

REFORMATION WORSHIP

The Westminster morning service follows the “classic” 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

11:00 A.M. Morning Service
6:00 P.M. Revival Prayer, at the church

REVIVAL PRAYER TONIGHT AT THE CHURCH

NO Q&A CLUB OR CONFESSION CLASS TONIGHT

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE AT 5:30

A candlelight service of simple worship and quiet communion at the Lord's Table will be conducted this evening at 5:30. A short time of fellowship to follow.

NO SUNDAY BIBLE SCHOOL LORD’S DAY, DECEMBER 28 AND JANUARY 4.

The next two Lord’s Day, December 28, and January 4, Westminster Church will gather for the eleven o’clock morning service only. Sunday Bible School will not meet, giving our faculty a well-deserved break before the start of a new semester on Lord’s Day, January 12.

THANKS

Every Advent and Christmastide brings great thanksgiving to God. We also express much appreciation to the Langstons who prepared the narthex, sanctuary and exterior portions for the seasonal services. Our facilities bear lovely testimony in festive decoration of the joy found in the pivotal truth of the Incarnation.

*BOOK OF THE MONTH: *On the Incarnation* by St. Athanasius*

Westminster Presbyterian Church

THE FESTIVAL OF THE INCARNATION

eleven o’clock
Lord’s Day, December 21, 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.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)

THE ANGLICAN CATECHISM, 1549

Ques. What is required of them who come to the Lord’s Supper?
Ans. To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men. (I Cor. 11:27-32; Col. 3)

HOLY COMMUNION

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be administered in the morning service. True believers who do repent of their sins, who desire to live as becomes followers of Christ, and are members in good standing in an evangelical church are invited to partake. Those who do not have a personal saving relationship with Jesus Christ are asked to refrain from partaking and are implored now to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior by faith and repentance.

COMMUNION OFFERING

All loose cash received in today’s morning service offering will go to providing a direct Christmas gift check to our missionary staff and their children. Designations can also be made on offering checks. This offering will remain open through today.

The Prelude

- Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus Prichard
- O Come, O Come, Emmanuel 15th century French melody, adapt. Helmore
- Of the Father’s Love Begotten 12th century plainsong, arr. Douglas
- O Little Town of Bethlehem Traditional English melody, arr. Vaughan Williams
- The First Noel 17th century English carol, harm. Stainer
- Once in Royal David’s City Gauntlett

**The First Lesson* – Isaiah 9:2, 6-7
The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (ESV)

**The Hymn No. 195* – “Joy to the world!” *Antioch*

**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) *Divinum mysterium*
Christ, to thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee, hymn, and chant, and high thanksgiving, and unwearied praises be, honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory, evermore and evermore! (by Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 405)

+The Interlude – The First Noel 17th century English carol, harm. Stainer

**The Ascription of Praise* (Sung by all) *St. Michael*
God from on high hath heard; let sighs and sorrows cease; lo! from the opening heav’n descends to man the promised Peace. Hark! through the silent night angelic voices swell; their joyful songs proclaim that “God is born on earth to dwell.” The Everlasting Son Incarnate deigns to be; himself a servant’s form puts on, to set his servants free. Daughter of Zion, rise to meet thy lowly King; let not thy stubborn heart despise the peace he comes to bring. All glory to the Son who comes to set us free, with Father, Spirit, ever One, through all eternity. (by Charles Coffin, 1736)

**The Westminster Shorter Catechism*
Pastor: Q. 57. Which is the fourth commandment?
Congregation: A. The fourth commandment is, *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*
Pastor: Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?
Congregation: A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

THE SESSION

George E. Close
Arthur E. Wahl

Sean W. T. McGowan, Moderator

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
Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Davila, Presbyterian Church in America El Salvador
Rev. and Mrs. J. Kelly Jackson, Reformed University Fellowship (PCA) . Florida State University
Rev. and Mrs. George Sayour, Ministry to State (PCA Mission to North Am.) Tallahassee
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.

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 Response* (Sung by all) *Crusader’s Hymn*
Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations! Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, praise, adoration, now and forevermore be thine. (anon., German, 1662, tr. Joseph A. Seiss, 1873)

**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.
(by Irish monk Dallan Forgaill, ca. 700)

**The Second Lesson* – Hebrews 1:1-3; I John 2:1b-2 (Responsively)
Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,
But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.
He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.
. . . if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (ESV)

**The Silent Prayers of God’s People*

**The Response* (Sung by all, Hymn No. 213, vv. 1-2) *Greensleeves*
What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing: haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary. Why lies he in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you: hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary. (by William C. Dix, c. 1865)

The Interlude – O Little Town of Bethlehem Redner

The Third Lesson – Daniel 9:20-27 (Pew Bible, p. 747, Large Print, pp. 887-888)

The Sermon – THE SEVENTY SEVENS Mr. McGowan

**The Hymn No. 218* – “Angels, from the realms of glory” *Regent Square*

**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) *Greatorex*
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 Words of Institution – I Corinthians 11:23-29a

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, “Take, eat: this is my body for you: this do in remembrance of me.”

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of *profaning* the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh *judgment* to himself.

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper

**The Parting Hymn No. 208* – “O come, all ye faithful” *Adeste Fideles*

**The Benediction*

THE HUMBLE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST

Humility in Scripture does not mean pretending to be worthless and refusing positions of responsibility, but knowing and keeping the place God has appointed for one. Being humble is a matter of accepting God’s arrangement, whether it means the high exposure of leadership (Moses was humble as a leader, Num. 12:3), or the obscurity of being a servant., When Jesus said the He was “lowly in heart” (Matt. 11:29), He meant that He was following the Father’s plan for His earthly life.

The three Persons of the Trinity are eternal and self-existent, having equally all aspects and attributes of deity, and always acting together. But the Persons are distinct in their mutual relationships. Something of what this means is revealed in the humble submission of Christ to the Father’s will, and also in the way that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to confirm the work of salvation in human hearts.

The Father’s will for Christ is sometimes called the covenant of redemption. It is called a “covenant” because it is an agreement between two parties. *The Westminster Confession* summarizes the agreement (the Father’s purpose, accepted by the Son) as follows:

It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only-begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Saviour of His Church, the Heir of all things and Judge of the world: unto whom He did, from all eternity, give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified (*Westminster Confession*, VIII.1).

Christ fulfilled this covenant through two stages called His “humiliation” and His “exaltation.” In His humiliation, He left behind the eternal glory that was His . . .

—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. 1519

THE DUPLEX GRATIA: THE GOSPEL’S DOUBLE GRACE

One of the most remarkable statements in the Bible is Ephesians 1:3. There we are told that “in Christ,” God has blessed his people with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” “*Every* spiritual blessing,” nothing lacking, is the present possession of everyone who is savingly united to Jesus Christ. There is no truth more basic and more profound in the gospel.

No one has better expressed the significance of this than John Calvin. Calvin taught that by his death and resurrection Christ procured for his people a “double grace” (*duplex gratia*) . . . Calvin makes plain that both justification (being “reconciled to God through Christ’s blamelessness”) and sanctification (the cultivation “of blamelessness and purity of life”) are two aspects of the one gift of Christ. The spiritual simultaneity in Christ of the *duplex gratia*.

—From Ian Hamilton’s *The Gospel-Shaped Life* (2017), pp. 16-17

WHAT IS FAITH? THE ANSWER FROM HEBREWS 11

Hebrews 11 shows that faith is so important because God’s people are beset with weakness, poverty, and difficulty. This is why verse one tells us, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” The context for faith is a life in which things are hoped for but not yet seen or possessed. Faith grasps things that are promised by God but are so far unfulfilled in our experience. We hope for power in the midst of weakness; we hope for peace in the midst of conflict and for joy in the presence of sorrow. For all these reasons, God’s people require faith to persevere in a difficult world.

What, then, is faith? Faith is believing God’s Word in order to lay hold of things that are promised and make them real in our lives. Faith is the mode, or the manner by which we possess heavenly things on earth. The point is not that faith creates the things we hope for—this is the false teaching of many today who use this verse to ascribe creative power to our faith. Instead, faith receives from God the blessings He gives. God gives forgiveness, peace, and spiritual provision. He promises a “city with foundations,” in which we will live forever (Heb. 11:10). Faith is the evidence of these things in our lives, the conviction that draws strength from them to follow God . . .

Hebrews 11 tells what God’s people did by faith. The thing to notice about these heroes is not their personality traits, their training, or their upbringing. We are not told that Abraham was a resourceful kind of person or that his personality made him suited for disappointment. The only thing that made him different from others was his faith, and by his faith what a difference he made for the whole world . . .

Faith can do great things in anyone’s life. If you live by faith in God, no matter who you are and whatever else is true of you, you can make a difference for God’s kingdom. What really matters is not your strengths or weaknesses, your training or lack thereof. By faith you can be a spiritual hero. Why? Is it because of some power inherent to faith, or because faith will unleash your hidden potential? Not at all. Faith can do great things through you, verse six tells us, because God “rewards those who seek him.” Faith gains its power from its object, the saving God who gives grace to those who trust in Him.

—The Rev. Richard D. Phillips, D.D. (Greenville PTS)
Senior Pastor, Second Presbyterian Church (PCA), Greenville, SC
Author of *The Masculine Mandate*

**The Response* (Sung by all) *Truro*
Good news from heav’n did angels bring, glad tidings to the earth they sang: to us this day a Child is giv’n, to crown us with the joy of heav’n. Glory to God in highest heav’n, who unto man his Son hath given, while angels sing with tender mirth, a glad new year to all the earth. (by Martin Luther, 1535, tr. Arthur T. Russell, 1848, Catherine Winkworth, 1865)

The Postlude – Sussex Carol Traditional English carol, arr. Vaughan Williams

JUSTIFICATION AND MERIT

The doctrine of justification, the storm center of the Reformation, was for Paul the heart of the gospel (Rom. 1:17; 3:21-5:21; Gal. 2:15-5:1), shaping his message (Acts 13:38-39) and his devotion (II Cor. 5:13-21; Phil. 3:4-14). Though other New Testament writers affirm the same doctrine in substance, the terms in which Protestants have affirmed and defended it for almost five centuries are drawn primarily from Paul.

Justification is God's act of pardoning sinners and accepting them as righteous for Christ's sake. In it, God puts permanently right their previously estranged relationship with Himself. This justifying sentence is God's bestowal of a status of acceptance for Jesus' sake. (II Cor. 5:21).

God's justifying judgment seems strange, for pronouncing sinners righteous may appear to be precisely the kind of unjust action by a judge that God's own law forbids (Deut. 25:1; Prov. 17:15). Yet it is a just judgment, for its basis is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. As "the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45), our representative head acting on our behalf, Christ obeyed the law that bound us and endured the punishment for lawlessness that we deserved and so "merited" our justification. Our justification is on a just basis (Rom. 3:25-26; I John 1:9), with Christ's righteousness reckoned to our account (Rom. 5:18-19).

God's justifying decision is in effect the judgment of the Last Day regarding where we will spend eternity, brought forward into the present and pronounced here and now. It is a judgment on our eternal destiny; God will never go back on it, however much Satan may appeal against the verdict (Zech. 3:1; Rom. 8:33-34; Rev. 12:10). To be justified is to be eternally secure (Rom. 5:1-5; 8:30).

The necessary means of justification is personal faith (*trust*) in Jesus Christ as crucified Savior and risen Lord (Rom. 4:23-25; 10:8-13). Faith is necessary because the meritorious ground of our justification is entirely in Christ. As we give ourselves in faith to Jesus, Jesus gives us His gift of righteousness, so that in the very act of "closing with Christ," as older Reformed teachers put it, we receive the divine pardon and acceptance we can find nowhere else (Gal. 2:15-16; 3:24).

Historic Roman Catholic theology includes sanctification in the definition of justification, considered as a process rather than a single decisive event, and affirms that while faith contributes to our acceptance with God, our works of sanctification, and merit must contribute too . . . On the Roman Catholic view, believers effect their own salvation with the help of the grace that flows from Christ through the church's sacramental system. The Reformers pointed out that this view of salvation undercuts the sense of confidence that only free grace can provide to those who have no merit. Paul had already showed that all people, of whatever piety, are without merit, and need a free justification if they are to be saved (*Rom. 3:10-12, 23-25a*). A justification that needs to be completed by the recipient is no resting place.

—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. 1695

GEORGE WHITEFIELD FROM HIS "TRUE WAY OF KEEPING CHRISTMAS"

It was love, mere love; it was free love that brought the Lord Jesus Christ into our World . . . it should excite us to prayer, that we might have an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ; that the blood which he spilt upon Mount Calvary, and his death and crucifixion, might make an atonement for our sins, that we might be made holy; that we might be enabled to put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, even the Lord Jesus Christ; that we may throw away the heavy yoke of sin, and put on the yoke of the Lord Jesus Christ. (from *Selected Sermons of George Whitefield*)

HOW CHRIST GIVES HIMSELF TO BELIEVERS

In order to give himself to us, Christ gives us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was given to him to live in all his fullness by the Father. This Spirit, dwelling in Christ in all his fullness, Christ in turn gives to all believers to dwell in them (*John* 14:14-20; *I Cor.* 6:17; *Rom.* 8:9). Thus the glorious union between Christ and believers is brought about. For as in his incarnation he took our nature into personal union with his own, so by the Holy Spirit he takes us into a mystical union with himself.

This mystical union is a glorious illustration of God's wisdom. The same Spirit who dwells in him as the head dwells in the church as his body, giving life to all the elect.

—John Owen (1616-1683), vice chancellor Oxford, the Puritans "theologian's theologian"
From *The Glory of Christ: Abridged*, ed. R. J. K. Law, (Banner, 1994), pp. 87-88

PRAYER

We are able to talk with God. He speaks verbally to us in his Word and nonverbally through His obvious providence. We commune with Him through prayer. Charles Hodge declared that "prayer is the converse of the soul with God." In and through prayer we express our reverence and adoration for God, we bare our souls in contrite confession before Him, we pour out the thanksgiving of grateful hearts, and we offer our petitions and supplications to Him.

In prayer we experience God as personal and powerful. He can hear us and act in response. The Scripture teaches both the sovereign foreordination of God and the efficacy of prayer. The two are not inconsistent with one another, for God ordains the means as well as the ends for His purposes.

—The Rev. R. C. Sproul, Drs. (Free Uni., NL)
From *The Reformation Study Bible*, 3rd. ed., p. 1808

