

**Detailed Revision Notes
for the
Proposed Revision of
The Book of Worship
Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

Submitted to the Permanent Judicial Commission
May 2014

Approved by the
34th General Assembly

If there are discrepancies between the text of the proposed revision in this document and the document titled “Descending Overture 14-A,” the text of the Descending Overture takes precedence.

INTRODUCTION

The 29th General Assembly (2009) approved the formation of a committee “to review the **Book of Order** with the input of the Stated Clerks of all presbyteries for the purpose of identifying terms, sentences, paragraphs, and/or sections that are not clear and/or which may cause confusion when applied, and further, to offer revisions as needed, to assure clarity of intent and meaning of implementation” (*Minutes* 24-43). The Moderator of the 29th General Assembly appointed TE Howard Shockley (Chairman, Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic), RE Ted Brandsma (Presbytery of the West), and TE James Quillin (Presbytery of the Central South) to the “Constitutional Revisions Committee.” Assistant Stated Clerk TE Ed McCallum resourced the Committee from the Office of the Stated Clerk. Beginning in January 2010, the Committee met three times face to face and numerous times via web meeting.

After submitting its work on the *Revised Book of Government* to the Permanent Judicial Commission in early 2013, the Committee prepared and presented a draft revision of the *Book of Worship* to the 33rd General Assembly (2013), which was received and circulated to Presbyteries and Sessions for input. The document was printed and mailed to all Clerks of Session and Presbytery Stated Clerks with a request for input by December 31, 2013. Input was generally positive, with most of the suggested changes being typographical. This *Proposed Revised Book of Worship* (March 2014), incorporates input received and is submitted to the Permanent Judicial Commission with complete revision notes.

The Constitutional Revisions Committee intends to recommend that the *Proposed Revised the Book of Worship*, with input from the Permanent Judicial Commission, be approved by the 34th General Assembly (2014) and sent to the Presbyteries as a Descending Overture. The Committee intends to submit the recommendation in a two column format (Current Version / Revised Version) for ease of use and distribution. The three column version with Revision Notes will be posted on www.epc.org as background for Commissioners.

The Committee is working on a **Manual of Services**. The need for such a Manual became obvious to the Committee during its work on revising the *Book of Government*. In the mid 1990’s, “Service Forms” were produced and published by the Committee on Christian Education and Publications. The proposed **Manual of Services** is a revision and expansion of that publication. Upon completion, the document will be submitted to the Committee on Christian Education and Communications for approval and publication, as the responsibility for such publications rests with that permanent committee (*Rules for Assembly* 10-1F.2(d, g)).

The Committee on Constitutional Revision will ask the 34th General Assembly to release it from the responsibility to revise the *Book of Discipline* implied in the charge from the 29th General Assembly. The Committee envisions being finished with its work upon the completion of the **Manual of Services** and the ratification of the *Revised Book of Worship* at the 2015 General Assembly.

GLOSSARY

1. Church – when capitalized, refers to the universal church (defined in *Book of Government*, Chapter 1)
2. Congregation – A broad term including all who gather for worship, including members and other attendees.
3. Local Church – An entity composed of its duly received members with specifically defined rights and responsibilities both ecclesiastically and corporately.
4. Minister – Refers broadly to lawfully ordained clergy from both EPC and other Christian traditions.
5. Pastor – designates any of the EPC Teaching Elders in a church, whether Pastor, Associate, or Assistant. Refers only to a Teaching Elder duly called by an EPC church as Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Assistant Pastor as per the *Book of Government*.
6. Teaching Elder - those ordained in one of the varieties of callings for a Pastor in the EPC (G.9-5).

WORKING PRINCIPLES

1. Scripture is our law, the **Westminster Confession and Catechisms** is our interpretation, the **Book of Order** is our application.
2. The Constitution should reflect principles of biblical church government and promote the pursuit of God’s mission at all levels of the church, the local church being the most visible expression.
3. Remove sections that do not require constitutional authority (“no bloating”). Liturgical elements that do not need constitutional authority will be moved to a **Manual of Services**, which will be referenced in the appropriate section of the *Book of Worship*.
4. Condense wording where possible.
5. Use standardized terminology throughout.
6. Use simple, clear, understandable language and organization.
7. No rights reserved to churches will be removed.
8. Historic interpretations of the *Book of Worship*, both authoritative and informal, that have clarified the meaning of particular sections will be incorporated.
9. Common practices will be included when helpful for clarification.
10. Internal references and references to Scripture and relevant Acts and Rules of Assembly will be added for ease of use.
11. Any substantive changes will be clearly highlighted. There will be no amendments “through the back door.”

STYLE

1. Capitalize:
 - a. Offices (Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, Deacon, Moderator, etc.)
 - b. Session and Presbytery when referring to a specific court (usually indicated by the definite article)
 - c. “Scripture”
 - d. “Word” when it is used synonymously with Scripture
 - e. Personal pronoun referring to the Deity
 - f. “Church” when referring to the Universal Church
 - g. Specific sacraments, such as the Lord’s Supper, or Sacrament of Baptism.
2. Not capitalized:
 - a. biblical (as per Bartleby and the *Columbia Guide to Standard American English*)
 - b. gospel (unless referring specifically to the specific books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John)
3. The words “shall” and “will” refer to mandatory provisions; the words “may” or “should” refer to matters that are commended but discretionary.
4. “Minister” will be used when the context would allow those who are ordained in other denominations. “Teaching Elder” will be used when the context is specific to the EPC.

STATUS OF FOOTNOTES

Footnotes in this proposed revision are intended to aid the user, referencing Scripture, other applicable sections of the **Book of Order**, the **Westminster Confession and Catechisms**, and Acts of Assembly. As they are not in the text proper, they are not considered “constitutional” and are not subject to the amending provisions stipulated in the *Book of Government*. They may be changed by an action of the General Assembly or in the editorial process. The same principle applies to indices and tables of contents.

KEY

- Added text is highlighted in gray.
- Items moved to a Manual of Services and Forms are PRINTED IN SMALL CAPS

- Reorganizational revisions are *marked in italics*.

Extensive revision notes are included to explain the Committee’s reasons for the proposed revisions based on the criteria above.

HIGHLIGHTED CHANGES TO THE PROPOSED REVISION OF THE *BOOK OF WORSHIP*

The Committee does not believe that it has made any substantive changes in the *Revised Book of Worship*. However, there are two changes that the Committee wanted to bring to the attention of the Assembly as a whole because of their significance.

1. *Book of Worship* 2-1

Current	Proposed Revision
2-1 The acceptable way of worshiping God is established by God Himself. Proper worship is defined and outlined in God’s revealed will and is to be followed in giving glory to Him. True and proper worship therefore finds its prescription in Holy Scripture...	2-1 The acceptable way of worshiping God corporately is established by God Himself. Proper corporate worship is defined and outlined in God’s revealed will and is to be followed in giving glory to Him. Proper worship therefore finds its prescription foundation in Holy Scripture...

Grounds: While technically not a substantive change, the Committee wanted to highlight the proposed substitution of the word “**foundation**” for “**prescription**.” It is possible to read the current *Book of Worship* as requiring EPC officers to subscribe to a strict regulative principle of worship (i.e., only that which is commanded may be done). In practice this has never been the case in the denomination. Using the word “foundation,” better describes the EPC’s longstanding view and practice, while continuing to affirm that God has revealed to us how He is to be worshiped and that all expressions of worship must be consistent with that revelation. At the same time, “foundation” acknowledges that there may be appropriate variations in application of those revealed principles in varied cultural settings. The required elements of worship are delineated in W.2-1A(1-5).

The word “**corporately**” has been added for clarity. The *Book of Worship* is intended to speak to our practices of corporate rather than private worship.

2. *Book of Worship* 5-1 and 5-2

Current	Proposed Revision
5-1 While marriage is not a sacrament of the Church, it is ordained of God and intended to last as long as the couple shall live. God has designed marriage for the mutual help of husband and wife and for the development of their moral and spiritual character, and for the propagation of children who are to be reared in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.	5-1 Marriage ordained by God While marriage is not a sacrament of the Church, it is ordained of God and intended to last as long as the couple shall live. God has designed marriage between a man and a woman for the mutual help of husband and wife and for the development of their moral and spiritual character, and for the propagation of children who are to be reared in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

<p>5-2 Who Should Marry: A man and a woman who are able to give their consent may marry unless their blood relationship is forbidden by Scripture. The partners should share a common Christian faith and a common intention to build a Christian home. Christians would be wise to seek as partners those who share a common faith and heritage.</p>	<p>5-2 Who should marry</p> <p>A man and a woman who are able to give their consent may marry unless their blood relationship is forbidden by Scripture. The partners husband and wife should share a common Christian faith and a common intention to build a Christian home. Christians would be wise to seek as a husband or a wife those who share a common faith and heritage.</p>
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Grounds: While technically not a substantive change, the Committee wanted to highlight the proposed revisions in **W.5-1** and **W.5-2**. The changes are made for the sake of clarity in light of the present cultural debate about the nature of marriage. The proposed revision makes an explicit statement that marriage ordained by God is between a man and a woman.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE TO THE 34TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2014)

The Constitutional Revisions Committee has noted some issues in the *Book of Worship* that should be addressed but are beyond the scope of the Committee’s charter. Those issues are addressed in recommendations 1 and 2. In recommendation 3, the Committee is asking to be released from the responsibility to revise the *Book of Discipline* implied in the charge from the 29th General Assembly.

1. That the Sabbath provisions of the **Westminster Confession of Faith** (21.7, 8), **Larger Catechism** questions 117-121; **Shorter Catechism** questions 58-60), and *Book of Worship* (§2-2) be referred to the Theology Committee for study and, if deemed necessary and appropriate, that the Committee bring recommendations to the 35th or 36th General Assembly including, but not limited to, amending some or all of those documents.

Grounds: Presbyteries have frequently and consistently allowed exceptions to **Westminster Confession of Faith** 21-7 and 21-8 regarding Sabbath observance. Such exceptions may be out of accord with *Book of Worship* §2-2 and would make it difficult for Teaching Elders to take a vow to submit to the government and discipline of the EPC with integrity at this point.

2. That the Assembly extend the provision of Act of Assembly 94-22, which permits Ruling Elders to administer the Lord’s Supper under certain circumstances, to specifically include the Sacrament of Baptism.

Grounds: In considering **W.3-1A** regarding who may administer Sacraments, the opinion of the Permanent Judicial Commission (Act of Assembly 94-22; **Minutes** 14-36) only addressed administration of the Lord’s Supper. The provision logically should include Baptism. It would be beneficial to state that explicitly.

3. That the 34th General Assembly release the Interim Committee on Constitutional Revisions from the responsibility to review and revise the *Book of Discipline*.

Grounds: The 29th General Assembly (2009) created this Committee to “review the **Book of Order** with the input of the Stated Clerks of all presbyteries for the purpose of identifying terms, sentences, paragraphs, and/or sections that are not clear and/or which may cause confusion when applied, and further, to offer revisions as needed, to assure clarity of intent and meaning of implementation.” The

Committee does not feel there is a need to review and revise the *Book of Discipline* (adopted in 1997) at this time.

PART THREE

The Book of Worship

Proposed CHAPTER 1: Man's Chief End¹

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 1	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 1
<p>1-1 Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. In giving glory to God, the Christian is to worship God as a private exercise of faith and as a part of the spiritual exercise of individual families. However, each person as a Christian becomes a part of the larger family of God, a community of faith called the Church. Within this family, all believers are called to share a corporate fellowship of praise, love, commitment, and service. This life together finds visible expression within the family and to the world through worship together.</p> <p>1-2 Called to worship: Since natural understanding reveals that there is a God who is Lord and sovereign over all, that this God is holy, loving, good, merciful and forgiving, it is appropriate for God's own people to hold Him in awe, to praise Him, to pray to Him, to trust in Him, and to magnify Him. While Christians are bound to give God this worship as individuals and as families, it is especially incumbent upon them to join together in common worship. In such worship, God's love and power in giving the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ for the remission of sin is to be acknowledged and the dedication of life in service to Him is to be made.</p> <p>1-3 Called to serve: The worship of God has, as its natural</p>		<p>1-1 Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. In giving glory to God, the Christian is to worship God as a private exercise of faith and as a part of the spiritual exercise of individual families. However, each person as a Christian becomes a part of the larger family of God, a community of faith called the Church. Within this family, all believers are called to share a corporate fellowship of praise, love, commitment, and service. This life together finds visible expression within the family and to the world through worship together.</p> <p>1-2 Called to worship: Since natural understanding reveals that there is a God who is Lord and sovereign over all, that this God is holy, loving, good, merciful and forgiving, it is appropriate for God's own people to hold Him in awe, to praise Him, to pray to Him, to trust in Him, and to magnify Him. While Christians are bound to give God this worship as individuals and as families, it is especially incumbent upon them to join together in common worship. In such worship, God's love and power in giving the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ for the remission of sin is to be acknowledged and the dedication of life in service to Him is to be made.</p> <p>1-3 Called to serve: The worship of God has, as its natural</p>

¹ Throughout this document, the proposed revised text is printed first in full with detailed revision notes following.

<p>From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 1</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 1</p>
<p>consequence, the response of commitment and service to Him. This finds expression as God’s people gather to worship, then scatter into the world to serve Him. Such service includes witnessing to all peoples the marvelous deeds of Him who calls us out of darkness into His wonderful light. It includes, as a first duty, the proclamation of a grace that reaches out to forgive, to redeem, and to give new spiritual power to life for Him through Jesus Christ, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It includes a witness to the Word of God revealed in Scripture. It includes a witness to God’s love and compassion by embodying that love in acts of ministry to the needs of others. Thus, the Church becomes God’s instrument in the world for the fulfilling of His divine purposes for mankind.</p> <p>1-4 The Church as a body of Christ: As the Church gathers in common worship and fellowship and then goes back into the world to live out its faith and commitment before men, it is acting as the Body of Christ. As a result, the individual Christian, the particular Church, and the visible Church in the world, combine to serve the great Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, when it is engaged in its worship and work. To be in Christ means to be involved actively in the Body by building the inner spiritual life of the Church and by extending its ministry to the world. The goal for the whole Church and each member of it is to have every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, both within the Church and in the whole world.</p>	<p>1. For consistent terminology and understandable language, “particular church” has been changed to “local church” throughout, as it was in the revised <i>Book of Government</i>.</p>	<p>consequence, the response of commitment and service to Him. This finds expression as God’s people gather to worship, then scatter into the world to serve Him. Such service includes witnessing to all peoples the marvelous deeds of Him who calls us out of darkness into His wonderful light. It includes, as a first duty, the proclamation of a grace that reaches out to forgive, to redeem, and to give new spiritual power to life for Him through Jesus Christ, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It includes a witness to the Word of God revealed in Scripture. It includes a witness to God’s love and compassion by embodying that love in acts of ministry to the needs of others. Thus, the Church becomes God’s instrument in the world for the fulfilling of His divine purposes for mankind.</p> <p>1-4 The Church as a body of Christ: As the Church gathers in common worship and fellowship and then goes back into the world to live out its faith and commitment before men, it is acting as the Body of Christ. As a result, the individual Christian, the local church, and the visible Church in the world, combine to serve the great Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, when it is engaged in its worship and work. To be in Christ means to be involved actively in the Body by building the inner spiritual life of the Church and by extending its ministry to the world. The goal for the whole Church and each member of it is to have every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, both within the Church and in the whole world.</p>

Proposed CHAPTER 2: Corporate Worship of God

2-1 The acceptable way of worshipping God corporately is established by God Himself. Proper worship is defined and outlined in God's revealed will and is to be followed in giving glory to Him. True and proper worship therefore finds its foundation in Holy Scripture. Only God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are to receive such worship.

A. Proper corporate worship shall include:

1. The reverent and attentive reading of the Scriptures, the sound preaching and conscientious hearing of the Word²
2. Singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs³
3. The proper administration and receiving of the sacraments⁴
4. Prayer with thanksgiving⁵
5. The giving of tithes and offerings⁶

B. Proper corporate worship of God shall also include times of solemn prayer and fasting,⁷ as well as special days of praise and thanksgiving.⁸

C. All corporate worship of God should at all times and in all places be performed in a holy and respectful manner and should not to be carelessly or willfully neglected or forsaken.⁹

2-2 The Lord's Day

It is appropriate that some amount of time be set aside for the worship of God. God has commanded in His Word that all men in every age keep one day in seven holy to Him as a Sabbath. From the beginning of the world up to the resurrection of Jesus, this Sabbath was the last day of the week. Since the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, it has been changed to the first day of the week and is to be continued until the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath. As a day for remembering and celebrating the resurrection of Christ, it is a continuing witness to God's power over sin and death.¹⁰

A. While Christians may worship God at any time and in any place, they especially worship God in places set aside for that purpose. This does not mean other places are less sacred, but it is a witness to the world when Christians gather together in visible demonstration that God is the Lord of all. For that reason it is appropriate to gather for common worship in a place set aside for the special purpose of praising, glorifying and worshipping God.

B. It is the responsibility of all Christians to gather on the Lord's Day for worship that it might be kept holy unto the Lord. Christians should arrange their affairs and use their influence so that no one will be kept unnecessarily from worshipping God or observing the day in an appropriate manner.

2-3 Preparing and gathering for worship

² 1 Timothy 4:13; W.2-5, 2-6.

³ Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; W.2-7.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 11:27-32; W.3

⁵ 1 Timothy 2:1-4; W.2-8

⁶ 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7-8; W.2-9

⁷ Acts 13:2-3

⁸ Hebrews 12:22-24

⁹ Hebrews 10:24-25

¹⁰ See the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 21.

No Christian should come to the Lord's Day unprepared. Hearts should be prepared that worshipers might be ready to hear and receive the Word of the Lord. Daily affairs should be taken care of beforehand and the day should be spent in rest, free from the cares and concerns of the ordinary works and words. Thoughts should not be concerned with worldly activities, but should focus on the things of the Lord. Plans should be made to participate in public and private worship. Works should be limited to the duties of necessity and mercy.

- A. As the people gather, they should do so in a quiet and reverent manner, remembering beforehand to pray for the Minister, for those who gather to worship, for those who are providentially hindered, and for themselves.
- B. All should be present at the appointed hour, unite in all the parts of the worship, and depart only when the benediction has been pronounced. The conduct of all should be reverent, and no unbecoming conduct should be practiced.

2-4 The order of common worship

The people of God have been set free from all forms of bondage, including bondage to rigid rules and regulations for worship. However, the people are to remember to do all things decently and in order that all may participate and God may be glorified. For the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, this means no local church is required to follow any predetermined or rigid form of worship. However, it also means that worship should be conducted in such a way that persons are not hindered in their worship and that it not be an offense to God.

- A. The Pastor, while advised to consult with the Session, has the duty and responsibility to determine the order, sequence, elements, and proportion of the service that each shall have in public worship. In making those decisions about worship, the Pastor shall be reminded of guidance for worship given in Scripture, the Reformed heritage in which we stand, of the customs, circumstances, and particular needs of the congregation, as well as the admonitions and limitations set by the *Book of Worship*.¹¹
- B. All who come to worship should actively participate. The worship should be so designed that there is common participation when all share in the various elements of praise to God. Participation by various members of the local church is encouraged to demonstrate that worship is a privilege of all and not relegated to a select few.
- C. Each time of worship should give expression to the redemptive work of Christ. It is also appropriate to give special emphasis to certain times of the Church year that highlight specific elements of redemption.¹²
- D. It is always appropriate to join with other parts of the Church in the celebration of certain days, seasons, and other special occasions. However, participation should always be in conformity with Scripture and in keeping with the heritage of the Reformed faith. It is always appropriate for the Session to set special days for prayer and fasting, for thanksgiving and praise, for remembering our heritage, and for recognizing the civic duties and responsibilities of the people of God.

2-5 The Word of God in worship

The ordinary worship of God always includes the reverent and attentive reading of the Scriptures. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence so manifest God in all His power and glory as to leave mankind without excuse, to know God and His will in a way sufficient for salvation necessitates God's self-revelation made in Holy Scripture. The Scriptures are for the sure establishment of the Church, as well as its comfort, and protects it from the corruption of the flesh, the malice of Satan and the world.

- A. Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is to be the rule of faith and life for all Christians. The authority of the Scriptures, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, does not depend upon any other than God Himself. The full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the

¹¹ W.2-7B

¹² Such times, common to the Church Universal, are included in the *Manual of Services*.

Scriptures is the inner working of the Holy Spirit in the heart. All that is necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation is clearly evident in Scripture.¹³

- B.** The supreme Word of God is Jesus Christ, who for the salvation of mankind came and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. He is pre-eminently revealed in the Scriptures and in order to truly know Him the Scriptures must be heard. Thus, the reading of the Scriptures becomes an essential part of worship.
- C.** Reading of the Word should be done with a sense of awe and reverence. A prayer for illumination prior to reading is appropriate in which prayer is made for a sensitive and open heart to the leading and speaking of the Holy Spirit. Ordinarily the Scriptures in worship should be read by the Pastor, or some other appropriate person who has been invited to do so.
- D.** The choice of passages and their length to be read from Scripture belongs to the Pastor. Since the whole counsel of God should be heard by the people, care should be exercised to read from both the Old and New Testaments. It is appropriate to use a lectionary in accomplishing this purpose.

2-6 Sound preaching of the Word

The ordinary worship of God always includes the sound preaching and conscientious hearing of the Word in obedience to God. Such preaching should always open the Word of God in such a way that the hearer can respond with clear understanding and simple faith. In dealing with matters in which there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, the Preacher is to remember that the only infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is Scripture itself.

- A.** Because preaching is closely related to the reading of Scripture, it is appropriate for the sermon to follow closely the reading of the Word and to be based upon it.
- B.** The sermon should be related to the local church and all present. It should address the real issues of that community of faith and should include practical application to life. It should be framed in such terms that all present can understand. Such preaching demands study, meditation, prayer, and time for adequate preparation. Above all, that which is preached should be exemplified in the life of the Preacher.
- C.** Since the reading of Scriptures requires attentiveness and the sermon conscientious hearing, the worshipers have a duty also. As God speaks through the Word as it is read and preached, penetrating hearts,¹⁴ giving guidance in the Christian life, building up in the faith,¹⁵ the worshiper has a solemn duty to be open and receptive to God's revelation. Even as the Preacher is to make proper preparation, so the worshiper is to be prepared in every way to hear and respond.
- D.** While all of the elements of public worship are important and should not be neglected, no worship is complete without the reading and preaching of the Word. For this reason, the Pastor and Session should be careful to protect the pulpit in each particular church that the Word be truly preached. No person should be permitted to preach to a local church without the invitation of the Pastor and the Session, or the Session if there is no Pastor.

2-7 Music in worship

Singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with grace in the heart¹⁶ is a necessary and indispensable part of the common worship of the people of God. The whole congregation is the true choir singing praises and giving glory to God. For this reason, corporate singing is not to be neglected. Emphasis should be given to the content of the hymns that all might sing with understanding.

- A.** Music is not an end in itself, but should serve the whole purpose of giving glory and praise to God. Where there is a choir auxiliary to the congregation, it should be remembered that it is representing the whole

¹³ See *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 1

¹⁴ Hebrews 4:12

¹⁵ 2 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

congregation before God and is not performing for the people. For this reason, it is appropriate for the choir to be composed of those from the local church as far as possible. Those who participate in a choir inevitably represent a special calling in the life of a congregation and should exhibit a gracious Christian life that brings honor to God. Participants in the choir should have such a character and conduct themselves in such a way that their lives will not be a barrier or hindrance to those who worship.

- B. The Pastor has final authority over all parts of the service, including the music. Where there is a music director or other such person working in music, that person shall always consult with the Pastor concerning the music or worship.¹⁷ If there is no Pastor, the Session has final authority over the service.¹⁸
- C. Care should be exercised in selecting music so that all may rejoice in the Lord, singing and making melody in their hearts. Lyrics should be appropriate and reflect Reformed theology.
- D. The use of various musical instruments in worship is appropriate unless disapproved by the Session. However, it is to be remembered that all music, including instruments, should be aids and not hindrances to or substitutes for congregational participation.
- E. As a community of praise, a congregation should ordinarily conclude its worship with congregational singing suitable for the occasion prior to the benediction.

2-8 Prayer in worship

The Pastor ordinarily has the duty to lead the people in prayer during times of worship, although others may be invited to do so. The one who leads the prayer does so on behalf of the people, representing them before God. In order for prayer to be accepted it must be made in the name of Jesus, by the help of the Holy Spirit, and be made in accordance with the will of God.¹⁹ It is to be made for things that are lawful for God's people and should be made with understanding, reverence, humility, fervor, faith, love, and perseverance. It should be made in a language that is common to all.

- A. In preparing to lead in prayer, the Pastor should give as careful attention to preparation for prayer as for preaching. The duty of voicing the prayers of the people is a solemn one and should be performed with the dignity befitting the occasion. The Pastor's own prayer life, the study of the great prayers of the Church, a close acquaintance with Scripture, the reading of devotional classics, all combine to enhance effectiveness as the Pastor represents the people before God in prayer.
- B. The people are also to prepare themselves for worship and prayer. During those times when the Minister is leading in prayer, their hearts should give assent to the thoughts that are voiced and their demeanor should be reverent.
- C. Those who lead in prayer need not be limited to fixed forms of prayer in worship and the Minister shall determine the emphasis given to the various parts of prayer. However, in the public worship of God the prayers should include adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession and the communion of saints.
 1. Adoration is comprised of offering glory and honor and praise to the holiness and majesty of God for His works of creation and providence, and for the fullness of His revelation in Jesus Christ.
 2. Confession is comprised of the voicing of sins common to all with opportunity for the people to confess silently private and individual sins and shortcomings, both of commission and omission.
 3. Assurance of Pardon is the appropriate response to confession. God's people can approach His throne of holiness because in Jesus they are assured of His grace and mercy. Those who believe in Jesus as Savior, who confess their sins, who are truly penitent and sorry for all their offenses, and who intend by God's gift of spiritual power through the Holy Spirit to turn from their evil ways, are assured of forgiveness.

¹⁷ See W.2-4A

¹⁸ See proposed G.18-3A (current G.16-10K, M)

¹⁹ John 14:13-14, 16:23-24; Romans 8:26-27

Therefore, it is the duty of the Pastor in joyous, affirming voice to declare unto such their forgiveness. It is then appropriate for the people of God to express their own joy and gratitude in the mercy of God by singing some hymn or response such as the Doxology or the *Gloria Patri*.

4. Thanksgiving is comprised of the expression of gratitude to God for all His blessings, specific and general as well as temporal and spiritual. God's gracious providence should be remembered and special thanksgiving should be made for His unspeakable gift in Jesus Christ.
5. Supplication is comprised of the requests of the people, both corporate and personal, for those things needful for life, for spiritual growth, for help in trouble, for health in sickness, for the development of the fruit of the Spirit, and for all those blessings necessary for witness and service.
6. Intercession is comprised of those requests made in behalf of others, especially praying for the visible Church, the Kingdom of Christ on earth, for the civil government including the president, the congress, the judiciary, the governor, and all those in positions of authority. It shall include petition for widows and orphans and for all those who have need of God.
7. Communion of Saints is comprised of prayers of gratitude for those who have witnessed a good confession and gone to be with the Lord. The prayer should remember the invisible Church whose members number those believers of all ages of all times. It is always appropriate for the prayers of the people of God to conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

2-9 The offerings of the people of God²⁰

The acknowledgment that God is the Author of every good gift and that His people are but stewards of His grace should find expression in the offerings of the congregation. In returning to God a proper stewardship of His gifts, the congregation is to be reminded that they are also held accountable not only for a proper stewardship, but for the use of all they have and are. The giving of the people of God in response to His goodness and love should find expression in three principal areas.

A. The offering of self

Stewardship begins with offering of self to God, heart, mind, body, and soul.²¹ Each service may properly include a time for rededication or for commitment. It is always appropriate to present individuals with an opportunity for public response to the proclamation of the Gospel by public profession of faith or reaffirmation. Such public profession or reaffirmation should be followed by church membership according to the procedure established by the congregation.²²

B. The offering of tithes and gifts

Each worship service should include a time when the community of believers may present their tithes and gifts to God. It is a visible expression of the commitment of believers to the extension of the Gospel, the work of ministry, and the support of the Church of Jesus Christ.²³

C. The offering of service to others

Each service of worship should remind the worshippers of God's call to service in ministry to others and provide opportunity from time to time for commitment to special service. This may include the announcement of opportunities within the common life of the congregation to serve Revision Notes

²⁰ For further elaboration of the "service of giving," see *Book of Worship* 7-4

²¹ Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Luke 10:27

²² See current **G.9-2B** [revised **G.8-2**]

²³ Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Revision Notes

Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 2	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 2
<p>2-1 The acceptable way of worshipping God is established by God Himself. Proper worship is defined and outlined in God’s revealed will and is to be followed in giving glory to Him. True and proper worship therefore finds its prescription in Holy Scripture. Only God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are to receive such worship. Such worship shall include the reverent and attentive reading of the Scriptures, the sound preaching and conscientious hearing of the Word, and singing of psalms and hymns, the proper administration and right receiving of the sacraments, and prayer with thanksgiving. Such public worship of God shall also include times of solemn prayer and fasting, as well as special days of praise and thanksgiving. All worship should at all times and in all places be performed in a holy and religious manner. The public worship of God is not to be carelessly or willfully neglected or forsaken.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For clarity, the word “corporately” has been added to proposed W.2-1 and other sections of chapter 2, being consistent with the intent of the chapter in addressing the worship of God’s people gathered rather than private worship. 2. The word “foundation” has been substituted for “prescription” in proposed W.2-1, in keeping with the denomination’s overall regulative principle. Using the word “foundation” affirms that God has revealed to us how He is to be worshiped, that all expressions of worship must be consistent with that revelation, yet there may be appropriate variations in application of those revealed principles in varied cultural settings. 3. For clarity, the word “Proper” has been substituted for “Such” in proposed W.2-1A and C. 4. For consistency with biblical references, “spiritual songs” has been added to W-2.1A.2. 5. “The giving of tithes and offerings was added to proposed W.2-1A.5 to be consistent with W.2-9. 6. For understandable language, “Respectful” replaces “religious” in proposed W.2-1C because of the negative connotation of the word “religious” while leaving room 	<p>2-1 The acceptable way of worshipping God corporately is established by God Himself. Proper corporate worship is defined and outlined in God’s revealed will and is to be followed in giving glory to Him. Proper worship therefore finds its foundation in Holy Scripture. Only God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are to receive such worship.</p> <p>A. Proper corporate worship shall include-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reverent and attentive reading of the Scriptures, the sound preaching and conscientious hearing of the Word²⁴ 2. “Singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,”²⁵ 3. The proper administration and right receiving of the sacraments, 4. Prayer with thanksgiving 5. The giving of tithes and offerings. <p>B. Proper corporate worship of God shall also include times of solemn prayer and fasting, as well as special days of praise and thanksgiving.</p> <p>C. All worship should at all times and in all places be performed in a holy and religious respectful manner. The public corporate worship of God is not to be</p>

²⁴ 1 Timothy 4:13; W.2-5, 2-6

²⁵ Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; W.2-7

<p>2-2 The Lord’s Day: It is appropriate that some amount of time be set aside for the worship of God. God has commanded in His Word that all men in every age keep one day in seven holy to Him as a Sabbath. From the beginning of the world up to the resurrection of Jesus, this Sabbath was the last day of the week. Since the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, it has been changed to the first day of the week and is to be continued until the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath. As a day for remembering and celebrating the resurrection of Christ, it is a continuing witness to God’s power over sin and death.</p> <p>A. While Christians may worship God at any time and in any place, they especially worship God in places set aside for that purpose. This does not mean other places are less sacred, but it is a witness to the world when Christians gather together in visible demonstration that God is the Lord of all. For that reason it is appropriate to gather for common worship in a place set aside for the special purpose of praising, glorifying and worshipping God.</p> <p>B. It is incumbent upon all Christians to gather on the Lord’s Day for worship that it might be kept holy unto the Lord. Affairs should be so arranged and influence so used that no one will be kept unnecessarily from worshipping God or observing the day in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>2-3 Preparing and gathering for</p>	<p>for many appropriate cultural expressions of worship.</p> <p>7. See recommendation #1, page iv.</p> <p>8. “Incumbent upon” carries a connotation of weight and duty. “Duty” was consistently replaced with “responsibility” in the <i>Book of Government</i>. For consistency of terminology, “responsibility of” replaces “incumbent upon” in proposed W.2-2B.</p> <p>9. For clarity of language, passive voice has been changed to active voice.</p>	<p>carelessly or willfully neglected or forsaken.</p> <p>2-2 The Lord’s Day: It is appropriate that some amount of time be set aside for the worship of God. God has commanded in His Word that all men in every age keep one day in seven holy to Him as a Sabbath. From the beginning of the world up to the resurrection of Jesus, this Sabbath was the last day of the week. Since the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, it has been changed to the first day of the week and is to be continued until the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath. As a day for remembering and celebrating the resurrection of Christ, it is a continuing witness to God’s power over sin and death.</p> <p>A. While Christians may worship God at any time and in any place, they especially worship God in places set aside for that purpose. This does not mean other places are less sacred, but it is a witness to the world when Christians gather together in visible demonstration that God is the Lord of all. For that reason it is appropriate to gather for common worship in a place set aside for the special purpose of praising, glorifying and worshipping God.</p> <p>B. It is the responsibility of all Christians to gather on the Lord’s Day for worship that it might be kept holy unto the Lord. Christians should arrange their affairs and use their influence so that no one will be kept unnecessarily from worshipping God or observing the day in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>2-3 Preparing and gathering for worship: No Christian should</p>
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<p>worship: No Christian should come to the Lord’s Day unprepared. Hearts should be prepared that worshipers might be ready to hear and receive the Word of the Lord. Daily affairs should be taken care of beforehand and the day should be spent in rest, free from the cares and concerns of the ordinary works and words. Thoughts should not be concerned with worldly activities, but should focus on the things of the Lord. Plans should be made to participate in public and private worship. Works should be limited to the duties of necessity and mercy.</p> <p>A. As the people gather, they should do so in a quiet and reverent manner, remembering beforehand to pray for the minister, for those who gather to worship, for those who are providentially hindered, and for themselves.</p> <p>B. All should be present at the appointed hour, unite in all the parts of the worship, and depart only when the benediction has been pronounced. The conduct of all should be reverent, and no unbecoming conduct should be practiced.</p> <p>2-4 The order of common worship: The people of God have been set free from all forms of bondage, including bondage to rigid rules and regulations for worship. However, the people are to remember to do all things decently and in order that all may participate and God may be glorified. For the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, this means no particular church is required to follow any predetermined or rigid form of worship. However, it also means that worship should be conducted in such a way that persons are not hindered in their worship</p>	<p>10. For clarity and consistency, corporate has been substituted for “common” in revised W.2-4. “Common,” too easily connotes “ordinary,” which is not the meaning in this context.</p>	<p>come to the Lord’s Day unprepared. Hearts should be prepared that worshipers might be ready to hear and receive the Word of the Lord. Daily affairs should be taken care of beforehand and the day should be spent in rest, free from the cares and concerns of the ordinary works and words. Thoughts should not be concerned with worldly activities, but should focus on the things of the Lord. Plans should be made to participate in public and private worship. Works should be limited to the duties of necessity and mercy.</p> <p>A. As the people gather, they should do so in a quiet and reverent manner, remembering beforehand to pray for the Minister, for those who gather to worship, for those who are providentially hindered, and for themselves.</p> <p>B. All should be present at the appointed hour, unite in all the parts of the worship, and depart only when the benediction has been pronounced. The conduct of all should be reverent, and no unbecoming conduct should be practiced.</p> <p>2-4 The order of corporate worship: The people of God have been set free from all forms of bondage, including bondage to rigid rules and regulations for worship. However, the people are to remember to do all things decently and in order that all may participate and God may be glorified. For the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, this means no local church is required to follow any predetermined or rigid form of worship. However, it also means that worship should be conducted in such a way that persons are not hindered in their worship and that it not be</p>
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<p>and that it not be an offense to God.</p> <p>A. The Pastor, while advised to consult with the Church Session, has the duty and responsibility to determine the order, sequence, elements, and proportion of the service that each shall have in public worship. In making those decisions about worship, the Pastor shall be reminded of guidance for worship given in Scripture, the Reformed heritage in which we stand, of the customs, circumstances, and particular needs of the congregation, as well as the admonitions and limitations set by the <i>Book of Worship</i>.</p> <p>B. All who come to worship should actively participate. The worship should be so designed that there is common participation when all share in the various elements of praise to God. Participation by various members of the particular congregation is encouraged to demonstrate that worship is a privilege of all and not relegated to a select few.</p> <p>C. Each time of worship should give expression to the whole Gospel. However, it is also appropriate to give special emphasis to certain times of the Church year, wherein the whole life of Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the whole counsel of God is celebrated. SUCH TIMES, COMMON TO THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL, INCLUDE ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, EPIPHANY, LENT, EASTER, ASCENSION, PENTECOST, AND TRINITY.</p> <p>ADVENT, WHEREIN THE CHURCH CELEBRATES THE</p>	<p>11. For clarity, “the whole Gospel” is changed to “the redemptive work of Christ” in proposed W.2-4C.</p> <p>12. Wording in proposed W.2-4C has been condensed.</p>	<p>an offense to God.</p> <p>A. The Pastor, while advised to consult with the Session, has the duty and responsibility to determine the order, sequence, elements, and proportion of the service that each shall have in public worship. In making those decisions about worship, the Pastor shall be reminded of guidance for worship given in Scripture, the Reformed heritage in which we stand, of the customs, circumstances, and particular needs of the congregation, as well as the admonitions and limitations set by the <i>Book of Worship</i>.</p> <p>B. All who come to worship should actively participate. The worship should be so designed that there is common participation when all share in the various elements of praise to God. Participation by various members of the local church is encouraged to demonstrate that worship is a privilege of all and not relegated to a select few.</p> <p>C. Each time of worship should give expression to redemptive work of Christ. It is also appropriate to give special emphasis to certain times of the Church year that highlight specific elements of redemption.</p>
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<p>PROMISE OF THE MESSIAH WHO WAS TO COME AND WHO IS COMING AGAIN;</p> <p>CHRISTMAS, WHEREIN THE CHURCH CELEBRATES THE INCARNATION OF GOD IN CHRIST;</p> <p>EPIPHANY, WHEREIN THE CHURCH CELEBRATES THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO THE WORLD;</p> <p>LENT, ENDING IN HOLY WEEK, WHEREIN THE CHURCH OBSERVES A TIME OF REPENTANCE AND HUMILITY, OF SACRIFICE AND SELF-DENIAL, AS IT CELEBRATES THE DEATH OF CHRIST UPON THE CROSS FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD;</p> <p>EASTER, WHEREIN THE CHURCH CELEBRATES GOD’S MIGHTY POWER AND PROMISE BY THE RESURRECTION OF HIS SON FROM THE DEAD;</p> <p>ASCENSION, WHEREIN THE CHURCH CELEBRATES THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST FROM THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD WHERE HE ALSO MAKES INTERCESSION FOR HIS OWN;</p> <p>PENTECOST, WHEREIN THE CHURCH CELEBRATES THE BESTOWING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON BELIEVERS, AND THE GIFT OF SPIRITUAL POWER TO EQUIP CHRISTIANS TO LIVE FOR JESUS UNDER THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS;</p> <p>TRINITY, WHEREIN THE CHURCH CELEBRATES THE ONENESS AND FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD, REVEALED IN GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON, AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT.</p>		
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D. It is always appropriate to join with other parts of the Church in the celebration of certain days, seasons, and other special occasions. However, participation should always be in conformity with Scripture and in keeping with the heritage of the Reformed faith. It is always appropriate for the Church Session to set special days for prayer and fasting, for thanksgiving and praise, for remembering our heritage, and for recognizing the civic duties and responsibilities of the people of God.

2-5 The Word of God in Worship: The ordinary worship of God always includes the reverent and attentive reading of the Scriptures. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence so manifest God in all His power and glory as to leave mankind without excuse, to know God and His will in a way sufficient for salvation necessitates God's self-revelation made in Holy Scripture. The Scriptures are for the sure establishment of the Church, as well as its comfort, and protects it from the corruption of the flesh, the malice of Satan and the world.

A. Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is to be the rule of faith and life for all Christians. The authority of the Scriptures, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, does not depend upon any other than God Himself. The full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Scriptures is the inner working of the Holy Spirit in the heart. All that is

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<p>necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation is clearly evident in Scripture.</p> <p>B. The supreme Word of God is Jesus Christ, who for the salvation of mankind came and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. He is pre-eminently revealed in the Scriptures and in order to truly know Him the Scriptures must be heard. Thus, the reading of the Scriptures becomes an essential part of worship.</p> <p>C. Reading of the Word should be done with a sense of awe and reverence. A prayer for illumination prior to reading is appropriate in which prayer is made for a sensitive and open heart to the leading and speaking of the Holy Spirit. Ordinarily the Scriptures in worship should be read by the Pastor, or some other appropriate person who has been invited to do so.</p> <p>D. The choice of passages and their length to be read from Scripture belongs to the Pastor. Since the whole counsel of God should be heard by the people, care should be exercised to read from both the Old and New Testaments and from all parts of the Word. It is appropriate to use a lectionary in accomplishing this purpose.</p> <p>2-6 Sound Preaching of the Word: The ordinary worship of God always includes the sound preaching and conscientious hearing of the Word in obedience to God. Such preaching should always open the Word of God in such a way that the hearer can respond with clear understanding and simple faith. In dealing with matters in which there is a</p>	<p>13. For clarity, the phrase “and from all parts of the Word” has been deleted from proposed W.2-5D because the phrase is unnecessary and could potentially cause confusion.</p>	<p>salvation is clearly evident in Scripture.</p> <p>B. The supreme Word of God is Jesus Christ, who for the salvation of mankind came and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. He is pre-eminently revealed in the Scriptures and in order to truly know Him the Scriptures must be heard. Thus, the reading of the Scriptures becomes an essential part of worship.</p> <p>C. Reading of the Word should be done with a sense of awe and reverence. A prayer for illumination prior to reading is appropriate in which prayer is made for a sensitive and open heart to the leading and speaking of the Holy Spirit. Ordinarily the Scriptures in worship should be read by the Pastor, or some other appropriate person who has been invited to do so.</p> <p>D. The choice of passages and their length to be read from Scripture belongs to the Pastor. Since the whole counsel of God should be heard by the people, care should be exercised to read from both the Old and New Testaments. It is appropriate to use a lectionary in accomplishing this purpose.</p> <p>2-6 Sound preaching of the Word</p> <p>The ordinary worship of God always includes the sound preaching and conscientious hearing of the Word in obedience to God. Such preaching should always open the Word of God in such a way that the hearer can respond with clear understanding and simple faith. In dealing with matters in which there is a question about the true and full</p>
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<p>question about the true and full sense of any Scripture, the Preacher is to remember that the only infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is Scripture itself.</p> <p>A. Because preaching is closely related to the reading of Scripture, it is appropriate for the sermon to follow closely the reading of the Word and to be based upon it.</p> <p>B. The sermon should be related to the particular congregation and the individuals within it. It should address the real issues of that community of faith and should include practical application to life. It should be framed in such terms that all present can understand. Such preaching demands study, meditation, prayer, and time for adequate preparation. Above all, that which is preached should be exemplified in the life of the Preacher.</p> <p>C. Since the reading of Scriptures requires attentiveness and the sermon conscientious hearing, the worshipers have a duty also. As God speaks through the Word as it is read and preached, cutting hearts, giving guidance in the Christian life, building up in the faith, the worshiper has a solemn duty to be open and receptive to God’s revelation. Even as the Preacher is to make proper preparation, so the worshiper is to be prepared in every way to hear and respond.</p> <p>D. While all of the elements of public worship are important and should not be</p>	<p>14. For clarity, “and all present” has been substituted in proposed W.2-6B to acknowledge the fact that those who are not members of the local church may be present.</p> <p>15. For understandable language, “cutting” was substituted for “penetrating” in proposed W.2-6C. For ease of use, footnotes to relevant Scriptures were added (see text section above).</p>	<p>sense of any Scripture, the Preacher is to remember that the only infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is Scripture itself.</p> <p>A. Because preaching is closely related to the reading of Scripture, it is appropriate for the sermon to follow closely the reading of the Word and to be based upon it.</p> <p>B. The sermon should be related to the local church and all present. It should address the real issues of that community of faith and should include practical application to life. It should be framed in such terms that all present can understand. Such preaching demands study, meditation, prayer, and time for adequate preparation. Above all, that which is preached should be exemplified in the life of the Preacher.</p> <p>C. Since the reading of Scriptures requires attentiveness and the sermon conscientious hearing, the worshipers have a duty also. As God speaks through the Word as it is read and preached, penetrating hearts, giving guidance in the Christian life, building up in the faith, the worshiper has a solemn duty to be open and receptive to God’s revelation. Even as the Preacher is to make proper preparation, so the worshiper is to be prepared in every way to hear and respond.</p> <p>D. While all of the elements of public worship are important and should not be neglected, no worship is complete without the</p>
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<p>neglected, no worship is complete without the reading and preaching of the Word. For this reason, the Pastor and Church Session should be careful to protect the pulpit in each particular church that the Word be truly preached. No person should be permitted to preach to a particular church without the invitation of the Pastor and the Church Session, or the Church Session if there is no Pastor.</p> <p>2-7 Music in Worship: Singing of psalms with grace in the heart is a necessary and indispensable part of the common worship of the people of God. The whole congregation is the true choir singing praises and giving glory to God. For this reason, corporate singing is not to be neglected. Emphasis should be given to the content of the hymns that all might sing with understanding.</p> <p>A. Music is not an end in itself, but should serve the whole purpose of giving glory and praise to God. Where there is a choir auxiliary to the congregation, it should be remembered that it is representing the whole congregation before God and is not performing for the people. For this reason, it is appropriate for the choir to be composed of those from the particular church as far as possible. Those who participate in a choir inevitably represent a special calling in the life of a congregation and should exhibit a gracious Christian life that brings honor to God. Participants in the choir should have such a character and conduct themselves in such a way that their lives will not be a</p>	<p>16. See note 4.</p>	<p>reading and preaching of the Word. For this reason, the Pastor and Church Session should be careful to protect the pulpit in each local church that the Word be truly preached. No person should be permitted to preach to a local church without the invitation of the Pastor and the Session, or the Session if there is no Pastor.</p> <p>2-7 Music in Worship</p> <p>Singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with grace in the heart is a necessary and indispensable part of the common worship of the people of God. The whole congregation is the true choir singing praises and giving glory to God. For this reason, corporate singing is not to be neglected. Emphasis should be given to the content of the hymns that all might sing with understanding.</p> <p>A. Music is not an end in itself, but should serve the whole purpose of giving glory and praise to God. Where there is a choir auxiliary to the congregation, it should be remembered that it is representing the whole congregation before God and is not performing for the people. For this reason, it is appropriate for the choir to be composed of those from the local church as far as possible. Those who participate in a choir inevitably represent a special calling in the life of a congregation and should exhibit a gracious Christian life that brings honor to God. Participants in the choir should have such a character and conduct themselves in such a way that their lives will not be a barrier or hindrance to those</p>
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<p>barrier or hindrance to those who worship.</p> <p>B. The Minister is responsible for the order for worship, for leading the service, and for determining the parts of worship along with the emphasis given to each. The Minister has final authority over all, including the music. Where there is a music director or other such person working in music, that person shall always consult with the Minister concerning the music or worship.</p> <p>C. Care should be exercised in selecting hymns that both new and old are selected in order that all may rejoice in the Lord, singing and making melody in their hearts. The words of hymns should be appropriate and reflect Reformed theology. It is appropriate to include contemporary hymns that are in keeping with the life of the particular congregation.</p> <p>D. The use of various musical instruments in worship is appropriate unless disapproved by the <u>Church Session</u>. However, it is to be remembered that all music, including instruments, should be aids and not hindrances to or substitutes for congregational participation.</p> <p>E. As a community of praise, a congregation should ordinarily conclude its worship with a hymn suitable for the occasion prior to the benediction.</p> <p>2-8 Prayer in Worship: The Minister ordinarily has the duty to lead the people in prayer</p>	<p>17. Wording has been condensed and clarified in proposed W.2-7B. “Pastor” is substituted for “Minister” as it is the calling within the office of Teaching Elder that is most relevant in the setting of worship in the local church. “Parts of the service” was added to clarify the term “all.”</p> <p>18 Wording of W.2-7C has been condensed. For clarity, “Music” and “lyrics” are substituted for “hymns” and “words of hymns,” keeping the intent of the section but more clearly including all music used in the corporate worship service.</p> <p>19. “Church Session” has been changed to “Session” throughout, as the word “Church” is unnecessary.</p> <p>20. “Congregational singing” is substituted for “hymn” in proposed W.2-7E keeping the intent of the section but broadening the categories to include all music used in the</p>	<p>who worship.</p> <p>B. The Pastor has final authority over all parts of the service, including the music. Where there is a music director or other such person working in music, that person shall always consult with the Pastor concerning the music or worship. If there is no Pastor, the Session has final authority over the service.</p> <p>C. Care should be exercised in selecting music so that all may rejoice in the Lord, singing and making melody in their hearts. Lyrics should be appropriate and reflect Reformed theology.</p> <p>D. The use of various musical instruments in worship is appropriate unless disapproved by the Session. However, it is to be remembered that all music, including instruments, should be aids and not hindrances to or substitutes for congregational participation.</p> <p>E. As a community of praise, a congregation should ordinarily conclude its worship with a hymn congregational singing suitable for the occasion prior to the benediction.</p> <p>2-8 Prayer in worship</p> <p>The Pastor ordinarily has the duty to lead the people in</p>
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<p>during times of worship, although from time to time others may be invited to do so. As the Minister prays the people are being represented before God. All the prayers should be offered silently from the hearts of those who listen. In order for prayer to be accepted it must be made in the name of Jesus, by the help of the Holy Spirit, and be made in accordance with the will of God. It is to be made for things that are lawful for God’s people and should be made with understanding, reverence, humility, fervor, faith, love, and perseverance. It should be made in a language that is common to all.</p> <p>A. In preparing to lead in prayer, the Minister should give as careful attention to preparation for prayer as for preaching. The duty of voicing the prayers of the people is a solemn one and should be performed with the dignity befitting the occasion. The Minister’s own prayer life, the study of the great prayers of the Church, a close acquaintance with Scripture, the reading of devotional classics, all combine to enhance effectiveness as the Minister represents the people before God in prayer.</p> <p>B. No less than the Minister, the people are to prepare themselves for worship and prayer. During those times when the Minister is leading in prayer, their hearts should give assent to the thoughts that are voiced and their demeanor should be reverent.</p> <p>C. Those who lead in prayer need not be limited to fixed forms of prayer in worship and the Minister shall</p>	<p>worship service.</p> <p>21. For consistent terminology with the <i>Book of Government</i>, “Pastor” has replaced “Minister” throughout proposed W.2-8. Although the responsibility may be delegated from time to time, part of the responsibility of a Teaching Elder’s calling as Pastor is leading the people in prayer.</p> <p>22. Wording of proposed W.2-8 has been condensed to avoid unnecessary duplication with proposed W.2-8B.</p> <p>23. For clarity, “also” replaces “no less than the minister” in proposed W2-8B. The people are to prepare themselves for prayer but they do so differently than the Pastor. The proposed change better captures that concept.</p>	<p>prayer during times of worship, although others may be invited to do so. The one who leads the prayer does so on behalf of the people, representing them before God. In order for prayer to be accepted it must be made in the name of Jesus, by the help of the Holy Spirit, and be made in accordance with the will of God. It is to be made for things that are lawful for God’s people and should be made with understanding, reverence, humility, fervor, faith, love, and perseverance. It should be made in a language that is common to all.</p> <p>A. In preparing to lead in prayer, the Pastor should give as careful attention to preparation for prayer as for preaching. The duty of voicing the prayers of the people is a solemn one and should be performed with the dignity befitting the occasion. The Pastor’s own prayer life, the study of the great prayers of the Church, a close acquaintance with Scripture, the reading of devotional classics, all combine to enhance effectiveness as the Pastor represents the people before God in prayer.</p> <p>B. The people are also to prepare themselves for worship and prayer. During those times when the Minister is leading in prayer, their hearts should give assent to the thoughts that are voiced and their demeanor should be reverent.</p> <p>C. Those who lead in prayer need not be limited to fixed forms of prayer in worship and the Minister shall determine the emphasis given to the various parts of</p>
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<p>determine the emphasis given to the various parts of prayer. However, in the public worship of God the prayers should include adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession and the communion of saints.</p> <p>Adoration is comprised of offering glory and honor and praise to the holiness and majesty of God for His works of creation and providence, and for the fullness of His revelation in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Confession is comprised of the voicing of sins common to all with opportunity for the people to confess silently private and individual sins and shortcomings, both of commission and omission.</p> <p>Assurance of Pardon is the appropriate response to confession. God’s people can approach His throne of holiness because in Jesus they are assured of His grace and mercy. Those who believe in Jesus as Savior, who confess their sins, who are truly penitent and sorry for all their offenses, and who intend by God’s gift of spiritual power through the Holy Spirit to turn from their evil ways, are assured of forgiveness. Therefore, it is the duty of the Minister in joyous, affirming voice to declare unto such their forgiveness. It is then appropriate for the people of God to express their own joy and gratitude in the mercy of God by singing some hymn or response such as the Doxology or the Gloria Patri.</p>		<p>prayer. However, in the public worship of God the prayers should include adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession and the communion of saints.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Adoration</u> is comprised of offering glory and honor and praise to the holiness and majesty of God for His works of creation and providence, and for the fullness of His revelation in Jesus Christ. 2. <u>Confession</u> is comprised of the voicing of sins common to all with opportunity for the people to confess silently private and individual sins and shortcomings, both of commission and omission. 3. <u>Assurance of Pardon</u> is the appropriate response to confession. God’s people can approach His throne of holiness because in Jesus they are assured of His grace and mercy. Those who believe in Jesus as Savior, who confess their sins, who are truly penitent and sorry for all their offenses, and who intend by God’s gift of spiritual power through the Holy Spirit to turn from their evil ways, are assured of forgiveness. Therefore, it is the duty of the Pastor in joyous, affirming voice to declare unto such their forgiveness. It is then appropriate for the people of God to express their own joy and gratitude in the mercy of God by singing some hymn or response such as the Doxology or the <i>Gloria Patri</i>.
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<p>Thanksgiving is comprised of the expression of gratitude to God for all His blessings, specific and general as well as temporal and spiritual. God’s gracious providence should be remembered and special thanksgiving should be made for His unspeakable gift in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Supplication is comprised of the requests of the people, both corporate and personal, for those things needful for life, for spiritual growth, for help in trouble, for health in sickness, for the development of the fruit of the Spirit, and for all those blessings necessary for witness and service.</p> <p>Intercession is comprised of those requests made in behalf of others, especially praying for the visible Church, the Kingdom of Christ on earth, for the civil government including the president, the congress, the judiciary, the governor, and all those in positions of authority. It shall include petition for widows and orphans and for all those who have need of God.</p> <p>Communion of Saints is comprised of prayers of gratitude for those who have witnessed a good confession and gone to be with the Lord. The prayer should remember the invisible Church whose members number those believers of all ages of all times. It is always appropriate for the prayers of the people of God to</p>		<p>4. <u>Thanksgiving</u> is comprised of the expression of gratitude to God for all His blessings, specific and general as well as temporal and spiritual. God’s gracious providence should be remembered and special thanksgiving should be made for His unspeakable gift in Jesus Christ.</p> <p>5. <u>Supplication</u> is comprised of the requests of the people, both corporate and personal, for those things needful for life, for spiritual growth, for help in trouble, for health in sickness, for the development of the fruit of the Spirit, and for all those blessings necessary for witness and service.</p> <p>6. <u>Intercession</u> is comprised of those requests made in behalf of others, especially praying for the visible Church, the Kingdom of Christ on earth, for the civil government including the president, the congress, the judiciary, the governor, and all those in positions of authority. It shall include petition for widows and orphans and for all those who have need of God.</p> <p>7. <u>Communion of Saints</u> is comprised of prayers of gratitude for those who have witnessed a good confession and gone to be with the Lord. The prayer should remember the invisible Church whose members number those believers of all ages of all times. It is always appropriate for the prayers of the people of God to conclude with the Lord’s Prayer.</p>
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<p>conclude with the Lord's Prayer.</p> <p>2-9 The Offerings of the People of God: The acknowledgment that God is the Author of every good gift and that His people are but stewards of His grace should find expression in the offerings of the congregation. In returning to God a proper stewardship of His gifts, the congregation is to be reminded that they are also held accountable not only for a proper stewardship, but for the use of all they have and are. The giving of the people of God in response to His goodness and love should find expression in three principal areas.</p> <p>A. The offering of self: The first duty of the Christian is to offer self to God, heart, mind, body, and soul. Each service may properly include a time for rededication or for commitment. It is always appropriate to present individuals with an opportunity for public response to the proclamation of the Gospel by public profession of faith or reaffirmation.</p> <p>B. The offering of tithes and gifts: Each worship service should include a time when the community of believers may present their tithes and gifts to God. It is a visible expression of the commitment of believers to the extension of the Gospel, the work of ministry, and the support of the Church of</p>	<p>24. For clarity, the beginning of W-2-9A has been re-worded. There are a number of "first duties" listed in the Book of Order. Revised language in proposed W.2-9A maintains the intended priority of offering oneself, but avoids the confusion of numerous "first duties."</p> <p>25. For clarity and consistency, language was added to proposed W.2-9A to be consistent with the EPC's theology of the church, Those who profess Christ and their children are members of the visible church (current G.9-2B, revised G.8-2).</p>	<p>2-9 The offerings of the people of God:</p> <p>The acknowledgment that God is the Author of every good gift and that His people are but stewards of His grace should find expression in the offerings of the congregation. In returning to God a proper stewardship of His gifts, the congregation is to be reminded that they are also held accountable not only for a proper stewardship, but for the use of all they have and are. The giving of the people of God in response to His goodness and love should find expression in three principal areas.</p> <p>A. The offering of self:</p> <p>Stewardship begins with offering of self to God, heart, mind, body, and soul. Each service may properly include a time for rededication or for commitment. It is always appropriate to present individuals with an opportunity for public response to the proclamation of the Gospel by public profession of faith or reaffirmation. Such public profession or reaffirmation should be followed by church membership according to the procedure established by the congregation.</p> <p>B. The offering of tithes and gifts: Each worship service should include a time when the community of believers may present their tithes and gifts to God. It is a visible expression of the commitment of believers to the extension of the Gospel, the work of ministry, and the support of the Church of Jesus Christ.</p>
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<p>Jesus Christ.</p> <p>C. The offering of service to others: Each service of worship should remind the worshipers of God’s call to service in ministry to others and provide opportunity from time to time for commitment to special service. This may include the announcement of opportunities within the common life of the congregation to serve. <u>Thus, announcements may play an important role and should not be excessive or irrelevant. From time to time it is important to offer opportunity for individuals to make a life commitment to serving others through some form of full-time service.</u></p>	<p>24. To condense language, the last two sentences of current G.2-9C are dropped in the revision because they are an unnecessary elaboration in a constitutional document.</p>	<p>C. <u>The offering of service to others:</u> Each service of worship should remind the worshipers of God’s call to service in ministry to others and provide opportunity from time to time for commitment to special service. This may include the announcement of opportunities within the common life of the congregation to serve.</p>
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Proposed CHAPTER 3: The Sacraments

3-1 In the Gospel only two sacraments are ordained by Christ. They are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

- A. **Administration of sacraments.** Ordinarily, only a lawfully ordained Minister²⁶ may administer the sacraments, but such do not act in their own right, rather on behalf of Christ and His Church. In the absence of a lawfully ordained Minister, authority to administer the sacraments may be exercised by Ruling Elders with consent of the Session or by a Commissioned Pastor with consent of the Presbytery.²⁷ This privilege should be exercised only in extraordinary circumstances in which a lawfully ordained Minister is not reasonably available.
- B. **Nature of sacraments.** Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace, representing Christ and all His benefits. They confirm our relationship to Him and represent a visible difference between those who belong to the Church and the rest of the world. There is a spiritual or sacramental relationship in the sacraments between the sign (water and bread and wine) and what is signified. The power revealed in the sacraments does not reside in them or in the one administering them, but is in the work of the Holy Spirit and in the promise of God who gives benefits to those who worthily receive them. Thus, the sacraments are powerful and effective in the life of the recipient because of God's Word which instituted them. For this reason the sacraments should not be neglected or omitted.²⁸

3-2 The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ. By the act of Baptism, a person becomes a part of the visible Church, for it is a sign and a seal of the Covenant of Grace for believers and their children. As a sign it proclaims God's forgiveness and our redemption in Jesus Christ. As a seal, God marks us as adopted children of our heavenly Father. It indicates our engrafting into Christ, our rebirth, the remission of sins, and our ability by the power of the Spirit to walk in newness of life. This sacrament is to be continued by God's people until the end of the world.²⁹

- A. **Candidates for Baptism.** Those eligible to receive this sacrament are those who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and have promised to be obedient to Him, along with the infants of one or both believing parents. Also, those who have legal responsibility for an infant have the right to present the child for Baptism.
- B. **Method of Baptism.** In the sacrament of Baptism water is to be used. Immersion or dipping the person into the water is not essential and Baptism is ordinarily administered by pouring or sprinkling.
- C. **Effectiveness of Baptism.** God's grace and salvation are not inseparably connected to this sacrament. Some who are baptized will be lost and some not baptized will be saved. Nevertheless, it is a great sin to make light of or to neglect this sacrament. A great benefit is lost when Baptism is neglected, for God promises to bless His people through this sacrament. The effectiveness of Baptism is not tied to the moment it is administered, yet God who keeps His promises confers His grace according to His own will and in His appointed time.
- D. **Administration of Baptism.** The grace received through Baptism does not come from the tradition or form of administration, and since it is not dependent upon the devoutness or the intention of the person administering it, Baptism should be administered only once.

E. Time and place of administration

²⁶A lawfully ordained minister in good standing of a non-EPC church may be authorized to serve communion in an EPC church, with the concurrence of the Presbytery (Act of Assembly 94-22, General Assembly Minutes 14-36).

See also *Westminster Confession of Faith* 27-4 (EPC version in Modern English).

²⁷ See current G.10-6E, proposed revision G.9-10.

²⁸ See *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 27.

²⁹ See *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 28.

1. Since Baptism is the act by which a person is solemnly admitted into the visible Church, the regular administration of the sacrament should ordinarily be in the presence of the family of believers. At that time, the benefits and promises should be set forth. The people should be reminded of Baptism as a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace, of our engrafting into Christ, and of the need to yield to God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life.
 2. However, if circumstances justify administering the sacrament at a time and place other than public worship, the Teaching Elder³⁰ may judge. In any event, at least one Ruling Elder should be present to represent the congregation and to assume on behalf of the congregation the commitment required by that congregation in the baptismal vows. No such private administration should convey the impression of baptismal regeneration or its necessity for salvation, and those present are to be reminded that Baptism is not inseparably connected with God's grace and salvation.
 3. Ordinarily the Session shall authorize and approve Baptisms. In exceptional cases, when it is not possible to convene the Session for approval, a Pastor of the church may perform the Baptism. If at all possible, a Ruling Elder should be present. That Pastor shall report the Baptism to the Session.
 4. All Baptisms shall be recorded in the permanent record of the Session.
- F. Baptism for Adults.** When a person who was not baptized as an infant desires to profess faith in Christ and be engrafted into His Body, being admitted into the visible Church, the sacrament of baptism shall be received.
- 1. Proper instruction.** Those persons desiring to be baptized shall receive necessary instruction concerning the meaning of the sacrament, the obligations of Church membership, the need to live by faith, to walk in holiness and righteousness, and to act in brotherly love toward those who have been baptized by the same Spirit into the same Body. The Session shall authorize the Baptism of the petitioner only when it is fully satisfied as to that person's full intention to be obedient to Christ and a profession of faith has been made.
 - 2. Minister's duty.** The Minister shall remind those present of the meaning of the sacrament as a sign and seal of engrafting, remission of sin, regeneration by the Spirit, adoption, and resurrection to everlasting life. All should be reminded to be thankful for their own Baptism with its benefits and privileges, to be humble because of sin and walking contrary to the grace given us, and to draw strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we were baptized.
 - 3. Recipient's duty.** Prior to Baptism, the recipient shall make affirmative response in professing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, affirming intention to walk in newness of life as one of those who have given their names to Christ. The recipient shall further affirm faithfulness and support of the Church and of the local church.
 - 4. Congregation's role.** In receiving a person into its fellowship and in acknowledging that person to be a part of the covenant community, the congregation assumes responsibilities toward that person. As Christ commanded His Church to baptize and teach, the congregation shall affirm its duty and commitment to the recipient by public vow. The following or like question shall be proposed to the congregation by the Minister: "Do you, the members of this congregation, and in the name of the visible Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, take responsibility for the continued Christian nurture of _____, promising to set a godly example by your own life, and to pray for _____ in this new life of faith?"
 - 5. The administration of the sacrament.** The Minister shall set apart the water from all common uses to this holy use and mystery and pray for a blessing upon the sacrament. The Minister shall then administer Baptism with water, by pouring, sprinkling, or immersion and without other ceremony. The Minister shall use the following or like words: "_____, on your profession of faith and promise of

³⁰ In the *Book of Worship* the term "Teaching Elder" is used in contexts where the reference is to those ordained in the EPC. The term "Minister" is broader, designating those ordained in the EPC or in other ecclesiastical traditions. The term "a Pastor" designates any of the EPC Teaching Elders in a church, whether Pastor, Associate, or Assistant.

obedience to Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” The sacrament is to be concluded by a prayer.

G. Baptism for children³¹

1. Role of the parents

One or both believing parents, or a believer(s) exercising the authority of a parent(s), are encouraged to present their children, prior to the time when children are able to make their own profession of faith, for the Sacrament of Baptism, which should not be unnecessarily delayed.³² Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace and in part confirm our position with and in Christ and demonstrate to the world the visible difference between it and those who belong to the Church.

2. Role of the Session

- a. It is the duty of the Session and Teaching Elders to offer instruction to the parents concerning the nature and meaning of the sacrament, the obligations assumed, and the role the congregation plays with the parents in the spiritual nurture and growth of the child.
- b. Ordinarily the Session shall authorize and approve the Baptism of infants and children of active members of the local church, except in such cases as the Minister may deem inexpedient. In that case the Minister shall report the Baptism to the Session. All Baptisms shall be recorded in the permanent record of the Church Session records and to inscribe the name of the child on the baptized roll.
- c. The Session may authorize those on the inactive roll to present children for Baptism. It may also require evidence of the intent of the petitioner(s) to follow the vows to be taken by meeting the requirements for restoration to the active roll.
- d. The Session may grant permission to believers who are not members to present infants for Baptism, provided such persons are members in good standing in some true branch of the visible Church. In such cases, the Church Session shall be careful to notify the governing body of the particular church in which those believers hold membership, of the Baptism of the infant.
- e. It is the continuing obligation of the Session to watch over the children of the congregation, to provide for that spiritual nurture necessary to grow in grace, and to provide opportunities, such as a communicants' class, where the children of the congregation may come to profess their faith and be prepared to assume the obligations and privileges of full participation in the life of the congregation.

3. The role of the congregation with the parents

The Baptism of a child requires a two-fold affirmation, one by the parents and one by the covenant community.

- a. The parents are to take vows indicating their commitment to bring the child up in the faith and in the loving discipline of the Lord.
- b. The congregation commits itself to provide nurture, support, and a godly example in assuming with the parents the spiritual oversight of the child.
- c. Parents and congregation together are to encourage growth in grace until the child, having become of age, claims Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
- d. Use of Godparents: The Evangelical Presbyterian Church does not recognize godparents since the members of the local church assume with the parents responsibility for the spiritual life of the child.

³¹ While traditionally called “infant Baptism,” the *Book of Worship* uses “child” or “children” for those who are beyond their infancy and eligible for baptism but not yet of age to give a credible profession of faith.

³² Genesis 17:11, Colossians 3:11, Galatians 3:26-27, Acts 16:15, 33

However, it is permitted to have persons who might become the responsible parental authority for the child to assume the vows of obligation with the parents. In such a case, the persons participating with the parents should have the same qualifications for membership in the visible Church.

4. Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism

- a. The Minister³³ shall remind the congregation of:
 - i. The meaning and nature of Baptism
 - ii. The significance, benefits and privileges of their own Baptism
 - iii. Their failures contrary to the grace of Baptism and for God's mercy and forgiveness
 - iv. The need to recommitment themselves to their endeavor to live by faith.
- b. The parents or other responsible person shall assume the following or like vows of duty and obligation.
 - i. Do you acknowledge _____'s need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?
 - ii. Do you claim God's covenant promises and benefits for _____ and by faith do you look to the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of your child as you do your own?
 - iii. Do you now unreservedly dedicate your child to God, and do you promise by relying on God's power and grace through the Holy Spirit to live an exemplary life before your child?
 - iv. Do you commit yourself to pray with and for your child, to teach your child the Scriptures and the great articles of our faith in Jesus Christ?
 - v. Do you promise to use every means provided by God, including faithful participation in the life of the Church, to bring your child up in the loving discipline of the Lord?
- c. The congregation acts for the whole family of God and assumes responsibility for the child by answering the following or like questions:
 - i. Do you, the members of this congregation, acting for yourselves and in behalf of the whole Body of Christ, assume responsibility with these parents for the spiritual nurture of this child?
 - ii. Do you commit yourself to set a godly example before this child, to provide as far as you are able, all that is necessary to the end that this child may one day confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?
- d. Administration of the sacrament: The Minister shall set apart the water from all common uses to this holy use and mystery and pray for a blessing upon the sacrament. Then the Minister shall use the following or like formula without adding any other ceremony and shall baptize the child with water, saying: "_____, child of the covenant, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." The sacrament is to be concluded by a prayer.

3-3 The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus on the night of His betrayal. It is to be celebrated until the end of the world as a perpetual remembrance of what He did for mankind on the cross. The Lord's Supper is a seal of all those benefits of Calvary for believers, and signifies their spiritual growth and nourishment. It is a bond and pledge of the communion of believers with Jesus Christ and with each other as parts of the Church.

³³ See footnotes 26 and 30.

- A. Nature of the sacrament.** The Lord's Supper is in no way a re-offering of Christ nor a sacrifice. It commemorates Christ's once for all offering of Himself, and in celebrating the sacrament the people offer praise to God for what has already been done.
- B. Nature of the elements.** While sometimes called by the name of what they represent, the body and blood of Christ, yet they retain the essential nature of bread and wine. While the elements are to be set apart for the use ordained $\text{\textcircled{e}}$ by Christ, this sacramental use gives no special quality to the physical elements. In the sacrament, Christ is uniquely and spiritually present and is discerned by the faith of the believer.³⁴
- C. Different names for the sacrament.** Historically Christians have used different names to describe the Lord's Supper. However, these names all signify the same sacrament. In addition to being called the Lord's Supper, it is called the Breaking of the Bread, Holy Communion, and the Eucharist (Thanksgiving).
- D. The significance of the sacrament.** Those who receive the sacrament spiritually feed upon Christ as the true bread, remembering and, by God's grace, renewing the covenantal benefits of Christ's death on their behalf.³⁵ In that sense, the sacrament conveys what it signifies when it is received by faith. Those who unworthily receive the sacrament do not receive what is signified. Rather, they are guilty of the body and blood of Jesus and condemn themselves. For this reason, the Session should be careful to refuse the Lord's Supper to those who are ignorant of its meaning or who are known to be ungodly.³⁶
- E. The frequency of the sacrament.** The Session is responsible for determining the frequency of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It is proper to observe it as often as each Lord's Day, but it should be observed at least quarterly. The Session should exercise care that the sacrament be not neglected.
- F. The place of the sacrament.** The Lord's Supper is a part of the worship of God's people. For that reason it should be celebrated ordinarily as a part of a regular service of worship. The observance of the sacrament should always be in conjunction with the reading and preaching of the Word, with the prayers of the people accompanied with hymns of praise.
- G. Special times of celebration**
- 1. With those who are ill.** When requested, the Session may authorize the Lord's Supper to be celebrated with those who are ill. At least one member of the Session should be present on such occasions. The Minister shall be careful to give some brief explanation of the meaning of the sacrament.
 - 2. Times and places other than worship on the Lord's Day.** The Session may authorize the celebration of the sacrament at a time and place other than the ordinary place of worship on the Lord's Day, provided that the Session is represented. In addition,
 - 3. Courts of the Church.** The Presbytery and General Assembly may authorize the celebration of the Lord's Supper at a meeting of the court or at some service or worship under the authority of the court.
- H. Preparation for the sacrament.** The Session should give at least one week's notice prior to the celebration of the sacrament. It is always appropriate for the Session to provide instruction in the nature and meaning of the sacrament and to solemnly warn those who are not spiritually prepared. The people are to prepare themselves by the examination of their inner spiritual life, of their present relationship to Christ, to confess and repent of known sins, to forgive those who have offended them, to pray earnestly for the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, and to draw near with a true heart in the full assurance of faith.³⁷
- I. Invitation to partake.** The Minister shall invite all true believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, including those from other congregations that are a part of the true Church to partake in the sacrament. All should be reminded of the need to trust in Jesus Christ as Lord, to repent of sin, and to covenant once more

³⁴ Westminster Confession 29-7

³⁵ Genesis 17:7; Galatians 3:16-17

³⁶ 1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 27-31

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 11:17-32

to live as followers of Jesus. Those who are ignorant in their knowledge of Christ or who are living ungodly and unrepentant lives should be warned of the serious consequences for those who unworthily partake.

J. Baptized children may be admitted to the Lord’s Table provided they have appeared before the Session and professed their faith in a manner acceptable to the Session. At its discretion, the Session may admit such persons to full membership.³⁸

K. The elements: Adequate preparation should be made of the elements to be served. It is appropriate for a large piece of bread to be made ready for breaking by the Minister and a cup with pouring vessel for the pouring of the wine/juice during the commemoration. The bread and wine/juice may be placed on a table and covered with a fine white cloth, or they may be brought forward and placed on the table when the time of celebration comes.

L. Administration of the sacrament

The words of institution shall be read, either from the Gospels or from I Corinthians 11.

The bread and wine/juice shall be blessed and be set apart from ordinary use to this holy use and mystery.

The bread shall be broken before the people as a visible demonstration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

M. Distributing the elements: It is proper for the people to gather at the table, but ordinarily the Ruling Elders (or others appointed by the Session) shall distribute the elements to the worshipers. A court of the Church may appoint godly people to distribute the elements when there are no Ruling Elders available.

N. The conclusion of the sacrament: Following a time for private prayer and self-examination the service may conclude with a hymn of praise and thanksgiving and the people dismissed with a benediction. Following the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, as an act of gratitude to God and renewed love for others, it is always appropriate to receive a special offering for the poor or for some other worthy cause. Such offerings should be ordered only by the Session.

Revision Notes

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>3-1 In the Gospel only two sacraments are ordained by Christ. They are Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Ordinarily, only a lawfully ordained Minister may administer the sacraments, but such do not act in their own right, rather on behalf of Christ and His Church. In the absence of a lawfully ordained Minister, authority to administer the sacraments may be exercised by Ruling Elders with consent of the Session or by a Commissioned Pastor with consent of the Presbytery (see G.10-6E). This privilege should be exercised only in</p>	<p>1. “Lawfully ordained minister” has been footnoted to reference Acts of Assembly, clarifying that the minister may be from outside the EPC (see footnote in text section above).</p>	<p>3-1 In the Gospel only two sacraments are ordained by Christ. They are Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.</p> <p>A. <u>Administration of sacraments.</u> Ordinarily, only a lawfully ordained Minister may administer the sacraments, but such do not act in their own right, rather on behalf of Christ and His Church. In the absence of a lawfully ordained Minister, authority to administer the sacraments may be exercised by Ruling Elders with consent of the Session or by a Commissioned Pastor with</p>

³⁸ For additional background, see *The Pastoral Letter on Children and the Lord’s Supper* on www.epc.org.

<p>From Current Book of Worship Chapter 3</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed Book of Worship Chapter 3</p>
<p>extraordinary circumstances in which a lawfully ordained Minister is not reasonably available.</p> <p>Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace, representing Christ and all His benefits. They confirm our relationship to Him and represent a visible difference between those who belong to the Church and the rest of the world. There is a spiritual or sacramental relationship in the sacraments between the sign (water and bread and wine) and what is signified. The power revealed in the sacraments does not reside in them or in the one administering them, but is in the work of the Holy Spirit and in the promise of God who gives benefits to those who worthily receive them. Thus, the sacraments are powerful and effective in the life of the recipient because of God’s Word which instituted them. For this reason the sacraments should not be neglected or omitted.</p> <p>3-2 The Sacrament of Baptism: Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ. By the act of baptism, a person becomes a part of the visible Church, for it is a sign and a seal of the Covenant of Grace for believers and their children. As a sign it proclaims God’s forgiveness and our redemption in Jesus Christ. As a seal, God marks us as adopted children of our heavenly Father. It indicates our engrafting into Christ, our rebirth, the remission of sins, and our ability by the power of the Spirit to walk in newness of</p>		<p>consent of the Presbytery (see current G.10-6E, proposed revision G.9-10). This privilege should be exercised only in extraordinary circumstances in which a lawfully ordained Minister is not reasonably available.</p> <p>B. <u>Nature of sacraments.</u> Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace, representing Christ and all His benefits. They confirm our relationship to Him and represent a visible difference between those who belong to the Church and the rest of the world. There is a spiritual or sacramental relationship in the sacraments between the sign (water and bread and wine) and what is signified. The power revealed in the sacraments does not reside in them or in the one administering them, but is in the work of the Holy Spirit and in the promise of God who gives benefits to those who worthily receive them. Thus, the sacraments are powerful and effective in the life of the recipient because of God’s Word which instituted them. For this reason the sacraments should not be neglected or omitted.</p> <p>3-2 <u>The Sacrament of Baptism:</u> Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ. By the act of Baptism, a person becomes a part of the visible Church, for it is a sign and a seal of the Covenant of Grace for believers and their children. As a sign it proclaims God’s forgiveness and our redemption in Jesus Christ. As a seal, God marks us as adopted children of our heavenly Father. It indicates our engrafting into Christ, our rebirth, the remission of sins, and our ability by the power of the Spirit to walk in newness of life. This sacrament is</p>

<p>From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3</p>
<p>life. This sacrament is to be continued by God’s people until the end of the world.</p> <p>A. Candidates for baptism: Those eligible to receive this sacrament are those who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and have promised to be obedient to Him, along with the infants of one or both believing parents. Also, those who have legal responsibility for an infant have the right to present the child for baptism.</p> <p>B. Method of baptism: In the sacrament of baptism water is to be used. Immersion or dipping the person into the water is not essential and baptism is ordinarily administered by pouring or sprinkling.</p> <p>C. Effectiveness of baptism: God’s grace and salvation are not inseparably connected to this sacrament. Some who are baptized will be lost and some not baptized will be saved. Nevertheless, it is a great sin to make light of or to neglect this sacrament. A great benefit is lost when baptism is neglected, for God promises to bless His people through this sacrament. The effectiveness of baptism is not tied to the moment it is administered, yet God who keeps His promises confers His grace according to His own will and in His appointed time.</p> <p>D. Administration of baptism: The grace received through baptism does not come from the tradition or form of administration, and since it is not dependent upon the</p>		<p>to be continued by God’s people until the end of the world.</p> <p>A. <u>Candidates for Baptism:</u> Those eligible to receive this sacrament are those who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and have promised to be obedient to Him, along with the infants of one or both believing parents. Also, those who have legal responsibility for an infant have the right to present the child for Baptism.</p> <p>B. <u>Method of Baptism:</u> In the sacrament of Baptism water is to be used. Immersion or dipping the person into the water is not essential and Baptism is ordinarily administered by pouring or sprinkling.</p> <p>C. <u>Effectiveness of Baptism:</u> God’s grace and salvation are not inseparably connected to this sacrament. Some who are baptized will be lost and some not baptized will be saved. Nevertheless, it is a great sin to make light of or to neglect this sacrament. A great benefit is lost when Baptism is neglected, for God promises to bless His people through this sacrament. The effectiveness of Baptism is not tied to the moment it is administered, yet God who keeps His promises confers His grace according to His own will and in His appointed time.</p> <p>D. <u>Administration of Baptism:</u> The grace received through Baptism does not come from the tradition or form of administration, and since it is not dependent upon the</p>

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>devoutness or the intention of the person administering it, baptism should be administered only once.</p> <p>E. Time and place of administration: Since baptism is the act by which a person is solemnly admitted into the visible Church, the regular administration of the sacrament should ordinarily be in the presence of the family of believers. At that time, the benefits and promises should be set forth. The people should be reminded of baptism as a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace, of our engrafting into Christ, and of the need to yield to God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life. However, if circumstances justify administering the sacrament at a time and place other than public worship, the Minister may judge. In any event, at least one Ruling Elder should be present to represent the congregation and to assume on behalf of the congregation the commitment required by that congregation in the baptismal vows. No such private administration should convey the impression of baptismal regeneration or its necessity for salvation, and those present are to be reminded that baptism is not inseparably connected with God's grace and salvation.</p>	<p>2. For consistency with the Revised <i>Book of Government</i>, "Teaching Elder" is used in the <i>Book of Worship</i> when, in context, it is used to designate EPC ordained ministers.</p> <p>3. For consistency and ease of use, the provision for Session approval (current W.3-2G.1) has been included at this point in the <i>Revised Book of</i></p>	<p>devoutness or the intention of the person administering it, Baptism should be administered only once.</p> <p>E. <u>Time and place of administration:</u></p> <p>1. Since Baptism is the act by which a person is solemnly admitted into the visible Church, the regular administration of the sacrament should ordinarily be in the presence of the family of believers. At that time, the benefits and promises should be set forth. The people should be reminded of Baptism as a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace, of our engrafting into Christ, and of the need to yield to God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life.</p> <p>2. However, if circumstances justify administering the sacrament at a time and place other than public worship, the Teaching Elder may judge. In any event, at least one Ruling Elder should be present to represent the congregation and to assume on behalf of the congregation the commitment required by that congregation in the baptismal vows. No such private administration should convey the impression of baptismal regeneration or its necessity for salvation, and those present are to be reminded that Baptism is not inseparably connected with God's grace and salvation.</p> <p>3. Ordinarily the Session shall authorize and approve Baptisms. In exceptional cases, when it is not possible to convene the</p>

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>F. Baptism for Adults: When a person who was not baptized as an infant desires to profess faith in Christ and be engrafted into His Body, being admitted into the visible Church, the sacrament of baptism shall be received.</p> <p>1. Proper instruction: Those persons desiring to be baptized shall receive necessary instruction concerning the meaning of the sacrament, the obligations of Church membership, the need to live by faith, to walk in holiness and righteousness, and to act in brotherly love toward those who have been baptized by the same Spirit into the same Body. The Church Session shall authorize the baptism of the petitioner only when it is fully satisfied as to that person's full intention to be obedient to Christ and a profession of faith has been made.</p> <p>2. Minister's duty: The Minister shall remind those present of the meaning of the sacrament as a sign and seal of engrafting, remission of sin, regeneration by the Spirit, adoption, and resurrection to everlasting life. All should be</p>	<p><i>Worship.</i></p>	<p>Session for approval, a Pastor of the church may perform the Baptism. If at all possible, a Ruling Elder should be present. That Pastor shall report the Baptism to the Session.</p> <p>4. All Baptisms shall be recorded in the permanent record of the Session.</p> <p>F. <u>Baptism for adults</u>: When a person who was not baptized as an infant desires to profess faith in Christ and be engrafted into His Body, being admitted into the visible Church, the sacrament of Baptism shall be received.</p> <p>1. <i>Proper instruction</i>: Those persons desiring to be baptized shall receive necessary instruction concerning the meaning of the sacrament, the obligations of Church membership, the need to live by faith, to walk in holiness and righteousness, and to act in brotherly love toward those who have been baptized by the same Spirit into the same Body. The Session shall authorize the Baptism of the petitioner only when it is fully satisfied as to that person's full intention to be obedient to Christ and a profession of faith has been made.</p> <p>2. <i>Minister's duty</i>: The Minister shall remind those present of the meaning of the sacrament as a sign and seal of engrafting, remission of sin, regeneration by the Spirit, adoption, and resurrection to everlasting life. All should be reminded to be</p>

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>reminded to be thankful for their own baptism with its benefits and privileges, to be humble because of sin and walking contrary to the grace given us, and to draw strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we were baptized.</p> <p>3. Recipient’s duty: Prior to baptism, the recipient shall make affirmative response in professing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, affirming intention to walk in newness of life as one of those who have given their names to Christ. The recipient shall further affirm faithfulness and support of the Church and of the particular church.</p> <p>4. Congregation’s role: In receiving a person into its fellowship and in acknowledging that person to be a part of the covenant community, the congregation assumes responsibilities toward that person. As Christ commanded His Church to baptize and teach, the congregation shall affirm its duty and commitment to the recipient by public vow. The following or like vow shall be proposed to the congregation by the Minister: “Do you, the members of this congregation, and in the name of the visible Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, take responsibility for the continued Christian nurture of _____, promising to set a godly example by your own life,</p>	<p>4. For consistency with the proposed revision to the <i>Book of Government (Revised G.13-2C)</i>, the congregation does not take vows but answers questions, by which a corporate commitment is made.</p>	<p>thankful for their own Baptism with its benefits and privileges, to be humble because of sin and walking contrary to the grace given us, and to draw strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we were baptized.</p> <p>3. <i>Recipient’s duty</i>: Prior to Baptism, the recipient shall make affirmative response in professing faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, affirming intention to walk in newness of life as one of those who have given their names to Christ. The recipient shall further affirm faithfulness and support of the Church and of the particular local church.</p> <p>4. <i>Congregation’s role</i>: In receiving a person into its fellowship and in acknowledging that person to be a part of the covenant community, the congregation assumes responsibilities toward that person. As Christ commanded His Church to baptize and teach, the congregation shall affirm its duty and commitment to the recipient publicly. The following or like question shall be proposed to the congregation by the Minister: “Do you, the members of this congregation, and in the name of the visible Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, take responsibility for the continued Christian nurture of _____, promising to set a godly example by your own life, and to pray for</p>

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<p>and to pray for _____ in this new life of faith?"</p> <p>5. The administration of the sacrament: After asking God’s blessings to attend the sacrament, the Minister shall administer baptism. This shall be done with water, either by pouring, sprinkling or immersion and without other ceremony, during which the Minister shall say, “_____, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” AFTER A BRIEF PRAYER FOR THE EFFECTUAL WORKING OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE RECIPIENT, THE MINISTER SHALL DECLARE THAT PERSON TO BE RECEIVED INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST’S CHURCH AND INTO MEMBERSHIP IN THAT PARTICULAR CHURCH, ALONG WITH THE RIGHT TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER AND THE PRIVILEGE OF SHARING IN THE MISSION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE CHURCH. IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT A CHARGE BE GIVEN AND THAT THE EVENT IS CONCLUDED WITH A PROMISE OF THE BLESSING OF GOD.</p> <p>G. Infant baptism: Believing parents are encouraged to present their children for the sacrament of baptism, which should not be unnecessarily delayed. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace and in part confirm our position with and in Christ and demonstrate to the world the</p>	<p>5. The phrase, “The Minister shall use following or like words” has been inserted for consistency with similar sections. The phrase “on your profession of faith...” is inserted to clarify the basis for adult baptism.</p> <p>6. Liturgical elements, beyond those belonging in the Constitution, (INDICATED WITH SMALL CAPS) will be incorporated in a Manual of Services.</p> <p>7. Section G on infant Baptism has been significantly reorganized and condensed in the proposed revision for clarity and ease of use.</p> <p>8. The current <i>Book of Worship</i> uses “child” and “infant” interchangeably, which could lead to confusion. Also, using the word “infant”</p>	<p>_____ in this new life of faith?"</p> <p>5. <i>The administration of the sacrament:</i> After asking God’s blessings to attend the sacrament, the Minister shall then administer Baptism with water, either by pouring, sprinkling, or immersion and without other ceremony. The Minister shall use the following or like words: “_____, on your profession of faith and promise of obedience to Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” The sacrament is to be concluded by a prayer.</p> <p>G. Baptism for children</p> <p>1. <i>Role of the parents</i></p> <p>One or both believing parents, or a believer(s) exercising the authority of a parent(s), are encouraged to present their children, prior to the time when children are able to make their own</p>

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>visible difference between it and those who belong to the Church. The baptism of an infant requires a two-fold affirmation, one by the parents and one by the covenant community. The parents are to take vows indicating their commitment to bring the child up in the faith and in the loving discipline of the Lord. The congregation also takes a vow indicating its commitment and duty to provide nurture, support, and a godly example in assuming with the parents the spiritual oversight of the child. Parents and congregation together are to encourage growth in grace until the child, having become of age, claims Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.</p> <p>1. Who may present children: The infants of one or both believing parents, or of a believer who exercises the authority of a parent, are eligible to receive the sacrament of baptism. Ordinarily this privilege is limited to those active members of the particular congregation. At its discretion, the Church Session may authorize those on the inactive roll to present infants for baptism. It may also require evidence of the intent of the petitioner(s) to follow the vows to be taken by meeting the requirements for restoration to the active roll.</p> <p>Further, the Church Session may grant permission to believers who are not members to present infants for</p>	<p>creates an unnecessary gap between “infant” and the age at which children are confirmed. Parents should be encouraged to present not only their infants for baptism, but also children past their infancy but not yet able to give a credible profession of faith. For consistency and clarity, the proposed revision uses the more comprehensive word “child” consistently in place of “infant.”</p> <p>7. The phrase “prior to the time when children are able to make their own profession of faith” is a helpful addition and consistent the EPC’s view of covenant baptism.</p>	<p>profession of faith, for the Sacrament of Baptism, which should not be unnecessarily delayed. Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace and in part confirm our position with and in Christ and demonstrate to the world the visible difference between it and those who belong to the Church.</p> <p><i>2. Role of the Session</i></p> <p>a. It is the duty of the Session and Teaching Elders to offer instruction to the parents concerning the nature and meaning of the sacrament, the obligations assumed, and the role the congregation plays with the parents in the spiritual nurture and growth of the child.</p> <p>b. Ordinarily the Session shall authorize and approve the Baptism of infants and children of active members of the local church, except in such cases as the Minister may deem inexpedient. In that case the Minister shall report the Baptism to the Session. All Baptisms shall be recorded in the permanent record of the Church Session records and to inscribe the name of the child on the baptized roll.</p> <p>c. The Session may authorize those on the inactive roll to present children for Baptism. It may also require evidence of the intent of the petitioner(s) to</p>

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<p>baptism, provided such persons are members in good standing in some true branch of the visible Church.</p> <p>In such cases, the Church Session shall be careful to notify the governing body of the particular church in which those believers hold membership, of the baptism of the infant. Ordinarily the Church Session shall authorize and approve the baptism of infants, except in such cases as the Minister may deem inexpedient. In that case the Minister shall report the baptism to the Church Session. All baptisms shall be recorded in the permanent record of the Church Session.</p> <p>2. Instruction of parents: It is the duty of the Church Session and Minister to offer instruction to the parents concerning the nature and meaning of the sacrament, the obligations assumed, and the role the congregation plays with the parents in the spiritual nurture and growth of the child.</p> <p>3. Use of Godparents: The Evangelical Presbyterian Church does not recognize godparents since the members of the particular congregation assume with the parents responsibility for the spiritual life of the child. However, it is permitted to have persons who might become the responsible parental authority for the child to assume the vows of obligation with the parents. In such a case, the persons participating</p>		<p>follow the vows to be taken by meeting the requirements for restoration to the active roll.</p> <p>d. The Session may grant permission to believers who are not members to present infants for Baptism, provided such persons are members in good standing in some true branch of the visible Church. In such cases, the Church Session shall be careful to notify the governing body of the particular church in which those believers hold membership, of the Baptism of the infant.</p> <p>e. It is the continuing obligation of the Session to watch over the children of the congregation, to provide for that spiritual nurture necessary to grow in grace, and to provide opportunities, such as a communicants' class, where the children of the congregation may come to profess their faith and be prepared to assume the obligations and privileges of full participation in the life of the congregation.</p> <p>3. <i>The role of the congregation with the parents</i></p> <p>The Baptism of a child requires a two-fold affirmation, one by the parents and one by the covenant community.</p> <p>a. The parents are to take vows indicating their commitment to bring the child up in the faith and</p>

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>with the parents should have the same qualifications for membership in the visible Church.</p> <p>4. The obligation of the Minister: The Minister shall be careful to remind the congregation of the meaning and nature of baptism. They should be reminded to remember the significance of their own baptism, the benefits and privileges of it, being humbled for failures contrary to the grace of baptism, and to remind all believers of the need for recommitment to their endeavor to live by faith. It is appropriate to restate that faith by confessing some appropriate symbol of the faith such as the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed.</p> <p>5. The obligation of the parents: The parents or other responsible person shall assume vows of duty and obligation. This shall be done by responding affirmatively to the following or like questions:</p> <p>Do you acknowledge _____'s, need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?</p> <p>Do you claim God's covenant promises and benefits for _____</p> <p>and by faith do you look to the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of your child as you do your own?</p> <p>Do you now unreservedly</p>		<p>in the loving discipline of the Lord.</p> <p>b. The congregation commits itself to provide nurture, support, and a godly example in assuming with the parents the spiritual oversight of the child.</p> <p>c. Parents and congregation together are to encourage growth in grace until the child, having become of age, claims Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.</p> <p>d. Use of Godparents: The Evangelical Presbyterian Church does not recognize godparents since the members of the local church assume with the parents responsibility for the spiritual life of the child. However, it is permitted to have persons who might become the responsible parental authority for the child to assume the vows of obligation with the parents. In such a case, the persons participating with the parents should have the same qualifications for membership in the visible Church.</p> <p><i>4. Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism</i></p> <p>a. The Minister shall remind the congregation of</p> <p>i. the meaning and nature of Baptism, They should be reminded to remember the</p>

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<p>dedicate your child to God, and do you promise by relying on God's power and grace through the Holy Spirit to live an exemplary life before your child?</p> <p>Do you commit yourself to pray with and for your child, to teach your child the Scriptures and the great articles of our faith in Jesus Christ?</p> <p>Do you promise to use every means provided by God, including faithful participation in the life of the Church, to bring your child up in the loving discipline of the Lord?</p> <p>6. The obligation of the congregation: The congregation is to assume, with the parents, responsibility for the spiritual nurture and development of the child. The congregation acts for the whole family of God and assumes responsibility for it on behalf of the child. The Minister shall propose the following or like questions:</p> <p>Do you, the members of this congregation, acting for yourselves and in behalf of the whole Body of Christ, assume responsibility with these parents for the spiritual nurture of this child?</p> <p>Do you commit yourself to set a godly example before this child, to provide as far as you are able, all that is necessary to the end that this child may one day confess Jesus Christ as Savior and</p>		<p>significance of their own Baptism,</p> <p>ii. the significance, benefits and privileges of it, their own Baptism,</p> <p>iii. their failures contrary to the grace of Baptism and for God's mercy and forgiveness</p> <p>iv. to recommitment themselves to their endeavor to live by faith.</p> <p>b. The parents or other responsible person shall assume the following or like vows of duty and obligation:</p> <p>i. Do you acknowledge _____'s need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?</p> <p>ii. Do you claim God's covenant promises and benefits for _____ and by faith do you look to the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of your child as you do your own?</p> <p>iii. Do you now unreservedly dedicate your child to God, and do you promise by relying on God's power and grace through the Holy Spirit to live an exemplary life before your child?</p> <p>iv. Do you commit</p>

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<p>Lord?</p> <p>7. Administration of the sacrament: The Minister shall set apart the water from all common uses to this holy use and mystery and pray for a blessing upon the ordinance. Then the Minister shall use the following or like formula without adding any other ceremony and shall baptize the child with water, saying: “ _____, child of the covenant, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” THE ORDINANCE IS TO BE CONCLUDED BY A PRAYER IN WHICH GOD’S BLESSINGS ARE ASKED UPON THE CHILD, UPON ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE CONGREGATION, AND FOR FAITHFULNESS TO THE VOWS THE PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN.</p> <p>8. The continuing obligation of the Church Session: It is the duty of the Church Session to record each baptism in its permanent records and to inscribe the name of the child on the baptized roll. It is the continuing obligation of the Church Session to watch over the children of the congregation, to provide for that spiritual nurture necessary to grow in grace, and to provide opportunities, such as a communicants’ class, where the children of the congregation may come to profess their faith and be prepared to assume the obligations and privileges of full participation in the life of the congregation.</p>	<p>8. Liturgical elements not necessary in the Constitution have been included in a Manual of Services.</p>	<p>yourself to pray with and for your child, to teach your child the Scriptures and the great articles of our faith in Jesus Christ?</p> <p>v. Do you promise to use every means provided by God, including faithful participation in the life of the Church, to bring your child up in the loving discipline of the Lord?</p> <p>c. The congregation acts for the whole family of God and assumes responsibility for the child by answering the following or like questions:</p> <p>i. Do you, the members of this congregation, acting for yourselves and in behalf of the whole Body of Christ, assume responsibility with these parents for the spiritual nurture of this child?</p> <p>ii. Do you commit yourself to set a godly example before this child, to provide as far as you are able, all that is necessary to the end that this child may one day confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?</p> <p>d. Administration of the sacrament: The Minister shall set apart the water from all common uses to this holy use and mystery and pray for a blessing upon the</p>

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>3-3 The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper: The Lord’s Supper was instituted by Jesus on the night of His betrayal. It is to be celebrated until the end of the world as a perpetual remembrance of what He did for mankind on the cross. The Lord’s Supper is a seal of all those benefits of Calvary for believers, and signifies their spiritual growth and nourishment. It is a bond and pledge of the communion of believers with Jesus Christ and with each other as parts of the Church.</p> <p>A. A <u>commemoration</u>: This sacrament is in no way a re-offering of Christ nor a sacrifice. It commemorates Christ’s once for all offering of Himself, and in celebrating the sacrament the people offer praise to God for what has already been done.</p> <p>B. <u>Nature of the elements</u>: While sometimes called by the name of what they represent, the body and blood of Christ, yet they retain the essential nature of bread and wine. While the elements are to be set apart for the use ordained of Christ, this sacramental use gives no special quality to</p>	<p>9. The proposed revision replaces the word “commemoration” with “sacrament.” While commemoration or remembrance is an important aspect of the sacrament (“Do this in remembrance of me”), its frequent use in the current <i>Book of Worship</i> could lead to a false impression that the EPC’s has a Zwinglian rather than Reformed view of the Lord’s Supper.</p> <p>10. “Christ is spiritually present in the elements” has been</p>	<p>sacrament. Then the Minister shall use the following or like formula without adding any other ceremony and shall baptize the child with water, saying: “ _____, child of the covenant, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” The sacrament is to be concluded by a prayer.</p> <p>3-3 The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper: The Lord’s Supper was instituted by Jesus on the night of His betrayal. It is to be celebrated until the end of the world as a perpetual remembrance of what He did for mankind on the cross. The Lord’s Supper is a seal of all those benefits of Calvary for believers, and signifies their spiritual growth and nourishment. It is a bond and pledge of the communion of believers with Jesus Christ and with each other as parts of the Church.</p> <p>A. <u>Nature of the sacrament</u>: The Lord’s Supper is in no way a re-offering of Christ nor a sacrifice. It commemorates Christ’s once for all offering of Himself, and in celebrating the sacrament the people offer praise to God for what has already been done.</p> <p>B. <u>Nature of the elements</u>: While sometimes called by the name of what they represent, the body and blood of Christ, yet they retain the essential nature of bread and wine. While the elements are to be set apart for the use ordained by Christ, this sacramental use gives no special quality to the physical elements. In the sacrament, Christ is uniquely and spiritually present and is</p>

From Current Book of Worship Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed Book of Worship Chapter 3
<p>the physical elements. <u>Christ is spiritually present in the elements</u> and is discerned by the faith of the believer.</p> <p>C. Different names for the sacrament: Historically Christians have used different names to describe the Lord’s Supper. However, these names all signify the same sacrament. In addition to being called the Lord’s Supper, it is called the Breaking of the Bread, Holy Communion, and the Eucharist (Thanksgiving).</p> <p>D. The significance of the sacrament: Worthy receivers by faith spiritually receive Christ crucified into their hearts and receive the benefits of His death on their behalf. In that sense, the sacrament conveys what it signifies when it is received by faith. Those who unworthily receive the sacrament do not receive what is signified. Rather, they are guilty of the body and blood of Jesus and condemn themselves. For this reason, the Church Session should be careful to refuse the Lord’s Supper to those who are ignorant of its meaning or who are ungodly.</p> <p>E. The frequency of <u>commemoration</u>: The Church Session is responsible for determining the frequency of celebration. It is proper to observe it as</p>	<p>replaced in proposed W.3-3B by “In the sacrament, Christ is uniquely and spiritually present” to prevent possible confusion with the Lutheran view and for consistency with the Westminster Confession of Faith 29-7.</p> <p>11. For biblical and confessional consistency and to prevent potential confusion with Roman Catholicism, proposed W.3-3D has been re-worded to 1) emphasize the manner in which the Lord’s Supper is celebrated rather than the worthiness of the believer (more consistent with 1 Cor. 11), and 2) emphasize grace and covenant renewal, not receiving Christ crucified during the Lord’s Supper.³⁹</p>	<p>discerned by the faith of the believer.</p> <p>C. <u>Different names for the sacrament</u>: Historically Christians have used different names to describe the Lord’s Supper. However, these names all signify the same sacrament. In addition to being called the Lord’s Supper, it is called the Breaking of the Bread, Holy Communion, and the Eucharist (Thanksgiving).</p> <p>D. <u>The significance of the sacrament</u>: Those who receive the sacrament spiritually feed upon Christ as the true bread, remembering and, by God’s grace, renewing the <u>covenantal benefits of Christ’s death on their behalf</u>. In that sense, the sacrament conveys what it signifies when it is received by faith. Those who unworthily receive the sacrament do not receive what is signified. Rather, they are guilty of the body and blood of Jesus and condemn themselves. For this reason, the Church Session should be careful to refuse the Lord’s Supper to those who are ignorant of its meaning or who are <u>known to be</u> ungodly.</p> <p>E. <u>The frequency of the sacrament</u>: The <u>Session</u> is responsible for determining the frequency of celebration of the Lord’s Supper. It is proper to observe it as often</p>

³⁹ From EPC **Leadership Training Guide**: “Calvin believed -- as do we Presbyterians -- that the Lord’s Supper is first a memorial, a remembering of the death of Christ. But even more importantly, he believed that Christ, while not bodily present as the Roman Catholics and Lutherans believed, is **spiritually present**. The influence and presence of Christ are real, but it is a spiritual presence and not a physical presence. Thus, Christ is mediated to us spiritually by the Holy Spirit when we take the elements in faith.”

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>often as each Lord’s Day, but it should be observed at least quarterly. The Church Session should exercise care that the sacrament be not neglected.</p> <p>F. The place of <u>commemoration</u>: The Lord’s Supper is a part of the worship of God’s people. For that reason it should be celebrated ordinarily as a part of a regular service of worship. The observance of the sacrament should always be in conjunction with the reading and preaching of the Word, with the prayers of the people accompanied with hymns of praise.</p> <p>G. Special times of commemoration: When requested, the Church Session may authorize the Lord’s Supper to be celebrated with those who are ill. At least one member of the Church Session should be present on such occasions. The Minister shall be careful to give some brief explanation of the meaning of the sacrament. Also, the Church Session may authorize the celebration of the sacrament at a time and place other than the ordinary place of worship on the Lord’s Day, provided that the Church Session is represented. In addition, the Presbytery and General Assembly may authorize the celebration of the Lord’s Supper at a meeting of the court or at some service or worship under the authority of the court.</p>	<p>12. The 33rd General Assembly referred study of a possible conflict <i>Book of Worship</i> provisions for taking communion to those who are ill with a seeming prohibition in Westminster Confession of Faith 29.3. Any changes in the <i>Book of Worship</i> that may result will either be incorporated in the Revision or follow the prescribed process for amendment, depending on the timing of approval.</p>	<p>as each Lord’s Day, but it should be observed at least quarterly. The Session should exercise care that the sacrament be not neglected.</p> <p>F. <u>The place of the sacrament</u>: The Lord’s Supper is a part of the worship of God’s people. For that reason it should be celebrated ordinarily as a part of a regular service of worship. The observance of the sacrament should always be in conjunction with the reading and preaching of the Word, with the prayers of the people accompanied with hymns of praise.</p> <p>G. Special times of <u>celebration</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>With those who are ill.</u> When requested, the Session may authorize the Lord’s Supper to be celebrated with those who are ill. At least one member of the Session should be present on such occasions. The Minister shall be careful to give some brief explanation of the meaning of the sacrament. 2. <u>Times and places other than worship on the Lord’s Day.</u> The Session may authorize the celebration of the sacrament at a time and place other than the ordinary place of worship on the Lord’s Day, provided that the Session is represented. In addition, 3. <u>Courts of the Church.</u> The Presbytery and General Assembly may authorize the celebration of the Lord’s Supper at a meeting of the court or at some service or worship under

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>H. Preparation for commemoration: The Church Session should give at least one week’s notice prior to the celebration of the sacrament. It is always appropriate for the Church Session to provide instruction in the nature and meaning of the sacrament and to solemnly warn those who are not spiritually prepared. The people are to prepare themselves by the examination of their inner spiritual life, of their present relationship to Christ, to confess and repent of known sins, to forgive those who have offended them, to pray earnestly for the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, and to draw near with a true heart in the full assurance of faith.</p> <p>I. Invitation to partake: The Minister shall invite to partake all true believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, including those from other congregations that are a part of the true Church. All should be reminded of the need to trust in Jesus Christ as Lord, to repent of sin, and to covenant once more to live as followers of Jesus. Those who are ignorant in their knowledge of Christ or who are living ungodly and unrepentant lives should be warned of the serious consequences for those who unworthily partake. Baptized children may be admitted to the Lord’s table provided they have appeared before the Church Session and professed their faith in a manner acceptable to the Church Session. At its discretion, the Church Session may admit such</p>		<p>the authority of the court.</p> <p>H. <u>Preparation for the sacrament</u>: The Session should give at least one week’s notice prior to the celebration of the sacrament. It is always appropriate for the Session to provide instruction in the nature and meaning of the sacrament and to solemnly warn those who are not spiritually prepared. The people are to prepare themselves by the examination of their inner spiritual life, of their present relationship to Christ, to confess and repent of known sins, to forgive those who have offended them, to pray earnestly for the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit, and to draw near with a true heart in the full assurance of faith.</p> <p>I. <u>Invitation to partake</u>. The Minister shall invite all true believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, including those from other congregations that are a part of the true Church to partake <u>in the sacrament</u>. All should be reminded of the need to trust in Jesus Christ as Lord, to repent of sin, and to covenant once more to live as followers of Jesus. Those who are ignorant in their knowledge of Christ or who are living ungodly and unrepentant lives should be warned of the serious consequences for those who unworthily partake.</p> <p>J. Baptized children may be admitted to the Lord’s <u>Table</u> provided they have appeared before the <u>Session</u> and professed their faith in a manner acceptable to the <u>Session</u>. At its discretion, the</p>

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>persons to full membership.</p> <p>J. The bread and the wine: Adequate preparation should be made of the elements to be served. It is appropriate for a large piece of bread to be made ready for breaking by the Minister and a cup with pouring vessel for the pouring of the wine during the commemoration. The bread and wine may be placed on a table and covered with a fine white cloth, or they may be brought forward and placed on the table when the time of celebration comes.</p> <p>K. The commemoration: The time of celebration having come, the Minister shall proceed in the following or like manner:</p> <p>The words of institution shall be read, either from the Gospels or from I Corinthians 11.</p> <p>The bread and wine shall be blessed and be set apart from ordinary use to holy use and mystery.</p> <p>The bread is to be broken before the people as a visible demonstration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross. THE MINISTER MAY SAY: "OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, ON THE SAME NIGHT IN WHICH HE WAS BETRAYED TOOK BREAD, AND WHEN HE HAD BLESSED AND BROKEN IT, HE GAVE IT TO HIS DISCIPLES, AS I GIVE THIS BREAD TO YOU IN HIS NAME, SAYING,</p> <p>"TAKE, EAT; THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH IS GIVEN FOR YOU; THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."</p>	<p>13. The proposed revision utilizes language that clarifies and maintains the longstanding practice of local churches choosing whether or not to use wine or juice in the Lord's Supper.</p> <p>13. The proposed revision removes discretionary liturgical language (NOTED IN SMALL CAPS). It will be placed in a Manual of Services.</p>	<p>Session may admit such persons to full membership.</p> <p>K. The elements: Adequate preparation should be made of the elements to be served. It is appropriate for a large piece of bread to be made ready for breaking by the Minister and a cup with pouring vessel for the pouring of the wine/juice during the commemoration. The bread and wine/juice may be placed on a table and covered with a fine white cloth, or they may be brought forward and placed on the table when the time of celebration comes.</p> <p>L. Administration of the sacrament:</p> <p>The words of institution shall be read, either from the Gospels or from I Corinthians 11.</p> <p>The bread and wine/juice shall be blessed and be set apart from ordinary use to this holy use and mystery.</p> <p>The bread shall be broken before the people as a visible demonstration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross.</p>

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 3
<p>(DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENT) THEN THE MINISTER MAY POUR THE WINE INTO THE CUP, OR, IF NOT POSSIBLE, TO HOLD UP A CUP, AND SAY: "AFTER THE SAME MANNER OUR SAVIOR TOOK THE CUP, AND HAVING GIVEN THANKS, AS HAS BEEN DONE IN HIS NAME, HE GAVE IT TO HIS DISCIPLES SAYING, 'THIS CUP IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD, WHICH IS SHED FOR MANY, FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS: ALL OF YOU DRINK OF IT.'" (DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENT.)</p> <p>L. Distributing the elements: It is proper for the people to gather at the table, but ordinarily the Ruling Elders (or others appointed by the Church Session) shall distribute the elements to the worshipers. A court of the Church may appoint godly people to distribute the elements when there are no Ruling Elders available.</p> <p>M. The conclusion of the <u>commemoration</u>: Following a time for private prayer and self-examination the service may conclude with a hymn of praise and thanksgiving and the people dismissed with a benediction. Following the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as an act of gratitude to God and renewed love for others, it is always appropriate to receive a special offering for the poor or for some other worthy cause. Such offerings should be ordered only by the Church Session.</p>		<p>M. <u>Distributing the elements</u>: It is proper for the people to gather at the table, but ordinarily the Ruling Elders (or others appointed by the Church Session) shall distribute the elements to the worshipers. A court of the Church may appoint godly people to distribute the elements when there are no Ruling Elders available.</p> <p>N. <u>The conclusion of the sacrament</u>: Following a time for private prayer and self-examination the service may conclude with a hymn of praise and thanksgiving and the people dismissed with a benediction. Following the celebration of the Lord's Supper, as an act of gratitude to God and renewed love for others, it is always appropriate to receive a special offering for the poor or for some other worthy cause. Such offerings should be ordered only by the Session.</p>

Proposed CHAPTER 4: The Worship of God at Other Times

4-1 Time of worship.

The principal time of worship for the people of God is the Lord's Day,⁴⁰ when the resurrection of Christ is celebrated and commemorated.⁴¹ However, the Session has the right and duty to assemble the people for worship on other days and at other times. The Session may order such assemblies at regular times or for the celebration of special events. At such special times of worship, the ordinary parts of worship⁴² will normally be observed, although the Session may call for special emphasis on matters of particular concern.

4-2 Days of prayer and fasting.

The Lord Jesus Christ set the example for God's people in a time of fasting. Throughout the New Testament there is frequent indication that Christians in the early Church practiced fasting. Therefore, the Church will do well in its spiritual life if it follows this example. The Session should be diligent and sensitive to those times when such a special day is called for and should be eager to order such an event. Christians individually and in particular families should observe special days when fasting is practiced.

A. When called by the Session.

When the Session calls a day of prayer and fasting, the purpose of the occasion should be announced and adequate time given in order that members may prepare themselves. It is appropriate on such occasions for services of public worship to be conducted during the day set aside. All the members under the authority of a Session should make diligent effort to conscientiously participate in the day set aside.

B. Private or family observance of a day of prayer and fasting.

It is entirely proper for individuals or for particular families to enter into a day of prayer and fasting. Christians should exercise such an option with some regularity as an offering to God and as a reminder of total dependency upon God for all one has and is.

C. When called by a higher court

It is proper and right for a Presbytery or for the General Assembly to call a day of prayer and fasting on behalf of some occasion it deems proper. In such event, the court shall call all the people within its jurisdiction to join in the special time of prayer and fasting.

4-3 Days of thanksgiving

A joyful and grateful heart is pleasing to the Lord and brings glory to Him. Because of God's infinite love, His providential care, and His continued working in the affairs of His people, it is appropriate to observe special times of praise and thanksgiving. During such times there shall be special services of worship, times of prayer, and the lifting of the hearts to God by all His people. Such occasions shall be ordered by a Session, by another court of the Church for those under its jurisdiction, and by individuals or families who have been especially blessed.

4-4 Individual worship

It is incumbent upon each Christian to develop the practice of daily worship of God. Such a time should include prayer, reading of the Scriptures, examination of one's inner spiritual life, and serious meditation.

⁴⁰ See *Westminster Confession of Faith* 21-7.

⁴¹ See W.2-2.

⁴² See W.2-1

The individual Christian should strive to improve knowledge of faith and of the Church by reading and studying the documents of the faith of the Church, by learning its government and worship, as well as its history.

4-5 Family worship

Each individual family should worship together. Such times, done regularly and faithfully, should include the reading together of God’s Word, times of prayer, times of sharing with one another God’s working in individual hearts, and times of doing together the things of the Lord. It is always appropriate for a family to sing together in praise of God’s goodness and mercy. Families ordinarily should worship together in the public worship of God in the local church.

Revision Notes

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 4	Revision notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 4
<p>4-1 The principal time of worship for the people of God is the Sabbath, or the Lord’s Day, when the resurrection of Christ is celebrated and commemorated. However, the Church Session has the right and duty to assemble the people for worship on other days and at other times. The Church Session may order such assemblies at regular times or for the celebration of special events. At such special times of worship, the ordinary parts of worship will normally be observed, although the Church Session may call for special emphasis on matters of particular concern.</p>		<p>4-1 Time of worship.</p> <p>The principal time of worship for the people of God is the Sabbath, or the Lord’s Day, when the resurrection of Christ is celebrated and commemorated. However, the Session has the right and duty to assemble the people for worship on other days and at other times. The Session may order such assemblies at regular times or for the celebration of special events. At such special times of worship, the ordinary parts of worship will normally be observed, although the Session may call for special emphasis on matters of particular concern.</p>
<p>4-2 Days of Prayer and Fasting: The Lord Jesus Christ set the example for God’s people in a time of fasting. Throughout the New Testament there is frequent indication that Christians in the early Church practiced fasting. Therefore, the Church will do well in its spiritual life if it follows this example. The Church Session should be diligent and sensitive to those times when such a special day is called for and should be eager to order such an event. Christians individually and in particular families should observe special</p>		<p>4-2 Days of prayer and fasting.</p> <p>The Lord Jesus Christ set the example for God’s people in a time of fasting. Throughout the New Testament there is frequent indication that Christians in the early Church practiced fasting. Therefore, the Church will do well in its spiritual life if it follows this example. The Church Session should be diligent and sensitive to those times when such a special day is called for and should be eager to order such an event. Christians individually and in particular</p>

<p>From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 4</p>	<p>Revision notes</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 4</p>
<p>days when fasting is practiced.</p> <p>A. When called by the Church Session: When the Church Session calls a day of prayer and fasting, the purpose of the occasion should be announced and adequate time given in order that members may prepare themselves. It is appropriate on such occasions for services of public worship to be conducted during the day set aside. All the members under the authority of a Church Session should make diligent effort to conscientiously participate in the day set aside.</p> <p>B. Private or family observance of a day of prayer and fasting: It is entirely proper for individuals or for particular families to enter into a day of prayer and fasting. Christians should exercise such an option with some regularity as an offering to God and as a reminder of total dependency upon God for all one has and is.</p> <p>C. When called by a higher court: It is proper and right for a Presbytery or for the General Assembly to call a day of prayer and fasting on behalf of some occasion it deems proper. In such event, the court shall call all the people within its jurisdiction to join in the special time of prayer and fasting.</p>		<p>families should observe special days when fasting is practiced.</p> <p>A. When called by the Session.</p> <p>When the Church Session calls a day of prayer and fasting, the purpose of the occasion should be announced and adequate time given in order that members may prepare themselves. It is appropriate on such occasions for services of public worship to be conducted during the day set aside. All the members under the authority of a Church Session should make diligent effort to conscientiously participate in the day set aside.</p> <p>B. Private or family observance of a day of prayer and fasting.</p> <p>It is entirely proper for individuals or for particular families to enter into a day of prayer and fasting. Christians should exercise such an option with some regularity as an offering to God and as a reminder of total dependency upon God for all one has and is.</p> <p>C. When called by a higher court</p> <p>It is proper and right for a Presbytery or for the General Assembly to call a day of prayer and fasting on behalf of some occasion it deems proper. In such event, the court shall call all the people within its jurisdiction to join in the special time of prayer and fasting.</p>

<p>From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 4</p>	<p>Revision notes</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 4</p>
<p>4-3 Days of Thanksgiving: A joyful and grateful heart is pleasing to the Lord and brings glory to Him. Because of God’s infinite love, His providential care, and His continued working in the affairs of His people, it is appropriate to observe special times of praise and thanksgiving. During such times there shall be special services of worship, times of prayer, and the lifting of the hearts to God by all His people. Such occasions shall be ordered by a Church Session, by another court of the Church for those under its jurisdiction, and by individuals or families who have been especially blessed.</p> <p>4-4 Individual Worship: It is incumbent upon each Christian to develop the practice of daily worship of God. Such a time should include prayer, reading of the Scriptures, examination of one’s inner spiritual life, and serious meditation. The individual Christian should strive to improve knowledge of faith and of the Church by reading and studying the documents of the faith of the Church, by learning its government and worship, as well as its history.</p> <p>4-5 Family Worship: Each individual family should worship together. Such times, done regularly and faithfully, should include the reading together of God’s Word, times of prayer, times of sharing with one another God’s working in individual hearts, and times of doing together the things of the Lord. It is always appropriate</p>		<p>4-3 Days of thanksgiving</p> <p>A joyful and grateful heart is pleasing to the Lord and brings glory to Him. Because of God’s infinite love, His providential care, and His continued working in the affairs of His people, it is appropriate to observe special times of praise and thanksgiving. During such times there shall be special services of worship, times of prayer, and the lifting of the hearts to God by all His people. Such occasions shall be ordered by a Church Session, by another court of the Church for those under its jurisdiction, and by individuals or families who have been especially blessed.</p> <p>4-4 Individual Worship</p> <p>It is incumbent upon each Christian to develop the practice of daily worship of God. Such a time should include prayer, reading of the Scriptures, examination of one’s inner spiritual life, and serious meditation.</p> <p>The individual Christian should strive to improve knowledge of faith and of the Church by reading and studying the documents of the faith of the Church, by learning its government and worship, as well as its history.</p> <p>4-5 Family Worship</p> <p>Each individual family should worship together. Such times, done regularly and faithfully, should include the reading together of God’s Word, times of prayer, times of sharing with one another God’s working in individual hearts, and times of doing together the things of the</p>

From Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 4	Revision notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 4
<p>for a family to sing together in praise of God’s goodness and mercy. Families ordinarily should worship together in the public worship of God in the particular congregation.</p>		<p>Lord. It is always appropriate for a family to sing together in praise of God’s goodness and mercy. Families ordinarily should worship together in the public worship of God in the local church.</p>

Proposed CHAPTER 5: Christian Marriage

5-1 Marriage ordained by God

While marriage is not a sacrament of the Church, it is ordained of God and intended to last as long as the couple shall live.⁴³ God has designed marriage between a man and a woman for the mutual help of husband and wife and for the development of their moral and spiritual character, and for the propagation of children who are to be reared in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

5-2 Who should marry

A man and a woman who are able to give their consent may marry unless their blood relationship is forbidden by Scripture.⁴⁴ The partners husband and wife should share a common Christian faith and a common intention to build a Christian home. Christians would be wise to seek as a husband or a wife those who share a common faith and heritage.

5-3 The remarriage of divorced persons

It is the divine intention that persons entering the marriage covenant become inseparably united, thus allowing for no dissolution save that caused by death of either husband or wife. However, the weaknesses of one or both partners may lead to gross and persistent denial of the marriage vows, yet only in cases of extreme, unrepentant, and irremediable unfaithfulness (physical or spiritual) should separation or divorce be considered. The remarriage of divorced persons may be sanctioned by the church, in keeping with the redemptive Gospel of Jesus Christ, when sufficient penitence for sin and failure is evident, and a firm posture of an endeavor after Christian marriage is manifested. Divorced persons should give prayerful thought to discover if God's vocation for them is to remain unmarried, since one failure in this realm raises serious questions as to the rightness and wisdom of undertaking another union. If the Minister has any questions about the readiness of divorced persons to remarry according to these principles, the ~~Church~~ Session should be consulted and its concurrence sought.⁴⁵

5-4 The church's role in Christian marriage

Marriage ordinarily should be performed in the place of common worship by an ordained Minister of the Church, and with the family of faith present. In approving the marriage, the Church affirms the divine institution of marriage and invokes God's blessings upon those who enter the relationship according to God's Word. As the Church hears the vows a couple make to one another, it should assure the couple of God's grace within their new relationship.

5-5 The Minister's role in Christian marriage

- A. It is the duty of the Minister to consult with the man and the woman contemplating marriage. They should be given godly advice concerning the establishment of a Christian home, as well as instruction in the meaning of marriage in God's sight, and the biblical teachings of the roles, duties, and relationships within the home.⁴⁶ The Minister should give such other counsel which seems needful, wise, and helpful that the couple may be well prepared for their new estate in marriage.
- B. Should the Minister be convinced that genuine faith is absent, that full responsibility for one another is missing, or that the blessings of God are not likely to rest upon such a relationship, the marriage ceremony should not be performed.
- C. It is the duty of the Minister to meet all civil requirements in performing and properly registering the marriage. In addition, the Minister shall report the marriage to the ~~Church~~ Session which shall record it in

⁴³ Matthew 19:4-6

⁴⁴ Leviticus 18:6-24

⁴⁵ See also Westminster Confession Chapter 24; EPC Position Paper on Divorce and Remarriage

⁴⁶ Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-21

its permanent records. It is wise for a Minister to keep a personal record of marriages which includes the names, the dates, the place, and the civil body issuing the authority to marry.

5-6 The service of Christian marriage

- A. The marriage service is an act of worship. For that reason, it is under the direction of the Minister only and shall always be characterized by reverence throughout.
- B. Music should be appropriate to the occasion and the Session or the Minister may determine what music is acceptable. Appropriate hymns sung by all are always proper.
- C. The decorations and all appointments should not be ostentatious or so call attention to themselves as to distract the worshipers from their duty to God on such a solemn occasion.
- D. The service itself should be conducted with dignity and reverence, beginning with prayers for the new home being established and for the members of the new family.
- E. Vows shall be exchanged, appropriate Scriptures read, and a charge may be given which sets forth both the duties and privileges of marriage.
- F. The Minister shall conclude the ceremony by publicly declaring that the couple is now husband and wife and the benediction shall be pronounced.

5-7 The consecration of a civil marriage

Persons who have been married by a civil authority may desire to have that marriage consecrated by a service in the Church, performed by a Minister of the Gospel. It is proper to perform such services, provided all the conditions for a couple preparing for marriage are observed. A marriage should never be sanctioned that does not meet the criteria laid down herein.

Revision Notes

Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 5	Revision Notes	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 5
<p>5-1 While marriage is not a sacrament of the Church, it is ordained of God and intended to last as long as the couple shall live. God has designed marriage for the mutual help of husband and wife and for the development of their moral and spiritual character, and for the propagation of children who are to be reared in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.</p>	<p>1. Changes in 5-1 and 5-2 are made for clarity light of the present cultural debate about the nature of marriage. The proposed revision is explicit that marriage is between a man and a woman.</p>	<p>5-1 Marriage ordained by God</p> <p>While marriage is not a sacrament of the Church, it is ordained of God and intended to last as long as the couple shall live. God has designed marriage between a man and a woman for the mutual help of husband and wife and for the development of their moral and spiritual character, and for the propagation of children who are to be reared in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.</p>
<p>5-2 Who Should Marry: A man and a woman who are able to give their consent may marry unless their blood relationship is forbidden by Scripture. The partners should share a common</p>		<p>5-2 Who should marry</p> <p>A man and a woman who are able to give their consent may marry unless their blood relationship is forbidden by</p>

<p>Current Book of Worship Chapter 5</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed Book of Worship Chapter 5</p>
<p>Christian faith and a common intention to build a Christian home. Christians would be wise to seek as partners those who share a common faith and heritage.</p> <p>5-3 <i>The Church's Role in Marriage: Marriage ordinarily should be performed in the place of common worship by an ordained Minister of the Church, and with the family of faith present. In approving the marriage, the Church affirms the divine institution of marriage and invokes God's blessings upon those who enter the relationship according to God's Word. As the Church hears the vows a couple make to one another, it should assure the couple of God's grace within their new relationship.</i></p> <p>5-4 <i>The Remarriage of Divorced Persons: It is the divine intention that persons entering the marriage covenant become inseparably united, thus allowing for no dissolution save that caused by death of either husband or wife. However, the weaknesses of one or both partners may lead to gross and persistent denial of the marriage vows, yet only in cases of extreme, unrepentant, and irremediable unfaithfulness (physical or spiritual) should separation or divorce be considered. The remarriage of divorced persons may be sanctioned by the church, in keeping with the redemptive Gospel of Jesus Christ, when sufficient penitence for sin and failure is evident, and a firm posture of an endeavor after Christian marriage is manifested. Divorced persons should give prayerful thought to discover if God's vocation for them is to remain unmarried, since one failure in this realm</i></p>	<p>2. <i>For a more logical progression of thought, sections 3 and 4 have been reversed in the proposed revision.</i></p>	<p>Scripture. The husband and wife should share a common Christian faith and a common intention to build a Christian home. Christians would be wise to seek as a husband or a wife those who share a common faith and heritage.</p> <p>5-3 <i>The remarriage of divorced persons</i></p> <p><i>It is the divine intention that persons entering the marriage covenant become inseparably united, thus allowing for no dissolution save that caused by death of either husband or wife. However, the weaknesses of one or both partners may lead to gross and persistent denial of the marriage vows, yet only in cases of extreme, unrepentant, and irremediable unfaithfulness (physical or spiritual) should separation or divorce be considered. The remarriage of divorced persons may be sanctioned by the church, in keeping with the redemptive Gospel of Jesus Christ, when sufficient penitence for sin and failure is evident, and a firm posture of an endeavor after Christian marriage is manifested. Divorced persons should give prayerful thought to discover if God's vocation for them is to remain unmarried, since one failure in this realm raises serious questions as to the rightness and wisdom of undertaking another union. If the Minister has any questions about the readiness of divorced persons to remarry according to these principles, the Church Session should be consulted and its concurrence sought.</i></p> <p>5-4 <i>The church's role in Christian marriage</i></p>

<p>Current Book of Worship Chapter 5</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed Book of Worship Chapter 5</p>
<p><i>raises serious questions as to the rightness and wisdom of undertaking another union. If the Minister has any questions about the readiness of divorced persons to remarry according to these principles, the Church Session should be consulted and its concurrence sought.</i></p> <p>5-5 The Minister’s Role in Marriage: It is the duty of the Minister to consult with the <u>couple</u> contemplating marriage. They should be given godly advice concerning the establishment of a Christian home, as well as instruction in the meaning of marriage in God’s sight, and the biblical teachings of the roles, duties, and relationships within the home. The Minister should give such other counsel which seems needful, wise, and helpful that the couple may be well prepared for their new estate in marriage. Should the Minister be convinced that genuine faith is absent, that full responsibility for one another is missing, and that the blessings of God are not likely to rest upon such a relationship, the marriage ceremony should not be performed. It is the duty of the Minister to meet all civil requirements in performing and properly registering the marriage. In addition, the Minister shall report the marriage to the Church Session which shall record it in its permanent records. It is wise for a Minister to keep a personal record of marriages which includes the names, the dates, the place, and the civil body</p>	<p>3. The word “Christian” has been added for clarity. The <i>Book of Worship</i> speaks primarily to marriage within the Church.</p> <p>4. See note 1</p> <p>5. For ease of use, the content of W.5-5 has been subdivided in the proposed revision.</p> <p>6. “Or” has replaced “and” to be clear that only one of the conditions need to be present for the minister to refuse to perform the ceremony.</p>	<p><i>Marriage ordinarily should be performed in the place of common worship by an ordained Minister of the Church, and with the family of faith present. In approving the marriage, the Church affirms the divine institution of marriage and invokes God’s blessings upon those who enter the relationship according to God’s Word. As the Church hears the vows a couple make to one another, it should assure the couple of God’s grace within their new relationship.</i></p> <p>5-5 The Minister’s role in Christian marriage</p> <p>A. It is the duty of the Minister to consult with <u>the man and the woman</u> contemplating marriage. They should be given godly advice concerning the establishment of a Christian home, as well as instruction in the meaning of marriage in God’s sight, and the biblical teachings of the roles, duties, and relationships within the home. The Minister should give such other counsel which seems needful, wise, and helpful that the couple may be well prepared for their new estate in marriage.</p> <p>B. Should the Minister be convinced that genuine faith is absent, that full responsibility for one another is missing, or that the blessings of God are not likely to rest upon such a relationship, the marriage ceremony should not be performed.</p> <p>C. It is the duty of the</p>

<p>Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 5</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 5</p>
<p>issuing the authority to marry.</p> <p>5-6 The Service of Christian Marriage: The marriage ceremony is an act of worship. For that reason, it is under the direction of the Minister only and shall always be characterized by reverence throughout. Music should be appropriate to the occasion and the Church Session or the Minister may determine what music is acceptable. Appropriate hymns sung by all are always proper. The decorations and all appointments should not be ostentatious or so call attention to themselves as to distract the worshipers from their duty to God on such a solemn occasion. The service itself should be conducted with dignity and reverence, beginning with prayers for the new home being established and for the members of the new family. Vows shall be exchanged, appropriate Scriptures read, and a charge may be given which sets forth both the duties and privileges of marriage. The Minister shall conclude the ceremony by publicly declaring that the couple is now husband and wife and the benediction shall be pronounced.</p>	<p>7. For consistent terminology, “service” is used instead of “ceremony” throughout this section of the revision because of its closer connection to the term “worship.”</p> <p>8. For clarity, the material in W.5-6 has been subdivided in the proposed revision.</p>	<p>Minister to meet all civil requirements in performing and properly registering the marriage. In addition, the Minister shall report the marriage to the Session which shall record it in its permanent records. It is wise for a Minister to keep a personal record of marriages which includes the names, the dates, the place, and the civil body issuing the authority to marry.</p> <p>5-6 The service of Christian marriage</p> <p>A. The marriage service is an act of worship. For that reason, it is under the direction of the Minister only and shall always be characterized by reverence throughout.</p> <p>B. Music should be appropriate to the occasion and the Session or the Minister may determine what music is acceptable. Appropriate hymns sung by all are always proper.</p> <p>C. The decorations and all appointments should not be ostentatious or so call attention to themselves as to distract the worshipers from their duty to God on such a solemn occasion.</p> <p>D. The service itself should be conducted with dignity and reverence, beginning with prayers for the new home being established and for the members of the new family.</p> <p>E. Vows shall be exchanged, appropriate Scriptures read, and a charge may be</p>

<p>Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 5</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 5</p>
<p>5-7 The <u>Blessing</u> of a Civil Marriage: Persons who have been married by a civil authority may desire to have that marriage <u>blessed</u> by a service in the Church, performed by a Minister of the Gospel. It is proper to perform such services, provided all the conditions for a <u>couple</u> preparing for marriage are observed. A marriage should never be sanctioned that does not meet the criteria laid down herein.</p>	<p>6. For clarity, “<u>consecration</u>” (to set apart for God’s use) replaces “blessing” because it better describes the reason for the service.</p>	<p>given which sets forth both the duties and privileges of marriage.</p> <p>F. The Minister shall conclude the ceremony by publicly declaring that the couple is now husband and wife and the benediction shall be pronounced.</p> <p>5-7 The <u>consecration</u> of a civil marriage</p> <p>Persons who have been married by a civil authority may desire to have that marriage <u>consecrated</u> by a service in the Church, performed by a Minister of the Gospel. It is proper to perform such services, provided all the conditions for a <u>man and woman</u> preparing for marriage are observed. A marriage should never be sanctioned that does not meet the criteria laid down herein.</p>

Proposed CHAPTER 6: Christian Burial of the Dead

6-1 The body of a believer after death.

It is permissible for Christians to dispose of bodies by burial, cremation, or donation for scientific purposes.⁴⁷

6-2 The funeral service.

A. In a funeral service the remains of the deceased are present. It is a worship service which focuses upon God who has raised Jesus Christ from the dead and gives believers genuine hope of their own resurrection.⁴⁸ It is a time for the reaffirmation of the Church's faith and a time for expressing joy in the assurance of eternal life.

B. Ostentatious decorations and display of flowers should be avoided.

C. The casket of the deceased should not be open during the service.

D. Ordinarily a funeral or memorial service should be conducted in the place of common worship. As this is the place for Baptism and marriage, it is also the place where witness to faith in the resurrection is made.

E. A Christian funeral service is entirely under the control of the Minister. It should include:

1. The reading of appropriate passages of Scripture, from both the Old and New Testament

2. An exposition of some passage by the Minister

3. Prayers of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased and prayers of intercession for the bereaved

4. The singing of appropriate hymns

5. A reminder to all of death for every person and judgment to come, along with a solemn reminder that each must repent and turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to gain eternal life

F. It is not appropriate to include a civic or fraternal rite in this service. If such is desired, it should be conducted at another time and place.

6-3 The memorial service

The memorial service should contain all the elements of a funeral service, but the remains of the deceased are not present.

6-4 Graveside service

A graveside service is an abbreviated funeral service at the place of burial, followed by committal either immediately or at a later time.

6-5 The committal

Ordinarily the committal should be reserved for the immediate family and close friends. It may be performed either before or after the worship service. It should consist of a few selected passages of Scripture, a brief prayer of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased, a committing of the body to its place of rest, and a committing of the soul to God, concluding all with a benediction.

⁴⁷ See Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 32.

⁴⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22

Revision Notes

<p>Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 6</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 6</p>
<p>6-1 Above all, a Christian <u>burial</u> should be a witness to the faith of the believers, to their confidence in the resurrection of the body and everlasting life. It is a time of worship in which glory is given to God for His care of the bereaved, for His trustworthy providence, and for the hope God’s people have in Jesus Christ. The focus of the burial service is God who has raised Jesus Christ from the dead and given believers an earnest appreciation of their own resurrection. It is a time for the reaffirmation of the Church’s faith and a time for expressing joy in the assurance of eternal life.</p> <p>6-2 The Place of Worship: <i>Ordinarily a <u>service of burial</u> should be conducted in the place of common worship. As this is the place for baptism and marriage, it is also the place where witness to faith in the resurrection is made.</i></p> <p>6-3 The Parts of Worship: A burial service, which shall be entirely under the control of the Minister, should include the reading of appropriate passages of Scripture, from both the Old and New Testament; it should include an exposition of some passage by the Minister, prayers</p>	<p>1. The revision deletes the term “burial service” and clarifies terminology of the various kinds of appropriate services: <u>funeral</u> service, <u>memorial</u> service, <u>graveside</u> service, and the <u>committal</u>. As a result, the <i>parts of current W-6 have been re-ordered.</i></p> <p>2. Revised W.6-2A condenses the wording of current W.6-1.</p> <p>2. Revised W.6-2E condenses wording and, for clarity, subdivides current W.6-3.</p>	<p>6-1 The body of a believer after death.</p> <p><i>It is permissible for Christians to dispose of bodies by burial, cremation, or donation for scientific purposes.</i></p> <p>6-2 The <u>funeral</u> service.</p> <p>A. <u>In a funeral service the remains of the deceased are present.</u> It is a worship service that focuses upon God who has raised Jesus Christ from the dead and gives believers genuine hope of their own resurrection. It is a time for the reaffirmation of the Church’s faith and a time for expressing joy in the assurance of eternal life.</p> <p>B. <i>Ostentatious decorations and display of flowers should be avoided.</i></p> <p>C. <i>The casket of the deceased should not be open during the service.</i></p> <p>D. <i>Ordinarily a funeral or memorial service should be conducted in the place of common worship. As this is the place for Baptism and marriage, it is also the place where witness to faith in the resurrection is made.</i></p> <p>E. A Christian funeral service <u>is</u> entirely under the control of the Minister. It should include:</p> <p>1. The reading of appropriate passages of Scripture, from both the</p>

<p>Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 6</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 6</p>
<p>of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased and prayers of intercession for the bereaved, the singing of appropriate hymns, and a reminder to all of death for every person and judgment to come, along with a solemn reminder that each must repent and turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to gain eternal life. It is not appropriate to include a civic or fraternal rite in this service. If such is desired, it should be conducted at another time and place.</p> <p>6-4 <i>The Casket of the Deceased: It is not necessary for the casket to be present for the worship service. It should not be open if present. Decorations and ostentatious display of flowers should be avoided. It is permissible for Christians to dispose of bodies by burial, cremation, or donation for scientific purposes.</i></p> <p>6-5 The Committal: Ordinarily the committal should be reserved for the immediate family and close friends. It may be performed either before or after the worship service. It should consist of a few selected passages of Scripture, a brief</p>	<p>2. Memorial services and Graveside Services are commonly practiced in the EPC, but do not appear in the current <i>Book of Worship</i>.</p>	<p>Old and New Testament</p> <p>2. An exposition of some passage of Scripture by the Minister</p> <p>3. Prayers of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased and prayers of intercession for the bereaved</p> <p>4. The singing of appropriate songs</p> <p>5. A reminder to all of death for every person judgment to come, along with a solemn reminder that each must repent and turn to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to gain eternal life</p> <p>F. It is not appropriate to include a civic or fraternal rite in this service. If such is desired, it should be conducted at another time and place.</p> <p>6-3 The memorial service</p> <p>The memorial service should contain all the elements of a funeral service, but the remains of the deceased are not present.</p> <p>6-4 Graveside service</p> <p>A graveside service is an abbreviated funeral service at the place of burial, followed by committal either immediately or at a later time.</p> <p>6-5 The committal</p> <p>Ordinarily the committal should be reserved for the immediate family and close friends. It may be performed either before or after the worship service. It should</p>

<p>Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 6</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 6</p>
<p>prayer of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased, a committing of the body to its place of rest, and a committing of the soul to God, concluding all with a benediction.</p>		<p>consist of a few selected passages of Scripture, a brief prayer of thanksgiving for the life of the deceased, a committing of the body to its place of rest, and a committing of the soul to God, concluding all with a benediction.</p>

Proposed CHAPTER 7: Service to God

7-1 Service as worship:

Our worship of God is not complete unless it is extended in loving service to others. Such ministries of compassion and concern for the wellbeing of others are not in themselves the Gospel, *they are the fruit of the Gospel* and may embody and convey the Gospel in a real way. It is to be remembered that good deeds done for others that do not include the sharing of what God has done in Jesus Christ are inadequate and incomplete. However, to share the Good News and fail to show concern and compassion for others' needs is to present an incomplete Gospel and may cause people to call in question the Good News itself. Faith and works are inseparably linked and are incomplete without one another.⁴⁹

7-2 The service of evangelism

The primary mission of the Church is to share the Gospel of salvation with all the nations of the world.⁵⁰ This is the mission of every Christian, every local church, and the whole church. Each court of the Church should encourage, train, and lead those under its jurisdiction in the service of evangelism.

7-3 The service of discipleship

Jesus commanded that Christians go into the world to make disciples,⁵¹ which involves teaching and training. This responsibility belongs to the home and each court of the Church. The basic study material is always the Bible, along with the confessional documents of the Church.

A. Discipleship in the home

It is the obligation of Christian parents to bring their children up in the nurture and instruction in the Lord.⁵² When parents present children for Baptism, they take a vow to that end.⁵³ Diligence should be exercised in fulfilling this obligation.

B. Discipleship-in the local church

It is the obligation of a Session to offer a program of education and nurture to the believers. This includes adequate educational facilities, properly trained teachers, and materials that reflect the history, heritage, faith and practice of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Such teachers should be active members of the congregation and approved by the Session. The Session may secure personnel to oversee the educational program under the supervision of the Pastor. Each Session should seek opportunities to establish discipleship ministries in places that are destitute of the Gospel and training in the faith.

C. Discipleship and Other Courts

The Presbytery and General Assembly are obligated to support and assist the Session in every way possible. This may include offering training for teachers, producing materials and educational aids, and other support functions that insure more effective nurture.

D. Discipleship and Formal Education

Teaching the things of God may include education within the context of the Christian faith. All of the courts of the Church should examine ways in which this may be accomplished, including Christian schools, colleges, or seminaries.

⁴⁹ Matthew 25:40; Romans 10:14-15; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 John 3:16-19;

⁵⁰ See G.4-3

⁵¹ Matthew 28:18-20

⁵² Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6.4

⁵³ See W.3-2G

7-4 The service of giving

The giving of God's people is an acknowledgement that He is the author of every good and perfect gift and that they are but stewards of His grace. God's people are reminded that they are held accountable not only for a proper stewardship of God's gifts in terms of tithes and offerings, but for the proper use of all they have and are. The service of giving finds expression in giving of self, of tithes and gifts, and of service to others.⁵⁴

A. The giving of self

The Christian is one who offers his heart and life totally to God. This self-giving is never complete, for each person must continue to offer self to re-surrender and recommitment.

B. The giving of tithes and gifts

Nowhere does the Bible mention less than a tithe as a proper stewardship for the Christian. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church believes in the tithe and teaches it as the minimum requirement for the believer. Gifts to the Lord are those contributions made over and above the tithe. Such giving should be done generously, regularly, systematically, and proportionally.⁵⁵

C. The giving of service to others

The teaching of Christ is that in service and ministry to others, God's people are honoring and serving Him.⁵⁶ Therefore, it is incumbent upon believers to serve others and to minister to their needs.

1. The individual believer

Scriptures teach that God calls every person to some vocation and whatever that task, the individual is to serve as unto the Lord.⁵⁷ For that reason, each Christian in daily tasks is to seek to serve God as a good steward. In work, leisure time, with family, friends and neighbors, the Christian is to seek to show love and compassion and to exhibit before the world what it means to belong to Jesus Christ.

2. The Christian should also seek places for service

- a. in the local church,⁵⁸
- b. in agencies and ministries of the community or church which minister to the needs of people, and
- c. in the ministries of the higher courts of the Church

3. The local church

The local church is to serve others as a witness to the world of God's love for all people. Each Session must judge how best to exemplify this love to its own community and situation.⁵⁹

4. The Presbytery and General Assembly

The higher courts should seek ways to give expression to the loving concern of God for the conditions of people. Thus, these courts are to give opportunity for those under their jurisdiction to express God's love in ways the courts deem fitting and beneficial. In expressing such concerns these courts shall be careful that they do not subvert or make secondary the primary mission of the Church to evangelize the world.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ See W.2-9

⁵⁵ Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8-9.

⁵⁶ Matthew 25:40

⁵⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:58

⁵⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:7

⁵⁹ For other responsibilities of the Session see G.18-3.

⁶⁰ see G.19-4A(5)

7-5 The service of compassion

The New Testament describes the concern and compassion of Christ for the conditions of people. The Church shall emulate its Head by showing special concern for the sick, the sorrowing, the hungry and the poor. The Session shall be responsible for establishing these ministries ~~to such~~ within the congregation, and into the community. The service of compassion to those in adversity shall include such places as hospitals, retirement homes, convalescent homes, children’s homes, prisons, and other public institutions. The higher courts of the Church shall seek to show compassion in these areas, including the establishment of institutions, both at home and abroad, for the care of various needs.

Revision Notes

Current Book of Worship Chapter 7	Revision Notes	Proposed Book of Worship Chapter 7
<p>7-1 In giving glory to God through worship, both the individual and the community of faith as a whole also gives glory to God by serving Him in ministry to others. The first duty of Christians is to give glory to God and to share with others the mighty deeds of God for our salvation. However, the necessary and inevitable consequence of faith and love is to care for others. Such ministries of compassion and concern for the wellbeing of others are not the Gospel, although they may embody the Gospel and convey the Gospel in a real way. Service to others is the fruit of the Gospel, the result in the lives of believers of the Gospel, who, in doing even unto the least, do it as unto Christ. It is to be remembered that good deeds done for others that do not include the sharing of what God has done in Jesus Christ are inadequate and incomplete. Until the Christian and the Church have shared the Good News of salvation, they have not shared their best gift. However, to share the Good News and fail to show concern and compassion for others’ needs is to present an incomplete Gospel and may cause people to call in question the Good News itself. Faith and works are inseparably linked and are incomplete without one another.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed W.7-1 has been condensed, eliminating unnecessary wording with the opening summary statement.. “In themselves” has been added in the revision as a helpful clarification of the relationship of gospel and works. 	<p>7-1 Service as Worship:</p> <p>Our worship of God is not complete unless it is extended in loving service to others. Such ministries of compassion and concern for the wellbeing of others are not in themselves the gospel, they are the fruit of the gospel and may embody and convey the Gospel in a real way. It is to be remembered that good deeds done for others that do not include the sharing of what God has done in Jesus Christ are inadequate and incomplete. However, to share the Good News and fail to show concern and compassion for others’ needs is to present an incomplete Gospel and may cause people to call in question the Good News itself. Faith and works are inseparably linked and are incomplete without one another.</p>

<p>Current Book of Worship Chapter 7</p>	<p>Revision Notes</p>	<p>Proposed Book of Worship Chapter 7</p>
<p>7-2 The Service of Evangelism: The <u>first task</u> of the Church is to share the Gospel of salvation with all the nations of the world. This is the task of every Christian, every particular church, and the whole church. Each court of the Church should encourage, train, and lead those under its jurisdiction in the service of evangelism.</p> <p>7-3 The Service of <u>Teaching</u>: Jesus commanded that Christians not only go into the world to make converts, but that those converts should be taught. Therefore, it is the duty of Christians and the Church to disciple those who believe. Within the particular church this duty falls to the Church Session; but both the Presbytery and General Assembly should seek ways to encourage and support the Church Session in this duty. The basic study material is always the Bible, along with the confessional documents of the Church.</p> <p>A. Duty in the home: It is the obligation of Christian parents to bring their children up in the nurture and instruction in the Lord. When parents present children for baptism, they take a vow to that end. Diligence should be exercised in fulfilling this obligation.</p> <p>B. Duty in the particular church: It is the obligation of a Church Session in the particular church to offer a program of education and nurture to the believers. This includes adequate educational facilities, properly trained teachers, and materials that reflect the history, heritage, faith and</p>	<p>3. “First task” has been changed to “<u>primary mission</u>” to emphasize the missional character of the church and its commitment to the Great Commission.</p> <p>4. “Teaching” has been changed to “<u>discipleship</u>” to better conform to the language of Matt. 28:18. W.7-3 has been condensed to eliminate unnecessary language.</p> <p>5. “Duty” has been changed to <u>discipleship</u> to avoid ambiguity and to be consistent with the terminology of proposed W.7-3.</p> <p>6. See note 4.</p>	<p>7-2 The Service of Evangelism</p> <p>The <u>primary mission</u> of the Church is to share the Gospel of salvation with all the nations of the world. This is the mission of every Christian, every <u>local</u> church, and the whole church. Each court of the Church should encourage, train, and lead those under its jurisdiction in the service of evangelism.</p> <p>7-3 The Service of <u>Discipleship</u></p> <p>Jesus commanded that Christians go into the world to make <u>disciples</u>, which involves teaching and training. This responsibility belongs to the home and each court of the Church. The basic study material is always the Bible, along with the confessional documents of the Church.</p> <p>A. <u>Discipleship in the home</u></p> <p>It is the obligation of Christian parents to bring their children up in the nurture and instruction in the Lord. When parents present children for Baptism, they take a vow to that end. Diligence should be exercised in fulfilling this obligation.</p> <p>B. <u>Discipleship in the local church</u></p> <p>It is the obligation of a <u>Session</u> to offer a program of education and nurture to the believers. This includes adequate educational facilities, properly trained teachers, and materials that reflect</p>

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<p>practice of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Such teachers should be active members of the congregation and approved by the Church Session. The Church Session may secure full-time personnel to oversee the educational program under the supervision of the Pastor. Each Church Session should seek to extend its teaching ministry by searching for opportunity to establish mission church schools in places that are destitute of the Gospel and training in the faith.</p> <p>C. Duty of other courts: The Presbytery and General Assembly are obligated to support and assist the Church Session in every way possible. This may include offering training for teachers, producing materials and educational aids, and other support functions that insure more effective nurture.</p> <p>7-4 The Service of Giving: As set forth in §2-9 of the <i>Book of Worship</i>, the giving of God’s people is an acknowledgement that He is the author of every good and perfect gift and that they are but stewards of His</p>	<p>7. “Full-time” is unnecessary in this context, and in some settings unattainable.</p> <p>8. For clarity, language has been condensed in proposed sections B, C, and D.</p> <p>9. See note 4.</p> <p>10. For ease of use and clarity, proposed W.7-3D has been moved and condensed from current W.7-6.</p> <p>11. The language of proposed W.7-4 has been condensed.</p>	<p>the history, heritage, faith and practice of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Such teachers should be active members of the congregation and approved by the Session. The Session may secure personnel to oversee the educational program under the supervision of the Pastor. Each Session should seek opportunities to establish discipleship ministries in places that are destitute of the gospel and training in the faith.</p> <p>C. Discipleship and Other Courts</p> <p>The Presbytery and General Assembly are obligated to support and assist the Session in every way possible. This may include offering training for teachers, producing materials and educational aids, and other support functions that insure more effective nurture.</p> <p>D. Discipleship and Formal Education</p> <p><i>Teaching the things of God may include education within the context of the Christian faith. All the courts of the Church should examine ways in which this may be accomplished, including Christian schools, colleges, or seminaries.</i></p> <p>7-4 The Service of Giving</p> <p>The giving of God’s people is an acknowledgement that He is the author of every good and perfect gift and that they are but stewards of His grace.</p>

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<p>grace. God’s people are reminded that they are held accountable not only for a proper stewardship of God’s gifts in terms of tithes and offerings, but for the proper use of all they have and are. This giving of the people finds expression in three principal areas of the offering of self, the offering of tithes and gifts, and the offering of service to others. (<i>Book of Worship</i>, 2-9.A, B, and C)</p> <p>A. The giving of self: The Christian is one who offers his heart and life totally to God. This self-giving is never complete, for each person must continue to offer self to re-surrender and recommitment.</p> <p>B. The giving of tithes and gifts: Nowhere does the Bible mention less than a tithe as a proper stewardship for the Christian. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church believes in the tithe and teaches it as the minimum requirement for the believer. Gifts to the Lord are those contributions made over and above the tithe. Such giving should be done regularly and systematically.</p> <p>C. The giving of service to others: The teaching of Christ is that in service and ministry to others God’s people are honoring and serving Him. Therefore, it is incumbent upon believers to serve others and to minister to their needs.</p>	<p>12. “Proportionally” has been added to include the biblical principle expressed in 1 Cor. 8, 9, 16:2.</p>	<p>God’s people are reminded that they are held accountable not only for a proper stewardship of God’s gifts in terms of tithes and offerings, but for the proper use of all they have and are. The service of giving finds expression in giving of self, of tithes and gifts, and of service to others.</p> <p>A. The giving of self</p> <p>The Christian is one who offers his heart and life totally to God. This self-giving is never complete, for each person must continue to offer self to re-surrender and recommitment.</p> <p>B. The giving of tithes and gifts</p> <p>Nowhere does the Bible mention less than a tithe as a proper stewardship for the Christian. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church believes in the tithe and teaches it as the minimum requirement for the believer. Gifts to the Lord are those contributions made over and above the tithe. Such giving should be done generously, regularly, systematically, and proportionally.</p> <p>C. The giving of service to others</p> <p>The teaching of Christ is that in service and ministry to others, God’s people are honoring and serving Him. Therefore, it is incumbent upon believers to serve others</p>

<p align="center">Current <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 7</p>	<p align="center">Revision Notes</p>	<p align="center">Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> Chapter 7</p>
<p>1. The individual believer: Each Christian is to seek opportunity to serve. This may be special service in the particular church, where each person should exercise the gifts God has given for the common good. Such service may include involvement in the agencies of the community which minister to the needs of people. It may include service in the ministries of the higher courts of the Church. It especially includes Christians in their daily work. The Scriptures teach that God calls every person to some vocation and whatever that task, the individual is to serve as unto the Lord. For that reason, each Christian in daily tasks is to seek to serve God as a good steward. In leisure time, with friends and neighbors, the Christian is to seek to show love and compassion and to exhibit before the world what it means to belong to Jesus Christ.</p> <p>2. The particular church: The individual congregation is to serve others as a witness to the world of God’s love for all people. Each Church Session must judge how best to exemplify this love to its particular community and situation, but the congregation as a whole must be given ways to collectively show their care and concern.</p> <p>3. The Presbytery and General Assembly: The</p>		<p>and to minister to their needs.</p> <p>1. <i>The individual believer:</i></p> <p>Scriptures teach that God calls every person to some vocation and whatever that task, the individual is to serve as unto the Lord. For that reason, each Christian in daily tasks is to seek to serve God as a good steward. In work, leisure time, with family, friends and neighbors, the Christian is to seek to show love and compassion and to exhibit before the world what it means to belong to Jesus Christ.</p> <p>2. The Christian should also seek places for service</p> <p>a. in the local church,</p> <p>b. in agencies and ministries of the community or church which minister to the needs of people, and</p> <p>c. in the ministries of the higher courts of the Church</p> <p>3. <i>The local church</i></p> <p>The local church is to serve others as a witness to the world of God’s love for all people. Each Session must judge how best to exemplify this love to its own community and situation.</p> <p>4. <i>The Presbytery and</i></p>

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<p>higher courts should seek ways to give expression to the loving concern of God for the conditions of people. Thus, these courts are to give opportunity for those under their jurisdiction to express God’s love in ways the courts deem fitting and beneficial. In expressing such concerns these courts shall be careful that they do not subvert or make secondary the primary business of the Church to evangelize the world.</p> <p>7-5 The Service of Compassion: The New Testament describes the concern and compassion of Christ for the conditions of people. The Church shall emulate its Head by showing special concern for the sick, the sorrowing, the hungry and the poor. The Church Session shall be responsible not only for establishing ministries to such within the congregation, but into the community as well. The service of compassion to those in adversity shall include such places as hospitals, retirement homes, convalescent homes, children’s homes, orphanages, prisons, and other public institutions. On a broader scale, the higher courts of the Church shall seek to show compassion in these areas. For the General Assembly, this may include the establishment of institutions, both at home and abroad, for the care of various needs.</p> <p>7-6 <i>The Service of Education: Teaching the things of God may include education within the context of the Christian faith. All of the courts of the Church should examine ways in which</i></p>	<p>13. “Mission” better expresses the character of the church than “business.”</p> <p>14. For clarity and ease of use, current W.7-6 has been <i>moved to proposed W.7-3D.</i></p>	<p><i>General Assembly</i></p> <p>The higher courts should seek ways to give expression to the loving concern of God for the conditions of people. Thus, these courts are to give opportunity for those under their jurisdiction to express God’s love in ways the courts deem fitting and beneficial. In expressing such concerns these courts shall be careful that they do not subvert or make secondary the primary mission of the Church to evangelize the world.</p> <p>7-5 The Service of Compassion: The New Testament describes the concern and compassion of Christ for the conditions of people. The Church shall emulate its Head by showing special concern for the sick, the sorrowing, the hungry and the poor. The Session shall be responsible for establishing these ministries within the congregation, and into the community.-The service of compassion to those in adversity shall include such places as hospitals, retirement homes, convalescent homes, children’s homes, prisons, and other public institutions. The higher courts of the Church shall seek to show compassion in these areas, including the establishment of institutions, both at home and abroad, for the care of various needs.</p>

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<i>this may be accomplished. It may include Christian schools at the particular church level or colleges and seminaries at the Assembly level.</i>		