

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 at the church
- 6:00 P.M. Q&A and Confession Class

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

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

Q AND A AND CONFESSION CLASS TONIGHT

2026 WALK FOR LIFE

A Women’s Pregnancy Center’s WALK FOR LIFE will be held on Saturday, April 18 at 8:30 AM at Northside Community Center. All are encouraged to walk as a show of support for this ministry. If you desire to register as a walker with sponsors or if you would like to sponsor a registered walker, please see Christi Griner for details.

SAVE THE DATE: SUMMER BIBLE MINISTRY JUNE 1-5 2026

Westminster’s Summer Bible ministry will be held the week of June 1-5 from 9-12. If you are interested in volunteering, please see Megan Peterson. More details will be provided at a later date.

*BOOK OF THE MONTH: *Thoughts for Young Men* by J.C. Ryle*

Westminster Presbyterian Church

THE MORNING SERVICE
eleven o’clock
Lord’s Day, April 12, 2026

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)
from *The Reformation Study Bible*, 3d. ed., p. 1857

The Prelude

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today Williams
Alleluia! Alleluia! Prichard
This Joyful Eastertide Joachim Oudaen's *David's Psalmen*, 1685, harm. Wood
Thine Be the Glory G. F. Handel, 1747

*The First Lesson – Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.
For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,
In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.
For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.
Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (ESV)

***The Second Lesson** – Psalm 24:1-6 (Responsively)
The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,
 For he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.
Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?
 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.
He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
 Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. (ESV)

***The Silent Prayers of God’s People**

***The Hymn** – “Blessed are the sons of God” *Easter Hymn*
Blessed are the sons of God, Alleluia! They are bought with Christ’s own blood; Alleluia! They are ransomed from the grave, Alleluia! Life eternal they shall have: Alleluia!
 They are justified by grace, Alleluia! They enjoy the Savior’s peace; Alleluia! All their sins are washed away, Alleluia! They shall stand in God’s great day: Alleluia! (by Joseph Humphreys, 1743, alt.)

***The Westminster Shorter Catechism**
Pastor: Q. 98. What is prayer?
Congregation: A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies.
Pastor: Q. 99. What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?
Congregation: A. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord’s Prayer.

***The Response** (Sung by all) *Darwall*
We come, O Christ, to you, true Son of God and man, by whom all things consist, in whom all life began. In you alone we live and move, and have our being in your love. You are the way to God, your blood our ransom paid; in you we face our Judge and Maker unafraid. Before the throne absolved we stand; your love has met your law’s demand. (by E. Margaret Clarkson, wrote a number of the theme hymns for IVCF’s Urbana Mission Conferences, 1946, rev. 1984)

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

The Third Lesson – James 1:19-21 (Pew Bible, p. 1011, Large Print, p. 1199)

The Sermon – THE PROPER RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD Mr. McGowan
V. FAITH THAT WORKS: AN EXPOSITION OF JAMES

The Morning Prayer

***The Hymn No. 38** – “Immortal, invisible, God only wise” *Joanna*

***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 florum* *Piae Cantiones*, 1582, arr. MacMillan

SANCTIFICATION: THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

According to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (Q. 35), sanctification is “the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.” It is a continuing change worked by God in us, freeing us from sinful habits and forming in us Christlike affections, dispositions, and virtues. It does not mean that sin is instantly eradicated, but it is also more than a counteraction, in which sin is merely restrained or repressed without being progressively destroyed. Sanctification is a real transformation, not just the appearance of one.

The basic meaning of “sanctify” is to set apart to God, for His use. But God works in those whom He claims as His own to conform them “to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). This moral renovation, in which we are increasingly changed from what we once were, flows from the agency of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:13; 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:11, 19, 20; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:22-24; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 13:20, 21). God calls His children to holiness and graciously gives what He commands (1 Thess. 4:4; 5:23).

Regeneration is birth; sanctification is growth. In regeneration, God implants desires that were not there before: desire for God, for holiness, and for glorifying God’s name in the world; desire to pray and worship; desire to love and bring benefit to others. In sanctification, the Holy Spirit “works in you, both to will and to work” according to God’s purpose, enabling His people to fulfill their new, godly desires (Phil. 2:12, 13). Christians, as the moral profile of Jesus (the “fruit of the Spirit”) is progressively formed in them (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; 5:22-25).

Regeneration is a momentary act, bringing a person from spiritual death to life. It is exclusively God’s work. Sanctification is an ongoing process, dependent on God’s continuing action in the believer, and consisting of the believer’s continuous struggle against sin. God’s method of sanctification is neither activism (self-reliant activity) nor apathy (God-reliant passivity), but human effort dependent on God (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:10-14; Heb. 12:14). Knowing that without Christ’s enabling we cannot do good works, but also that He is ready to strengthen us for all we have to do (Phil. 4:13), we “abide” in Christ, asking for His help constantly—and we receive it (Col. 1:11; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2:1).

The standard to which God’s work of sanctifying His saints is directed is His own revealed moral law, expounded and modeled by Christ Himself. Christ’s love, humility, and patience are a supreme standard for Christians (Rom. 13:13; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Pet. 2:21).

Believers find within themselves contrary urgings. The Spirit sustains their regenerate desires and purposes, but their fallen instincts (the “flesh”) obstruct their path and drag them back. The conflict of these two is sharp. Paul says he is unable to do what is right, and unable to restrain himself from doing what is wrong (Rom. 7:14-25). This conflict and

frustration will be with Christians as long as they are in the body. Yet by watching and praying against temptation, and cultivating opposite virtues, they may through the Spirit’s help “put to death” particular bad habits (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). They will experience many particular deliverances and victories in their battle with sin, while not being exposed to temptations that are impossible to resist (1 Cor. 10:13).

—The Rev. J. I. Packer, D. Phil. (Oxford)
author of *Knowing God*, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*
from *The Reformation Study Bible*, 2d. ed., p. 1650

GIFTS AND MINISTRIES

The New Testament depicts two board types of ministry within local churches. While all Christians fulfill informal ministering roles, some held formal and official ministerial offices. Paul addressed these official ministers as “overseers and deacons” (Phil. 1:1), and sometimes referred to the “bishops” (lit. “overseers”) as “elders” (Titus 1:5, 7). The “bishops” or “elders” bore primary responsibility for ruling and teaching the church (1 Tim. 5:17), and the “deacons” were apparently especially charged with ministering to the material needs of the believers (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 3:80).

It is clear, however, that these officers who oversee local churches should not restrict the informal ministries, but rather should facilitate them (Eph. 4:11-13). Conversely those who minister informally should not be defiant or disruptive, but should allow the elders to direct their ministries in ways that are orderly and edifying (i.e., strengthening and upbuilding, 1 Cor. 14:3-5, 12, 26, 40; Heb. 13:17). The body of Christ grows to maturity in faith and love as “each part is working properly” (Eph. 4:16) and fulfills its particular form of service as granted by God’s grace (Eph. 4:7, 12).

The word “gift” (lit. “donation”) appears in connection with spiritual service only in Eph. 4:7-8. Paul explains the phrase “he gave gifts to men” (Eph. 4:8) as the ascended Christ giving to His church persons called to and equipped for the ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher (Eph. 4:11). Also, through the enabling ministry of these persons, Christ bestows a ministry role on every Christian. Elsewhere (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12-14) Paul calls the divinely given abilities to serve *chaismata* (specific manifestations of *charis*, “grace,” 1 Cor. 12:4).

—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. 1711

THE WORD OF GOD: SCRIPTURE AS REVELATION

Christianity is the true worship and service of the true God, mankind’s Creator and Redeemer. It is a religion that rests on revelation: nobody would know the truth about God, nor be able to relate to Him in a personal way, had God not first acted to make Himself known. But God has so acted, *with* the sixty-six books of the Bible . . .

—The Rev. J. I. Packer, D. Phil. (Oxford)
author of *Knowing God* and *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*

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

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
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.