

Service for the Lord's Day

Adapted from John Calvin's *Form of Church Prayers*,
first published in Geneva (1542) and Strasbourg (1545)

OPENING SENTENCES

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

Ps. 124:8

Amen.

With true and believing hearts,
let us give worship and praise to God
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Liturgy of the Word

PSALM OR HYMN

“New Songs of Celebration Render”
“All People That on Earth Do Dwell”
“I Greet Thee Who Thy Sure Redeemer Art”

PH 218

PH 220

PH 457

INVOCATION

CONFESSION OF SIN

Brothers and sisters, let us present ourselves before the Lord,
confessing our faults and sins.

Lord God, eternal and almighty Father:

**We acknowledge before your holy majesty that we are poor sinners,
conceived and born in guilt and in corruption,
prone to do evil, unable of our own power to do good.**

Because of our sin, we endlessly violate your holy commandments.

**But, O Lord, with heartfelt sorrow we repent
and turn away from all our offenses.**

**We condemn ourselves and our evil ways,
with true sorrow asking that your grace will relieve our distress.**

**Have compassion on us, most gracious God, Father of mercies,
for the sake of your son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

And in removing our guilt,

**also grant us daily increase of the grace of your Holy Spirit,
and produce in us the fruits of holiness and of righteousness
pleasing in your sight;**

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ABSOLUTION

Brothers and sisters, you know that God, being full of goodness and mercy, loved the world so greatly that he gave his only Son, who said plainly that he had come to save that which had been lost. That good Savior has promised us that everything we ask in his name will be given us, and that if we forgive others their sins his Father will forgive our own. Believe, therefore, that when we ask God's mercy in the name of our Lord Jesus, and when we forgive our neighbor, our Lord forgives us, and, through the faith we have in Jesus Christ, our hearts are cleansed.

May Jesus, the true Savior of the world, who died for us and is seated in glory at the right hand of the Father, dwell in your hearts through his Holy Spirit, that you be wholly alive in him, through living faith and perfect love.
Amen.

DECALOGUE

The congregation may sing the Decalogue here, or following the Apostles' Creed.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Almighty and ever gracious God,
since all our salvation depends upon your holy Word:
therefore grant that our hearts may be set free from worldly things,
so that we may with all diligence and faith hear your Word,
rightly understand your gracious will,
and in all sincerity live according to the same,
to your praise and glory;
through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

SERMON

APOSTLES' CREED

DECALOGUE

If the Decalogue was not used earlier in the service, it should be included here.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Almighty God, you have promised to hear the prayers we make through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who said that he would be in the midst of us whenever we gather in his name. Now lift up our thoughts and desires to you so that we may call on you with all our heart, trusting in your goodness and grace.

We pray for all leaders and rulers,
those charged with the administration of justice.
Rule over them by your sovereign Spirit
so that they may might build up the realm of Christ.
Keep the people of all nations in peace and safety
so that we may serve you in godliness
and praise your name all the days of our lives.

We pray for the church, its pastors and people,
and all whom you have entrusted with the work of the gospel.
Guide and direct us by your Holy Spirit,
so that we may be faithful ministers of your glory:
gathering all the poor, wandering, and lost sheep
into the loving arms of the good shepherd Jesus Christ,
so that they may grow in righteousness and holiness in him.

We pray for all people everywhere,
that those who are estranged from the knowledge of Christ
may be brought into the illumination of the Holy Spirit
through the preaching of the gospel.
Visit them with your grace and enlighten them with your Word
so that they may grow in goodness day by day,
enriched by your spiritual blessings,
until all the world may worship you with one heart and one voice.

We pray for all those who are suffering,
whether by poverty, prison, sickness, exile,
or any misery of the body or affliction of the spirit.
Enable them to know your loving kindness and care
so that they may be delivered from every ill.

We pray for all who are gathered here in the name of Jesus Christ,
that we might hear his Word and keep his Supper.
Pardon our faults and nourish us in all goodness,
so that we may offer ourselves completely,
with all our love and steadfast faith,
to your dear Son, our Lord, the only Savior and Redeemer,
who taught us to pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Liturgy of the Table

SCRIPTURE AND EXPOSITION

1 Cor. 11:23-29

Having made our confession of faith to testify that we are children of God, and
hoping therefore that God our faithful Father will be gracious to us, let us hear

how Jesus Christ instituted his holy supper for us, as St. Paul relates it in 1 Corinthians 11:

“I have received from the Lord,” he says, “that which I have delivered to you, how the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying ‘Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; do this remembering me.’ And after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, remembering me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

We have heard how our Lord observed his supper with his disciples. Therefore, let each of us examine our conscience to see whether we truly repent of our sins, desire henceforth to live a life consistent with God’s will, and above all to trust in God’s mercy—seeking salvation wholly in Jesus Christ and, renouncing all hatred and dissention, determine to live in peace and love with our neighbors and to discern the unity of Christ’s body which is the church.

If we have this witness in our hearts before God, never doubt that he claims us as his children, and that the Lord Jesus addresses his Word to us, inviting us to his Table and giving us this holy sacrament offered to all his disciples. Above all, believe the promises of his unfailing truth, that Christ is truly willing to make us partakers of his body and blood, in order that we may possess him wholly and so that he may live in us as we in him. Though we see only bread and wine, we affirm that he fulfills in us everything he shows us in these visible things: that he is the true bread of heaven and food for eternal life. In giving himself to us, he claims us as his own.

Therefore, come and let us receive this sacrament as a pledge of the goodness which his life and death has gained for us. May we never pull ourselves away from the one who invites us by his Word, but present ourselves to him with believing hearts, that he may give himself to us. Come, then, and receive what Christ offers.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us lift our spirits and hearts on high.

We lift them to the Lord.

Almighty God, we offer thanks and praise to you without ceasing and magnify your name in word and deed.

As on the cross our Lord Jesus offered his body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins,

still he seeks to offer them to us as nourishment for eternal life.

By the power of your Holy Spirit,

grant us the grace of such a beneficial gift

that we may sincerely receive his body and blood

– indeed, Christ himself – who, being true God and truly human, is the holy bread of heaven which gives us life.

No longer living for ourselves
but Christ in us and we in Christ,
lead us to the life that is holy, blessed, and everlasting.
As partakers in your eternal covenant of grace,
by which we are made children and heirs,
and through which our needs are provided,
may we never cease to magnify your name in word and deed.
This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. **Amen.** †

DISTRIBUTION

Those communing come forward to receive from the elders, while a lector reads John 13; alternately, the congregation may sing appropriate psalms.

Take, eat, the body of Jesus
which has been delivered unto death for you.

This is the cup of the new covenant in the blood of Jesus
which has been shed for you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Eternal God, we give you eternal praise and thanks
that you have drawn us into the communion of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord, the true bread of heaven and drink for eternal life.
Grant us now this further benefit:
that we may never forget these things, but hold them always in our hearts,
so that we may grow in grace, increase in faith, and serve you in all we do.
So may we live to the praise of your glory,
and serve others even as in Christ you have served us;
through Jesus Christ your Son,
who in the unity of the Holy Spirit lives and reigns with you,
O God, forever and ever. Amen.**

SONG OF SIMEON

“Now May Your Servant, Lord”

PH 605

OFFERING FOR THE POOR

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be merciful to you.
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and keep you in virtuous prosperity.
Amen.

Num. 6:24-26

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Prepared by John C. Bush, HR; Decatur, AL; Chair Calvin Jubilee Task Force, North Alabama Presbytery. The order is reconstructed from several sources. Most of the liturgical text is adapted from Thompson's *Liturgies of the Western Church*. Two other sources were used in this service: a reprint of the 1556 edition of the English translation of the Genevan *Book of Order*; and a 1664 Marot & Beza *Psalter* in my own collection, which contains "La Forme des Prieres Ecclesiastiques."

† Additional material provided by the Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).