: 5) To formulate the answer to the ordination vows for all officebearers as 'I do.'

Recommendation: Not to do so, because no ground is advanced why the distinction should be eliminated.

Form for the Solemnization of Marriage

p.51 Proposal: 1) To delete the word 'publicly' since the wish to have a non public ceremony should be respected.

Recommendation: To delete it because the announcement of the banns in public does not imply that the wedding ceremony has to take place in a public meeting.

p.52 Proposal: 2) To read the first line '...we may now proceed to the solemnization of your marriage' since solemnization needs a compliment.

Recommendation: To do so, on the advanced ground.

p.52 Proposal: 3) To change 'as also our Lord Jesus Christ has said...' (3rd line from bottom) into 'as also our Lord Jesus Christ said...' (imperfect tense).

Recommendation: Not to do so since the perfect tense is grammatically correct.

p.53 Proposal: 4) To change the words '...even when they least expect it' (line 13/12 from bottom) into '...even unexpectedly' because we should always expect the help of the Lord, and the intention is to say that this help may come unexpectedly.

Recommendation: Not to change because, even though we should always expect God's help, we do not always do so.

p.54 Proposal: 5) To change 'Care for your family, and household properly' (line 14/15) into 'Take care of your family and household properly' since the first reading is liable to be misunderstood.

Recommendation: To leave it as it is since no evidence is given why 'care for' would be liable for misunderstanding.

Proposal: 6) To reinstate the words of the old form 'desirous of the incorruptible ornament' etc. p.541, 6 lines from bottom, Book of Praise.

Recommendation: Not to do so since no ground is given why the present text 'and live modestly in faith and love, and holiness' would be insufficient, p.54, line 17.

Proposal: 7) To reinstate the 'I do' after the exposition of the marriage duties since by this 'I do' the couple declares that they want their marriage solemnized on these conditions.

Recommendation: Not to do so because the acceptance of these duties is expressed in the marriage vow.

p.55 Proposal: 8) To delete the 'I do' after the exchange of rings as rather silly and totally superfluous.

Recommendation: Not to do so since the optional character of the exchange of rings renders deletion unnecessary.

p.55 Proposal: 9) To delete in the pronouncement the words 'In the Name of the Lord and authorized by the government of the province' since the minister was not authorized by the Lord, nor by the government of the province to solemnize marriages but by the religious body to which he belongs.

Recommendation: Abstaining from a concrete recommendation the committee feels that in some way it should be expressed that the marriage pronouncement is in agreement with the law of the province. See comment of Dr. Helder, p.55.

p.56 Proposal: 10) To change the words 'Grant that these children be nurtured in the fear of the Lord' (line 9) into 'Grant that they may nurture their children in the fear of the Lord' since we do not pray for the children but for the couple at this point of the prayer.

Recommendation: To do so on the basis of the advanced ground.

In a final remark Rev. W.W.J. VanOene wonders if it is correct to say that 'God gathers a church to Himself' as is done on page 41, line 15/16, cf. page 44, line 11 from the bottom. Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ who gathers the church for Himself, cf. Lord's Day 21: God elects, Christ gathers. The committee feels that it is not a matter of either-or, but of and-and. The church is the Church of God.

III Church at Burlington East

Form for the Public Profession of Faith

p.10 Proposal: 1) To change 'Do you truly detest and humble yourself before God because of your sins' found under "Secondly..." into 'Do you truly detest your sins and humble yourself before God because of them...' on the grounds that 'detest' belongs to 'your sins' but in the present reading it is very unclear that it does.

Recommendation: Not to do so, since 'detest' not exclusively concerns one's sins but also the person because of his sins, as is evident from the old form '...that you abhor and humble yourself before God because of your sins.'

IV Church at BarrheadForm for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper

p.12 Proposal: 1) To remove the reference to 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 sub Invitation and Admonition from the margin since 1 Cor. 6:9, 10 does not speak about the Lord's Supper but about the inheritance of the kingdom of God.

Recommendation: Not to do so because a list of sins is mentioned in these verses which, if persisted in, not only exclude from the Kingdom, but -- though not mentioned in so many words -- subsequently also from the Lord's Supper.

p.12 Proposal: 2) To replace the list of sins mentioned under Invitation and Admonition by the words of the abbreviated form p.20 sub Invitation and Admonition: 'But to all who do not truly grieve over their sins.....lest they meet with heavier judgment' and to continue: 'Beloved brothers and sisters, this is not meant to discourage broken and contrite hearts, p.13, line 14.

Grounds: a) The list of sins found in the Form contains more than I, Corinthians 6:9, 10 and, in fact, more than can be proven from Scripture, which does not give a list to be used for the participation in the Lord's Supper.
 b) No list is ever complete and the updating of it is always arbitrary, and therefore subject to disagreement.
 c) The maintaining of a list could lead to the kind of legalism which dominated the Church when Jesus was on earth.
 d) Not sin as such, as might be suggested by a list, but the perseverance in sin causes one to eat and drink judgment upon himself.

Recommendation: See under Fergus p.12/13.

Form for the Readmission in the Church of Christ

p.32 Proposal: 1) Not to tie down the readmission to the next celebration of the holy supper, but to delete the reference to it from the Form, since there is no good ground to link the one thing that closely with the other.

Recommendation: Not to accede to the request because the excommunication results among other things in the exclusion from the use of the sacraments and it is therefore proper that the readmission into the fellowship with Christ and his church is confirmed by a celebration of the Lord's Supper wherein the readmitted brother (sister) is allowed to participate.

v Church at WatfordForm for Infant Baptism and Form for the Public Profession of Faith

p.5, Proposal: 1) To change 'May he (she) forever praise and magnify Thee, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one only true God' (line 4/5) into '...magnify Thee and Thy Son Jesus Christ together with the Holy Spirit, the one

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only true God', in agreement with the old forms, since the new form is inconsistent by addressing in the beginning of the prayer God the Father and in the end the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit under the identical personal pronoun 'Thee'.

Recommendation: To take over the change on the advanced ground.

Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper

p.12 Proposal: 1) To change the somewhat arbitrary and time-bound list of sins as mentioned under Invitation and Admonition into one restricted to the sins which the Scriptures list themselves.

Recommendation: See under Fergus p.12/13

p.12 Proposal: 2) To change the words: 'On the contrary, those who do not feel this testimony in their hearts...' (line 14 from bottom) into 'those who do not confess this testimony' on the ground that "a possible mystical understanding of the Lord's Supper" is sensed.

Recommendation: Not to do so because the words 'to feel in their hearts' correspond with the words 'all who are thus minded' of the first line and do not imply a mystical understanding anymore than the expression 'thus minded' does.

p.16 Proposal; 3) To change the words 'Let us so truly be partakers of the new and everlasting covenant' (middle of page) and the words 'Let us in all tribulation await our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven' (line 13 from bottom) into 'Make us so truly partakers...' and 'Grant that in all tribulation...' on the ground that 'let' would be admonitory and and admonition to the congregation does not belong in a prayer.

Recommendation: Not to accede to the request since 'let' is not used in the context in an admonitory but in a petitionary way.

p.16 Proposal: 4) To change the words '...who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body...' (line 11 from bottom) into '...who will change our mortal body...' on the ground that the words clearly reflect 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

Recommendation: Not to do so since the words do not refer to 1 Cor. 15:51-54 in the first instance but to Phil. 3:21 where the word 'lowly' (literally: of humble station) is used.

Form for the Excommunication of Communicant Members

p.29 Proposal: 1) To delete the words 'and a taxcollector' from the clause 'let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector' or to change them into 'and a sinner' because the word 'a tax collector' may be misunderstood out of its biblical context and it may have subversive consequences.

Recommendation: Not to change since the biblical context of the word is clearly indicated by the text reference in the margin.

- p.29 Proposal: 2) To change the words 'But have nothing to do with him (her)...' (line 6/7 from bottom) into 'have no company with him (her)' in agreement with K.J.V. of 2 Thess. 3:14, on the ground that the K.J.V. is a better rendering of the verb used in the original text and prevents that no attention is paid to the preceding exhortation to warn him as a brother.
- Recommendation: To change into 'But do not associate with him (her)' which is the best rendering of the original text.

Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons

- p.50 Proposal: 1) To mention in the margin of line 10, Galatians 6:10 upon which the words 'Let us do good to all men...' reflect.
- Recommendation: To do so since the words indeed refer to this text.

Form for the Solemnization of Marriage

- p.52 Proposal: 1) To change the word 'should' in the phrase 'and should not be broken' (line 8 from bottom) into 'may' because 'should' weakens the divine demand to keep marriage holy.
- Recommendation: Not to do so since 'should' indicates a strong moral obligation.
- p.55 Proposal: 2) To add on p.55 the admonitory address to the married couple as found in the old form on pp.542/3, because this admonition is more needed than in the past, now that separation is becoming more common and divorce easier to obtain.
- Recommendation: Not to do so, since in the exposition on the institution of marriage p.52 it has been made abundantly clear what Scripture says about divorce and other sins against the seventh commandment.

VI Church at Calgary

Form for the Baptism of Infants

- p.3 Comment: Upbuilding (line 6) is not an English word.
- Reply: It is an English word according to the Compact edition of the Oxford English Dictionary.

Form for the Baptism of Adults

- p.8/9 Proposal: 1) To insert the words 'by the grace of God' into the phrase 'Do you promise to continue steadfastly in this doctrine...' (p.8 last line).
- Recommendation: Not to do so since already in the address p.8 line 8 reference is made to the grace of God, and so is done once more in the response to the vow p.9 line 15.

Form for Public Profession of Faith

- p.10 Proposal: 1) Under Profession (line 15) reference should be made in the first place to the public profession of faith.
Recommendation: To read: 'We now ask you to answer sincerely the following questions', since both: the admission to the Lord's Supper (line 14) and the public profession of faith (line 12) were already mentioned.
- p.10 Proposal: 2) To change the words 'incorporating us into His covenant' in line 1/10 into 'receiving us into His covenant' because 'incorporating' is used in relation to Christ and not the covenant.
Recommendation: To take over the suggestion since we become one body with Christ but are received into the covenant relationship.

Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper

- p.11 Comment: To start a sentence (line 5 from bottom) with the words 'In order that' seems linguistically incorrect.
Reply: The committee fails to see why it would be incorrect and no ground is advanced to prove the point.
- p.11 Proposal: 1) To change the word 'intended' (line 2 from bottom) into 'ordained', 'commanded' or 'instituted'.
Recommendation: Not to do so since the second line of the form already pointed to the institution and the emphasis in the sentence at the bottom of the page is not on the ordinance to use the Lord's Supper but on the way it shall be used, namely to Christ's remembrance.
- p.12 Proposal: 2) To replace the list under Invitation and Admonition by the list as found in 1 Cor. 6:9, 10, if it is felt that a list is necessary.
Recommendation: See under Fergus p.12/13.
- p.14 Proposal: 3) To change the words 'bloody sweat' in line 12 to the biblical quotation.
Recommendation: Not to do so because it would make the sentence complicated and because the expression 'bloody sweat' is an acceptable expression for what Luke 22:44 relates.
- p.15, Proposal: 4) To change the word 'wine' in second last line p.15 and
 21 10th line from bottom p.21 into 'the fruit of the vine' in agreement with Mark 14:25.
Recommendation: Not to do so since the text of the form does not quote and, indeed, 'wine' is meant by the words 'the fruit of the vine'.

Abbreviated form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper

- p.19 Comment: The addition to the heading 'for the afternoon service' seems to encourage the celebration of the Lord's Supper as well in the afternoon service.
Reply: The words are not prescriptive but restrictive in the sense that the use of the short form shall be restricted to the afternoon celebration if such a celebration in the second service is held.

Form for the Excommunication of Non-Communicant Members

p.24 Proposal: 1) To change the heading of this form into the heading used for the old form, Book of Praise p.519 because the present heading is ambiguous since it could be read that persons are to be excommunicated for being non-communicant members.

Recommendation: Not to change because the words 'excommunication' and 'non-communicant members' have different connotations and for that reason do not give ground for a real ambiguity.

p.25 Proposal: 2) To change the reference to Matthew 18:17 in line 17 into a quotation as is given in the Form for the Excommunication of Communicant members p.29 line 11 from bottom.

Recommendation: Not to do so since it would require the restructuring of the whole sentence, and it is clear from the text reference in the margin who are meant.

p.25, Proposal: 3) To change the words 'Do not look on him (her) as an enemy, but warn him (her) as a brother (sister)' into 29 'but warn him "like" or "as you would" a brother' because the person concerned is not a brother.

Recommendation: Not to change because the word 'as' taken over from the R.S.V. does ^{not} imply that he is a brother but that he should be admonished as if he were a brother.

Form for Readmission

p.32 Proposal: 1) To delete the words 'within a week' in line 15 since a week must be considered too short a time to give the required notice and the time limit can better be left to the digression of the consistory.

Recommendation: To change the words 'within a week' into 'within _____ week(s)' on the advanced ground.

p.32 Proposal: 2) To delete the words in line 9 'at the next celebration of the holy Supper' since the tying down of the readmission to the celebration of the Lord's Supper is not considered to be right.

Recommendation: See Barrhead p.32.

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FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS

Doctrine of
Baptism

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrine of holy baptism is summarized as follows:

Eph. 2:3

John 3:3,5

First, we and our children are conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature children of wrath, so that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again. This is what the immersion in or sprinkling with water teaches us. It signifies the impurity of our souls, so that we may detest ourselves, humble ourselves before God, and seek our cleansing and salvation outside of ourselves.

1st Cor. 12:13

Second, baptism signifies and seals to us the promise of the cleansing from our sins through Jesus Christ. We are, therefore, baptized into the Name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

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Rom. 8:28

When we are baptized into the Name of the Father, God the Father testifies and seals to us that He establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us. He adopts us for His children and heirs, and promises to provide us with all good and avert all evil or turn it to our benefit.

When we are baptized into the Name of the Son, God the Son promises us that He washes us in His blood from all our sins and unites us with Him in His death and resurrection. Thus we are freed from our sins and accounted righteous before God.

When we are baptized into the Name of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that He will dwell in us and make us living members of Christ, imparting to us what we have in Christ, namely, the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal.

Third, since every covenant contains two parts, a promise and an obligation, we are, through baptism, called and obliged by the Lord to a new obedience. We are to cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to trust Him and to love Him with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and with all our strength. We must not love the world but put off our old nature and lead a God-fearing life. And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sins, we must not despair of God's mercy nor continue in sin, for baptism is a seal and trustworthy testimony that we have an eternal covenant with God.

Rom. 8:5

Eph. 5:27

Mat. 22:37

1 Joh. 2:15

Eph. 4:22

Col. 3:5

Although our children do not understand all this, we may not therefore exclude them from baptism. Just as they share without their knowledge in the condemnation of Adam, so are they, without their knowledge, received into grace in Christ. For the LORD spoke to Abraham, the father of all believers, and thus also speaks to us and our children, saying, I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. Peter also testifies to this when he says, For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him. Therefore, in the old dispensation God commanded that infants be circumcised. This circumcision was a seal of the covenant and of the righteousness of faith. Christ also took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them. In the new dispensation baptism has replaced circumcision. Therefore, infants must be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and of His covenant; and as they grow up, their parents have the duty to instruct them in these things.

Gen. 17:7

Acts 2:39

Rom. 4:13

MARK 10:16

Col. 2:11

In order that we may now administer this holy sacrament of God to His glory, for our comfort and to the upbuilding of the congregation, let us call upon His holy Name.

Prayer
before
Baptism

Almighty, eternal God, in Thy righteous judgment Thou hast punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, but in Thy great mercy hast saved and protected the believer Noah and his family. Thou hast drowned the entire host of the obstinate Pharaoh in the Red Sea, but led Thy people Israel through the midst of the sea on dry ground. Thus Thou hast signified baptism. We therefore pray Thee that Thou in Thy infinite mercy wilt graciously look upon this child and incorporate him (her) by Thy Holy Spirit into Thy Son Jesus Christ, so that he (she) may be buried with Him by baptism into death and raised with Him to walk in newness of life. We pray that he (she), following Him day by day, may joyfully bear his (her) cross and cleave to Him in true faith, firm hope and ardent love. Grant that he (she), comforted in Thee, may leave this life, which is no more than a constant death, and at the last day may appear without terror before the judgment seat of Christ Thy Son.

All this we ask through Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Address to
the Parents

Beloved in Christ the Lord, you have heard that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord our God to seal to us and our children His covenant; we must therefore use this sacrament for that purpose and not out of custom or superstition. That it may be clear, then, that you desire baptism for the right purpose, you are to answer sincerely the following questions:

First, do you confess that our children, though conceived and born in sin, and therefore subject to all sorts of misery, even to condemnation, are sanctified in Christ and thus as members of His Church ought to be baptized?

Second, do you confess that the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, summarized in the Creeds and taught here in the Church of Christ, is the true and complete doctrine of salvation?

Third, do you promise as father and mother to instruct your child in this doctrine, as soon as he (she) is able to understand, and to have him (her) instructed therein to the utmost of your power?

What is your answer?

Answer

I do (to be answered by each parent).

Baptism

 , I baptize you into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty, merciful God and Father, we thank and praise Thee that Thou hast forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ. Thou hast received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thy only Son Jesus Christ, and so adopted us to be Thy children. Thou hast sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism.

We pray Thee through Thy beloved Son that Thou wilt always govern this child by Thy Holy Spirit, that he (she) may be nurtured in the Christian faith and in godliness, and may grow and increase in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grant that he (she) thus may acknowledge Thy fatherly goodness and mercy, which Thou hast shown to him (her) and to us all. May he (she) live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King, and High Priest, Jesus Christ, and valiantly fight against and overcome sin, the devil, and his whole dominion. May he (she) forever praise and magnify Thee and Thy Son Jesus Christ together with the Holy Spirit, the one only true God. Amen.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

(Those who were not baptized in their infancy, and at a later age declare that they desire Christian baptism, must first be thoroughly instructed in the essentials of the Christian doctrine. After having confessed this doctrine before the overseers, they shall be admitted to the public profession of their faith and to baptism. For the administration of their baptism the following form shall be used.)

Doctrine of
baptism

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrine of holy baptism is summarized as follows:

Eph. 2:3

John 3:3,5

First, we and our children are conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature children of wrath, so that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again. This is what the immersion in or sprinkling with water teaches us. It signifies the impurity of our souls, so that we may detest ourselves, humble ourselves before God, and seek our cleansing and salvation outside of ourselves.

Second, baptism signifies and seals to us the promise of the cleansing from our sins through Jesus Christ.

Ma H. 28:19

We are therefore baptized into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Rom. 8:28

When we are baptized into the Name of the Father, God the Father testifies and seals to us that He establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us. He adopts us for His children and heirs and promises to provide us with all good and avert all evil or turn it to our benefit.

Rom. 6:5

When we are baptized into the Name of the Son, God the Son promises us that He washes us in His blood from all our sins and unites us with Him in His death and resurrection. Thus we are freed from our sins and accounted righteous before God.

Eph. 5:27

When we are baptized into the Name of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that He will dwell in us and make us living members of Christ, imparting to us what we have in Christ, namely, the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal.

Ma H. 22:37

Third, since every covenant contains two parts, a promise and an obligation, we are, through baptism, called and obliged by the Lord to a new obedience. We are to cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to trust in Him and to love Him with our whole heart, soul, and

1 John 2:15

Eph. 4:22

Col. 3:5

mind, and with all our strength. We must not love the world but put off our old nature and lead a God-fearing life. And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sins, we must not despair of God's mercy nor continue in sin, for baptism is a seal and trustworthy testimony that we have an eternal covenant with God.

Mark 1:4,5

Luke 3:3

Math. 28:19

Mark 16:16

Although the children of believers are not able to understand these things, they must be baptized by virtue of the covenant. Adults, however, may not be baptized unless they, conscious of their sins, repent and profess their faith in Christ. For this reason John the Baptist, following the command of God, preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and only those who confessed their sins were baptized. Our Lord Jesus Christ also commanded His apostles to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, adding the promise, He who believes and is baptized will be saved.

Acts 2:38;

8:36,37;

10:47,48;

16:14,15,

31-33

According to this rule the apostles baptized only those adults who had repented and professed their faith. Therefore also today no other adults should be baptized than those who have learned to understand, by the preaching and instruction of the Gospel, the glorious contents of holy baptism, and are thus able to give account of their faith by personal profession.

In order that we may now administer this holy sacrament of God to His glory, for our comfort, and to the upbuilding of the congregation, let us call upon His holy Name.

Prayer
before
Baptism

Almighty, eternal God, in Thy righteous judgment Thou hast punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, but in Thy great mercy hast saved and protected the believer Noah and his family. Thou hast drowned the entire host of the obstinate Pharaoh in the Red Sea, but led Thy people Israel through the midst of the sea on dry ground. Thus Thou hast signified baptism.

We therefore pray Thee that Thou in Thy infinite mercy wilt graciously look upon this brother (sister), and incorporate him (her) by Thy Holy Spirit into Thy Son Jesus Christ, so that he (she) may be buried with Him by baptism into death and raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

We pray that he (she), following Him day by day, may joyfully bear his (her) cross and cleave to Him in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love. Grant that he (she), comforted in Thee, may leave this life, which is no more than a constant death, and at the last day may appear without terror before the judgment seat of Christ Thy Son.

All this we ask through Him, our Lord Jesus Christ,
Thy Son, who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one only God,
lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Public
Profession
of Faith

Beloved brother (sister) _____, you
desire to receive holy baptism as a seal of your incorpora-
tion into the Church of God. You have been instructed by us
in the Christian religion and have made profession of it
before the overseers. It must become clear to all that you
not only accept the Christian doctrine, but also intend, by
the grace of God, to live according to it. Therefore, we
ask you to answer sincerely the following questions before
God and His Church.

First, do you believe in the one and only true God,
distinct in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
who has created of nothing heaven and earth, with all that
is in them, and still upholds and governs them so that
nothing happens without His divine will?

Second, do you believe that you were conceived and
born in sin and are therefore by nature a child of wrath,
totally unable to do any good and inclined to all evil?

Do you confess that you have often transgressed the commandments of the Lord in thought, word, and deed, and do you sincerely repent of these your sins?

Third, do you believe that Jesus Christ, who is both true and eternal God and true man, who assumed His human nature from the virgin Mary, is given by God as your Saviour? Believing in Him, do you confess that you receive the remission of sins in His blood and that by the power of the Holy Spirit you have become a member of Jesus Christ and His Church?

Fourth, do you wholeheartedly agree with the doctrine of the Word of God summarized in the Creeds and taught here in the Church of Christ? Do you promise to continue steadfastly in this doctrine to the end of your life, and do you reject all heresies and errors conflicting with this doctrine? Do you promise to persevere in the fellowship of this Christian Church and be diligent in the hearing of the Word of God and in the use of the holy sacraments?

Fifth, do you firmly resolve, as is proper for a member of Christ and His Church, always to lead a Christian life and not to love the world and its evil desires? Do you promise to submit willingly to the Christian admonition and discipline of the Church, if it should happen, and may God graciously prevent it, that you become delinquent either in doctrine or in conduct?

_____, what is your answer?

Answer

I do.

Our merciful God grant you His grace and blessing to fulfill this your holy intention through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Baptism

_____, I baptize you into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of
Thanksgiving

Almighty, merciful God and Father, we thank and praise Thee that Thou hast forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ. Thou hast received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thy only Son Jesus Christ and so adopted us to be Thy children. Thou hast sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism.

We beseech Thee through Thy beloved Son that Thou wilt always govern this brother (sister) by Thy Holy Spirit, that he (she) may live a truly Christian and godly life and grow in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grant that he (she) may acknowledge Thy fatherly goodness and mercy, which Thou hast shown to him (her) and to us all. May he (she) live in all righteousness under our

only Teacher, King, and High Priest, Jesus Christ, and
valiantly fight against and overcome sin, the devil,
and his whole dominion. May he (she) forever praise
and magnify Thee and Thy Son Jesus Christ together
with the Holy Spirit, the one only true God. Amen.

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(pages 15-20)

FORM FOR THE PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH

Address

Believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank the Lord our God for the grace given us by adopting us to be His children and receiving us into His covenant. We acknowledge His love and power, by which He instills in His children the desire publicly to profess their faith in Him in the presence of His holy Church so that they may receive admission to the holy supper.

Profession

We now ask you to answer sincerely the following questions:

First, do you wholeheartedly believe the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the Creeds and taught here in the Church of Christ? Do you promise by the grace of God steadfastly to continue in this doctrine in life and death, rejecting all heresies and errors conflicting with God's Word?

Second, do you acknowledge God's covenant promises, which have been signified and sealed to you in your baptism? Do you truly detest and humble yourself before God because of your sins and seek your life outside of yourself in Jesus Christ?

Third, do you declare that you love the Lord God and that it is your heartfelt desire to serve Him according to His Word, to forsake the world, and to crucify your old nature?

Fourth, do you firmly resolve to commit your whole life to the Lord's service as a living member of His Church? Do you promise to submit willingly to the admonition and discipline of the Church, if it should happen, and may God graciously prevent it, that you become delinquent either in doctrine or conduct?

_____, what is your answer?

I do.

Answer

After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you. To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Pet. 5:10

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FORM FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Institution

1 Cor. 11:23-29

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, the holy supper has been instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to the words of this institution as described by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.

In order that we may now celebrate this holy supper of the Lord to our comfort, we must first rightly examine ourselves. Further, we must use it as Christ intended it, namely, to His remembrance.

Self-
examination

True self-examination consists of the following three parts:

First, let everyone consider his sins and accursedness so that he, detesting himself, may humble himself before God. For the wrath of God against sin is so great that He could not leave it unpunished, but has punished it in His beloved Son Jesus Christ by the bitter and shameful death of the cross.

Second, let everyone search his heart whether he also believes the sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is freely given him as his own, as if he himself had fulfilled all righteousness.

Third, let everyone examine his conscience whether it is his sincere desire to show true thankfulness to God with his entire life, and, laying aside all enmity, hatred and envy, to live with his neighbour in true love and unity.

Invitation
and
Admonition

God will certainly receive in grace all who are thus minded and count them worthy to partake of the supper of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 6: 9, 10

But those who do not feel this testimony in their hearts, eat and drink judgment upon themselves. Therefore, according to the command of Christ and of the apostle Paul, we admonish all those who know themselves to be guilty of the following sins to abstain from the table of the Lord and we declare to them that they have no part in the Kingdom of Christ: all idolators; those who call upon deceased saints, angels or other creatures; all sorcerers, fortune-tellers, and all who engage in astrology and the occult; all who despise God, His Word and the holy sacraments; all who blaspheme, curse and use foul language; all who promote disunity and schism in the Church or revolt against the civil government; all perjurers; all who disobey their parents and superiors; all murderers, all who are contentious and who live in envy and hatred against their neighbours; all adulterers, fornicators, those who live in common-law or practice homosexuality; all who abuse alcohol or drugs; all thieves or robbers, all gamblers and covetous persons and all who lead offensive lives. While they persist in their sins, they shall not take of this food, which Christ has ordained only for His believers, ^{otherwise} their judgment and condemnation will be the heavier.

Ps. 51: 17

But all this, beloved brothers and sisters, is not meant to discourage broken and contrite hearts, as if only those who are without sin may come to the table of the Lord. For we do not come to this supper to declare that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves. On the contrary, we seek our life outside of ourselves in Jesus Christ and, in doing so, we acknowledge that we are dead in ourselves. We also are aware of our many sins and shortcomings. We do not have perfect faith and we do not serve God with such zeal as He requires. Daily we have to contend with the weakness of our faith and with the evil desires of our flesh. Yet, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are heartily sorry for these shortcomings and desire to fight against our unbelief and to live according to all the commandments of God. Therefore we may be fully assured that no sin or weakness which still remains in us against our will can prevent us from being received by God in grace and from being made worthy partakers of this heavenly food and drink.

Remembrance
of Christ

Let us now consider for what purpose the Lord has instituted His supper; namely, that we are to use it in remembrance of Him. We remember Him in the following manner.

First of all, let us fully trust that the Lord Jesus Christ was sent by the Father into this world, according to the promises made from the beginning to the fathers in the Old Testament, and that He assumed our flesh and blood.

From the beginning of His incarnation to the end of His life on earth, He bore for us the wrath of God, under which we should have perished eternally. By His perfect obedience He has fulfilled for us all the righteousness of God's law. He did so especially when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him the bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane. There He was bound that He might free us from our sins. He suffered countless insults that we might never be put to shame. He was innocently condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God. He even let His blessed body be nailed to the cross that He might cancel the bond which stood against us because of our sins. By all this He has taken our curse upon Himself that He might fill us with His blessing. On the cross He humbled Himself, in body and soul, to the very deepest shame and anguish of hell. Then He called out with a loud voice, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? that we might be accepted by God and nevermore be forsaken by Him. Finally, by His death and the shedding of His blood, He confirmed the new and eternal testament, the covenant of grace, when He said, It is finished.

Luke 22:44

Col. 2:14

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Gal. 3:13,14

Mat. 27:46

Joh. 19:30

Assurance

Luke 22:19,20

In order that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ during His last Passover, instituted the holy supper. He gave the bread and the cup to His disciples in remembrance of Him, and He declared: As often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are reminded and assured of My hearty love and faithfulness towards you. It is a sure pledge that I have given My body and shed My blood for you; otherwise you would have suffered eternal death. I nourish and refresh your hungry and thirsty souls with My crucified body and shed blood to everlasting life as certainly as this bread is broken before your eyes and this cup is given to you and you eat and drink in remembrance of Me.

Hebr. 9:12

From this institution of the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ we learn that He directs our faith and trust to His perfect sacrifice, once offered on the cross. It is the only ground for our salvation. Thereby He has become to our hungry and thirsty souls the true food and drink of life eternal. For by his death He has removed the cause of our eternal hunger and misery, which is sin, and obtained for us the life-giving Spirit. By this Spirit, who dwells in Christ as the Head and in us as His members, we have true communion with Him and share in all His riches, life eternal, righteousness, and glory.

Acts 2:33

By the same Spirit we are also united in true brotherly love as members of one body. For the apostle Paul says, Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. As one bread is baked out of many grains and one wine is pressed out of many grapes, so we all, incorporated in Christ by faith, are together one body. For the sake of Christ, who so exceedingly loved us first, we shall now love one another, and shall show this to one another not just in words but also in deeds.

1 Cor. 10:17

1 Joh. 4:
10, 11, 19

Expectation
of Christ's
Coming

Mark 14:25

Rev. 19:7

Finally, Christ has commanded us to celebrate the holy supper until He comes. We receive at His table a foretaste of the abundant joy which He has promised and look forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb, when He will drink the wine new with us in the kingdom of His Father. Let us rejoice and give Him the glory, for the marriage feast of the Lamb is coming! May the almighty, heavenly God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ help us in this through His Holy Spirit. Amen.

To receive all this, let us now humble ourselves before God in prayer and call upon Him in true faith.

Prayer

Merciful God and Father, we thank Thee that in this supper we cherish the blessed memory of the bitter death of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ. Work in our hearts through the Holy Spirit so that we may entrust ourselves more and more to Thy Son Jesus Christ. Grant that our contrite hearts may be nourished with His true body and blood, yes, with Him who is the only heavenly bread, that we may not live in our sins, but Christ in us and we in Him.

Let us so truly be partakers of the new and everlasting testament, the covenant of grace, that we do not doubt that Thou wilt forever be our gracious Father, nevermore imputing to us our sins but providing us with all things for body and soul as Thy dear children and heirs.

Grant us Thy grace that we may take up our cross joyfully, deny ourselves, and confess our Saviour. Let us in all tribulation await our Lord Jesus Christ who will come from heaven to change our lowly body to be like His glorious body and take us to Himself forever.

Hear us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(or: through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray,

Our Father who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name,

Thy Kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one,
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
for ever. Amen.)

*Profession
of Faith*

Let us now profess our catholic, undoubted Christian faith. (The Apostles' Creed may be recited by the minister, said in unison, or sung by the congregation.)

Exhortation

Brothers and sisters, in order that we may now be nourished with Christ, the true heavenly bread, we must not cling with our hearts to the outward symbols of bread and wine, but lift our hearts on high in heaven, where Christ, our advocate, is, at the right hand of His heavenly Father. Let us not doubt that we shall be nourished and refreshed in our souls with His body and blood through the working of the Holy Spirit, as truly as we receive the holy bread and drink in remembrance of Him.

1 Cor. 10:16-17

Communion

(When he breaks the bread, the minister shall say:)

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(And when he gives the cup:)

The cup of blessing, for which we give thanks, is the communion of the blood of Christ. Take, drink from it, all of you, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(During the communion some suitable portion of Scripture may be read and a psalm or hymn be sung.)

Doxology

(After the communion, the minister shall say:)

Beloved in the Lord, since the Lord has now nourished our souls at His table, let us together praise His holy Name. Let everyone say in his heart:

Ps. 103: 1-4,

8-13

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 forgives all your iniquity,

who heals all your diseases,

who redeems your life from the Pit,

who crowns you with steadfast

love and mercy.

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding
in steadfast love.

He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

He does not deal with us according
to our sins,
nor requite us according to
our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high
above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love
toward those who fear him;

as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our
transgressions from us.

As a father pities his children,
so the LORD pities those who
fear him.

Rom. 8: 31

He who did not spare his own Son
but gave him up for us all,
will he not also give us all
things with him?

Rom. 5:8-10

But God shows his love for us in that
while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.
Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood,
much more shall we be saved by him
from the wrath of God.
For if while we were enemies we were
reconciled to God by the death of his Son,
much more, now that we are reconciled,
shall we be saved by his life.

Therefore my heart and my mouth shall proclaim the praise
of the Lord, from now on and for evermore. Amen.

Thanks-
giving

Merciful God and Father, we thank Thee that in Thy bound-
less mercy Thou hast given us Thy only Son as our Mediator. We
praise Thee that He is the sacrifice for our sins and our food
and drink to life eternal.

We thank Thee that Thou givest us a true faith, through
which we may share in such great benefits.

Through Thy Son Thou hast instituted the holy supper for
the strengthening of our faith. We beseech Thee, faithful God
and Father, that by Thy Holy Spirit this celebration may lead
to our daily increase in true faith and fellowship with Christ,
Thy beloved Son.

In His Name we pray. Amen.

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(pages 29-40)

ABBREVIATED FORM FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
(for the afternoon service)

Institution

Brothers and sisters, the apostle Paul describes the institution of the holy supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

1 Cor. 11: 23-29

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.

Self-

examination

If we are to celebrate the holy supper for the strengthening of our faith, we must first examine ourselves.

Let everyone consider his sins and accursedness that he may humble himself before God.

Let everyone examine his heart whether he believes the sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is freely given him as his own. Finally, let everyone determine whether he intends gratefully to serve the Lord with his entire life and to live in true love and harmony with his neighbour.

Invitation
and
Admonition

All who by the grace of God repent of their sins, desiring to fight against their unbelief and live according to God's commandments, will certainly be received by God at the table of His Son Jesus Christ. They may be fully assured that no sin or weakness which still remains in them against their will shall keep God from accepting them in grace and granting them this heavenly food and drink.

But to all who do not truly grieve over their sins and do not repent from them, we declare that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ. We admonish them to abstain from the holy supper, otherwise their judgment will be the heavier.

Remembrance
of Christ

Christ has commanded us to use this supper in remembrance of Him. At this table we remember that our Lord was sent by the Father into the world, assumed our flesh and

blood, and from the beginning to the end of His life bore for us the wrath of God. He was bound that we might be set free. He was innocently condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God. He let His blessed body be nailed to the cross and so took our curse upon Himself to fill us with His blessing. He was forsaken by God that we might nevermore be forsaken by Him. By His death and the shedding of His blood He confirmed the new and everlasting covenant of grace when He said, It is finished.

John 19:30

Assurance

Therefore, as often as we eat this bread and drink of this cup, we are reminded and assured of Christ's hearty love towards us. He died on the cross and shed His blood for us that He might feed our hungry and thirsty souls unto eternal life with His crucified body and shed blood, as truly as we receive this bread and drink in remembrance of Him.

Fellowship

Truly, by His suffering and death Christ has obtained for us the Spirit of life. By this Spirit we are united with Him and receive all His gifts. The same Spirit unites us in brotherly love as members of one body. Therefore we all, incorporated into Christ by true faith, are one body and shall show this to one another not just in words but also in deeds.

1 Cor. 10:17

*Expectation
of Christ's
Coming*

Finally, Christ has commanded us to celebrate the holy supper until He comes. We receive at His table a foretaste of the abundant joy which He has promised and look forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb, when He will drink the wine new with us in the Kingdom of His Father.

Rev. 19:7

Let us rejoice and give Him the glory, for the marriage feast of the Lamb is coming!

Let us pray.

Prayer

Gracious God and Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast given us Thy only Son as a sacrifice for our sins and as our food and drink unto eternal life.

We pray Thee, work in our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit through this supper so that, entrusting ourselves more and more to Thy Son Jesus Christ, we may not live in our sins, but He in us and we in Him.

Strengthen our faith that Thou wilt forever be our gracious Father, who givest us all things necessary for body and soul. Grant us Thy grace that we joyfully take up our cross, deny ourselves, and confess our Saviour.

Teach us to expect our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body and take us to Himself in eternity. Amen.

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Exhortation

In order to be nourished with Christ, the true heavenly bread, let us not cling to the outward symbols of bread and wine, but lift up our hearts to Jesus Christ, our advocate at the Father's right hand.

Let us firmly believe that we will be nourished with His body and blood as certainly as we receive this bread and drink in remembrance of Him.

Communion

(When he breaks the bread, the minister shall say:)

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(And when he gives the cup:)

The cup of blessing, for which we give thanks, is the communion of the blood of Christ. Take, drink from it, all of you, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(During the communion some suitable portion of Scripture may be read and a psalm or hymn be sung.)

Doxology

(After the communion the minister shall say:)

Beloved in the Lord, now that the Lord has nourished us at His table, let us together praise His Name with thanksgiving.

B. 103:1-4

8-13

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 forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast
love and mercy.

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding
in steadfast love.

He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

He does not deal with us according
to our sins,
nor requite us according to
our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high
above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love
toward those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our
transgressions from us.

As a father pities his children,
so the LORD pities those who
fear him.

Therefore my heart and my mouth shall proclaim
the praise of the Lord, from now on and for evermore.
Amen.

Thanks-
giving

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed by Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one,
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for
ever. Amen.

FORM FOR THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF NON-COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

First
Announcement

Beloved in the Lord, the consistory has the sad duty of informing the congregation that a brother (sister), by baptism ingrafted into the Christian Church, is guilty of, and that he (she), in spite of many earnest admonitions, did not show evidence of true repentance. Therefore the consistory, to its great sorrow, is obliged to deal further with this brother (sister), and, if he (she) persists in his (her) sin, to proceed to his (her) excommunication. The consistory is making this known to you for the first time and seriously exhorts you to pray for him (her) continually, that it might please the Lord to bring him (her) to repentance.

Second
Announcement

Beloved in the Lord, the consistory, having taken the advice of Classis, has the sad duty of informing the congregation that _____, by baptism ingrafted into the Christian Church, in spite of continual earnest admonitions, obstinately persists in sinning against the commandment. Unless he (she) within shows repentance and amendment of life, the consistory will be obliged to exclude this brother (sister) from the communion of the Church because of his (her) wilful

disobedience to the covenant of God. The congregation is exhorted to admonish this member with affection and to pray the Lord for his (her) conversion.

The Excom-
munication

Beloved in the Lord, the consistory previously had the sad duty of informing the congregation that _____, by baptism ingrafted into the Christian Church, in spite of continual earnest admonitions, obstinately persisted in sinning against the commandment, and that the consistory would be obliged to exclude this brother (sister) from the communion of the Church, unless he (she) showed repentance and amendment of life.

The consistory must now inform the congregation that _____, in spite of many earnest admonitions, obstinately denies the communion with Christ and His Church, which was signified and sealed to him (her) in holy baptism.

Therefore, we elders and overseers of the Church of God in this place, assembled in the Name and authority of Jesus Christ, our Lord, declare before you all that for these reasons we hereby excommunicate _____ from the Church of the Lord and that, as long as he (she) persists obstinately and impenitently in his (her) sins, he (she) is excluded from the fellowship of Christ and all the spiritual blessings and benefits which God promises to and bestows

Mat. H. 18:17,18

upon His Church; and that he (she) is therefore to be accounted by you as a Gentile and a tax collector, according to the command of Christ, who says that whatsoever His ministers shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

2 Thess. 3:
14,15

Further we exhort you, beloved Christians, not to associate with him (her) that he (she) may be ashamed. Do not look on him (her) as an enemy but warn him (her) as a brother (sister).

Hebr. 8:12

Eph. 6:1-4

In the meantime, take care lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, departing from the living God. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth."

o

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

1 Pet. 5:5

You that are younger be subject to the elders.

1 John 2:
15-17

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever.

01-2 2:13

But since it is God who works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure, let us call upon His holy Name with confession of our sins.

Prayer

Righteous God and merciful Father, before Thy holy majesty we accuse ourselves because of our sins. We acknowledge that we have deserved the sorrow and grief caused by the excommunication of our brother (sister). Yes, we all are worthy to be excluded from Thy presence because of our many transgressions.

But, O Lord, be gracious to us for Christ's sake. We repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness. Work in us by Thy Spirit, so that we may endeavour to serve Thee more and more. Grant that we may shun the pollution by the world and by those who have strayed from Thee.

Grant that the excluded member may become ashamed of his (her) sins and return to Thee, for Thou hast no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Therefore we, Thy people, will always welcome those who return to Thee. Kindle in our hearts love and zeal that, by our admonitions as well as by our example, this excommunicated brother (sister) and others who live in unbelief may be brought back to Thee.

Bless our endeavours, that we may have reason to
rejoice again over him (her) for whom we now must mourn,
so that in this way Thy holy Name be praised, through
our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

(or: through our Lord Jesus Christ who taught us to pray,

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors;

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one,

For Thine is the kingdom and the power

and the glory, for ever. Amen.)

1983
18^d
(pages
41-60)

FORM FOR THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF COMMICANT MEMBERS

First
Announce-
ment

Beloved in the Lord, the consistory informs you with sorrow, that a brother (sister) of the congregation has become guilty of

In spite of several earnest admonitions, there is no evidence of repentance. Therefore the consistory had to suspend him (her) from the communion of the table of the Lord.

However, this did not lead to repentance. Continuing admonitions also proved fruitless.

To its great sorrow the consistory is now obliged to exercise further discipline, and will have to proceed to the excommunication of this brother (sister) if he (she) persists in his (her) sin.

We make this known to you for the first time, and seriously exhort you to pray the Lord that He may bring this member of the body to repentance.

Second
Announce-
ment

Beloved in the Lord, with sorrow the consistory has informed you previously that a brother (sister) has become guilty of sinning against the commandment.

You then heard that he (she) was suspended from the holy supper because he (she) refused to repent.

In spite of continued discipline no true repentance has become apparent. On the contrary, all admonitions remained fruitless. The only result was a further hardening of heart.

We have asked the advice of Classis and now inform you with sorrow that we will proceed with the excommunication.

We seriously exhort you to admonish this sinner continually in love. His (her) name and address are

_____

Pray the Lord that He may bring this brother (sister) to repentance, that this sin may be banned from the congregation and the sinner be saved.

Third
Announce-
ment

Beloved in the Lord, the consistory had the sad duty to inform you already twice that brother (sister) _____ has become guilty of sinning against the commandment. You also heard that he (she) refused to repent and further hardened his (her) heart, so that he (she) had to be suspended from the holy supper. Yet, no true repentance was shown. On the contrary, all admonitions remained fruitless. Therefore, to our great sorrow, we now inform you for the third time that we have to deal further with this brother (sister). If he (she) does not come to repentance, he (she) will be excluded from the communion of the Church of Christ on

For the last time we call upon you to admonish him (her) most urgently and in love.

Pray the Lord that it may please Him to lead this brother (sister) to repentance, so that he (she) may not harden himself (herself) to the utmost.

The Excommunication

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, the consistory has informed you that brother (sister) _____ has persisted in a life of sin. The purpose of these announcements was that by your prayers and admonitions he (she) might turn to the living God and thus be delivered from the power of Satan, who has taken him (her) captive. But, to our deep sorrow, no one has informed us of the least evidence of true repentance, although he (she) was warned by many. His (her) guilt, which was already serious, has only become all the heavier because of his (her) persistence in sin.

We have shown much patience with him (her), but now we know ourselves bound to proceed to the ultimate remedy given us by the Lord in His Word, namely, exclusion from the communion of His Church. This excommunication is intended to make this brother (sister) ashamed of his (her) sins, and also to ensure that this corrupt member does not affect the whole body which is Christ's Church.

Moreover, in this way the blaspheming of God's Name is prevented. Christ Jesus has assigned the exercise of discipline to His officebearers with the words, Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

Mat. 18:18

Therefore we, elders and overseers of the Church of God in this place, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ excommunicate _____ from the Church of the Lord, because he (she) obstinately persists in his (her) sin.

He (she) is now excluded from the fellowship of Christ and from His kingdom. He (she) may no longer use the sacraments. He (she) has no part any more in the spiritual blessings and benefits which Christ bestows upon His Church.

As long as he (she) persists in sin, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Mat. 18:17

We exhort you, beloved Christians, not to look on him (her) as an enemy. On the contrary, try to warn him (her) as a brother (sister). But do not associate with him (her), that he (she) may be ashamed and come to repentance.

Warning to
the Congregation
2 Thess. 3:
14-15

This excommunication, beloved, is a warning for us all. Let us fear the Lord and be cautious, for he who thinks he stands must take heed lest he fall. Continue in the true

1 Cor. 10:12

fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and also with all upright believers, so that we may obtain eternal salvation.

You have seen in what manner our excommunicated brother (sister) has lost the way: how he (she) began to fall and gradually came to ruin. Learn from this how subtle Satan is in bringing man to destruction, and how he causes him to despise God's Word and His sacraments:

2 Cor. 2:11

Hebr. 12:1, 2

Therefore, resist evil from the very beginning. Lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

1 Pet. 5:8

Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour.

Luke 22:46

Pray that you may ^{not} enter into temptation.

Hebr. 4:7

Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

Phil. 2:13

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.
Let everyone repent of his sins lest our God humble us again and we have to grieve for another member of the body.

Live with one accord in godliness; be our crown and joy in the Lord.

Phil. 2:12

Only the Lord, who is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure, is able to keep us in the way of His commandments.

Let us, therefore, call upon His holy Name with confession of our sins.

Prayer

Righteous God and merciful Father, before Thy holy majesty we accuse ourselves because of our sins. We acknowledge that we have deserved the sorrow and grief caused by the excommunication of our brother (sister). Yes, we all are worthy to be excluded from Thy presence because of our many transgressions.

But, O Lord, be gracious to us for Christ's sake. We repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness. Work in us by Thy Spirit, so that we may endeavour to serve Thee more and more. Grant that we may shun the pollution by the world and by those who have strayed from Thee.

Grant that the excluded member may become ashamed of his (her) sins and return to Thee, for Thou hast no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Therefore we, Thy people, will always welcome those who return to Thee. Kindle in our hearts love and zeal that, by our admonitions as well as by our

example, this excommunicated brother (sister) and others who live in unbelief may be brought back to Thee.

Bless our endeavours, that we may have reason to rejoice again over him (her) for whom we now must mourn, so that in this way Thy holy Name be praised, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

(or: through our Lord Jesus Christ who taught us to pray,

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors;

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one,

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.)

FORM FOR THE READMISSION INTO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Announce-
ment

Beloved in the Lord, in the year ... brother (sister) _____, was excommunicated from the Church of Christ.

The consistory may now inform you with gratitude that this remedy has borne fruit. The Lord has blessed our admonitions and prayers, so that _____ has repented and has requested to be again received into the communion of the Church.

It is the gracious will of God that we receive penitent sinners with joy.

1 Cor. 14: 40

Since all things have to be done in good order, we inform you that at the next celebration of the holy supper we shall loose this person from the bond of excommunication and readmit him (her) to the fellowship of the saints.

If any of you should have valid reason against such readmission, he should give notice to the consistory within week(s). Meanwhile let us thank the Lord, who has shown favour to this lost sheep, and let us beseech Him to perfect His work of conversion to eternal salvation.

(If no lawful objection has been brought forward, the readmission shall take place with the following form.)

Readmission
according
to the
Scriptures

Beloved Christians, we have recently informed you of the conversion of our fellow brother (sister) _____, to the end that, with your approbation, he (she) might be received again into the Church of God.

No one has brought forward any objection against this readmission, and therefore we will now receive him (her) into the communion of saints.

Matt. 18: 15-18

The Lord Christ instructed His Church to excommunicate impenitent sinners and said, Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. But He immediately added, And whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Ezek. 33:11

He taught us that excommunication does not take away all hope of salvation. For God has sworn by Himself, saying, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

Therefore the Church keeps hoping and praying for the repentance and return of the lost sinner, always eager to receive the penitent.

2 Cor. 2:5-7

The apostle Paul commanded the congregation at Corinth to forgive and comfort the brother who had been reprov'd and had come to repentance, He exhorted them to reaffirm their love for him lest he should be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

Christ also teaches us that the sentence of absolution, passed upon a repentant sinner according to the Word of God, is counted binding by the Lord. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Mat. 16:19

For this reason no one who truly repents needs to doubt in the least that he is certainly received by God in grace, as Christ has declared, If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.

John 10:23

Questions

Before we proceed to the act of loosing the bond of excommunication and readmit you, brother (sister) _____, to the Church of Christ, we request you to answer the following questions.

_____, do you declare with all your heart, here before God and His Church, that you are sincerely sorry for the sin and stubbornness on account of which you were justly excluded from the Church? Do you also truly believe that God has forgiven all your sins for the sake of Christ's blood and now receives you in grace?

Do you, therefore, desire to be readmitted to the Church of Christ and do you promise, by the grace of the Lord, to live from now on in all godliness according to the Word of God?

Answer

I do.

Readmis-
sion

Assembled in the name and authority of Christ Jesus,
we elders and overseers absolve you, _____,
from the bond of excommunication.

We receive you again into the Church of the Lord
with joy and gratitude and declare that you share in the
fellowship of Christ, of the holy sacraments, and of all
spiritual gifts and blessings of our Saviour, which God
promises to and bestows upon His Church.

May the eternal God preserve you in this grace to
the end, through His only Son Jesus Christ.

1 Thess. 5:24

He who calls you is faithful and he will do it. Amen.

Charge

Beloved brother (sister), be assured in your heart that
the Lord Himself has received you in grace. Be diligent to
guard yourself against the subtleties of Satan, the wicked-
ness of the world, and the fallacies of the flesh, lest you
again become entangled in sin. The love of Christ has
brought you back; love Him for He has forgiven you much.
Do not grieve the Holy Spirit again, who has promised in
your baptism to dwell in you and to sanctify you to be a
member of Christ.

Luke 15:32

Beloved Christians, receive this brother (sister) in
love. Rejoice and be thankful, for this brother (sister)
was dead and is alive; he (she) was lost and is found.

Luke 15:7

Rejoice with the angels, for Christ said, I tell you,

there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents
than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repent-
ance. Look on him (her) no longer as a stranger but as a
fellow citizen with the saints and a member of the house-
hold of God.

Epl. 2:19

Since there is no good in ourselves, let us, with
praise and thanksgiving, implore the Lord Almighty for
His grace.

Prayer

Gracious God and Father, we thank and praise Thee
through Jesus Christ that Thou hast granted this brother
(sister) godly grief and repentance unto life and hast
caused us to rejoice in this.

We pray Thee, show him (her) Thy grace, that he (she)
may become more and more assured of the complete remission
of all sins, and may derive from that assurance unspeak-
able joy and delight to serve Thee.

Since for a time he (she) has grieved many by his (her)
sins, grant that he (she) now may edify many by his (her)
conversion. Grant that he (she) may walk steadfastly in Thy
ways till the end.

Teach us, Father, by this example that with Thee there
is forgiveness, that Thou mayest be praised. Grant that
we now with our brother (sister) may together serve Thee
with childlike fear and obedience all the days of our life,

through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with Thee and the Holy Spirit is the one only true God. Amen.

(or: through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we conclude our prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors;

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one,

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.)

FORM FOR THE ORDINATION

(or: INSTALLATION OF MINISTERS OF THE WORD)

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, the consistory has now twice published the name of our brother _____, to learn if anyone had objections against his ordination to the ministry of the Word (or: installation as minister in this Church). Since no one has brought forward anything lawful against his doctrine and life, we will now in the name of the Lord proceed to his ordination (or: installation).

Let us first hear what Holy Scripture teaches about the office of ministers of the Word.

The exalted Christ gathers His Church through His Word and Spirit, and in His grace uses the ministry of man. The apostle Paul indicates this when he says, And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. As the Chief Shepherd, who unceasingly cares for His flock, He appoints shepherds to take heed to the flock in His Name. They are to take care of the sheep of Christ by means of the proclamation of the Word, by the administration of the sacraments, and by prayers and pastoral supervision. In this way the flock is tended and led in the right paths.

*Institution
by Christ*

Eph. 4: 11, 12

1 Peter 5: 4

Acts 6:4

In the early Christian Church this task was fulfilled by the apostles. They, in turn, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, appointed elders in every Church. According to 1 Timothy 3: 17 there were elders who ruled the congregation. Some of them were also called to labour in preaching and teaching. The latter are now called ministers of the Word. They have received the ministry of reconciliation, of which Paul speaks, saying, All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you, on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Cor 5:18-20

Duties of
the minister

The task of the minister of the Word can be described as follows:

Acts 20:27

First, he must declare the whole counsel of God to his congregation, proclaiming the Word according to the command of the apostle Paul; I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince,

2 Tim. 4:1,2

rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching.

Acts 20:20

After the example of the apostle he is to perform this duty in public and from house to house. He shall expose all errors and heresies as unfruitful works of darkness, and exhort the membership to walk as children of the light.

He shall teach the Word of God to the youth of the Church

2 Tim. 3:15

and to others whom God calls, for the holy Scriptures are able to instruct them for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It is also his duty to visit the members of the congregation and to comfort the sick and sorrowing. Thus comforting and admonishing, he shall call the whole congregation to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Second, he is called to administer the sacraments, because Christ has joined this administration to the preaching of the Gospel. It is therefore the duty of the minister of the Word to administer holy baptism according to the command of Christ, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He also is to administer the holy supper as instituted by Christ when He said, Do this in remembrance of me.

Mat. 28:19

1 Cor. 11:24

Third, it is his duty as pastor and teacher of the congregation to call upon the Name of the Lord in public worship, with supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings.

1 Tim. 2:1, 2

Fourth, it is the duty of the minister of the Word, with the elders as stewards of the house of God, to see to it that in the congregation all things are done in peace and good order.

Together they shall supervise the doctrine and life of the membership and tend the flock of God, not as domineering over those in their charge but being examples to the flock. In so doing they are to shut and open the kingdom of God by Christian discipline, according to the charge given them by Christ. From all this we see what glorious work the ministers of the Word may perform.

1 Cor. 14:33

1 Pet. 5:2, 3

When the Chief Shepherd is manifested they as faithful servants will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

1 Pet. 5:4

Ordination

Beloved brother _____, you are now about to enter upon your office. We ask you to answer the following questions before God and His holy Church.

(or: installation)

First, do you feel in your heart that God Himself, through His congregation, has called you to this holy ministry?

Second, do you believe the Old and the New Testament to be the only Word of God and the complete doctrine of salvation? Do you reject all doctrines conflicting with it?

Third, do you promise faithfully to discharge the duties of your office and to adorn the doctrine of God with a godly life? Do you also promise to submit to the discipline of the Church in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or life?

What is your answer?

Answer

I do with all my heart.

*Laying on
of Hands

God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this holy office, enlighten you with His Spirit and so govern you in your ministry, that you may fulfill it obediently, and that it may bear fruit to the honour of His Name and the expansion of the kingdom of His Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Charge to
the minister

John 20:6

1 Pet. 5: 2

1 Tim. 4: 12-16

1 Tim. 5: 17

Beloved brother in Christ, God our Father has obtained the Church for Himself with the blood of His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has made you pastor and teacher of this congregation. Love Christ, feed his lambs and tend his sheep, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly. Take heed to yourself, set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Preach the pure doctrine, so that by your preaching and teaching the congregation may be kept in obedience to the

2 Tim. 2:3

Word of God. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ

1 Tim. 4:14

Jesus. Do not neglect the gift you have, with which the Lord

has endowed you for this ministry. Devote yourself to your

1 Tim. 4:16

duties with all your strength and with perseverance, for by so

doing you shall save both yourself and your hearers.

Charge to
the Congre-
gation

Beloved brothers and sisters, the Lord has granted you this

servant. Receive him with all joy. How beautiful are the feet

1 Cor. 5:2:7

of him who brings good tidings! Take heed to receive the Word of

God, which you shall hear from him, and accept his words, spoken

1 Thess. 2:13

according to the Holy Scriptures, not as the word of man, but as

what it really is, the word of God.

1 Petr. 13:17

Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping

watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account.

Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of

no advantage to you.

Mat. 10:12,13

If you thus receive this servant from the Lord, the peace

of God will come upon you, and you will inherit eternal life
through Christ.

Since we of ourselves are not capable of all this, we will
call upon the Almighty God.

Prayer

Merciful Father, Thou art pleased to gather to Thyself
out of the whole human race a Church chosen to life eternal.

We thank Thee that Thou wilt gather this Church by the ministry of men, and that Thou givest this minister of the Word to this congregation. We pray Thee, wilt Thou by Thy Spirit equip him to the ministry to which Thou hast called him. Enlighten his mind that he may understand the Scriptures, and open his mouth that he may proclaim the mysteries of the gospel with boldness. Grant him wisdom and faithfulness to guide the flock in the right path and to keep them in Christian peace, that by his ministry and under his good leadership Thy Church may be preserved and increased.

Encourage and comfort him by Thy Spirit, so that he may remain steadfast in troubles and temptations during his ministry, and, finally, with all Thy faithful servants, may enter into the joy of his Lord.

Grant that those entrusted to his pastoral care may acknowledge this servant as sent by Thee. Give that they may receive the instruction and admonition of Christ which this shepherd shall bring to them and that they may joyfully submit to his direction. Grant that through his ministry all may believe in Christ and thus inherit eternal life.

Hear us, O Father, through Jesus Christ Thy Son, who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

*The laying on of hands shall not take place in the case of those who are already in the ministry.

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(pages
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FORM FOR THE ORDINATION
(or: INSTALLATION) OF MISSIONARIES

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, the consistory has now twice published the name of our brother _____, to learn if anyone had objections against his ordination (or: installation) as a missionary. His task will be the ministry of the gospel, which must be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations. Since no one has brought forward anything lawful against his doctrine and life, we will now in the Name of the Lord proceed to his ordination (or: installation).

4.24:14

The Office

Let us first hear what Holy Scripture teaches about the office of those ministers of the Word who are set apart for the preaching of the gospel to those who are outside.

1. 5:9

God, our heavenly Father, in His good pleasure, gathers a Church from every tribe and tongue and people and nation out of the corrupt race of man unto life eternal.

John
3: 16, 17;
10: 10, 11,
16

For this purpose God sent His only Son into the world, who came as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, that they may have life and have it abundantly. He calls His sheep not only from Israel, but also from all the nations, and leads them to His fold, that there shall be one flock, one shepherd.

Acts 1:50
John
15:26,27;

In order to gather His Church, Christ has sent the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father and who bears witness to Him.

○
20:21,22
1 John 4:14

The apostles were also witnesses, sent by Christ as the Father had sent Him. They saw and testified that the Father had sent His Son as the Saviour of the world.

Rom. 10:14,
15,17

It is the calling of the Church, through this testimony of the apostles, to move people to believe in Christ crucified.

Acts 13:2

From the time of the apostles, the Holy Spirit has commanded the congregation to set apart men for this work, to which He has called them.

In order that this command may be fulfilled, the Lord Christ has now given to this congregation a minister of the Word.

Duties of
the Mis-
sionary

According to the mandate of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles, a missionary shall first of all preach the Word of God, revealed in the Holy Scriptures, to those who are without Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world, so that they who are far off, can come near through the blood of Christ.

Eph. 2:12,13

2 Cor. 5:19,20

As an ambassador of Christ, he has been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation; for God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Therefore he shall ask in the name of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Tit. 9 He must hold firm to the reliable Word of God, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to refute those who contradict it.

Math. 28:19 Second, he ought to baptize believers and their children into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that the Lord has commanded His Church.

Cor. 11:23,26 And whereas the Lord Jesus has commanded His Church to proclaim His death until He comes, he shall also prepare the table of the Lord in the midst of the believers. It shall also be his duty to admonish the believers when they sin in doctrine and life and to deny them the use of the sacraments if they do not heed his admonitions, for the apostle Paul warned, You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Acts 14:23 Third, as soon as it becomes feasible he shall, in good order, ordain overseers and deacons, according to the charge and example of the apostle Paul; so that they, as faithful men who are able to teach others also, may guide the flock of the Lord, which He obtained with the blood of His Son. He shall, however, not be hasty in the laying on of hands, according to the warning of Paul to Timothy.

Tit. 1:5,6
1 Tim. 2:2
Acts 20:28
1 Tim. 5:22
In order that they may be able to fulfil this charge, the Lord Christ, to whom has been given all authority in heaven and

Math 28:20

on earth, comforted and encouraged His apostles, and in them His whole Church, with this promise, And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. This promise shall stand until the holy city, the new Jerusalem, has come down out of heaven from God. The glory of God is its light and its lamp is the Lamb. Then the promise will be fulfilled that the nations shall walk by its light and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. Therefore the Lord Christ calls those blessed who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

Rev. 21:10,
23^b, 24

Rev. 22:14

Ordination
(or Installation)

And now, beloved brother _____, you are about to enter upon your office, as it has been described.

Therefore you are to answer the following questions before God and His holy Church.

First, do you feel in your heart that God Himself through His congregation has called you to this holy ministry?

Second, do you receive the Old and the New Testament as the only Word of God and the complete doctrine of salvation and do you reject all doctrines conflicting with it?

Third, do you promise faithfully to discharge the duties of your office, in close cooperation with the consistory of this Church, and to adorn the doctrine of God with a godly life?

Do you also promise to submit to the discipline of the Church, .
in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or life?

What is your answer?

Answer

I do with all my heart.

* Laying on
Hands

God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this holy office, enlighten you with His Spirit, and so govern you in your ministry that you may fulfill it obediently, and that it may bear fruit to the honour of His name and the expansion of the kingdom of His Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Charge to
the missionary

2 m. 1:8,9

Beloved brother, go then in the power of the Holy Spirit to the work to which God, through His Church, has called you as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord and take your share of suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling.

1 Pet. 5:4

And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

Charge to
the Congregation

2 Thess. 3:1

Beloved brothers and sisters, the Lord has granted you this servant. Receive him with all joy. Beseech the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may guard him (together with his family) in all his ways. Pray for him, that the Word of the Lord may speed on and triumph, as it did among you.

Since we of ourselves are not capable of all this, we will call upon the Almighty God.

Prayer

Merciful Father, Thou art pleased to gather to Thyself out of the whole human race a Church chosen to life eternal. We thank Thee that Thou wilt gather this Church by the ministry of man and that Thou hast graciously provided this congregation with a faithful servant who is to labour in the ministry of Thy Word to those who are outside.

We beseech Thee, wilt Thou by Thy Spirit equip him to the ministry to which Thou hast called him. Enlighten his mind that he may understand the Scriptures, and open his mouth that he may boldly proclaim Thy gospel, so that through his preaching many may come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant him wisdom and perseverance in all difficulties and oppression which may confront him in his ministry. Guard him in all his ways. Grant him Thy grace, that he may remain steadfast to the end and with all Thy faithful servants may enter into the joy of his Lord.

Grant this congregation (and the cooperating churches) Thy grace, that they may see what Thou art doing in this ministry and continually remember Thy servant in their prayers, in order that they may rejoice in the propagation of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Hear us, O merciful Father, through Thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

*The laying on of hands shall not take place in the case of those who are already in the ministry.

FORM FOR THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the consistory has now twice published the names of the brothers who were elected and appointed to the office of elder and deacon in this Church, to learn if anyone had objections to their ordination.

Since no one has brought forward anything lawful against their doctrine and life, we shall now in the Name of the Lord proceed to their ordination.

Let us first hear what Holy Scripture teaches about the offices of elders and deacons.

Institution

Ex. 3:16

Ex. 17:5

Num. 11:16

Deut. 27:1

Deut. 31:9

Josh. 20:4

Judg. 8:16

Already in the old dispensation the people of God enjoyed the leadership and guidance of elders. The Lord told Moses to gather the elders of Israel together in Egypt and to inform them of His promises to deliver them from bondage. While these elders were with Moses in the desert, the Lord told him to select from their midst seventy men to bear the burden of the people with him. Together with Moses these elders had authority to command the people. At the end of his ministry, Moses gave to all the elders of Israel the law to rule God's people. Once in the promised land, these elders fulfilled their calling in every city.

In His unceasing care for His flock the Good Shepherd called apostles to be the foundation of His catholic Church.

Acts 14:23
15:23
16:4
20:17

The apostles, in turn, appointed elders in every Church with the cooperation of the congregation. Apostles and elders gathered together to take decisions to which the Churches had to submit. Paul charged the overseers to take heed to the flock in which the Holy Spirit had made them guardians.

1 Pet. 5:2

Peter admonished the elders to tend the flock of God that is their charge.

Phil. 1:1

In his epistle to the Philippians, the apostle Paul addressed the saints together with the overseers and deacons. In order that these offices might remain, he also gave his fellow workers detailed instructions for selecting brothers to these offices of overseers and deacons.

1 Tim. 3:1-13
Tit. 1:5-9

He directed Titus to appoint elders in every town. The New Testament calls these office-bearers not only presbyters or elders but also bishops or overseers as well as shepherds and guardians.

The office of elder is, therefore, one of authority given by Christ. They are to fulfill their duties by reminding God's people of His ordinances and by exercising discipline over the disobedient, by caring for the flock and defending the sheep against the dangers that threaten them.

Mandate

As for their mandate, the task of the elders is, together with the ministers of the Word, to have supervision over Christ's Church, that every member may conduct himself properly in doctrine and life, according to the gospel.

1 Thess. 2:11-12

Tit. 1:9

For this purpose they shall faithfully visit the members of the congregation in their homes to comfort, instruct, and admonish them with the Word of God, reproving those who behave improperly.

They shall exercise Christian discipline, according to the command of Christ, against those who show themselves unbelieving and ungodly and refuse to repent. They shall watch that the sacraments are not profaned.

Matt. 18:

17, 18

Second, being stewards of the house of God, they are to take care that in the congregation all things are done decently and in good order. For this purpose they form, together with the minister of the Word, the presbytery or consistory of the Church.

1 Tim. 4:4

Together they tend the flock of God which is in their charge. They must prevent that anyone serves in the Church without having been lawfully called.

1 Pet. 5:1-4

Third, it is their duty to assist the ministers of the Word with good counsel and advice. They are also charged with the supervision over the doctrine and conduct of these fellow servants. They shall permit no strange teaching, so that in every respect the congregation is edified by the pure doctrine of the gospel.

Acts 20: 29-31

Therefore they must watch diligently that no wolves enter the sheepfold of the Good Shepherd.

John 10: 7-13

2 Tim. 3: 14-17

To do their work well as shepherds of God's flock, the overseers should train themselves in godliness and diligently search the Scriptures, which are profitable in every respect, that the man of God may be equipped for every good work.

The Ministry
of Mercy
Deut. 14: 28, 29;

16: 11, 14;

24: 19-21;

26: 12-13;

27: 19

Concerning the ministry of mercy, assigned to the deacons, the Lord impressed upon His people Israel to show mercy to the needy. God repeatedly commanded that the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow might eat within their towns and be filled. In the old dispensation the needy and suffering were protected and provided for by God's fatherly love: His ordinances taught the covenant people to imitate that love as beloved children.

John 14: 9

Mark 10: 45

Mark 22: 27

John 13: 15

The Lord Jesus Christ, who has shown us the Father, came into the world to serve. In His mercy He fed the hungry, healed the sick and showed compassion to the afflicted. Thus He gave an example that His Church should do likewise. The ministry of mercy, as assigned to the deacons, proceeds, therefore, from this love of our Saviour.

Acts 2: 46;

4: 32-37

After the example of her Lord, the first Christian congregation took care that no one in her midst suffered want. To each was contributed according to need.

Math. 25: 31-46

Rom. 12: 13

Also today the Lord calls on us to show hospitality, generosity, and mercy, so that the weak and needy may share abundantly

Hebr. 13:2,16

in the joy of God's people. No one in the congregation of Christ may live uncomforted under the pressure of sickness, loneliness and poverty.

1 Pet. 4:9

Phil. 1:1

For the sake of this service of love Christ has given deacons to His Church.

Acts 6:1-7

The apostles realized that they would have to give up preaching the Word of God if they had to give their full attention to the daily support of the needy. Therefore they assigned this duty to seven brothers chosen by the congregation. It is the responsibility of the deacons to see to the good progress of this service of charity in the church. They shall acquaint themselves with existing needs and difficulties, and exhort the members of Christ's body to show mercy. They shall gather and manage the offerings and distribute them in Christ's Name, according to need. They are called to encourage and comfort with the Word of God those who receive the gifts of Christ's love. They shall promote with word and deed the unity and fellowship in the Holy Spirit which the congregation enjoys at the table of the Lord.

Cor. 6:10

1 Thess. 3:12

2 Pet. 1:7

In this way God's children will increase in love to one another and to all men.

Ordination

Beloved brothers, you are about to enter upon your respective offices. We request you to answer the following questions before God and His holy Church.

First, do you feel in your hearts that God Himself, through His congregation, has called you to these offices?

Second, do you believe the Old and the New Testament to be the only Word of God and the complete doctrine of salvation? Do you reject all doctrines conflicting with it?

Third, do you promise to discharge faithfully the duties of your office and to adorn it with a godly life - you elders in the government of the Church - and you deacons in the ministry of mercy? Do you also promise to submit to the discipline of the Church in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or life?

What is your answer?

Answer

I do (to be answered by each personally).

The almighty God and Father grant you His grace, that you may faithfully and fruitfully discharge your offices. Amen.

Charge

You, elders, as good shepherds of Christ's flock and faithful watchmen over the house of God, be diligent in governing the Church, in comforting the distressed, and in admonishing the wayward.

0

1 Pet. 5:2-4
Take heed that the congregation abide by the pure doctrine and
lead a godly life. Tend the flock of God that is your charge,
not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly,
not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to
the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will
obtain the unfading crown of glory.

Gal. 6:10
You, deacons, be faithful and diligent in the gathering of
gifts and distribute them cheerfully to those who need assistance,
especially to the widows and orphans. Let us do good to all men,
especially to those of the household of faith. Support those
who are burdened with cares or who are lonely. Give in your
ministry of mercy a good example to the congregation of the
service to which all are called by Christ Jesus.

1 Tim. 3:9
Be all with one accord faithful in your offices. Hold the
mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. If you serve well,
you will gain a good standing for yourselves, always have great
1 Tim. 3:13
confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus, and finally
enter into the joy of your Master.

1 Thess. 5:12,13
On the other hand, beloved brothers and sisters, receive
these men as servants of God. Respect the overseers who labour
among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem
Heb. 13:17
them very highly in love because of their work. Obey your leaders

and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls,
as men who will have to give account.

Take care that the deacons have sufficient means to fulfill their ministry. Be good stewards of all that the Lord has entrusted to you. Remember Christ, your example in serving the Church of God.

Since we are unable of ourselves to do all this let us call upon the Lord our God.

Prayer

Lord God and heavenly Father, it has pleased Thee for the edification of Thy Church to ordain overseers and deacons besides the ministers of the Word. We thank Thee that Thou hast given us men who are endowed with Thy Holy Spirit. Grant them more and more the gifts they need - wisdom, courage, discretion, and mercy - so that each of them may fulfill his office as it is pleasing to Thee.

Give Thy grace to both elders and deacons that they may persevere in faithful service, without being hindered by trouble and sorrow or by persecution of the world.

Grant that this people, over whom Thou has set them, may submit willingly to the good exhortation of the overseers and them in love because of their work.

Give us ardent love for each other. Grant that we may cheerfully provide the deacons with sufficient means, so that the needy may be liberally supplied.

We beseech Thee that by the faithful service of everyone the kingdom of Thy Son may come and Thy Name be glorified, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

FORM FOR THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE

Announcement

The consistory announces that _____ and _____ have indicated their intention to be married according to the ordinance of God. They desire to begin this holy state in the Name of God and to complete it to His glory. If no lawful objection is brought forward, this marriage will be solemnized a) in a ceremony which will take ^{place} the Lord willing, ...; b) in a worship service which will take place, the Lord willing, (whichever is applicable).

Introduction

_____ and _____, since the consistory has duly made known to the congregation your desire to be married, and no lawful objection has been presented, we may now proceed to the solemnization ^{of your marriage} in the Name of the Lord.

Institution of Marriage

Hebr. 13:4

Gen. 1:27

2:18-24

Let us first listen to a summary of what the Word of God teaches us about marriage. We find there that marriage is an institution of God which pleases Him and must therefore be held in honour among all. After God our Father had made heaven and earth, He created man in His own image. And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him. When the man did not find a helper fit for him among the creatures of God, the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall

upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs
and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the
LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman
and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at
last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she
shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."
Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and
cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

1 Cor. 7:2

Since the Lord forbids immorality, each man should
have his own wife and each woman her own husband, so
1 Cor. 6:19,20 that our bodies may be preserved as temples of the Holy
Spirit and we may glorify God in our body.

Mat. 19:6

Our Lord Jesus Christ honoured marriage when He
revealed His glory at the marriage feast at Cana. He
taught us that marriage is an institution of God and
should not be broken, and said, What therefore God has
joined together, let not man put asunder.

Mal. 2:16

Mat. 19:9

God has made marriage such a strong bond that He
hates divorce, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has said,
Whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and
marries another, commits adultery.

So we know that the Lord also today gives husband
and wife to one another, and, since they are united by
His hand, nothing shall separate them in this life.

The Profound
Mystery
Eph. 5: 22-33

The apostle Paul teaches us that the unity of husband and wife in marriage is a profound mystery, as symbol of the relationship between Christ and His Church. As Christ is the Head of the Church, so the husband is ^{the} head of his wife. Christ loved His Church to the end, and gave Himself up for her, that she might be holy and without blemish. So the husband shall love his wife as his own body, care for her, and cherish her, as Christ does the Church. As the Church is subject to Christ, so the wife shall be subject in everything to her husband, respect him, and entrust herself to his loving care. Husband and wife shall assist each other in all good things, heartily forgiving one another their sins and shortcomings. United in love, they will more and more reflect in their marriage the unity of Christ and His Church. . .

John 13:1

1 Cor. 7: 28

It is also true, as the apostle says, that those who marry will face troubles in this state and because of sin will experience many difficulties and afflictions. Yet they may also believe the promise of God that they, as heirs of the grace of life, will always receive His aid and protection, even when they least expect it.

The Purpose
of Marriage

The Word of God also teaches us about the purpose of marriage. First, husband and wife shall live together happily in sincere love and holiness, helping each other

faithfully in all things that belong to this life and to the life to come.

Gen. 1:28

Second, by marriage the human race is to be continued and increased, and under the blessing of God, husband and wife will be fruitful and multiply. If it pleases God to give them children, they shall nurture these children in the true knowledge and fear of the Lord.

Eph. 6:4

(The minister asks them to rise.)

The Duties
in Marriage

Bridegroom and bride, hear from the Word of God what the Lord requires of you in marriage.

1 Pet. 3:7

Bridegroom, know that God has set you to be the head of your wife. Love her as your own body, as Christ loved His Church and gave Himself up for her. Guide, protect, and comfort your wife. Live with her wisely and honour her, because she is an heir to eternal life together with you; then your prayers will not be hindered. Work faithfully in your daily calling, that you may support your family and also help those in need.

Eph. 4:28

Bride, love your husband and be subject to him, as the Church is subject to Christ. Accept his guidance and assist him in all good things. Care for your family and household properly, and live modestly, in faith, love, and holiness.

Help each other always and be faithful to each other. Diligently fulfill the calling which the Lord has given you in the Church and in this world. Believe God's sure promise, Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.

P. 128: 1, 2

(Minister: Will you now join your right hands?)

The Marriage
Vows

To the bridegroom:

_____, do you declare here before the Lord and these witnesses that you take as your lawful wife _____, here present? Do you promise to love and guide her faithfully, to maintain her, and to live with her in holiness, according to the holy gospel? Do you also promise never to forsake her, but to be true to her always, in good days and bad, in riches and poverty, in health and sickness, for as long as you both shall live? What is your answer?

Answer: I do.

To the bride:

_____, do you declare here before the Lord and these witnesses that you take as your lawful husband _____, here present? Do you promise to love and obey him, to assist him, and to live with him in holiness, according to the holy gospel? Do you also promise never to forsake him, but to be true to him always, in good days and bad, in riches and poverty, in health and sickness, for as long as you both shall live? What is your answer?

Answer: I do.

Pronouncement

Minister: In the Name of the Lord and authorized by the government of the province, I now pronounce you husband and wife. The Father of all mercies, who by His grace called you to this holy state of marriage, bind you together in true love and faithfulness, and grant you His blessing. Amen.

*(Optional)
Exchange
of Rings*

Do you give this ring as a symbol of your constant faithfulness and abiding love?

Answer: I do.

Bridegroom and bride, since we cannot expect anything from ourselves, you shall kneel before the Lord, and we shall pray with you and for you that He may enable you to fulfill your vows and will grant you His blessing.

Intercession

Almighty and heavenly Father, Thou hast said from the beginning that man should not be alone. We thank and praise Thee that Thou hast given this brother and sister to each other in marriage, that they may be one.

We pray Thee, grant them Thy Holy Spirit that they may live together according to Thy will in true faith. Help them to resist the power of sin, and to live in holiness before Thee. Lift up Thy countenance upon them, and guide

them in prosperity and adversity by Thy Fatherly hand.
Grant them Thy blessing according to the covenant promises
given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Confirm Thy covenant
to them and to their children, if it pleases Thee to make
them parents. ^{grant} ~~grant~~ that they may nurture their children
in the fear of the Lord, to the glory of Thy Name, and to
the edification of the Church.

Let them live in communion with Thy Son, Jesus
Christ, in the harmony of true love, and to the benefit
of their neighbour. Cause them to look forward with all
the Church to the great day of the marriage feast of the
Lamb.

Hear us, merciful Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ,
Thy beloved Son, who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, the
only true God, lives and reigns forever, Amen. (or add:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our debts,

As we also have forgiven our debtors;

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one,

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for
ever. Amen.)

Benediction

Brother and sister _____, our Lord God bless
you richly and grant you a long and holy life together in
all godliness, love, and unity. Amen.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSLATION AND REVISION OF THE PRAYERS AND FORMS
c/o 374 Queen St. South, Hamilton, Ontario L8P 3T9

1983
18E

December, 1982

To the General Synod of the Canadian
Reformed Churches to be convened at
Cloverdale, Fall, 1983

Esteemed Brothers:

In agreement with the decision of Synod Smithville 1980, Acts Art. 123 III D 1^b, 2.3 the Committee on Translation and Revision of the Prayers and Forms is pleased to submit to you a newly translated, revised and linguistically corrected final draft of the Prayers.

With brotherly greetings,
On behalf of the committee,



L. Selles, Secretary

LS;tgb
c.c. All consistories of the
Canadian/American Reformed Churches

1983
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1.

A GENERAL CONFESSION OF SINS AND PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON
AND ON DAYS OF FASTING AND PRAYER

12 pages

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Eternal and merciful Father, we humble ourselves before Thee, for we have often and seriously sinned. We acknowledge that we deserve nothing but eternal death, for we were conceived and born in sin. All sorts of evil desires against Thee and our neighbour live in us. We continually transgress Thy commandments by our thoughts, words, and deeds. We fail to do what Thou hast commanded us and we do what Thou hast forbidden. We all like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way. We acknowledge this and are heartily sorry for all our sins. We are ashamed and humble ourselves. Our transgressions are innumerable, our debt is great and we cannot repay it. We are not worthy to be called Thy children nor to lift up our eyes to Thee.

We praise Thee for Thy mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord. We know that Thou dost not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn to Thee and live. Thy mercy is infinite to those who turn to Thee. Therefore we are encouraged to pray to Thee from the depths of our hearts. We trust in our Mediator Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Have compassion on us and forgive us all our sins for Christ's sake. Wash us in His blood so that we will be clean. Cover us with His righteousness for the glory of Thy Name.

Fill now Thy servant with Thy Holy Spirit so that he may boldly proclaim Thy Word in all its purity. Prepare our hearts to receive Thy Word, to understand it, and to keep it. Write Thy laws upon our hearts, as Thou hast promised. Grant us the desire and the strength to walk in the ways of Thy precepts, so that Thy Name may be praised and glorified and Thy church may be built.

Gracious Father, for all this we earnestly pray Thee in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (or add: who taught us to pray,

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed by Thy Name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one,
For Thine is the kingdom and the power
and the glory, for ever. Amen.)

Almighty and merciful God, we confess that we are unworthy to come before Thee in prayer. Our sins testify against us and our consciences accuse us. But Thou, Lord, hast commanded us to call upon Thee in all our needs. In mercy Thou hast promised to hear our petitions. We realize that this is not because of our merits, for we have none. It is because of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast appointed as our Mediator and Advocate. We therefore reject all other help and take our refuge in Thy mercy alone.

Heavenly Father, Thou hast showered so many blessings on us. We especially thank Thee that Thou hast brought us to the light of Thy truth and to the knowledge of Thy holy gospel. Time and again, however, we have ungratefully forgotten Thy benefits. We have departed from Thee and have followed the desires of our own heart. We have not honoured Thee as we should have done. If Thou shouldst bring us into judgment, we could expect nothing but condemnation and eternal death.

But, Lord, look upon the face of Thy Anointed and hide Thy eyes from our sins. Let Thy wrath be removed through His intercession. Work in us mightily by Thy Spirit, that He may daily put to death our sinful nature and renew us that we may serve Thee better.

Since it pleases Thee that we should pray for all mankind, we beseech Thee, bless Thy holy gospel. Let it be proclaimed and received everywhere. May the whole world be filled with the knowledge of Thee. Convert those who do not know Thee. Strengthen those who are weak in faith. Let everyone, not only in words but also in deeds, magnify and hallow Thy holy Name. Send therefore faithful servants into Thy harvest. Equip them to discharge the duties of their office faithfully. Destroy, we pray Thee, all false teachers, fierce wolves, and hirelings, who seek their own honour and profit instead of the honour of Thy holy Name and the salvation of men.

Graciously preserve and govern Thy churches throughout the world in the unity of the true faith and in godliness of life so that day by day Thy kingdom may come. Destroy the dominion of Satan. Let the perfection of Thy kingdom arrive so that Thou wilt be all in all.

We pray Thee for the mission work among Jews, Moslems, and heathens, who live without Thee and without hope in the world. Bless the propagation of the gospel among those who still call themselves

Christians but have deviated from Thy truth in doctrine and life. Bless the pastoral admonitions of the office-bearers to those who harden themselves in their sin. Grant that all of us, in a spirit of gentleness, may restore those who depart from Thee. Remember all Christian instruction and all who are involved in it. Bless the training for the ministry of the gospel, the professors, lecturers, and students. Grant that all who are studying at universities or colleges may be guided by Thy Spirit and may remain firm in Thy truth. Bless also the work of all societies which in accordance with Thy holy Word, seek to hallow Thy Name, to promote Thy kingdom, and to do Thy will. Be with all institutions of Christian mercy. Grant to those who work there the full measure of love.

We also pray Thee for our civil government, for our Queen and her family, and for all whom Thou hast set in authority over us. May they perform their task in such a manner that the King of kings may rule over them and their subjects. As Thy servants, may they more and more oppose the lawless kingdom of Satan. Grant that under the shield of their government we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. Bless therefore all those who are called to defend our country and to maintain peace, freedom, and righteousness.

We also pray Thee for our brothers and sisters who suffer persecution for the sake of Thy Name and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not permit Thy Name to be removed from the earth. Deliver Thy persecuted children from oppression. But if it is Thy will that by their death they bear witness to Thy truth, comfort them in their sufferings. May they accept their trials from Thy fatherly hand. Make them persevere in faith till the very end, to the honour of Thy Name, to the edification of Thy church, and to their own salvation.

We commit to Thee all those whom Thou art chastening with poverty, imprisonment, physical illness, or spiritual distress. May it please Thee to heal the sick and to restore soundness of mind to those who are mentally ill. Surround with Thy care those who are handicapped in body or mind and bless all that is done to help them. Lift up those who are depressed. Comfort the widowers, widows, and orphans. Show Thy love to the lonely, Thy strength to the weak, Thy grace to the dying, Thy sustaining power to the bereaved. Grant that all trials may yield the fruit of peace and righteousness.

Finally, Lord, take us and our dear ones into Thy care and keeping. Watch over our families. Strengthen the expectant mothers

and grant them a good delivery. Protect the unborn from the selfishness and cruelty of man. Strengthen the bond between husbands and wives and between parents and children. Help us to bring up our children in the fear of Thy Name. Be with those married couples whom Thou, in Thy wisdom, hast not given children. Bless them and cause them to be a blessing in the midst of Thy household. Help us in our daily work. Protect us when we travel. Bless all our endeavours for the promotion of Thy kingdom, for the benefit of our country, or for the advancement of honourable personal interests. Bless also the products of the soil. Grant favourable weather, a fruitful growth, and a good harvest. Give that we in our respective callings may live according to Thy will. May we use the talents Thou hast given us in such a way that they may not hinder but promote our life in Thy kingdom. Strengthen us in all temptations so that we fight the good fight of faith victoriously and hereafter with Christ possess eternal life.

We pray for all this in the Name of our faithful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. (or add: who taught us to pray,

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 Hallowed by Thy Name,
 Thy kingdom come,
 Thy will be done,
 On earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread;
 And forgive us our debts,
 As we also have forgiven our debtors;
 And lead us not into temptation,
 But deliver us from the evil one,
 For Thine is the kingdom and the power
 and the glory, for ever. Amen.)

3.

A PUBLIC CONFESSION OF SINS AND PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON

Heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God, we acknowledge and confess before Thy divine majesty that we are poor, miserable sinners. Conceived and born in utter wickedness and corruption, we are inclined to all manner of evil and incapable by nature of doing any good. We transgress Thy holy commandments continually and deserve Thy wrath and eternal condemnation according to Thy righteous judgment.

But, Lord, we are truly sorry for our sins. We accuse ourselves and acknowledge that we are to be blamed for our sinfulness

and transgressions. Yet, on the ground of the sufferings of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, we plead for Thy mercy. Have compassion on us, gracious God and Father, and forgive us our sins for the sake of His death. Grant us also the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, that He may teach us to confess our sins sincerely, to detest ourselves, and to know our misery. May He so lead us that we die to sin, rise up to a new life, and bring forth fruits of holiness and righteousness, acceptable to Thee through Jesus Christ.

Make us understand Thy holy Word rightly so that we may learn to put our trust in Thee alone and not in any creature. May our old nature with all its evil desires be increasingly put to death day by day and may we present ourselves as a living sacrifice to Thee, to the honour of Thy Name and the benefit of our neighbour.

We also beseech Thee, gracious God, to bring back to Thyself in true repentance all who depart from Thy truth, that we all with one accord may serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

This we ask of Thee through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (or add: who taught us to pray, Our Father, etc.)

A BRIEF FORM OF PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON

We thank Thee, merciful God and Father, that Thou hast brought us to the knowledge of Thee and of Thy Son by Thy Spirit and Word. Thou hast caused Thy Word to be proclaimed to us again. Let us, who have received Christ Jesus the Lord, live in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as we were taught, and abound in thanksgiving. We confess that through ignorance, unthankfulness, and discontent, we do not obey Thy holy Word as we should. We therefore beseech Thee, Lord, remember Thy great mercy and have compassion on us. Teach us truly to know our sins, to repent sincerely, and to amend our life. Strengthen the ministers of Thy church in order that they may faithfully preach Thy holy Word. Lord, give strength also to our rulers that they may govern in justice and equity.

We pray Thee for brother (sister) -----, who, -----

Keep us, we beseech Thee, from all hypocrisy and unfaithfulness, and destroy all subtle scheming against Thy Word and Thy church.

Lord, do not take Thy Word and Thy Spirit from us, but make us grow in faith. Give us patience and steadfastness in all suffering and adversity. Help Thy church and deliver Thy people from opposition, mockery, and tyranny. Strengthen those who are weak and burdened with sorrow. Grant us Thy peace through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who gave us this sure promise: Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, He will give it to you in my name. Amen. (or add: and who taught us to pray, Our Father, etc.)

5.

PRAYER BEFORE THE EXPLANATION OF THE CATECHISM

Heavenly Father, Thy Word is perfect, reviving the soul. Thy testimony is sure, making wise the simple. Thy gospel is the power for salvation to everyone who believes. We, however, are by nature blind and incapable of doing any good. We beseech Thee to let the light of Thy Holy Spirit shine in our hearts. Make us humble, and free us from all conceit and worldly wisdom, which is enmity against Thee. Help us to understand Thy Word and to direct our lives according to it. Confirm us in our catholic and undoubted Christian faith. Wilt Thou also in Thy grace bring back those who are straying from Thy truth, that we all in true unity may serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

All this we ask of Thee only for the sake of Christ, Thy Son. Amen. (or add: who taught us to pray, Our Father, etc.)

6.

PRAYER AFTER THE EXPLANATION OF THE CATECHISM

Gracious God and merciful Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast established Thy covenant with believers and their seed and hast sealed this by holy baptism. Thou wilt also show us Thy grace by teaching us Thy will and Thy way in Christ Jesus our Lord. Thou hast given pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt continually grant us Thy grace until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. May we not be tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Bless our homes and endow parents with Thy Spirit that they may nurture their children in the discipline and instruction

of the Lord. We pray Thee for all teaching according to Thy Word, as confessed in the creeds of Thy church. Be with all who labour in it and provide them with knowledge and wisdom which is rooted in the fear of Thy Name. Bring about Thy praise from the mouth of Thy covenant people and put to shame the wise and prudent of this world. May the dominion of Satan be destroyed and the kingdom of Jesus Christ be strengthened in this congregation and in all Thy churches, to the glory of Thy holy Name and to our salvation.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ, Thy Son. Amen. (or add: who taught us to pray, Our Father, etc.)

PRAYER BEFORE MEALS

7.

Almighty God, faithful Father, Thou hast made the world and dost uphold it by Thy powerful Word. Thou didst provide Israel in the desert with food from heaven. Wilt Thou also bless us, Thy humble servants, and renew our strength by these gifts which we have received from Thy fatherly hand through our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that we may use them with moderation. May we acknowledge that Thou art our Father and the source of all good things, and help us to use our strength in a life devoted to Thy service. Grant also that at all times we may long for the lasting food of Thy Word. May we thus be nourished to everlasting life, which Thou hast prepared for us by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Saviour.

In His Name we pray. Amen.

THANKSGIVING AFTER MEALS

8.

Lord God, our heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this food and drink and for Thy Word. We thank Thee that Thou wilt take care of us and wilt provide for all our needs. We are especially grateful that we have been born anew to the hope of a better life, which Thou hast revealed to us in the holy gospel. We pray Thee, merciful God and Father, let our hearts not be weighed down by the cares of this life. Grant us Thy grace that in our daily tasks we may seek the things which are above, expecting our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is coming with the clouds, for our deliverance.

We thank and pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

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Merciful Father, we thank Thee for watching over us this past night and giving us strength to begin a new day. Provide, we pray Thee, for all our needs so that we may walk before Thee in holiness and righteousness today and all the days of our life. Equip us for our work. Give us our daily bread and make us able to promote the cause of Thy church and kingdom. May Thy service and glory be foremost in our minds and may we expect all success in our endeavours from Thy fatherly hand alone. Grant us Thy grace to lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and to run with perseverance the race that is set before us. Make the preaching of Thy Word fruitful here and on the mission field. Bless all instruction given according to Thy Word and strengthen all faithful labourers in Thy harvest.

We pray for those whom Thou hast set over us that they may rule us according to their calling as servants of Thee, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Give endurance to all who are persecuted on account of their faith and deliver them from their enemies. Destroy all the works of the devil. Comfort the distressed and show Thy mercy and help to all who call upon Thy holy Name in sickness and other troubles of life. Deal with us and with all Thy people according to Thy grace in Christ Jesus who assured us that He will do whatever we ask in His Name.

Hear us for His sake. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER

10.

Merciful God, eternal light in whom is no darkness at all, we draw near to Thee at the end of this day. We thank Thee that Thou hast given us strength for our daily work and hast guided us safely through this day. Bless what was good in our labour and conduct. In Thy mercy cover the sins we committed as Thou coverst the earth in the darkness of night. Thou givest the day for work and the night for sleep; grant us, therefore, a good night's rest that we may wake up in good health and be able to take up our daily task again. Command Thy angels to guard us and let Thy face shine upon us. We cast all our anxieties on Thee, for Thou carest about us.

Grant comfort and rest to all who are ill, bowed down by grief or afflicted by anguish.

Thy steadfast love, O Lord, endures for ever. Do not forsake the work of Thy hands.

All this we ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.

11.

OPENING PRAYER FOR THE MEETINGS OF THE DEACONS

Merciful God and Father, in Thy Word Thou hast not only declared that we shall always have the poor with us, but hast also commanded us to support them in their need. Thou hast ordained the service of deacons for Thy church in order that the needy members may receive the necessary help. Thou hast called us to the office of deacon in this congregation and we are now assembled in Thy Name to deal with the matters pertaining to our office. We humbly beseech Thee to give us the Spirit of discretion. May He lead us to those in true need and help us to distribute the alms in a spirit of joy, faithfulness, and liberality.

Kindle fervent love for the needy in the hearts of Thy people that they may generously contribute of the possessions entrusted to them as Thy stewards. Grant us sufficient means to bring relief to the needy. May we discharge the duties of our office as ministers of Christ's mercy.

Give us Thy grace to help by means of material gifts and to comfort with Thy holy Word the hearts of the afflicted that they may put their trust in Thee alone. Bless, we pray Thee, our ministry and provide generously for the poor that both they and we may praise and thank Thee, while we await the blessed appearance of Thy Son, Jesus Christ. He became poor for our sake that He might enrich us with eternal treasures.

In His Name we pray. Amen.

12.

OPENING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

Heavenly Father, merciful God, it has pleased Thee to gather a church for Thyself out of the nations of all the earth and to govern her through the service of men. Thou hast graciously called us to

be office-bearers in Thy church and hast charged us to take heed to ourselves and to the flock which Christ has bought with His precious blood.

In Thy Name we are now together in this place to deal with the matters before us concerning the edification and welfare of Thy church(es) and to do so in an ecclesiastical manner. We realize that we are unworthy and unable of ourselves to think, speak, or accomplish any good. We beseech Thee, therefore, that Thy Holy Spirit may govern us in our deliberations and decisions and may lead us into Thy truth.

Keep all misunderstanding away from us and guard us against the sinful inclinations of our hearts. Let Thy Word be our only rule so that our work may be to Thy glory, serve the wellbeing of Thy church(es) and that our consciences may be at peace.

We ask this in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank Thee that in the gathering and preservation of Thy church in our country Thou art pleased to use our service. By Thy grace Thy gospel is preached without hindrance and we may meet in our public worship and in ecclesiastical assemblies. At the close of this present meeting we humbly ask Thee forgiveness for our shortcoming and sins and we thank Thee for the good we received from Thy fatherly hand.

Faithful God and Father, bless all decisions taken in agreement with Thy holy Word and cause these to further Thy purpose. Preserve Thy church by the purity of doctrine, by the proper administration and use of the sacraments, and by the faithful exercise of church discipline.

Destroy all wicked counsels conceived against Thy Word and church and strengthen the ministers to preach Thy gospel boldly and steadfastly. Give perseverance to the overseers and the deacons, that through the faithful administration of their offices, they may be a blessing to Thy people.

Bless the Queen and her house. So govern the civil authorities that they rule in justice and wise restraint. May their rule be

directed to the supremacy of Thee, the King of rulers and ruled alike. In this way let the wicked dominion of Satan be broken down more and more, and may we lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way.

Hear us, God and Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK, I

14.

Righteous and merciful Father, Thou art the Almighty and without Thy will nothing occurs in heaven or on earth. Life and death are in Thy hand.

We are not worthy to call upon Thee and we cannot hope that Thou wilt hear and answer us if Thou shouldst mark our iniquities. We pray Thee, therefore, look upon us according to Thy mercy in Christ Jesus, who bore our griefs and who was wounded for our transgressions. We acknowledge that of ourselves we are incapable of doing any good and are inclined to all evil. On that account we are justly chastised and disciplined by Thee and we deserve even worse. But, Lord, Thou hast made us Thy people and Thou art our God. Our only refuge is Thy mercy, which Thou hast never withheld from those who turn to Thee. We pray, therefore, do not hold our sins against us but impute to us the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ so that in Him we may stand before Thee. Graciously grant us recovery; take this sickness and suffering from us and bless the means provided by Thee. But if it pleases Thee to prolong our trial, give us patience and strength to bear it all according to Thy will. Thou art wise and good. May whatever Thou decidest contribute to our sanctification.

Rather chastise us now, Lord, than that we should perish with the world hereafter. Grant that we may forsake the world and crucify our old nature; renew us more and more after the image of Jesus Christ. Let us never be separated from Thy love, but draw us closer to Thee from day to day. Grant that thus we may with joy reach the end of our calling, which is to die with Christ, to rise with Him triumphantly, and to live with Him eternally. We also believe that Thou wilt hear us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (or add: who taught us to pray, Our Father, etc.).

Merciful God and Father, Thou art the eternal salvation for the living and the eternal life of the dying. Life and death are in Thy hands. Thou continually carest for us in such a way that health and sickness, good and evil come from Thy fatherly hand; not even a hair can fall from our heads without Thy will. Thou dost order all things for the good of Thy children.

We beseech Thee that Thy Holy Spirit may teach us to know our misery and to bear Thy chastisements patiently. If they were according to what we deserve, they would be a thousand times more severe. We believe that they are not evidence of Thy wrath but of Thy fatherly love, so that we may not be condemned with the world.

Lord, unite us by Thy Holy Spirit more and more with Christ our Head and conform us to Him both in suffering and glory. Strengthen us to bear what Thou bringest over us in Thy fatherly wisdom. We submit ourselves entirely to Thy will, regardless of whether Thou wilt leave us yet on earth or whether Thou wilt take us home unto Thyself. We trust in Thee, for with body and soul, both in life and death, we belong to Christ, whose resurrection is the guarantee of our blessed resurrection.

Grant that we may experience the comfort of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. May His innocent blood wash away the uncleanness of our sins and may His righteousness cover our unrighteousness in Thy last judgment. Arm us with faith and hope that we may overcome the assault of Satan and not be put to shame by any fear of death. Give us always good confidence in Thee, our faithful God and Father, trusting that neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come shall be able to separate us from Thy love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Father, into Thy hands we commit our spirits. Fulfill Thy promise to us that Thou wilt never forsake us; be with us, even in the hour of death.

Hear and answer us for Christ, our Saviour's sake. Amen.
(or add: who taught us to pray, Our Father, etc.).