

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.

EASTER MORNING PRE-SERVICE FELLOWSHIP

There will be a pre-service time for fellowship on Easter morning with light refreshments beginning at 9:30 A.M. Sunday Bible School will not meet. Each household is asked to bring a finger food item. If it is raining on Easter morning, the event will not take place.

EASTER MORNING FESTIVAL SERVICE

The joyful celebration of our Lord’s resurrection on Easter Day will begin with the Easter Morning Festival Service at 11:00 A.M.

CHRIST ALONE

Justification because of Christ alone (*solus Christus*) means that Jesus has done the necessary work of salvation utterly and completely, so that no merit on the part of man, no merit of the saints, no works of ours performed either here or later in purgatory, can add to his completed work. In fact, any attempt to add to Christ’s work is a perversion of the gospel and indeed is no gospel at all (Gal. 1:6-9). To proclaim Christ alone is to proclaim him as the Christian’s one and only sufficient Prophet, Priest, and King. We need no other prophets to reveal God’s word or will. We need no other priests to mediate God’s salvation and blessing. We need no other kings to control the thinking and lives of believers. Jesus is everything to us and for us in the gospel.

Yet we are in danger of forgetting that today, because of our idolatrous preoccupation with ourselves. The polls tell us that seventy-six percent of evangelicals believe that man is basically good by nature, and that eighty-six percent believe that the gospel is mostly about God helping us to help ourselves . . . The “gospel” of our day has a lot to do about self-esteem, good mental attitudes, and worldly success. There is almost no preaching about sin, hell, judgment, or the wrath of God . . .

—The Rev. James Montgomery Boice, D.Theol. (Basel)
Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace? (2001), pp. 88-89

Westminster Presbyterian Church

THE GOOD FRIDAY EVENING SERVICE

seven o’clock
April 3, 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.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— Galatians 3:13 (ESV)

CURSED

My ordination hymn was “’Tis midnight, and on Olive’s Brow.” I love that hymn in spite of a line in it that bothers me. It declares that Jesus was “not forsaken by his God.” Some theologians say, “Jesus, in his humanity, felt forsaken on the cross, but he wasn’t really forsaken.” But if Jesus was not really forsaken on the cross, we are still in our sins. We have no redemption. We have no salvation. The whole point of the cross is that if Jesus was going to bear our sins and the sanctions of the covenant, then he had to experience utter and complete forsakenness by the Father . . . When Jesus took the curse upon himself, he so identified with our sin that he became a curse. God cut him off and justly so. This was an act of divine justice. At the moment that Christ took upon himself the sin of the world, he became the most grotesque, most obscene mass of sin in the history of the world. God is too holy to even look at iniquity. When Christ was hanging on the cross, the Father, as it were, turned his back on Christ . . . I have heard many sermons about the physical pain of death by crucifixion . . . Surely the physical agony of crucifixion was a ghastly thing. But there were thousands who died on crosses . . . But only one person has ever received the full measure of the curse of God while on a cross. I doubt that Jesus was even aware of the nails and the spear—he was so overwhelmed by the outer darkness. On the cross Jesus was in the reality of hell...He became a curse for us so that we someday will be able to see the face of God.

Finally, Jesus cried, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). It was over. What was over? His life? The pain of nails? No. It was the forsakenness that ended. The curse was finish.

—The Rev. R. C. Sproul, Drs. (Free Uni., NL)
From *Saved from What?* (Crossway Books, 2002), as found in *Jesus, Keep Me Near The Cross*

The Prelude

Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted *Geistliche Volkslieder*, Paderborn, 1850
When Jesus Left His Father's Throne . . . Traditional English melody, *English Hymnal*

***The First Lesson – St. Matthew 27:32-43, 45-48, 50-51, 54**

32 As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross.

33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull),
34 They offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.

35 And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.

36 Then they sat down and kept watch over him there.

37 And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

38 Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

39 And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads

40 And saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

41 So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying,

42 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.

43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

47 And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah."

48 And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.

50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.

54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (ESV)

**The Hymn No. 250 – “Throned upon the Awful Tree ” Arfon*

*The Invocation and the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven; ²Hallowed 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*

O Christ, our King, Creator, Lord, Savior of all who trust your Word, to them who seek you ever near, now to our prayers bend your ear. Lord, in your cross true grace is found—it flows from every streaming wound—whose pow’r our inborn sin defeats, breaks the firm bond, and frees our souls. (by Gregory I, Bishop of Rome, 6th century, tr. Ray Palmer, author of “My Faith Looks Up to Thee,” 1858, alt., mod.)

+The Interlude – Wondrous Love Southern Harmony, 1840

The Second Lesson – St. Luke 23:33-34; 23:39-43

And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do... One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he (*Jesus*) said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." (ESV)

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

Lord Jesus, think on me and purge away my sin; from earthborn passions set me free and make me pure within. Lord Jesus, think on me, with care and woe oppressed; let me your loving servant be and gain your promised rest. Lord Jesus, think on me nor let me go astray; thro' darkness and perplexity point you the heav'nly way. Lord Jesus, think on me, that, when the flood is past, I may th'eternal brightness see and share your joy at last. (by Synesius of Cyrene, Bishop of Ptolemais, c. 410, tr. Allen W. Chatfield, Anglican clergyman and scholar, 1876, mod.)

*The Third Lesson– St. John 19:25-27

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. (ESV)

**The Hymn No. 251 – “Beneath the cross of Jesus” St. Christopher*

The Interlude – My Faith Looks Up to Thee Mason

The Fourth Lesson – St. Matthew 12:40

The Homily – WHAT IS SO GOOD ABOUT GOOD FRIDAY? Mr. Burrell

**The Hymn No. 252 – “When I survey the wondrous cross” Hamburg*

**The Benediction*

**The Response* (Sung by all) *Wem in Leidenstagen*
Glory be to Jesus, who in bitter pains poured for me the lifeblood from his sacred
veins! Lift we then our voices, swell the mighty flood, louder still and louder praise
the Lamb of God! (Italian, 18th century, tr. Edward Caswall, 1857)

The Postlude – O Jesus, We Adore Thee Lloyd

OF CHRIST, THE MEDIATOR OF THE SECOND COVENANT
Christ, in the truth of our nature, was made like unto us in all things—sin only excepted—
from which he was clearly void, both in his life and in his nature. He came as a lamb
without spot to take away the sins of the world, by the sacrifice of himself once made, and
sin was not in him . . . He was crucified, and died to reconcile his Father unto us, and to
be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for all our actual transgressions . . . (from
the Irish *Articles of Religion*, Article 30, adopted 1615, precursor of *The Westminster
Confession of Faith*)

GOD HATH MANIFESTED HIS JUSTICE AND MERCY IN CHRIST
We believe that God who is perfectly merciful and also perfectly just, sent his Son to
assume that nature in which the disobedience was committed, to make satisfaction in the
same, and to bear the punishment of sin by his most bitter passion and death. God
therefore manifested his justice against his Son when he laid our iniquities upon him, and
poured forth his mercy and goodness on us, who were guilty and worthy of damnation
out of mere and perfect love, giving his Son unto death for our justification, that through
him we might obtain immortality and life eternal. (from the *Belgic Confession of Faith*,
Article 20. “Belgic” is the Anglicization of the Latin form of the older name for both
“Belgium” and “The Netherlands”. Written in 1561, the confession was adopted by the
Dutch Synod of Dort in 1619).

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM
Q. 38. Why did he (*Jesus*) suffer under Pontius Pilate?
A. That he, being innocent, might be condemned by the temporal judge, and thereby
deliver us from the severe judgment of God to which we were exposed.
**Q. 39. Is there anything more in his having been crucified than if he had died some
other death?**
A. Yes; for thereby I am assured that he took on himself the curse which lay upon me,
because the death of the cross was accursed of God.
Q. 40. Why was it necessary for Christ to suffer death?
A. Because, by reason of the justice and truth of God, satisfaction for our sins could be
made no otherwise than by the death of the Son of God. (This catechism, later adopted
by the Synod of Dort (Dutch, 1618-19), soon became the most widely used catechism and
confession of the Reformation).

HOW TO GROW SPIRITUALLY
There was once a powerful Syrian general named Naaman who had contracted the
dreaded disease of leprosy. At God’s instruction, the prophet Elisha promised Naaman
healing if he would wash in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman was indignant.
Dipping in the Jordan was too undignified an act for him, and it didn’t fit his definition
of help. If not for the persistence of his servants, he would have returned to Syria unhealed
(2 Kings 5:1-4).

For the same reason, many people miss God’s simple, ordinary plan for their spiritual
growth—diligent attendance to the means of grace.

Means or Mystery?
Louis Berkhof defines the means of grace as the “objective channels which Christ has
instituted in the Church to which He ordinarily binds Himself in communicating His
grace.” The means of grace are “his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and
prayer, and all these are made effective in the salvation of the elect” (Westminster Shorter
Catechism, Q&A 88). Believers must recognize these means of grace and trust God and
His working through them.

This truth is demonstrated in the phenomenal growth of the early church (Acts 2:41-47).
These first Christians turned the world upside down not because they discovered a trendy
new way to “do church” but because of their striking conformity to Jesus. Notably, the
church grew as the believers “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the
fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Because devoting yourself seems to
lack pizzazz, we tend to make spiritual growth more difficult than it is. But, with few
exceptions, those who are growing in godliness are committed to preaching, the
sacraments, and prayer. These are the ordinary means of grace. Spiritual growth doesn’t
require innovation because God doesn’t work erratically and irregularly (Mal. 3:6). We
don’t have to “find God’s wave and ride it” until He surges elsewhere.

Still, the means of grace don’t always seem to work. Maybe we’ve said, “I come to church,
partake of the sacraments, spend time in prayer, and I don’t seem to grow.” Assuming
that we are diligently and believingly using the means, we shouldn’t too easily dismiss
the vital role they are playing in our lives. Imagine saying, “I eat three times a day, but I
don’t get any healthier. Eating must not be the answer.” What shape might we be in if we
weren’t being fed by God through His ordinary means?

In our church, new members hear this admonition when they profess their faith in Christ:
“By the diligent use of the means of grace and with the assistance of your God, continue
in the profession which you have just made.”

—The. Rev. William Boekestein, M.Div.
Immanuel Fellowship Church (URCNA), Kalamazoo, MI
From Ligonier.org, June 11, 2014

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.

