

The

DIRECTORY of

CHURCH WORSHIP

FOR THE

Covenant Reformed

Presbyterian Church

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PREFACE

The Directory of Church Worship (DCW) represents an application of the doctrine of worship set forth in Scripture, and explicated in the Constitution of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church. Although no church may add to nor neglect nor deviate from any of the elements or practices of worship which are ordained in the Word of God, nevertheless, the precise words and orders of service are, of necessity, matters of circumstance which may vary from time to time and from place to place.

Presbyterianism recognizes both the nature of circumstances and the importance of maintaining unity even with respect to many circumstantial details. Accordingly, synods and councils may “set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, . . . which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in His Word” (Westminster Confession of Faith, 31:3).

In accordance with this teaching of the Westminster Standards, the forms of this Directory are to be followed, as an expression of the unity which we enjoy with one another. Further direction for the public worship of the church may be found in the Constitution, including Westminster Confession of Faith 21.

The Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church.

1 **CHAPTER 1**

2 **THE BAPTISM OF COVENANT CHILDREN**

3 The administration of baptism is to be performed in accordance with the Constitution (see III. Public
4 Worship, B. The Elements of Worship, section 4).

5 The following vows are to be administered.

6 The minister shall address the parent(s) and shall ask:

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

10 **Answer. We do.**

11 *Do you promise to instruct your child in the principles of our holy religion as revealed in the*
12 *Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as summarized in the Westminster Confession*
13 *of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism?*

14 *Do you promise to pray with and for your child, to set an example of piety and godliness before*
15 *(him/her/them) and to endeavor by all the means of God's appointment to bring (him/her/them) up in the*
16 *nurture and admonition of the Lord?*

17 **Answer: We do.**

18 The minister shall then address the congregation, asking the members to rise and to answer in the
19 affirmative either of the following questions:

20 *Do you, the members of this congregation, promise, in the presence of God, to safeguard this*
21 *covenant by setting an example of godliness before (this child/these children), and at all times*
22 *testifying of God's glory and grace so that (he/she/they) may behold to (his/her/their)*
23 *comfort, your faithfulness as an encouragement in (his/her/their) walk with the Lord?*

24 **OR**

25 *Do you, the people of the Lord, promise to receive (this child/these children) in love, pray for*
26 *(him/her/them), help care for (his/her/their) instruction in the faith and encourage and*
27 *sustain (him/her/them) in the fellowship of believers; and as a congregation do you bind*
28 *yourselves to assist in the instruction of (this child/these children)?*

29 *If so, answer, "We do so promise".*

30 **The congregation answers: We do so promise.**

31 Thereupon the minister shall baptize the child, saying:

32 (Name), *I baptize thee into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

33 It is appropriate both immediately prior to the administration of baptism and after it, that prayer be offered
34 to God, asking for His blessing upon the ordinance, upon the one(s) being baptized, upon the parent(s), and
35 upon the church as a whole.

CHAPTER 2

THE ADMISSION OF PERSONS TO COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

When a person presents himself for communicant membership, and is approved by the governing authority of the congregation to be admitted to said membership, the following vows are to be administered in a service of public worship.

Do you believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments to be the infallible Word of God, and its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect and only true doctrine of salvation?

Answer. I do.

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

Answer. I do.

Do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your sovereign Lord; and do you promise, in reliance on the grace of God, to serve Him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature, and to lead a godly life according to the Word of God and the covenant of our church?

Answer. I do.

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

Answer. I do.

The minister should then ask that the congregation please rise, for the administration of the following vow.

Do you, the members of this congregation, promise, in the presence of God, to safeguard this covenant by receiving your dear (brother/sister/brethren) in the Lord into the fellowship of this covenant body for the edification of (his/her/their) faith and the strengthening of this church; and at all times setting an example of godliness before (him/her/their) so that (he/she/they) may behold, for (his/her/their) comfort, your faithfulness as an encouragement in his (his/her/their) walk with the Lord?

Answer. We do so promise.

If the person confessing his faith has not been baptized in a church that maintains Word and sacrament in their fundamental integrity, that person should now be baptized. The administration of baptism is to be performed in accordance with the Constitution (see III. Public Worship, B. The Elements of Worship, section 4).

It is appropriate, both immediately prior to the administration of baptism and immediately after it, for prayer to be offered to God, asking for His blessing upon the ordinance, upon the one(s) being baptized, and upon the church as a whole.

If the particular congregation has a church covenant, the person(s) admitted to communicant membership should now sign a copy of that covenant, after which the minister should countersign it.

It is appropriate for the minister to conclude this part of the service by giving an exhortation, in these or

1 similar words:

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

10 Whenever a person is received by transfer from another manifestation of the visible church, or upon
11 reaffirmation of faith, it is appropriate to use the same questions for membership as found above.

12 If a minister of the gospel is not available, then a ruling elder may administer the vows of
13 membership. However, only a minister may administer the sacrament of baptism.

14

1 **CHAPTER 3**

2 **ORDINATION OF PASTORS (TEACHING ELDERS)**

3 After the sermon the presiding minister shall begin thus:

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

5 *Dearly beloved in Christ Jesus: We are gathered here to ordain this brother according to*
6 *apostolic order by prayer and the laying on of hands to the office of the ministry of the Word*
7 *of God. But since we can do nothing without the Lord, let us therefore together call upon*
8 *Him.*

9 Thereupon prayer is to be offered, asking that the one to be ordained would be a man after God's own heart,
10 and that through his ministry, many would be won to Christ.

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

12 *Dearly beloved brother in the Lord: You stand here in the presence of God to be publicly and*
13 *solemnly ordained to the office of the holy ministry. It is proper for you, therefore, earnestly*
14 *to consider the dignity and responsibility of the office that you may enter upon it with a lively*
15 *consciousness of your own sins and inadequacies and an ardent longing for divine help. The*
16 *Lord Himself ordained this office when he said: **All power is given unto me in heaven and in***
17 *earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and*
18 *of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have*
19 *commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world. The*
20 *apostle Paul also testifies: **This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop [i.e.,***
21 *overseer], he desireth a good work. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though*
22 *God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. And he*
23 *gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and*
24 *teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of*
25 *the body of Christ: till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son*
26 *of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. The*
27 *Lord, who has promised to be with us even unto the end of the world, has upheld this office*
28 *among us to the present time; and since we are about to ordain you to this office, hear further*
29 *the apostle Paul to Timothy: **Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation,***
30 *in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to*
31 *doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given by prophecy, with the laying*
32 *on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give yourself wholly to them;*
33 *that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine;*
34 *continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*
35 *The apostle Peter admonishes likewise: **Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking***
36 *the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready*
37 *mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And*
38 *when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not*
39 *away.*

40 *Dear Brother, you are therefore as a servant of Christ to feed the flock of God; to preach the*
41 *Word in season and out of season; to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort with all longsuffering and*
42 *humility; to instruct the ignorant, to comfort the afflicted, to strengthen the weak, to seek the*
43 *lost; to continue in prayer and supplication, to administer the holy sacraments, and to*
44 *maintain good discipline and order in the church of God. Be watchful in all things; be a*
45 *good soldier of Jesus Christ; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry;*

1 *fight the good fight of faith: then the God of peace will be with you; and the LORD, the*
2 *righteous Judge, shall give you a crown of righteousness at that day.*

3 *And now we request you in the name of God to answer the following questions.*

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

7 **Answer. I do.**

8 *Do you honestly and without reservation embrace the Constitution of the Covenant Reformed*
9 *Presbyterian Church with the conviction that the same is a summary of the system of truth of*
10 *Holy Scripture, and do you promise to teach and defend the same in good faith and reject all*
11 *doctrines conflicting therewith?*

12 **Answer. I do.**

13 *Do you approve of and agree to uphold the government, discipline and worship of the*
14 *Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church as contained in the By-Laws?*

15 **Answer. I do.**

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

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

19 *Do you acknowledge the rightful authority of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church,*
20 *and do you promise to perform your office faithfully in the same and to show all proper*
21 *regard for its laws and ordinances and all suitable obedience to its government in the Lord?*

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

23 Then the candidate shall be directed to kneel, and the ministers and elders shall lay their hands severally on
24 his head, and prayer is to be offered. It is appropriate during this prayer to pray that the Lord would
25 consecrate the ordinand through the Holy Spirit; that he would be granted grace and strength in order
26 rightly to divide the Word of truth, to be an example in all things, and to win many souls for the kingdom of
27 Christ.

28 After the prayer of ordination, the ordinand shall rise, and the presiding minister shall say:

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

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

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

36 When the new minister is to be installed at the same time as pastor of the congregation (or charge) in which

1 he has been ordained, the Installation Service shall now proceed according to the form provided for that
2 purpose (Chapter 4).

3 It is customary for the newly-ordained man to pronounce the benediction at the conclusion of the worship
4 service.

5

1 now also what the Word of God says to you, how you are to receive him and what your mind
2 shall be toward him: **We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you,**
3 **and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for**
4 **their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Remember them which have the rule**
5 **over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God whose faith follow, considering the**
6 **end of their conversation. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves:**
7 **for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy,**
8 **and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Even so hath the Lord ordained that**
9 **they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. If we have sown unto you spiritual**
10 **things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?**

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

17 The presiding minister shall address this question to the pastor elect:

18 *And now, dear brother, I ask you in the presence of God and this congregation, do you now*
19 *accept the oversight and care of this congregation to perform faithfully and conscientiously*
20 *the duties which rest upon you as pastor and teacher, and to foster this fold in the grace and*
21 *knowledge of Jesus Christ in accordance with your ordination vow?*

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

23 Then the presiding minister shall address this question to the congregation:

24 *Beloved in the Lord: You have heard this solemn vow. I ask you as officers and members of*
25 *this congregation in the presence of God: Do you receive this minister as your pastor and*
26 *teacher, and do you promise to love and honor him, and to be obedient unto him in the Lord?*

27 **Answer. We do.**

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

29 *On the ground of the mutual promises, and by the authority of the Covenant Reformed*
30 *Presbyterian Church, we install you, (Name), as pastor and teacher of this congregation,*
31 *and herewith we give the same to your care and oversight in the name of the Father, and of*
32 *the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

33 Prayer then should be offered, thanking God for the establishment of His church, and the provision of all
34 spiritual gifts and heavenly benefits, and beseeching Him that the minister may be faithful in the
35 proclamation of the gospel and that the congregation may be gracious hearers of the message.

36 It is customary that the newly-installed minister offer the benediction at the close of the installation service.

1 **CHAPTER 5**

2 **ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS**

3 Such parts of the following form are to be used as they relate to the particular circumstances in each
4 congregation as to the number to be ordained or installed, or both.

5 After the sermon, the presiding minister shall call the present congregational presbytery (Session) forward
6 first, and then call the candidate(s) second. The minister shall then say:

7 *Dearly beloved in the Lord: (This man/These men) (has/have) been solemnly chosen and*
8 *called by you, as a Christian congregation, to take part as elder(s) and deacon(s) in the care*
9 *and service of this church. (He/They) has (have) accepted your call. No one has come*
10 *forward to urge any just objection to (his/their) being set in office. We therefore proceed, in*
11 *the name of the Lord, to ordain (him/those) who has (have) not been previously ordained, and*
12 *to set each apart to his own office, to the work of the ministry among you.*

13 Prayer should then be offered, asking the Lord's blessing upon each of the ones being ordained and/or
14 installed.

15 Then, addressing the candidates, the presiding minister shall say:

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

26 *Elders are appointed to assist and support the ministers of the Word in the general*
27 *government of the church. They form, with the minister, in each particular congregation, a*
28 *congregational presbytery in common for the spiritual supervision of the flock which is*
29 *committed to their care. They are bound to take part, accordingly, in the work of the ministry,*
30 *so far as it has to do with this pastoral oversight and care. They are to be the advisors and*
31 *counselors of the minister in the discharge of his holy office; they are to be to him as hands*
32 *and eyes, acting with him and for him throughout the congregation. It is their duty to go*
33 *before the flock in the way of Christian example, to watch over it in the Lord, to take an*
34 *active interest in its spiritual welfare, to feel a responsibility for its condition, to be at hand in*
35 *all circumstances with spiritual aid for its necessities and wants. It belongs to them, in virtue*
36 *of their office, to visit the sick and afflicted, to instruct the ignorant, to admonish such as are*
37 *out of the way, to warn the unruly, to command and rebuke with authority in Christ's name.*
38 *To them, moreover, in conjunction with the pastor, belongs the whole discipline of the church,*
39 *its power of the keys, as exercised both in the form of censure and in the form of restoration.*

40 *Deacons are appointed to assist and support the elders in those ministrations which pertain*
41 *to the more outward needs of the general household of faith. On them falls the honorable*
42 *charge of caring for the poor and needy and of seeing that the charities of the church are*
43 *properly dispensed. They are to aid in securing the funds necessary for the support of the*
44 *church in its various activities. They are to labor among the people in making known to them*

1 *the needs of the church, fostering the principle of stewardship, and thereby cultivating the*
2 *spirit of liberal and cheerful giving. In discharging these duties, however, they must not lose*
3 *sight of the true spiritual character of their office, which, although it may be thus occupied*
4 *with outward and temporal things, yet remains always a proper branch of the Christian*
5 *ministry, the purpose of which in all things can only be eternal salvation. Hence it is that so*
6 *much stress is laid, in the New Testament, on the character and life of those who are called to*
7 *take part in this work. They must be men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,*
8 *who may be able, both by word and example, to help forward the great purpose of the gospel,*
9 *making their ministrations to the bodily necessities of the poor the occasion and means of a*
10 *still better benefit to their souls. The apostle Paul, writing on this subject, expressly requires*
11 *of them virtues of like sort with those which are needful for the office of the ministry in its*
12 *most exalted character.*

13 The minister shall now address these questions to the candidates:

14 *And now, brother (brethren), having well considered the nature and design of this (these)*
15 *office(s) to the use of which you have been called by the voice of this congregation, do you*
16 *accept the call as coming to you from God, and are you willing to undertake the work and*
17 *service it sets before you, in the name and for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ?*

18 **Answer. I do.**

19 Vows for Elders

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

23 **Answer. I do.**

24 *Do you honestly and without reservation embrace the Constitution of the Covenant Reformed*
25 *Presbyterian Church with the conviction that the same is a summary of the system of truth of*
26 *Holy Scripture, and do you promise to teach and defend the same in good faith and reject all*
27 *doctrines conflicting therewith?*

28 **Answer. I do.**

29 *Do you approve of and agree to uphold the government, discipline and worship of the*
30 *Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church as contained in the By-Laws?*

31 **Answer. I do.**

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

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

35 *Do you acknowledge the rightful authority of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church,*
36 *and do you promise to perform your office faithfully in the same and to show all proper*
37 *regard for its laws and ordinances and all suitable obedience to its government in the Lord?*

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

1 Vows for Deacons

2 *Do you receive the Holy Scriptures as being the inspired Word of God, and do you accept the*
3 *Constitution of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church as being in harmony with the*
4 *Scriptures?*

5 **Answer. We do.**

6 *Do you promise to exercise your ministry, deacon(s), among this people, with faithful*
7 *diligence, according to that which you have now declared to be the rule and measure of your*
8 *faith, showing all proper regard for the lawful authority of the church, and taking heed to*
9 *your own lives, that you may adorn the gospel of God our Saviour by a walk and conversation*
10 *answerable to the place you occupy in Christ's house?*

11 **Answer. We do.**

12 The minister shall now ask the one(s) being ordained and/or installed to turn and face the congregation,
13 shall ask the congregation to rise, and shall direct the following question to the congregation.

14 *Do you the members of this congregation solemnly covenant in the presence of God to give*
15 *honor to these officers, submitting yourselves to their rightful authority, heeding the*
16 *admonition of discipline, and encouraging them in their office?*

17 **Answer: We do so promise.**

18 Here those who have not been previously ordained to the office in which they are now called to serve shall
19 be ordained. They shall be directed to kneel, and the minister and elders shall lay their right hand upon each
20 one in succession, while prayer is offered over each ordinand.

21 The minister shall say to each officer being ordained and/or installed:

22 *(Name), take the authority now committed to your trust to execute the office of*
23 *(elder/deacon) in the church, which office is now solemnly committed unto you, in the name of*
24 *the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

25 The other church council members may now be called upon to give the right hand of fellowship to the
26 newly-installed officers.

27 It is appropriate to close this portion of the service with prayer, asking that God would make these officers
28 wise and faithful, humble, tender, modest, yet bold, constant, patient, and persevering in their appointed
29 work; and that they would hold the testimony of a good conscience, and prove themselves a good example
30 unto all the flock, and all for the glory of God's holy name

CHAPTER 6

WORSHIP UNDER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN EXISTING CHURCHES¹

SECTION 1: In cases where no Minister of the Word (Teaching Elder) is able to be present, it is understood that God's people gather in official worship providing Christ rules through the supervision of two or more Elders (Ruling or Teaching). In such circumstances, opening and closing prayer shall replace the salutation and benediction; the sacraments may not be administered; and licensed exhortation, sermon reading or a pre-recorded sermon shall replace the official preaching from Scripture.

SECTION 2: In the event that two Ruling Elders are unable to be present, the congregational presbytery may call God's people to gather together for mutual edification under the leadership of one Ruling Elder, Deacon or an appointee of the congregational presbytery which shall set the order of service.

SECTION 3: There may be other emergency or exceptional circumstances that may arise not covered herein, and yet when the congregation gathers together, prays, reads the Scriptures, sings praise to God and hears a message that faithfully expounds the gospel and applies it to their hearts, there is no reason that such may not be considered worship.

¹ This chapter added at 07-2009 American Presbytery. See Minutes 13, B on DCW 6..