

REFORMATION WORSHIP

The Westminster morning service follows the classical pattern of the major Protestant Reformers as they sought to return Christian worship to the pattern and elements of the immediate post-Apostolic church. The service consists of four major parts—the acts of entrance, the ministry of the Word, the ministry of prayer and the acts of commitment. Not only does the practice of “classic” worship place the focus on Almighty God himself and his majesty—as opposed to human personalities and entertainment—but the “means of Grace” are central in the service.

THE LORD’S DAY AT WESTMINSTER

- 9:45 A.M. Sunday Bible School for the entire family
- 11:00 A.M. Morning Service
- 6:00 P.M. Revival Prayer

TONIGHT – REVIVAL PRAYER, AT THE CHURCH AT 6:00.

Revival prayer, as displayed by Daniel, Nehemiah, Anna and the Apostles.

ALL CHURCH FELLOWSHIP DINNER NEXT LORD’S DAY

Immediately following the morning service next Lord’s Day, we will have an all church fellowship meal.

PRESBYTERY

The one hundred and fifty-eighth stated meeting of Gulf Coast Presbytery will convene this Tuesday May 13, in the First Presbyterian Church, Niceville, FL. Attending from Westminster will be the pastor and Ruling Elder George Close.

THE WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Westminster Church is a congregation of Gulf Coast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America. The church was officially chartered on April 29, 1954 by Florida Presbytery of the then Presbyterian Church, U. S. In 1973 the congregation affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America to remain fully loyal to the sound doctrine of the Reformed Faith as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and to be obedient to the Great Commission.

*BOOK OF THE MONTH: *The Finger of God* by Philip S. Ross*

Westminster Presbyterian Church

THE MORNING SERVICE
eleven o’clock
Lord’s Day, May 11, 2025

Visitors will note that the Westminster morning service proceeds without announcement. Written direction is found in the bulletin for each component of the corporate expression of worship of the Almighty and Majestic Triune God. The service is planned in this manner so as to eliminate as much as possible interruptions of the flow of thought and expressions of reverent worship that is commensurate with the majesty of Almighty God. This worship begins with the prelude.

- *Indicates the congregation standing, as one is able.
- +Latecomers may be seated.

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” Revelation 5:12 (ESV)

REBIRTH

It was Jesus who first declared that spiritual rebirth was an absolute necessity for entering the kingdom of God. He declared to Nicodemus, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). The word *unless* in Jesus’ teaching signals a universally necessary condition for seeing and entering the kingdom of God. Rebirth, then, is an essential part of Christianity; without it, entrance into God’s kingdom is impossible. *Regeneration* is the theological term used to describe rebirth. It refers to a new generating, a new genesis, a new beginning. It is more than “turning over a new leaf”; it marks the beginning of a new life in a radically renewed person. Peter speaks of believers having “been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God” (I Peter 1:23).

Regeneration is the work of Holy Spirit upon those who are spiritually dead (see Ephesians 2:1-10). The Spirit recreates the human heart, quickening it from spiritual death to spiritual life. Regenerate people are new creations. Where formerly they had no disposition, inclination, or desire for the things of God, now they are disposed and inclined toward God. In regeneration, God plants a desire for Himself in the human heart that otherwise would not be there.

Regeneration is not to be confused with the full experience of conversion. Just as birth is our initiation, our first entrance into life outside the womb, so our spiritual rebirth is the starting point of our spiritual life. It occurs by God’s divine initiative and is an act that is sovereign, immediate, and instantaneous. An awareness of our conversion may be gradual. Yet rebirth itself is instantaneous. No one can be partially reborn.

—The Rev. R. C. Sproul, Drs. (Free Uni., NL)
Founding pastor, St. Andrew’s Chapel (PCA), Sanford, FL
from *The Reformation Study Bible*, 3d. ed., p. 1857

The Prelude

Thine Be the Glory G. F. Handel, 1747

*The First Lesson – Zephaniah 3:17; Malachi 1:11

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. (ESV)

***The Hymn No. 53 – “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” Lobe Den Herren**

*The Invocation and the Lord's Prayer

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

***The Response** (Sung by all) *Hamburg*

Father of heav'n, whose love profound a ransom for our souls has found, before your throne we humbly bend; to us your pard'ning love extend. Almighty Son, Incarnate Word, our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord, before your throne we humbly bend; to us your saving grace extend. Eternal Spirit, by whose breath the soul is raised from sin and death, before your throne we humbly bend; to us your quick'ning pow'r extend. (by Edward Cooper, English pastor, 1805, mod.)

+The Interlude – Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain Sullivan

*The Ascription of Praise (Sung by all) *Mendon*

This day the Lord for sinners slain in might victorious rose again: O Jesus, may we raised be from death of sin to live in thee! O Lord, this day upon us shine and fill our souls with light divine: O Spirit, fill our hearts this day, with grace to hear and grace to pray. (by William W. How, Bishop of Wakefield, 1871)

*The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell;* The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting. Amen.

*i. e. His body continued in the state of the dead until the third day.

(from the 2nd c.; the term “Catholic” is the Anglicization of the Latin for universal)

The Gloria Patri (Sung by all) *Greator rex

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen. (2nd cent.)

*The Great Commandment (Unison)

And he [*Jesus*] said . . . “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (St. Matthew 22:37-40 [Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18]) (ESV)

***The Response (Sung by all) Slane**

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
thou my best thought by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my great Father, I thy true son; thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one. Riches
I heed not, nor man's empty praise, thou mine inheritance, now and always: thou and
thou only, first in my heart, High King of heaven, my treasure thou art. High King of
heaven, my victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun! Heart of
my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all. (by Irish monk Dallan
Forgaill, ca. 700, to honor the faith of fifth century missionary Patrick of Ireland, tr.
Mary Elizabeth Byrne, 1905, vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1912)

***The Second Lesson – Psalm 32:1-5 (Responsively)**

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. (ESV)

*The Silent Prayers of God's People

*The Pastoral Prayer

***The Doxology** (Sung by all) *Old Hundredth*

Lord, I my vows to you renew, disperse my sins as morning dew; guard my first springs of thought and will, and with yourself my spirit fill. Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heav'nly host: praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (by Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, referred to by James II as the finest Protestant preacher of his day, 1695, 1709)

***The Westminster Larger Catechism**

Pastor: Q. 134. What is the sixth commandment?
Congregation: A. The sixth commandment is, *Thou shalt not kill.*
Pastor: Q. 135. What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?
Congregation: A. The duties required in the sixth commandment are, all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; by just defense thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit; a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreations; by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness; peaceable, mild, and courteous speeches and behavior; forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.

***The Response** (Sung by all) *New Britain*
O Jesus, King most wonderful! Thou conqueror renowned! Thou sweetness most ineffable, in whom all joys are found! When once thou visitest the heart, then truth begins to shine, then earthly vanities depart, then kindles love divine. May every heart confess thy name; and ever thee adore; and seeking thee, itself inflame, to seek thee more and more. Thee may our tongues forever bless; thee may we love alone; and ever in our lives express the image of thine own. (attr. to Bernard of Clairvaux)

The Interlude – O Praise the Lord, for He Is Good . . Haweis, adapt. Samuel Webbe, Jr.

The Third Lesson – Exodus 20:13 (Pew Bible, p. 61, Large Print, p. 72)

The Sermon – THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT Mr. McGowan

VIII. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: LOVING GOD’S LAW

The Morning Prayer

***The Hymn No. 342** – “Christ is made the sure foundation” *Regent Square*

***The Benediction**

***The Response** (Sung by all) *Hyfrydol*
Alleluia, alleluia! Hearts to heav’n and voices raise; sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise: he, who on the cross a victim for the world’s salvation bled, Jesus Christ, the King of glory, now is risen from the dead. Alleluia, alleluia! Glory be to God on high; alleluia to the Savior who has won the victory; alleluia to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity. Alleluia! Alleluia to the Triune Majesty. (by Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, nephew of William Wordsworth, 1862, alt.)

The Postlude – *Tempus adest floridum* *Piae Cantiones*, 1582, arr. MacMillan

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS SANCTIFIER

God calls every person to mirror and reflect His holy character. “As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” (1 Peter 1:15-16). Our problem is that in ourselves we are not holy; we are unholy. Yet the Bible refers to us as “saints.” The term *saint* means “one who is holy.” Since holiness is not found in ourselves, we must be made holy. The One who works to make us holy, to conform us to the image of Christ, is the Holy Spirit. As the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is no more holy than the Father and the Son. Yet we do not speak of the Holy Father, the Holy Son, and of the Holy Spirit. That the Spirit of God is called the Holy Spirit is not so much because of His person (which is indeed holy) but because of His work, to make us holy.

It is the special work of the Holy Spirit to make us saints. He consecrates us. The Holy Spirit fulfills the role of the sanctifier. To be sanctified is to be made holy, or righteous. Sanctification is a process that begins the moment we become Christians. The process continues until death when the believer is made finally, fully, and forevermore righteous.

The Reformed faith is distinctive in its emphasis on the working of the Holy Spirit *alone* in regeneration. We do not assist the Holy Spirit in our rebirth. We reject outright any notion of cooperative effort in the rebirth of the believer. Sanctification, however, is a different matter. Our sanctification is a cooperative venture. We must work with the Holy Spirit to grow in sanctification. The apostle Paul expressed this idea in his letter to the church at Phillipi: “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:12-13).

The call to cooperation is one that involves work. We are to work in earnest. To work with fear and trembling does not suggest a spirit of terror but reverence coupled with effort. We are consoled by the knowledge that we are not left to do this work alone or by our own efforts. God is working within us to accomplish our sanctification.

The Holy Spirit indwells the believer, working to bring about a more righteous life and heart. We must be careful, however, not to confuse the indwelling Spirit with any deification of the individual. The Spirit is in the believer and works with the believer, but does not become the believer. The Spirit works to produce sanctified human beings, not deified creatures. When the Spirit indwells us, He does not become human and we do not become gods. The Holy Spirit does not destroy our personal identities as human beings. In our sanctification we are to become godlike in character, but not in being.

—The Rev. R. C. Sproul, Drs. (Free Uni., NL)
Founding pastor, St. Andrew’s Chapel (Ind. Reformed), Sanford, FL
Founder of Ligonier Ministries, author of over one hundred books
from *The Reformation Study Bible*, 3d. ed., p. 2023

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

Salvation in Christ is liberation, and the Christian life is one of liberty—Christ has set us free (Gal. 5:1; cf. John 8:32,36). Christ's liberating action is not basically social, political, or economic improvement, as is sometimes suggested today; it is liberation from the law as a means to salvation, from the power of sin, and from superstition.

First, Christians have been set free from the law as a system of salvation. Being justified by faith in Christ, they are no longer under God's law, but under His grace (Rom. 3:19; 6:14-15; Gal. 3:23-25). Their standing with God (the "peace" and "access" of Romans 5:1-2) is assured because they have been accepted and adopted in Christ. It does not, nor ever will, depend on what they do, nor will it ever be imperiled by what they fail to do. They live, not by being perfect, but by being forgiven.

Although they are fallen, human beings think they can gain a right relationship with God through disciplines of obedience, ritual, and ascetism. Without God's righteousness, they go about "seeking to establish their own" righteousness—as Paul describes the Jews (Rom. 10:3). Paul knew that this is a hopeless enterprise. No human performance is ever good enough, and there are always wrong desires in the heart, no matter how correct the outward actions are (Rom. 7:7-11; cf. Phil. 3:6). God always looks at the heart first.

Far from opening the way of life, the law's work is to arouse, expose, and condemn the sin that permeates our moral lives, making us aware of its reality and consequences (Rom. 3:19; 1 Cor. 15:56; Gal. 3:10). The futility of treating the law as a system of salvation, and seeking righteousness by it, is plain (Gal. 3:10-12; 4:21-31). This futility is the bondage to the law from which Christ sets us free.

Second, Christians have been set free from sin's dominion (John 8:34-36; Rom. 6:14-23). They have been supernaturally regenerated and made alive to God through union with Christ in His death and risen life (Rom. 6:3-11). The desire of their heart now is to serve God in righteousness (Rom. 6:18, 22). Sin's dominion involves not only constant acts of disobedience, but also a constant disregard for God's moral law, rising sometimes to resentment or even hatred towards the law. Now, however, being changed in heart, motivated by thankfulness for the gift of grace, and energized by the Holy Spirit, Christians are "not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit" (Rom. 7:6).

Third, Christians have been set free from superstitions, including the idea that matter and physical pleasures are intrinsically evil. Against this idea, Paul insists that Christians are free to enjoy as God's good gifts all created things (1 Tim. 4:1-5), provided we do not transgress the moral law, nor hinder our own spiritual well-being or that of others (1 Cor. 6:12, 13; 8:7-13).

—The Rev. J. I. Packer, D. Phil. (Oxford)
author of *Knowing God* and *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*
from *The Reformation Study Bible*, 2d. ed., p. 1700

LOVING THE CHURCH FOR BETTER OR WORSE

Something is terribly wrong when professing Christians do not identify with the church and love being a part of her. Something is wrong when professing Christians fail to be passionate about every aspect of the church and long to invest themselves in her, taking all that the church represents and does to heart. Listen, for example, to the way Paul instructs the Ephesians: "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

I fell in love with the church the moment I was converted as a freshman in college in 1971. Having never attended any church until then, I discovered a community that was, to me, like a family: caring, loving, and nourishing. The church I found was able to tell me that I was wrong about some things without driving me away. I knew that I was loved. The church showed me acts of kindness and fellowship that I recall with affection to this day. I was introduced to expository preaching from the start - a style of preaching that puts the Bible above the personality and idiosyncrasies of the preacher. I discovered communal prayer times, and joyful singing, all of which have been the mainstay of my Christian life ever since. True, I have had my share of worship wars, when Christians disagree over important things and sometimes trivial things; but for all that, I have taken delight in her rituals of song and sacrament, prayer and proclamation, more times than I can relate. I love the church. I fully endorse Calvin's way of putting it (and the shadow of Cyprian that lies behind it): "For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels" (*Inst.* 4.1.4). In the church, I have discovered saints and angels (though not, as far as I know, *real* angels). I have witnessed deeds of extraordinary kindness done to myself and to others, and I have been the beneficiary of kindnesses done to me by those who remained anonymous.

Yes, there is a dark side to the church as there is to all things in this fallen world. The church is not perfect. It has her share of malcontents and killjoys, her energy-sapping attention-getters and despondent hearts. Adullam's cave has nothing on some churches I have seen, but none of this robs me of my love for the church. Even at her most eccentric - the King James Version's rendition of 1 Peter 2:9 as "ye are ... a peculiar people" is painfully accurate, if quaint -- she is still Christ's body. "Love me, love my church" is what Jesus seems to say in the Bible. I would not have it any other way. Would you?

—The Rev. Derek W. H. Thomas, Ph.D. (Wales)
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church (ARP), Columbia, SC
Chancellor's Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary
From reformation21.org/blog/2019/08/loving-the-church-for-better-o.php

THE SACRAMENTS

Christ instituted two rights for His followers to observe: baptism, a once-for-all rite of initiation (Matt. 28:19; Gal. 3:27), and the Lord’s Supper, a regular rite of remembrance (1 Cor. 11:23-26). These are called “sacraments” in the Western church, “mysteries” in the Eastern Orthodox church, or “ordinances”. Scripture has no technical term for the two rites, or the corresponding Old Testament observances, that is, circumcision of males as a rite of initiation (Gen. 17:9-14, 23-27) and the annual Passover as a rite of remembrance (Ex. 12:1-27). Biblical teaching, however, warrants classifying them all together as signs and seals of a covenant relationship with God.

“Sacrament” is from a Latin word meaning sacred. Study of the Christian rites (*baptism and the Lord’s Supper*) themselves leads to a definition of sacrament as a ritual action instituted by Christ in which signs perceived by the senses present to us the grace of God in Christ and the blessings of His covenant. They communicate and confirm these blessings to believers, who in receiving the sacraments respond to God’s grace and declare their faith and allegiance to Him. The sacraments “put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world.” They solemnly “engage them (*Christians*) to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, XXVII.1) . . .

The sacraments are means of grace, for God uses them to strengthen faith’s confidence in His promises and to call forth acts of faith for receiving the good gifts signified. The efficacy of the sacraments is not from the faith or virtue of the minister, but from the faithfulness of God, who, having given signs, is now pleased to use them. Christ and the apostles speak of the sign as if it were the thing signified, and as if receiving the former is the same as receiving the latter (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:15-21; 1 Pet. 3:21, 22). As the preaching of the Word makes the gospel audible, so the sacraments make it visible.

Sacraments strengthen faith by correlating Christian beliefs with the testimony of our sense. The *Heidelberg Catechism* illustrates this in its answer to Question 75. The key words are “as sure as”:

Christ has commanded me . . . to eat of this broken bread and to drink of this cup in memory of Him, and therewith has given assurance: first, that His body was . . . broken on the cross for me, and His blood shed for me, as sure as I see with my eyes the bread . . . broken for me and the cup communicated to me; and, further, that with His crucified body and shed blood He Himself feeds and nourishes my soul to eternal life, as sure as I take and taste the bread and cup . . . which are given me as sure tokens of the body and blood of Christ.

—The Rev. J. I. Packer, D. Phil. (Oxford)
from *The Reformation Study Bible*, 2d. ed., p. 1411

CHRISTIANS AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT

Civil government is a means ordained by God for ruling and maintaining order in communities. It is one of a number of such means, including ministers in the churches and parents in the home. Each such means has its own sphere of authority under Christ, who now rules and sustains creation, and the limits of each sphere are set by reference to the others. In our fallen world these authorities are institutions of God’s “common grace” (kindly providence), standing as a bulwark against anarchy and the dissolution of ordered society.

With reference to Rom. 13:1-7 and 1 Pet. 2:13-17, the *Westminster Confession* explains the sphere of civil government as follows:

God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be, under him, over the people, for his own glory, and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers . . . Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven (23:1, 3).

Because civil government exists for the welfare of the whole society, God gives it the “power of the sword,” the lawful use of force to administer just laws (Rom. 13:4). Christians must acknowledge this as part of God’s order (Rom. 13:1, 2). A government may collect taxes for the services it renders (Matt. 22:15-21; Rom. 13:6, 7). But if it forbids what God requires or requires what God forbids, Christians cannot submit, and some form of civil disobedience becomes inescapable (Acts 4:18-31; 5:17-29).

The church’s sphere of authority relates to the civil government at the level of morality. The church has the responsibility to comment on the morality of governments and their policies on the basis of God’s word, but should not appropriate to itself the power to set such policies. Whereas these assessments may foster political action among Christians, they should act in their capacity as citizens rather than as representatives of the church. In this way the gospel works through moral persuasion and the working of God’s grace among citizens.

Christians should urge governments to fulfill their proper role. They are to pray for, obey, and yet watch over civil governments (1 Tim. 2:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13, 14), reminding them that God ordained them to rule, protect, and keep order

—The Rev. J. I. Packer, D.Phil. (Oxford)
author of *Knowing God* and *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*
from *The Reformation Study Bible*, 2d. ed., p. 1636

JOHN CALVIN ON THE NECESSITY FOR REFORMING THE CHURCH
More than 450 years ago, a request came to John Calvin to write on the character of and need for reform in the Church. The circumstances were quite different from those that inspired other writings of Calvin, and enable us to see other dimensions of his defense of the Reformation. The Emperor Charles V was calling the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire to meet in the city of Speyer in 1544. Martin Bucer, the great reformer of Strassburg, appealed to Calvin to draft a statement of the doctrines of and necessity for the Reformation. The result was remarkable. Theodore Beza, Calvin’s friend and successor in Geneva, called *The Necessity for Reforming the Church* the most powerful work of his time . . .

... Calvin focuses on four topics, which he calls the soul and body of the church. The soul of the church is worship and salvation. The body is sacraments and church government. The great cause of reform for Calvin centers in these topics. The evils, remedies and necessity for prompt action all relate to worship, salvation, sacraments and church government.

... Proper worship is Calvin’s first concern.

WORSHIP
Calvin stresses the importance of worship because human beings so easily worship according to their own wisdom rather than God’s. He insists that worship must be regulated by the Word of God alone: “I know how difficult it is to persuade the world that God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by His Word. The opposite persuasion which cleaves to them, being seated, as it were, in their very bones and marrow, is, that whatever they do has in itself a sufficient sanction, provided it exhibits some kind of zeal for the honour of God. But since God not only regards as fruitless, but also plainly abominates, whatever we undertake from zeal to His worship, if at variance with His command what do we gain by a contrary course? The words of God are clear and distinct, ‘Obedience is better than sacrifice.’” This conviction is one of the reasons that reform was required: “ . . . since . . . God in many passages forbids any new worship unsanctioned by his Word; since he declares that he is grievously offended with the presumption which invents such worship, and threatens it with severe punishment, it is clear that the reformation which we have introduced was demanded by a strong necessity.” . . .

For Calvin the worship of the medieval church had become “gross idolatry.” The issue of idolatry was for him as serious as the issue of works righteousness in justification. Both represented human wisdom replacing divine revelation. Both represented a pandering to human proclivities, rather than desiring to please and obey God . . .

The reformers, like the prophets of old, needed to attack the idolatry and the “external show” of the worship of their time. The antidote to the theatrics of the church in Calvin’s day was a godly simplicity of worship — as reflected in the order of service in the church of Geneva . . .

—The Rev. W. Robert Godfrey, Ph.D. (Stanford)

From www.Ligonier.org, July 8, 2016

*Westminster’s worship service follows Calvin’s 1542 order of service.

THE SESSION
Sean W. T. McGowan, Moderator
George E. Close
Arthur E. Wahl
Brett S. Doster

THE DIACONATE
Christopher J. Colson
Kerry S. Langston
Drew D. McLeod

OUR MINISTER
Sean W. T. McGowan, Pastor

OUR MISSIONARIES
Rev. and Mrs. Allen M. Baker, III, Reformed Evangelistic Fellowship Africa, India and USA
Rev. and Mrs. Ethan P. Brown, Reformed University Fellowship (PCA) University of Illinois
Mr. and Mrs. Juan C. Cardenas, TEAM (The Evangelical Alliance Mission) India
Rev. and Mrs. Jonathan M. Craig, Ministry to State (PCA Mission to North Am.) Tallahassee
Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Davila, Presbyterian Church in America El Salvador
Rev. and Mrs. J. Kelly Jackson, Reformed University Fellowship (PCA) Florida State University
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stewart, Presbyterian Church in America Japan

OUR MISSION AGENCIES
A Women’s Pregnancy Center Tallahassee
Calvary Home for Children Anderson, SC
Chelsea House, Good Samaritan Network Tallahassee
Good Samaritan Inn for Men, Good Samaritan Network Tallahassee
Gulf Coast Presbytery, Presbyterian Church in America Madison, FL to Mobile, AL
Palmer Home for Children Memphis and Nashville, TN
Pregnancy Center of Gadsden County Havana and Quincy
Pregnancy Help & Information Center Tallahassee
Presbyterian Church in America Retired Ministers and Widows Relief Fund USA

THE ORDINARY MEANS OF GRACE-BASED MINISTRY
“What exactly do you mean by ‘ordinary means of grace-based ministry?’” The “ordinary means of grace” are “the Word, sacraments, and prayer.” These are the ordinances given by God with which spiritual life is nurtured. By ordinances we mean spiritual instruments of grace and growth in grace appointed by God in the Bible. So, when we say ordinary means of grace-based ministry, we mean a ministry that focuses on doing the things God says are central to the spiritual health and growth of His people. The key things that the church can do to help people know God and grow in their knowledge of God are: (1) the public reading and preaching of the Word; (2) emphasize the confirming efficacy of the sacraments; and (3) emphasize a life of prayer. —The Rev. J. Ligon Duncan, III, Ph.D.