

## Questions about the Liturgy in *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*

### ***Where do these materials come from? Are they new or old?***

These worship resources are primarily drawn from the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), which was commended for use by the 205th General Assembly (1993) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Deeply rooted in the Reformed tradition, these resources are intended for use in accordance with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Directory for Worship; they also seek to respond to recent developments in the life and liturgy of the church, including sacramental renewal, contemporary expressions of worship, and ongoing ecumenical dialogue. The fruit of extensive research, conversation, and consultation, these liturgies are offered to equip, empower, and enliven the whole church in giving glory to God.

### ***Are these the only words we should use in worship?***

By no means! The intent of this resource is to provide *one* exemplary, carefully crafted model of the liturgy, with multiple options as space allows. These texts may prove useful for certain occasions or seasons, but would not be sufficient to sustain a congregation throughout the Christian year. The rubrics (printed in red or italics) associated with each element of worship point to places where other options are available, and provide guidance for those who lead worship extemporaneously. These rubrics are not intended to be spoken. When multiple options are provided (A, B, etc.), you need only use one.

### ***Why this order of worship?***

The Presbyterian tradition calls for a dynamic relationship between freedom and form, all guided by the Word of God and open to the movement of the Spirit (W-3.1002). This order of worship reflects an ancient pattern of transformation in Christ and communion with God, as well as an emerging consensus on best practices of *contemporary, traditional, Reformed, ecumenical* worship. Of course, this liturgy, like any other, will need to be adapted as particular cultural contexts, social settings, and local circumstances demand. *However*, we encourage congregations to adopt and explore this liturgy for a period of time as an opportunity for shared reflection on what we do in worship and why.

### ***What about the five-fold order in the Directory for Worship?***

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Directory for Worship describes a five-fold order for the Service for the Lord's Day (W-3.3000), all centered on Jesus Christ, the Word of God, encountered in Scripture, Sermon, and Sacrament (W-1.1004). The liturgy in *Glory to God* presents the same elements in essentially the same order, but with the four-fold division found in the *Book of Common Worship*: Gathering, Word, Eucharist, Sending. This order of worship reflects the understanding that "Responding to the Word" (the third action in the Directory for Worship) is something that happens *throughout* the Service for the Lord's Day. Every aspect of worship—and all of Christian life—is our grateful response to God's gracious Word.

### ***How does music fit into these worship resources?***

Numerous opportunities for singing are suggested—hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs; congregational song during Gathering and Communion; and traditional liturgical responses (*Kyrie, Gloria*, etc.). Worship planners will find that, in general, hymns and songs from the first half of *Glory to God* (God's mighty acts) will work well in the first half of the Service for the Lord's Day, while hymns and songs from the second half of the hymnal (our response to God) will fit best in the second half of the service. "Service music" and other songs related to particular acts of worship may be found in the center section of the hymnal. Occasions for

instrumental and choral music are also provided—particularly during the Gathering, around the reading of Scripture, at the Offering, during Communion, and following the Charge.

***Is it necessary to sing the Introductory Dialogue (lift up your hearts, etc.)?***

Singing the Introductory Dialogue—as well as the *Sanctus*, Memorial Acclamation, and Great Amen—is encouraged; music helps to set the tone for a joyful feast with the risen Lord. The melody for the Introductory Dialogue is easy to learn and set in an accessible range for pastor and congregation; it may also be led by a cantor. Local circumstances may not allow for the singing of the liturgy; in those situations, the dialogue (and other responses) may be spoken.

***Is it necessary to celebrate the Lord’s Supper every Sunday?***

This order of worship assumes, as the *Book of Order* does (W-2.4009), that the Lord’s Supper is an *integral* part of the Service for the Lord’s Day. As Jesus taught the word and shared bread with his disciples on the first day of the week—the day he rose from the dead (Luke 24)—our Sunday worship is centered in Word and Sacrament. Accordingly, John Calvin referred to the proclamation of the Word and celebration of the Sacraments as the “marks of the church,” a conviction echoed in our *Book of Confessions*. There is a sense in which the Service for the Lord’s Day is incomplete without the Lord’s Supper, just as it would be without the preaching of the Word. Many Presbyterian congregations are recovering the fullness of Sunday worship in Word and Sacrament; this liturgy is designed with the hope that the church as a whole will continue to move in that direction.

***What does “Eucharist” mean?***

The word “Eucharist” comes from a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving.” This word is used frequently in the Greek New Testament when Jesus breaks bread with his disciples. It conveys one of the central tenets of the Reformed tradition—that all of Christian life and worship is our grateful response to the gift of God’s grace in Jesus Christ. Thus Eucharist or thanksgiving is a fitting and ancient response to the proclamation of God’s Word.

There are other terms that are commonly used to refer to the Sacrament:

- “The Lord’s Supper” focuses on the institution of the meal by Jesus Christ (but is sometimes confused with “Last Supper”)
- “[Holy] Communion” focuses on the congregation’s encounter with God through the presence of Christ and the power of the Spirit in the sharing of the bread and cup

Each of these words—Eucharist, Lord’s Supper, and Communion—helps us to understand one facet of the feast.

***Why are the words of institution in the middle of the Great Thanksgiving?***

The Directory for Worship provides three options for the placement of the narrative of Jesus’ institution of the Lord’s Supper: (1) before the Great Thanksgiving, at the Invitation to the Table; (2) during the Great Thanksgiving; and (3) after the Great Thanksgiving, at the Breaking of the Bread (W-3.3612–3615). The 1993 *Book of Common Worship* included all three of these options in the Service for the Lord’s Day.

Recent research shows that most Presbyterian pastors use the third option. The predominant use of this pattern, to the exclusion of the others, has had three unfortunate effects: (a) giving worshipers the impression that these are “magic words” to be spoken at the breaking of the bread and pouring of the cup; (b) missing the connection between the Eucharist and the important theme of thanksgiving, including thanksgiving for Christ’s gift of this meal; and (c) giving death the “last word,” in that people’s primary association with the Sacrament becomes what Jesus did “on the night before he died” (more on that below).

In order to broaden and deepen worshipers' understanding of the Sacrament, encourage the theme of thanksgiving, and promote the celebration of a joyful feast (or resurrection meal), the liturgy in *Glory to God* invites presiders to employ the second option (which also has the advantage of widespread ecumenical use). The other two patterns are still permissible, of course, and may be fittingly used on certain occasions (for instance, option 3 on Passion/Palm Sunday or during Lent).

A word of caution or clarification is in order. The intent of this proposal is *not* to downplay the place of the crucifixion in the liturgy, or the role of Jesus' death in the story of salvation. Rather, an emphasis on option 2—using the institution narrative in the middle of the prayer—assumes that, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Jesus' crucifixion is *central*, but not *final*. This proposal seeks to show that, in the eucharistic liturgy as well as the story of salvation, Jesus' resurrection has the last word.

### ***Why is the “ecumenical version” of the Lord’s Prayer used?***

From the beginning, one of the hallmarks of Reformed worship has been liturgy in the vernacular—in the common language of the people of God. Yet many of us continue to use the language of another era (the Tudor dynasty) when we pray the prayer Jesus taught. This liturgy presents the “Our Father” in our mother tongue, using a translation developed by the English Language Liturgical Consultation in the 1980s. We hope that, by using this ecumenical version in contemporary English, new generations will learn and understand this prayer in a fresh way. You may always choose to pray “in the words closest to your heart,” but congregations should consider using this version of the prayer for certain services (e.g. a contemporary service or World Communion Sunday) or seasons (e.g., the time after Pentecost).

### ***Why is it “given for you” instead of “broken for you”?***

Many people are surprised to learn that, in the Gospels, Jesus never says, “This is my body, *broken* for you.” Matthew and Mark simply say, “This is my body”; Luke adds, “which is given for you.” (John mentions a meal on the night before the Passover, but doesn't include a parallel account of the Lord's Supper.) Paul's description of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 includes these words: “This is my body that is for you;” the King James Version inserted the word “broken,” but most contemporary translations (NRSV, NIV, CEB, e.g.) lack that word.

Emphasizing the brokenness of Jesus' body reinforces the misconception that this is *only* a memorial meal; the image of a body broken in death (especially when these are the “last words” in the rite) has tended to eclipse our affirmation that Christ is *risen* from the dead! With this liturgy, congregations are encouraged to explore other words (as provided) at the breaking and distribution of the bread.

### ***Why are there special roles for deacons, elders, and pastors?***

In the Reformed / Presbyterian tradition we affirm the priesthood of all believers—the idea that all baptized Christians are called to exercise their spiritual gifts in the worship of God and in ministry to one another. The church also recognizes that certain persons—deacons, ruling elders, and teaching elders (or pastors)—have been equipped by the Spirit with *particular* gifts of service and leadership, including leadership in worship.

For that reason, the liturgy in *Glory to God* identifies places where it is especially appropriate for deacons, elders, and pastors to take certain liturgical roles. Note that for “reasons of order” the Directory for Worship requires that a teaching elder (pastor) or ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service preside at the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (W-2.3011a and W-2.4012c)

### ***Why is the order of the charge and blessing reversed?***

The word of blessing (or benediction) spoken at the conclusion of the Service for the Lord's Day is not intended to lull us into comfortable repose; rather, it is meant to propel us out into the world to love and serve the Lord, going forth to minister in Christ's name. Like Abraham (Genesis 12:2), we are blessed in order to *be a blessing* in the world. Putting the Blessing *after* the Charge has the unintended effect of sapping our "missional momentum," or reversing the outward movement of the church.

Therefore, in the Service for the Lord's Day provided with *Glory to God*, the Charge becomes the final word in the Sunday liturgy, directing us toward the week-long worship of God—Christian service and discipleship—that is our daily calling. Deacons or elders may speak the Charge, perhaps at the doors of the church, as a way of exercising their spiritual gifts and embodying their calling to lead the congregation in mission and ministry.

***What other liturgical resources will be included in Glory to God?***

In addition to the Service for the Lord's Day and the liturgy for Evening Prayer (as printed in the recent hymnal sampler), the forthcoming Presbyterian hymnal (2013) will include resources for the Sacrament of Baptism and reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant, as well as liturgy for Morning Prayer and Prayer at the Close of Day.