

Biblical and Confessional Resources for Worship

Office of Theology and Worship
Theology, Formation, and Evangelism
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Biblical and Confessional Resources for Worship

This collection of resources, developed at the request of the 213th General Assembly (2001), draws new liturgical texts from the Scriptures and the Book of Confessions. May it foster worship that is biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, and Reformed—faithful, joyous, and ever new—all to the glory of God.

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Greeting

These greetings come from the opening words of the New Testament epistles and the book of Revelation. They are appropriate for use at the beginning of worship.

Grace to you and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Rom. 1:7, 1 Cor. 1:3, 2 Cor. 1:2,
Phil. 1:2, 2 Thess. 1:2, Philem. 3

Grace to you and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ,
who gave himself for our sins
to set us free from the present evil age,
according to the will of our God and Father,
to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
Gal. 1:3-5

Grace to you and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ
with every spiritual blessing.
Eph. 1:2-3

To the saints
and faithful brothers and sisters
in Christ:
Grace to you and peace
from God our Father.
Col. 1:2

To the church
in God the Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.
1 Thess. 1:1

Grace, mercy, and peace
from God the Father
and Christ Jesus our Lord.
1 Tim. 1:2, 2 Tim. 1:2

Grace and peace
from God the Father
and Christ Jesus our Savior.
Titus 1:4

May grace and peace
be yours in abundance
in the knowledge of God
and of Jesus our Lord.
2 Pet. 1:2

To those who are called,
who are beloved in God the Father
and kept safe for Jesus Christ:
May mercy, peace, and love
be yours in abundance.
Jude 1-2

Grace to you and peace
from God who is
and who was
and who is to come
and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness,
the firstborn of the dead,
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.
To Christ who loves us
and freed us from our sins by his blood,
and made us to be a kingdom,
priests serving his God and Father,
to him be glory and dominion
forever and ever. Amen.
Rev. 1:4-6

Opening Sentences

These sentences of Scripture and excerpts from the confessions may be used as Calls to Worship. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation.

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

**Many peoples shall come and say:
Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that we may learn God's ways
and walk in God's paths.**

Isa. 2:2-3

God shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
**They shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;**
nation shall not rise up against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

Isa. 2:4

O house of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the Lord!

Isa. 2:5

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of God's glory.

Isa. 6:3

You are a chosen race,
a royal priesthood,
a holy nation,
God's own people,
in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts
of the one who called you
out of darkness into marvelous light.

**Once we were not a people,
but now we are God's people;
once we had not received mercy,
but now we have received mercy.**

1 Pet. 2:9-10; cf. Exod. 19:6

Those who desire life
and desire to see good days,

let them keep their tongues from evil
and their lips from speaking deceit;
**let them turn away from evil and do good;
let them seek peace and pursue it.**

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous;
God's ears are open to their prayer.

1 Pet. 3:10-12

I am speaking to you, little children,
because your sins are forgiven
on account of Christ's name.
I am speaking to you, mothers and fathers,
because you know God
who is from the beginning.

I am speaking to you, young people,
because you have conquered the evil one.

**I speak to you, children
because you know the Father.
I speak to you, fathers and mothers,
because you know God
who is from the beginning.
I speak to you, young people,
because you are strong
and the word of God abides in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.**

1 John 2:12-14

Beloved, let us love one another,
because love is from God;
**everyone who loves
is born of God and knows God.**

Whoever does not love
does not know God,
for God is love.

1 John 4:7-8

Holy, holy, holy,
the Lord God the Almighty,
who was and is and is to come.
**You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed
and were created.**

Rev. 4:8, 11

Great and amazing are your deeds,

Lord God the Almighty!
**Just and true are your ways,
ruler of the nations!**
Lord, who will not fear
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship before you,
for your judgments have been revealed.
Rev. 15:3-4

Praise our God,
all you servants of the Lord,
and all who fear God,
small and great.
Hallelujah!
**For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.**
**Let us rejoice and exult
and give God the glory.**
Rev. 19:5-7

The Spirit and the church say, Come.
And let everyone who hears say, Come.
And let everyone who is thirsty come.
**Let anyone who wishes
take the water of life as a gift.**
Rev. 22:17

God alone is to be adored and worshiped,
in spirit and in truth.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.023; cf. John 4:23

Let Christ be our looking glass,
in whom we may contemplate our predestination.
**We are inscribed in the Book of Life
if we have fellowship with Christ,
and he is ours and we are his in true faith.**
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.060

What is our chief end?
To glorify and enjoy God forever.
Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.001

In Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all creation,
the Church seeks a new openness
to God's mission in the world.

**In Christ, the triune God tends the least among us,
suffers the curse of human sinfulness,
raises up a new humanity,
and promises a new future for all creation.**

In Christ, Church members share with all humanity
the realities of creatureliness, sinfulness,
brokenness, and suffering,
as well as the future toward which God is drawing them.

**The mission of God pertains not only to the Church
but also to people everywhere and to all creation.**

Book of Order, F-1.0404

There is one Church,
**for there is one Spirit,
one hope,
“one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.”**

Book of Order, F-1.0302; cf. Eph. 4:5-6

To a child in the congregation:

Who are you?

I am a child of God.

What does it mean to be a child of God?

That I belong to God, who loves me.

To the whole congregation:

Who are we?

We are children of God.

What does it mean to be children of God?

That we belong to God, who loves us.

Based on *Belonging to God: A First Catechism*, Q 1-2

Call to Confession

These words from Scripture and the confessions may be used as Calls to Confession. They are appropriately spoken from the baptismal font, perhaps after pouring water into the font. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation. Alternately, the leader may speak the entire text (with the exception of selections from the catechisms).

Those who love me, I will deliver;
I will protect those who know my name.
When they call to me, I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble,
I will rescue them and honor them.
With long life I will satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.
Psa. 91:14-16

Hear these words from the prophet Isaiah:
But now thus says the Lord who created you,
“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the water,
I will be with you;
and through the rivers,
they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire
you shall not be burned,
and the flames shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”
Isa. 43:1-3

For surely I know the plans I have for you,
says the Lord,
plans for your welfare and not for harm,
to give you a future with hope.
Then when you call upon me
and come and pray to me,
I will hear you.
When you search for me,
you will find me;
if you seek me with all your heart.
Jer. 29:11-13

Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are,
when you judge others;
for in passing judgment on another

you condemn yourself,
because you, the judge,
are doing the very same things.
You say, "We know that God's judgment
on those who do such things
is in accordance with truth."
Do you imagine, whoever you are,
that when you judge those who do such things
and yet do them yourself,
you will escape the judgment of God?
Or do you despise the riches
of God's kindness
and forbearance and patience?
Do you not realize that God's kindness
is meant to lead you to repentance?
Rom. 2:1-4

For the wages of sin is death,
but the free gift of God
is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Rom. 6:23

The word of God is living and active,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing until it divides soul from spirit,
joints from marrow;
it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions
of the heart.
And before God no creature is hidden,
but all are naked
and laid bare to the eyes of the one
to whom we must render an account.
Heb. 4:12-13

Since, then, we have a great high priest
who has passed through the heavens,
Jesus, the Son of God,
let us hold fast to our confession.
For we do not have a high priest
who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,
but we have one who in every respect
has been tested as we are,
yet without sin.
Let us therefore approach the throne of grace
with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy
and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb. 4:14-16

Jesus is able for all time
to save those who approach God through him,
since he always lives to make intercession for them.
Heb. 7:25

Let us approach with a true heart
in full assurance of faith,
with our hearts sprinkled clean
from an evil conscience
and our bodies washed with pure water.
**Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope
without wavering,
for the one who has promised is faithful.**
Heb. 10:22-23

Since we are surrounded
by so great a cloud of witnesses,
let us also lay aside every weight
and the sin that clings so closely.
Heb. 12:1

Draw near to God,
and God will draw near to you.
James 4:8

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved,
that with the Lord
one day is like a thousand years,
and a thousand years are like one day.
The Lord is not slow about this promise,
as some think of slowness,
but is patient with you,
not wanting any to perish,
but all to come to repentance.
2 Pet. 3:8-9

God is light;
in God there is no darkness at all.
**If we say that we have fellowship with Christ
while we are walking in darkness,
we lie and do not do what is true.**
But if we walk in the light
as Christ himself is in the light,
we have fellowship with one another,

and the blood of Jesus
cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:5-7

If we say that we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins,
God who is faithful and just
will forgive us our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

1 John 1:8-9

Children of God,
I am speaking these things to you
so that you may not sin.
But if anyone does sin,
we have an advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous;
and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins,
and not for ours only
but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:2

See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of God;
and that is what we are.

Beloved, we are God's children now;
what we will be has not yet been revealed.

**What we do know is this:
when Christ is revealed,
we will be like him,
for we will see him as he is.**

And all who have this hope in Christ
purify themselves,
just as he is pure.

1 John 3:1-3

Children of God, let us love,
**not in word or speech,
but in truth and action.**

And by this we will know
that we are from the truth
and will reassure our hearts before God
whenever our hearts condemn us;
**for God is greater than our hearts,
and God knows everything.**

1 John 3:18-20

The children of God fight against sin;
they sob and mourn
when they find themselves tempted to do evil;
and, if they fall, rise again
with earnest and unfeigned repentance.
**They do these things, not by their own power,
but by the power of the Lord Jesus,
apart from whom they can do nothing.**

Scots Confession, 3.13

We believe in God alone.
**We call upon God,
and we do so through Christ.**
There is one God
**and there is one mediator
between God and humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human.**

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.204; cf. 1 Tim. 2:5

If anyone does sin,
we have an advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.024; cf. 1 John 2:1

This is true repentance,
sincerely turning to God and all good
and earnestly turning away
from the devil and all evil.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.094

What is faith in Jesus Christ?
**Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace,
whereby we receive and rest upon him alone
for salvation,
as he is offered to us in the gospel.**

What is repentance unto life?
**Repentance unto life is a saving grace,
whereby sinners,
out of a true sense of their sin,
and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ,
do, with grief and hatred of their sin,
turn from it unto God, with full purpose of,
and endeavor after, new obedience.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.086-7.087

Confession of Sin

These words from Scripture and the confessions may be used as Prayers of Confession of Sin. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation. Alternately, these texts may be spoken entirely in unison.

I do not understand my own actions.

**For I do not do what I want,
but I do the very thing I hate.**

Now if I do what I do not want,
I agree that the law is good.

**But in fact it is no longer I that do it,
but sin that dwells within me.**

For I know that nothing good dwells within me,
that is, in my flesh.

I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.

For I do not do the good I want,
but the evil I do not want is what I do.

**Now if I do what I do not want,
it is no longer I that do it,
but sin that dwells within me.**

Rom. 7:15-20

Holy Creator, we confess and acknowledge
that you created us in your own image and likeness,
so that in our whole nature
no imperfection could be found.

**From this dignity and perfection
man and woman have fallen,
both conspiring against your sovereign majesty.**

We have shown ourselves hostile to you,
and have made ourselves servants to sin.

**And thus everlasting death
has power and dominion over us all,
unless we are reborn from above.**

By the power of the Holy Spirit,
work this rebirth in us,
creating in our hearts the confidence of chosen ones,
with assured faith in your promise
revealed to us in your Word;

**by this faith we grasp Christ Jesus
with the graces and blessings promised in him.**

Scots Confession, 3.02-3.03

Declaration of Forgiveness

These words from Scripture and the confessions may be used as Declarations of Forgiveness. They are appropriately spoken from the baptismal font, perhaps while lifting water from the font. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation. Alternately, the leader may speak the entire text (with the exception of selections from the catechisms).

In each case, the Declaration of Forgiveness should end with these (or similar) words:

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

In Jesus Christ you are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Do not remember the former things,

or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing;

now it springs forth,

do you not perceive it?

Isa. 43:18-19

Believe the good news!

God did not send the Son into the world

to condemn the world,

but in order that the world might be saved

through him.

John 3:17

But now, apart from law,

the righteousness of God has been disclosed,

and is attested by the law and the prophets,

the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ

for all who believe.

For there is no distinction,

since all have sinned

and fall short of the glory of God;

we are now justified by God's grace as a gift,

through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Rom. 3:21-24

Therefore, since we are justified by faith,

we have peace with God

through our Lord Jesus Christ,

through whom we have obtained access

to this grace in which we stand;

and we boast in our hope

of sharing the glory of God.

And not only that,

**but we also boast in our sufferings,
knowing that suffering produces endurance,
and endurance produces character,
and character produces hope,
and hope does not disappoint us,
because God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.**

Rom. 5:1-5

For while we were still weak,
at the right time

Christ died for the ungodly.

This proves God's love for us:

while we were sinners

Christ died for us.

Much more surely then,
now that we have been justified by his blood,
will we be saved through him
from the wrath of God.

**For if while we were sinners
we were reconciled to God
through the death of Jesus Christ
much more surely, having been reconciled,
we will be saved by his resurrection.**

Now we may even boast in God,
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Rom. 5:6, 8-11

Wretched people that we are!

Who will rescue us
from this body of death?

Thanks be to God
through Jesus Christ our Lord!

**There is therefore now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.
For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
has set us free from the law of sin and of death.**

Rom. 7:24—8:2

What then are we to say about these things?

If God is for us, who is against us?

God, who did not withhold the Beloved Son,
but gave him up for all of us.

Will God not also give us everything else?

Who will bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?

It is Christ Jesus, who died,
yes, who was raised,
who is at the right hand of God,
who indeed intercedes for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will hardship, or distress, or persecution,
or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors
through him who loved us.**

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,

nor angels, nor rulers,

nor things present,

nor things to come,

nor powers, nor height, nor depth,

nor anything else in all creation,

**will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Rom. 8:31-39

Christ has been raised from the dead,
the first fruits of those who have died.

For since death came through a human being,

the resurrection of the dead has also come

through a human being;

for as all die in Adam,

so all will be made alive in Christ.

1 Cor. 15:20-22

Now the Lord is the Spirit,
and where the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is freedom.

And all of us, with unveiled faces,

seeing the glory of the Lord

as though reflected in a mirror,

are being transformed into the same image

from one degree of glory to another;

for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

2 Cor. 3:17-18

From now on, therefore,
we regard no one from a human point of view;

even though we once knew Christ

from a human point of view,

we know him no longer in that way.

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

everything old has passed away;

see, everything has become new!

All this is from God,
who sought reconciliation with us through Christ
and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;

that is, in Christ

**God sought reconciliation with the world,
not counting our sins against us,
but entrusting us
with the message of reconciliation.**

So we are ambassadors for Christ,
since God is making this appeal through us;
we entreat you on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

**For our sake God made him to be sin
who knew no sin,
so that in him we might become
the righteousness of God.**

2 Cor. 5:16-21

Through the law I died to the law,
so that I might live to God.
I have been crucified with Christ;
and it is no longer I who live,
but it is Christ who lives in me.
And the life I now live in the flesh
I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave himself for me.
Gal. 2:19-20

But when the fullness of time had come,
God sent Jesus Christ, the Son,
born of a woman,
born under the law,
in order to redeem those who were under the law,
so that we might receive adoption as children.

**And because we are children,
God has sent the Spirit of the Son
into our hearts,
crying, "Abba! Father!"**

So you are no longer a slave but a child,
and if a child then also an heir, through God.
Gal. 4:4-7

Therefore Jesus had to become
like his brothers and sisters
in every respect,
so that he might be
a merciful and faithful high priest

in the service of God,
to make a sacrifice of atonement
for the sins of the people.

**Because he himself was tested
by what he suffered,
he is able to help those who are being tested.**

Heb. 2:17-18

This is the covenant
that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their minds,
and write them on their hearts,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.
And they shall not teach one another
or say to each other, "Know the Lord,"
for they shall all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest.
For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more.

Heb. 8:10-12; cf. Jer. 31:33-34

The Holy Spirit testifies to us,
saying, "This is the covenant
that I will make with them
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds,"
and "I will remember their sins
and their lawless deeds no more."

Heb. 10:15-17; cf. Jer. 31:33-34

If you invoke as Father
the one who judges all people impartially
according to their deeds,
live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.
You know that you were ransomed
from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors,
not with perishable things like silver or gold,
but with the precious blood of Christ.

1 Pet. 1:17-19

Come to Christ, a living stone,
though rejected by mortals
yet chosen and precious in God's sight,
and like living stones,

let yourselves be built into a spiritual house,
to be a holy priesthood,
to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God
through Jesus Christ.

1 Pet. 2:4

You are a chosen race,
a royal priesthood,
a holy nation,
God's own people,
in order that you may proclaim
the mighty acts of God
who called you out of darkness
into marvelous light.
Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

1 Pet. 2:9-10; cf. Exod. 19:6

Christ suffered for you.
He himself bore our sins
in his body on the cross,
so that, free from sins,
we might live for righteousness.
By his wounds you have been healed.
For you were going astray like sheep,
but now you have returned
to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

1 Pet. 2:21, 24-25; Isa. 53:5-6

See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of God;
and that is what we are.

**All who have this hope in God
purify themselves,
just as God is pure.**

1 John 3:1, 3

God is love,
and those who abide in love abide in God,
and God abides in them.

**Love has been perfected among us in this:
that we may have boldness on the day of judgment,
because as God is, so are we in this world.**

There is no fear in love,
but perfect love casts out fear;

for fear has to do with punishment,
and whoever fears
has not reached perfection in love.
We love because God first loved us.
1 John 4:16-19

Now to the one who is able
to keep you from falling,
and to make you stand without blemish
in the presence of glory with rejoicing,
**to the only God our Savior,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, power, and authority,
before all time and now and forever. Amen.**
Jude 24-25

Jesus said, "Do not be afraid;
I am the first and the last,
and the living one.
I was dead, and see,
I am alive forever and ever."
Rev. 1:17-18

Our eternal God and Father,
who by grace alone chose us
in the Son Christ Jesus
before the foundation of the world was laid,
appointed him to be our head,
our brother, our pastor,
and the great bishop of our souls.
**By this most holy brotherhood
whatever we have lost in Adam
is restored to us again.
So we confess,
and most undoubtedly believe.**
Scots Confession, 3.08

Hear the good news!
For the sake of Christ's reconciling work,
God will no more remember our sins
or the sinfulness
with which we have to struggle
throughout our lives.
**God graciously imparts to us
the righteousness of Christ
so that we may never
come into condemnation.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.056

God has now performed what was promised
from the beginning of the world,
giving us the only Son,
and in him reconciliation with the Father,
the remission of sins,
all fullness and everlasting life.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.089

Solely by the grace of Christ
and not from any merit of ours,
we are justified,
absolved from sin and death
by God the Judge.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.107

For Christ took upon himself
and bore the sins of the world
and satisfied divine justice.
So absolved from sin, death and condemnation,
we are at last righteous and heirs of eternal life.
**God alone justifies us,
and justifies only on account of Christ,
not holding our sins against us
but ascribing to us the righteousness of Christ.**
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.108

How do we share in the redemption of Christ?
**We share in the redemption of Christ
by the work of the Holy Spirit,
who convinces us of our sin,
enlightens our minds
in the knowledge of Christ,
and renews our wills,
persuading and enabling us
to embrace Jesus Christ,
freely offered to us in the gospel.**
Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.029-7.031

The Church is the body of Christ.
**Christ gives to the Church
all the gifts necessary to be his body.**
The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts
in its life as a community in the world.

**The Church is to be a community of love,
where sin is forgiven,
reconciliation is accomplished,
and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.**

Book of Order, F-1.0301; cf. 1 Cor. 12:27–28

How does God deal with us as sinners?
**God hates our sin but never stops loving us.
God's Son, Jesus, sacrificed his life for us
by dying on the cross.
He showed his victory over death
by rising from the dead.
He removed our guilt
and gave us new, unending life with God.**

Children of God, believe the good news!
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

Based on Belonging to God: A First Catechism, Q 13 and 27

Confession and Pardon Sequences

Each of these confession and pardon sequences is designed to be used as a set, following the shape of the Scripture or confession that is its source. In each case, a congregational prayer of confession should be supplied as indicated. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation. Alternately, the leader may speak the entire text.

Announcement of the Gospel = Call to Confession

Declaration of Pardon and New Life = Declaration of Forgiveness

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL

God destined us for adoption as children
through Jesus Christ,
according to the good pleasure of his will
and to the praise of the glorious grace
God has freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

**We have redemption in Christ
through his blood,
the forgiveness of our trespasses,
according to the riches of his grace.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

DECLARATION OF PARDON AND NEW LIFE

Hear the good news:
In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
**In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance,
having been destined
according to the purpose of God,
so that we,
who have set our hope on Christ,
might live for the praise of his glory.**

In Christ, you also,
when you heard and believed
the word of truth,
the gospel of your salvation,
were marked with the seal
of the promised Holy Spirit.

**This is the pledge of our inheritance
toward redemption as God's own people.
To God be praise and glory!**

Eph. 1:5-14

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL

With great love for us,
God, who is rich in mercy
made us alive with Christ,
even when we were dead through our sin.
By grace we have been saved.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

DECLARATION OF PARDON AND NEW LIFE

Hear the good news:
By grace you have been saved through faith,
and this is not your own doing;
it is the gift of God—
not by works,
so that no one can boast.
**We are what God has made us,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand
to be our way of life.**
Eph. 2:4-10

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL

In Jesus Christ
God sought reconciliation with us.
**The reconciling act of God in Jesus Christ
exposes the evil in us
as sin in the sight of God.**
In sin, we claim mastery of our own lives,
turn against God and neighbors,
and become exploiters and despoilers
of the world.
**We lose our humanity in futile striving
and are left in rebellion, despair, and isolation.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

DECLARATION OF PARDON AND NEW LIFE

Hear the good news:
In Jesus Christ God sought reconciliation with us.
The risen Christ is the Savior of all.
**All who are joined to Christ by faith
are set right with God
and commissioned to serve
as Christ's reconciling community.**
Confession of 1967, 9.7, 9.10, 9.12

The Law

In the Reformed tradition, the “third use of the law” is for those who have already accepted God’s grace through Jesus Christ, in whom the Holy Spirit is already at work. Here, the use of the law is to continually reshape and reform us according to God’s will and teach us to follow God’s commandments in our daily lives.

These words from Scripture and the confessions appropriately follow the Declaration of Forgiveness. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation.

Hear, O Israel:

The Lord is our God,
the Lord alone.

You shall love the Lord your God

**with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your might.**

Keep these words
that I am commanding you today
in your heart.

**Recite them to your children
and talk about them when you are at home
and when you are away,
when you lie down and when you rise.**

Bind them as a sign on your hand,
fix them as an emblem on your forehead;
**write them on the doorposts of your house
and on your gates.**

Deut. 6:4-9

Hear, O heavens,
and listen, O earth;
for the Lord has spoken:

**Wash yourselves;
make yourselves clean;
cease to do evil,
learn to do good;
seek justice,
rescue the oppressed,
defend the orphan,
plead for the widow.**

Isa. 1:2, 16-17

Jesus said: I give you a new commandment,
that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you,

you also should love one another.
By this everyone will know
that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.
John 13:34-35

What then are we to say?
Should we continue in sin
in order that grace may abound?

By no means!

How can we who died to sin go on living in it?

Do you not know that all of us
who have been baptized into Christ Jesus
were baptized into his death?

**Therefore we have been buried with him
by baptism into death,
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead
by the glory of the Father,
so we too might walk in newness of life.**

Rom. 6:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
has set us free
from the law of sin and of death.**

Rom. 8:1-2

Let love be genuine;
hate what is evil,
hold fast to what is good;
love one another with mutual affection;
outdo one another in showing honor.

**Do not lag in zeal,
be ardent in spirit,
serve the Lord.**

Rejoice in hope,
be patient in suffering,
persevere in prayer.

**Contribute to the needs of the saints;
extend hospitality to strangers.**

Bless those who persecute you;
bless and do not curse them.

**Rejoice with those who rejoice,
weep with those who weep.**

Live in harmony with one another;
do not be haughty,

but associate with the lowly;
do not claim to be wiser than you are.

**Do not repay anyone evil for evil,
but take thought for what is noble
in the sight of all.**

If it is possible,
so far as it depends on you,
live peaceably with all.

Rom. 12:9-18

You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters;
but do not use your freedom
as an opportunity for self-indulgence;
rather, through love
become slaves to one another.

**For the whole law is summed up
in a single commandment,
“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**

Live by the Spirit, I say,
and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.

**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, generosity,
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

There is no law against such things.

And those who belong to Christ Jesus
have crucified the flesh
with its passions and desires.

**If we live by the Spirit,
let us also be guided by the Spirit.**

Gal. 5:13-16, 22-26

This is the covenant
that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their minds,
and write them on their hearts,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

And they shall not teach one another
or say to each other, “Know the Lord,”
for they shall all know me,

from the least of them to the greatest.

For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
and I will remember their sins no more.

Heb. 8:10-12; cf. Jer. 31:33-34

Like obedient children,

do not be conformed to the desires
that you formerly had in ignorance.
Instead, as God who called you is holy,
be holy yourselves in all your conduct;
for it is written,
“You shall be holy, for I am holy.”
1 Pet. 1:14-16; cf. Lev. 11:45

As servants of God,
live as free people,
yet do not use your freedom
as a pretext for evil.
Honor everyone.
Love the family of believers.
Worship God.
1 Pet. 2:16-17

Beloved,
I am giving you no new commandment,
but an old commandment
that you have had from the beginning;
the old commandment is the word that you have heard.
Yet I am giving you a new commandment
that is true in Christ and in you,
because the darkness is passing away
and the true light is already shining.
1 John 2:7-8

The commandment we have from God is this:
**those who love God
must love their brothers and sisters also.**
1 John 4:21

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ
has been born of God,
and everyone who loves the parent loves the child.
**By this we know that we love the children of God,
when we love God
and obey God’s commandments.**
And these commandments are not burdensome,
for whatever is born of God conquers the world.
**And this is the victory that conquers the world,
our faith.**
Who is it that conquers the world
but the one who believes
that Jesus is the Son of God?
1 John 5:1-4

This is love, that we walk
according to God's commandments;
this is the commandment
just as you have heard it from the beginning—
you must walk in it.
2 John 6

Beloved, do not imitate what is evil
but imitate what is good.
Whoever does good is from God.
3 John 11

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints,
those who keep the commandments of God
and hold fast to the faith of Jesus.
Rev. 14:12

Jesus Christ teaches us:
“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.”**
Heidelberg Catechism 4.004;
cf. Matt. 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27

The Ten Commandments begin:
“I am the Lord your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of bondage.”
What does this teach us?
**Because God is the Lord,
and our God and Redeemer,
therefore we are bound
to keep God's commandments.**

What is the summary of the Commandments?
**To love the Lord our God
with all our heart,
with all our soul,
with all our strength,
and with all our mind;
and our neighbor as ourselves.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.041 – 7.044;
cf. Exodus 20:2, Matt. 22:37-40, Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:27

Since in Christ we are freed from judgment,
what special use is there of the law to us?

**The law is of special use
to show us how much we are bound to Christ
for his fulfilling the law,
enduring its curse for our good;
and thereby to provoke us to more thankfulness,
and to express our thankfulness
in our greater care to be obedient.**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.207

Since we are the Lord's covenant people
we know we must be holy as the Lord is holy.

**We must keep God's commandments,
not in order to earn or compel the Lord's favor,
but to reflect the character of God
and to be God's grateful and loving people.**

Declaration of Faith, 3.3

What are the uses of God's law?

**God's law has three uses.
First, it shows me how grievously I fail
to live according to God's will,
driving me to pray for God's mercy.
Second, it functions to restrain
even the worst of sinners
through the fear of punishment.
Finally, it teaches me how to live a life
which bears witness to the gospel,
and spurs me on to do so.**

Study Catechism, Q 92

What are the Great Commandments of our Lord?

**You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your strength,
and with all your mind;
and your neighbor as yourself.**

Can you obey these commandments perfectly?

**No. Yet there is more grace in God than sin in me.
While I should not cease to pray to God for mercy,
I can be confident that God is forgiving,
and that I will be set free from all my sins.**

**By grace I can confess my sins,
repent of them,
to grow in love and knowledge day by day.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.042; Study Catechism, Q 119

Peace

These words from Scripture may be spoken after the Declaration of Forgiveness (and/or the Summary of the Law). They may precede the Passing of the Peace. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation.

These sentences of Scripture may be followed by these (or similar) words:

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Peace be to you,
and peace be to your house,
and peace be to all that you have.

1 Sam. 25:6

Peace, peace to you,
and peace to the one who helps you!
For your God is the one who helps you.

1 Chr. 12:18

I will both lie down and sleep in peace;
**for you alone, O Lord,
make me lie down in safety.**

Ps. 4:8

May the Lord give us strength!
May the Lord bless us with peace!

Ps. 29:11

May righteousness flourish
and peace abound,
until the moon is no more.

Ps. 72:7

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
**for God will speak peace to the people,
to the faithful,
those who turn to God in their hearts.**

Ps 85:8

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

Ps. 85:10

Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.

Prov. 3:17

Those of steadfast mind
you keep in peace, O God—
in peace because they trust in you.
Isa. 26:3

O Lord, you will ordain peace for us,
**for indeed, all that we have done,
you have done for us.**
Isa. 26:12

The effect of righteousness will be peace,
**and the result of righteousness,
quietness and trust forever.**
Isa. 32:17

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger
who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”
Isa. 52:7

Thus says the Lord, who has compassion on you:
**For the mountains may depart
and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed.**
Isa. 54:10

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
**the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.**
Isa. 55:12

Peace, peace, to the far and the near,
says the Lord;
and I will heal them.
Isa. 57:19

I will make a covenant of peace with them;
it shall be an everlasting covenant with them;
and I will bless them and multiply them,
and will set my sanctuary among them forevermore.
Ezek. 37:26

Look! On the mountains
the feet of one who brings good tidings,
who proclaims peace!
Nahum 1:15

Then they spoke to the angel of the Lord
who was standing among the myrtle trees,
**“We have patrolled the earth, and lo,
the whole earth remains at peace.”**
Zech. 1:11

For there shall be a sowing of peace;
the vine shall yield its fruit,
the ground shall give its produce,
and the skies shall give their dew;
and I will cause the remnant of this people
to possess all these things.
Zech. 8:12

These are the things that you shall do:
Speak the truth to one another,
render in your gates judgments that are true
and make for peace.
Zech. 8:16

Jesus said: “Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled,
and do not let them be afraid.”
John 14:27

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement
grant you to live in harmony with one another,
in accordance with Christ Jesus,
so that together you may with one voice
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Rom. 15:5-6

Welcome one another, therefore,
just as Christ has welcomed you,
for the glory of God.
Rom 15:7

May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope

by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Rom. 15:13

Brothers and sisters, put things in order,
agree with one another, live in peace;
and the God of love and peace will be with you.
Greet one another with a holy kiss.
2 Cor. 13:11-12

In Christ, you who once were far off
have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
Christ is our peace.
In his flesh he has made us one,
and has broken down the dividing wall between us.
Christ proclaimed peace to those who were far off
and those who were near,
for through Christ
both have access in one Spirit to the Father.
We are no longer strangers and aliens,
but citizens with the saints
and members of the household of God.
Eph. 2:13-19

Christ came and proclaimed peace
to you who were far off
and peace to those who were near.
Eph. 2:17

I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling
to which you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one another in love,
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.
Eph. 4:1-3

Be kind to one another,
tenderhearted,
forgiving one another,
as God in Christ has forgiven you.
Eph. 4:32

As shoes for your feet
put on whatever will make you ready
to proclaim the gospel of peace.
Eph. 6:15

Peace be to the whole community,

and love with faith,
from God the Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Eph. 6:23

May the peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding,
guard your hearts and your minds
in Christ Jesus.
Phil. 4:7

Through Christ
God was pleased to reconcile all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of his cross.
Col. 1:20

Bear with one another
and, if anyone has a complaint against another,
forgive each other;
just as the Lord has forgiven you,
so you also must forgive.
Col 3:13

Now may the Lord of peace himself
give you peace at all times in all ways.
2 Thess. 3:16

Pursue peace with everyone,
and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
Heb. 12:14

A harvest of righteousness is sown in peace
for those who make peace.
James 3:18

To those who have been chosen
and destined by God the Father
and sanctified by the Spirit
to be obedient to Jesus Christ
and to be sprinkled with his blood:
May grace and peace be yours in abundance.
1 Pet. 1:2

Now that you have purified your souls
by your obedience to the truth
so that you have genuine mutual love,
love one another deeply from the heart.

1 Pet. 1:22

Those who desire life
and desire to see good days,
**let them keep their tongues from evil
and their lips from speaking deceit;**
Let them turn away from evil and do good;
let them seek peace and pursue it.
1 Pet. 3:11

Greet one another with a kiss of love.
Peace to all of you who are in Christ.
1 Pet. 5:14

May grace and peace be yours in abundance
in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
2 Pet. 1:2

Beloved, let us love one another,
because love is from God.
**Since God has forgiven us in Christ,
let us forgive one another.**
1 John 4:7

In this is love,
not that we loved God but that God loved us
and sent Christ Jesus the Son
to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
**Since God loved us so much,
we also ought to love one another.**
1 John 4:10-11

Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us
from God the Father and from Jesus Christ,
the Father's Son,
in truth and love.
2 John 3

May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.
Jude 2

Prayer for Illumination

These Prayers for Illumination based on Scripture and the confessions may be used before the reading and proclamation of the Word.

Holy and gracious God,
may your Holy Spirit give us
a spirit of wisdom and revelation,
so that, with the eyes of our hearts enlightened,
we may know the hope to which Christ has called us,
the riches of his glorious inheritance among us,
and the greatness of his power for those who believe.
Amen.

Based on Eph. 1:17-19

Eternal God,
your Spirit inspired those who wrote the Bible
and enlightens us to hear your Word fresh each day.
Help us to rely always on your promises in Scripture.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Based on Belonging to God: A First Catechism, Q 37

Before the Reading of Scripture

These biblical words may be spoken before the reading of Scripture.

Hear the word of the Lord;
listen to the teaching of our God.
Isa. 1:10

Hear the word of the Lord.
Jer. 2:4

Listen now to this word that I speak
in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people.
Jer. 28:7

O dry bones,
hear the word of the Lord.
Ezek. 37:4

Blessed are those who hear the word of God
and obey it!
Luke 11:28

Like newborn infants,
long for the pure, spiritual milk,
so that by it you may grow into salvation—
if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.
1 Pet. 2:2-3

Be attentive to this word
as to a lamp shining in a dark place,
until the day dawns
and the morning star rises in your hearts.
2 Pet. 1:19

Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the church.
Rev. 2:7

After the Reading of Scripture

These biblical words may be spoken after the reading of Scripture. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation.

The word of the Lord.

Amen! May the Lord fulfill the words that you have spoken.

Jer. 28:6

Blessed are those who hear the word of God
and obey it!

Luke 11:28

Jesus said: Very truly, I tell you,
anyone who hears my word
and believes the one who sent me
has eternal life,
and does not come under judgment,
but has passed from death to life.

John 5:24

Lord, to whom can we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

We have come to believe and know
that you are the Holy One of God.

John 6:68-69

The word of God is living and active,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
piercing until it divides soul from spirit,
joints from marrow;
it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Heb. 4:12

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen.

**By faith we understand
that the worlds were prepared by the word of God,
so that what is seen**

was made from things that are not visible.

Heb. 11:1, 3

You have been born anew,
not of perishable but of imperishable seed,
through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Pet. 1:23

The grass withers,

and the flower falls,

but the word of the Lord endures forever.

That word is the good news that was announced to you.

1 Pet. 1:24-25; cf. Isa. 40:6-8

We know that the Son of God has come
and has given us understanding
so that we may know the one who is true:
Jesus Christ, true God and eternal life.

1 John 5:20

The Word of God.

**Blessed is the one who reads aloud
the words of the prophecy,
and blessed are those who hear
and who keep what is written in it;
for the time is near.**

Rev. 1:2,3

These are the words of the first and the last,
who was dead and came to life.

Rev. 2:8

These are the words of the holy one, the true one,
who has the key of David,
who opens and no one will shut,
who shuts and no one opens.

Rev. 3:7

The words of the Amen,
the faithful and true witness,
the origin of God's creation.

Rev. 3:14

Ascription of Praise

These words from Scripture may be spoken at the conclusion of the sermon. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation.

Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord!

Ps. 150:6

Now to God who is able to strengthen you
according to the gospel
and the proclamation of Jesus Christ—
to the only wise God,
through Jesus Christ,
be the glory forever! Amen.

Rom. 16:25, 27

In Christ Jesus
every one of God's promises is a "Yes."

For this reason

**it is through Christ that we say the "Amen,"
to the glory of God.**

2 Cor. 1:20

At the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth
and under the earth
**and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

Phil. 2:10–11

Whoever speaks must do so
as one speaking the very words of God;
whoever serves must do so
with the strength that God supplies,
so that God may be glorified in all things
through Jesus Christ.

**To God be the glory and the power
forever and ever. Amen.**

1 Pet. 4:11

Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling,
and to make you stand without blemish
in the presence of God's glory with rejoicing,
to the only God our Savior,

through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, power, and authority,
before all time and now and forever. **Amen.**
Jude 24-25

Holy, holy, holy,
the Lord God the Almighty,
who was and is and is to come.
**You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.**
Rev. 4:8, 11

Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and power to our God.
Rev. 19:1

Affirmation of Faith

These excerpts from Scripture and the confessions may be used for Affirmations of Faith following the proclamation of the Word.

See also the Affirmations of Faith found in the Christian Year and topical sections.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God,
the Lord alone.

**You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your might.**

Deut. 6:4-5

Let the same mind be in you
that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death –
even death on a cross.

**Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

Phil. 2:5-11

Great indeed, we confess,
is the mystery of our religion:
Christ Jesus was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen by angels,
preached among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
taken up in glory.

1 Tim. 3:16 (Revised Standard Version)

The saying is sure:
If we have died with Christ,
we will also live with him;
if we endure,
we will also reign with him;
if we deny him,
he will also deny us;
if we are faithless,
he remains faithful—
for he cannot deny himself.

2 Tim. 2:11-13

The most ecumenical of our creeds, the Nicene Creed is shared by Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and most Protestant churches. As such, it is especially appropriate for use when celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, a sign of the church's unity in Christ; it may be led from the table.

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.
Nicene Creed

The Apostles' Creed has long been associated with Christian baptism; it may be led from the font. This interrogative form of the Apostles' Creed represents one of the baptismal practices of the early church.

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed Interpreted

What do you believe
when you confess your faith in "God the Father Almighty"?

**That God is a God of love,
and that God's love is powerful beyond measure.**

What do you affirm
when you confess your faith in Jesus Christ as "our Lord"?

**That having been raised from the dead
he reigns with compassion and justice
over all things in heaven and on earth,
especially over those who confess him by faith;
and that by loving and serving him above all else,
we give glory and honor to God.**

What do you believe
when you confess your faith in the Holy Spirit?

**That apart from the Holy Spirit,
our Lord can neither be loved, nor known, nor served.
The Holy Spirit is the personal bond
by which Jesus Christ unites us to himself,
the teacher who opens our hearts to Christ,
and the comforter who leads us to repentance,
empowering us to live in Christ's service.**

What do you affirm

when you speak of "the life everlasting"?

**That communion with Jesus Christ
is eternal life itself.**

In him we were chosen

before the foundation of the world.

**By him the eternal covenant with Israel
was taken up, embodied, and fulfilled.**

**To him we are joined by the Holy Spirit through faith,
and adopted as children,
the sons and daughters of God.**

Through him we are raised from death to new life.

For him we shall live to all eternity.

Study Catechism, Q 7, 31, 54, 87

We believe and confess only one God,
who can do all things,
is all-wise, all-good,
all-just, and all-merciful.

We believe that everything required for our salvation
has been offered and communicated to us in Jesus Christ,
the wisdom of God and God's eternal Son.

Jesus Christ clothed himself in our flesh:

God and human in one person.

We believe that we are illuminated in faith
by the unfathomable grace of the Holy Spirit.

God imparts this gracious gift.

By faith we receive grace

to live holy lives in awe and reverence for God,

for we receive what the gospel promises

when God gives us the Holy Spirit.

Faith does not cool our desire for good and holy living,

but rather engenders and excites it in us,

leading naturally to good works.

We believe that the sacraments are joined to the Word
in order that the Word may be more fully confirmed.

Baptism is given to us as the pledge of our adoption,
in which we are grafted into the body of Christ,
and renewed in holiness of life by his Spirit.

The holy Supper of our Lord is a testimony
of our unity with Jesus Christ,
who died only once and was raised for our sake.
The body and blood of Jesus Christ
are food and drink for the soul
just as bread and wine are nourishment for the body.
As for the true Church
we believe that it ought to be governed
in accordance with the order established
by our Lord Jesus Christ.
In this way, pure doctrine can be maintained,
the poor and afflicted can be helped in their need,
assemblies can be gathered in the name of God,
and both great and small can be edified.

Adapted from the French Confession of 1559, based on a translation of the original text by Dr. Ellen Babinsky,
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and Dr. Joseph D. Small, Office of Theology and Worship, PC(USA)

Prayers of the People

These invitations to the Prayers of the People are adapted from Scripture and the confessions.

Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.288

For prayer there is to be a standard lest they be excessively long and irksome. Care is to be taken lest the congregation is wearied by too lengthy prayers and when they are to hear the preaching of the Gospel they either leave the meeting or, having been exhausted, want to do away with it altogether.

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.220

INVITATIONS TO PRAYER

The Spirit helps us in our weakness;
for we do not know how to pray as we ought,
but that very Spirit intercedes
with sighs too deep for words.
And God, who searches the heart,
knows what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes for the saints
according to the will of God.

Rom. 8:26-27

Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of mercies
and the God of all consolation,
who consoles us in all our affliction,
so that we may be able to console those
who are in any affliction
with the consolation with which we ourselves
are consoled by God.
For just as the sufferings of Christ
are abundant for us,
so also our consolation is abundant through Christ.

2 Cor. 1:3-5

Let us pray in the Spirit at all times
in every prayer and supplication.
Let us keep alert and always persevere
in supplication for all the saints.

Eph. 6:18

The church responds to the gospel of reconciliation

in praise and prayer.

In our prayer,

we commit ourselves afresh to Christ's mission,

experience a deepening of faith and obedience,

and bear open testimony to the gospel.

Confession of 1967, 9.50

Why do we pray to God?

We pray because we were created to live with God,

who desires the prayers of our hearts.

Our hearts long for God,

for we need God's help and guidance every day.

Belonging to God Catechism, Based on Q 46

The God who has adopted us as children

is the God who encourages

and commands us to pray.

When we pray, we respond with love

to that greater love which meets us from above.

Before we enter into prayer,

God is ready to grant all that we need.

We may turn to God with confidence each day,

not because we are worthy,

but simply because of God's grace.

By praying we acknowledge that we depend on grace

for all that is good, beautiful, life-giving, and true.

Study Catechism, Q 123

Invitation to the Water

These words from Scripture and the confessions may be used in preparation for celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism. They may also be used as an invitation to the reaffirmation of Baptism or the renewal of baptismal discipleship.

Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, signifies and seals our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.094

It is done!
I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end.
To the thirsty I will give water as a gift
from the spring of the water of life.
Those who conquer will inherit these things,
and I will be their God
and they will be my children.
Rev. 21:6-7

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come."
And let everyone who hears say, "Come."
And let everyone who is thirsty come.
Let anyone who wishes
take the water of life as a gift.
Rev. 22:17-18

Christ has instituted this external washing with water
and by it has promised
that we are as certainly washed
with his blood and Spirit
from the uncleanness of our souls
and from all our sins,
as we are washed externally with water
which is used to remove the dirt from our bodies.
Heidelberg Catechism 4.069

We believe that in baptism
the Spirit demonstrates and confirms God's promise
to include us and our children
in this gracious covenant,
cleansing us from sin,
and giving us newness of life,
as participants in Christ's death and resurrection.
Baptism sets us in the visible community
of Christ's people

and joins us to all other believers
by a powerful bond.
In baptism we give ourselves up
in faith and repentance
to be the Lord's.
For both children and adults,
baptism is a reminder that God loves us
long before we can love God.
Declaration of Faith, 6.5

Why do we baptize?
**Because Jesus instructed his disciples to baptize,
and because Jesus himself was baptized by John
in the waters of the river Jordan,
we celebrate this sacrament
among the people whom God has called.
Through baptism,
we are adopted and welcomed into God's family.
In these waters,
we share in the dying and rising of Jesus,
who washes away all our sins.
We are made one with Christ
and one with all who are joined to Christ
in the church.**

Belonging to God Catechism, Based on Q 42

To be used at baptism as a dialogue with a child who is not old enough to make a profession of faith:

Who are you?
I am a child of God.

What does it mean to be a child of God?
That I belong to God, who loves me.

When we baptize,
we show that all of us are children of God
and the Spirit seals us in God's love.
Belonging to God Catechism, Based on Q 1-2

Offering

These words from Scripture and the confessions may be used as calls to Offering or invitations to Christian stewardship. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation.

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and make good your vow to the Most High.
Ps. 50:14

Ascribe to the Lord the honor due God's name;
bring offerings and come into God's courts.
Ps. 96:8

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless God's holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and do not forget all God's benefits.
Ps. 103:1-2

Honor the Lord with your substance
and with the first fruits of all your produce;
then your barns will be filled with plenty,
and your vats will be bursting with wine.
Prov. 3:9-10

On entering the house,
the wise men saw the child with his mother,
and knelt down and worshipped him.
Then, opening their treasure chests,
they offered him gifts.
Matt. 2:11

For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.
Matt. 6:21

For what will it profit us
to gain the whole world and forfeit our life?
Mark 8:36

To the man unable to walk Peter said,
"I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you,
in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth."
Acts 3:6

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,

by the mercies of God,
to present yourselves as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship.
Rom. 12:1

For you know the generous act
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though he was rich,
yet for your sakes he became poor,
so that by his poverty you might become rich.
2 Cor. 8:9

For you know the generous act
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though he was rich,
yet for your sakes he became poor,
so that by his poverty you might become rich.
And in this matter I am giving my advice:
it is appropriate for you who began last year
not only to do something
but even to desire to do something—
now finish doing it,
so that your eagerness may be matched
by completing it according to your means.
For if the eagerness is there,
the gift is acceptable according to what one has—
not according to what one does not have.
I do not mean that there should be relief for others
and pressure on you,
but it is a question of a fair balance
between your present abundance and their need,
so that their abundance may be for your need,
in order that there may be a fair balance.
As it is written,
“The one who had much did not have too much,
and the one who had little did not have too little.”
2 Cor. 8:9-15

The point is this:
the one who sows sparingly
will also reap sparingly,
and the one who sows bountifully
will also reap bountifully.
Each of you must give
as you have made up your mind,
not reluctantly or under compulsion,

for God loves a cheerful giver.
And God is able to provide you
with every blessing in abundance,
so that by always having enough of everything,
you may share abundantly in every good work.
As it is written,
“God scatters abroad, and gives to the poor;
the righteousness of God endures forever.”
God who supplies seed to the sower
and bread for food
will supply and multiply your seed for sowing
and increase the harvest of your righteousness.
You will be enriched in every way
for your great generosity,
which will produce thanksgiving to God through us;
for the rendering of this ministry
not only supplies the needs of the saints
but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.
Through the testing of this ministry
you glorify God by your obedience
to the confession of the gospel of Christ
and by the generosity of your sharing
with them and with all others,
while they long for you and pray for you
because of the surpassing grace of God
that he has given you.
Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift!
2 Cor. 9:6-15

Live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself for us,
an offering and sacrifice to God.
Eph. 5:2

The apostle Paul writes,
“I have learned to be content with what I have.
I know what it is to have little,
and I know what it is to have plenty.
In any and all circumstances
I have learned the secret
of being well-fed and of going hungry,
of having plenty and of being in need.
I can do all things through Christ
who strengthens me.”
Let us share our gifts.
Phil. 4:11-13

Whatever your task,
put yourselves into it,
as done for the Lord:
the exhorter, in exhortation;
the giver, in generosity;
the leader, in diligence;
the compassionate, in cheerfulness.
Col. 3.23; Rom. 12.8

For we brought nothing into the world,
so that we can take nothing out of it.
1 Tim. 6:7

Do good,
be rich in good works,
generous, and ready to share,
thus storing up for yourselves the treasure
of a good foundation for the future,
so that you may take hold of the life
that really is life.
1 Tim. 6:17-19

Through Christ, then,
let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God,
that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.
Do not neglect to do good
and to share what you have,
for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
Heb. 13:15-16

Every generous act of giving,
with every perfect gift,
is from above,
coming down from the Father of lights.
James 1:17

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another
with whatever gift each of you has received.
1 Pet. 4:10

How do we live faithfully with our possessions?
**Through truth, faithfulness, and justice
in contracts and commerce between persons;
rendering to all their due;
giving and lending freely,
according to our abilities,**

**and the necessities of others;
moderation of our judgments,
wills, and affections,
concerning worldly goods;
avoiding unnecessary lawsuits;
and an endeavor by all just and lawful means
to procure, preserve, and further
the wealth and outward estate of others,
as well as our own.**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.251

The reconciliation of humankind
through Jesus Christ
makes it plain that enslaving poverty
in a world of abundance
is an intolerable violation of God's good creation.
Because Jesus identified with the needy and exploited,
the cause of the world's poor
is the cause of his disciples.

**We are called to use our abilities,
our possessions,
and the fruits of technology
as gifts entrusted to us
for the maintenance of God's family
and the advancement of the common welfare.**

Confession of 1967, 9.46

We are persuaded
that there is an inseparable connection
between faith and practice,
truth and duty.

**Let us worship God with our lives
and the presentation of our tithes and offerings.**

Book of Order, F-3.0104

The mission of God in Christ
gives shape and substance
to the life and work of the Church.

**In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission
for the transformation of creation and humanity
by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love,
offering to all people the grace of God at font and table,
and calling all people to discipleship in Christ.**

Book of Order, F-1.01

The Church is the body of Christ.
Christ gives to the Church

all the gifts necessary to be his body.

**The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts
in its life as a community in the world.**

Book of Order, F-1.0301

The Church is sent to be Christ's faithful evangelist:

**making disciples of all nations
in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
sharing with others a deep life
of worship, prayer, fellowship, and service; and
participating in God's mission
to care for the needs of the sick, poor, and lonely;
to free people from sin, suffering, and oppression;
and to establish Christ's just, loving, and peaceable rule
in the world.**

Book of Order, F-1.0302

We affirm the election of the people of God
for service as well as for salvation;
covenant life marked by a disciplined concern
for order in the church according to the Word of God;
a faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation
and seeks proper use of the gifts of God's creation; and
the recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny,
which calls the people of God to work
for the transformation of society
by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God.

Book of Order, F-2.05

Invitation to the Lord's Table

These words from Scripture and the confessions may be used in preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or as Invitations to the Lord's Table.

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.096

Jesus said: I am the living bread
that came down from heaven.
Whoever eats of this bread
will live forever;
and the bread that I will give
for the life of the world
is my flesh.
Let anyone who is thirsty come to me
and let the one who believes in me drink.
John 6:51, John 7:37-38

Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking;
if you hear my voice and open the door,
I will come in and eat with you,
and you with me.
Rev. 3:20

Blessed are those who are invited
to the marriage supper of the Lamb.
Rev. 19:9

We believe that at the Lord's Supper
the community of believers is renewed
by the memory of Christ's life and death,
by his real presence in the power of the Holy Spirit,
and by the promise of his coming again.

**Christ makes himself known to us
in the breaking of bread.**

He offers us his body broken for our sake
and his blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

**We accept his promises and gifts
and depend on his life to sustain ours.**

In turn we offer ourselves in thanksgiving
to the risen Lord who has conquered death.

**So we celebrate his victory here and now
and anticipate the joyous feast in his coming kingdom.**

**Reunited around one loaf and cup,
we receive strength and courage
to continue our pilgrimage with God in the world.**

Declaration of Faith, 6.5

Breaking of the Bread

These words from Scripture may be used at the Breaking of the Bread. When the narrative of the institution of the Lord's Supper is not used at the Breaking of the Bread, it should be spoken at the Invitation to the Table or during the Great Thanksgiving.

Jesus said: Blessed are those
who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Matt. 5:6

These words are especially appropriate at an evening service.

When it was evening,
the disciples came to Jesus and said,
“The hour is now late;
send the crowds away
so that they may buy food for themselves.”
Jesus said to them,
“They need not go away;
you give them something to eat.”
They replied,
“We have nothing here
but five loaves and two fish.”
And Jesus said, “Bring them here to me.”
Taking the five loaves
and the two fish,
he looked up to heaven,
and blessed and broke the loaves,
and gave them to the disciples,
and the disciples gave them to the crowds.
And all ate and were filled;
and they took up what was left over
of the broken pieces,
twelve baskets full.”

Matt. 14:15-20; cf. Mark 6:35-43

Jesus called his disciples to him and said,
“I have compassion for the crowd,
because they have been with me now
for three days
and have nothing to eat;
and I do not want to send them away hungry.”

The disciples said to him,
“Where are we going to get enough bread
to feed so great a crowd?”

Jesus asked them,
“How many loaves have you?”

They said, "Seven, and a few small fish."
Then Jesus took the seven loaves and fish;
and after giving thanks he broke them
and gave them to the disciples,
and the disciples gave them to the crowds.
And all of them ate and were filled;
and they took up the broken pieces left over,
seven baskets full.
Matt. 15:32-37; cf. Mark 8:1-8

At table with his disciples,
Jesus took a loaf of bread,
and after blessing it he broke it,
gave it to the disciples, and said,
"Take, eat; this is my body."
Then he took a cup,
and after giving thanks
he gave it to them, saying,
"Drink from it, all of you;
for this is my blood of the covenant,
which is poured out for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
I tell you, I will never again
drink of this fruit of the vine
until that day when I drink it new
with you in my Father's kingdom."
Matt. 26:26-29

At table with his disciples,
Jesus took a loaf of bread,
and after blessing it he broke it,
gave it to them, and said,
"Take; this is my body."
Then he took a cup,
and after giving thanks
he gave it to them,
and all of them drank from it.
He said to them,
"This is my blood of the covenant,
which is poured out for many.
Truly I tell you,
I will never again drink
of the fruit of the vine
until that day when I drink it new
in the kingdom of God."
Mark 14:22-25

These words are especially appropriate for Passion/Palm Sunday or Maundy Thursday.

When the hour came,
Jesus took his place at the table,
and the apostles were with him.
He said to them,
“I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you
before I suffer;
for I tell you, I will not eat it again
until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”
Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said,
“Take this and divide it among yourselves;
for I tell you that from now on
I will not drink of the fruit of the vine
until the kingdom of God comes.”
Then he took a loaf of bread,
and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and gave it to them, saying,
“This is my body, which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”
And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying,
“This cup that is poured out for you
is the new covenant in my blood.
But see, the one who betrays me is with me,
and his hand is on the table.
For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined,
but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed.”
Luke 22:14-23

When the risen Lord was at table with his disciples,
he took bread, blessed and broke it,
and gave it to them.
Then their eyes were opened,
and they recognized him.
Luke 24:30-31

Jesus said: I am the bread of life.
Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never thirst.
John 6:35

Jesus said: I am the bread of life.
Jesus said: I am the vine, you are the branches.
Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never thirst.
John 6:35; John 15:5

The bread that we break,
is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?

The cup of blessing that we bless,
is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?
Because there is one bread,
we who are many are one body,
for we all partake of the one bread.
1 Cor. 10:16-17

I have received from the Lord
what I hand on to you,
that the Lord Jesus
on the night when he was betrayed
took a loaf of bread,
and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and said,
“This is my body that is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”
In the same way he took the cup also,
after supper, saying,
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.”
For as often as you eat this bread
and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord’s death
until he comes.
1 Cor. 11:23-26

Communion of the People

These words from Scripture may be spoken as the people are invited to receive the bread and cup. Non-bold parts are intended for leaders; bold parts, for the congregation.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Happy are those who find rest in God.

Psalm 34:8

Jesus said: Blessed are those
who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Thanks be to God.

Matt. 5:6

Then their eyes were opened,
and they recognized him.

Luke 24:31

Jesus said:

Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never thirst.

Thanks be to God.

John 6:35

Prayer After Communion

These Prayers after Communion, based on biblical texts, may be spoken by the leader or in unison by the congregation.

O Lord our God, you are very great.
You cause plants to grow
to bring forth food from the earth:
wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine,
and bread to strengthen us.
With all your creatures, we look to you
to give us our food in due season.
When you open your hand,
we are filled with good things.
When you send forth your Spirit
you renew the face of the earth.
Therefore we rejoice
and sing to you, O Lord;
as long as we live. **Amen.**

Based on Psalm 104:1, 14-15, 27-28, 30, 33-34

We praise you, O Lord,
and give you thanks with all our hearts,
in the company of your people.
You are gracious and merciful;
you provide food for those who worship you;
you are ever mindful of your covenant.
May your praise endure forever! **Amen.**

Based on Psalm 111:1, 4-5, 10

Blessing

These biblical words of blessing may be spoken by the pastor at the conclusion of the service.

Come, Lord Jesus Christ!
The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.
May love be with all of you
in Christ Jesus.
1 Cor. 16:22-24

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with all of you.
2 Cor. 13:13

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.
Gal. 6:18

Peace be to the whole community,
and love with faith,
from God the Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Grace be with all
who have an undying love
for our Lord Jesus Christ.
Eph. 6:23-24

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be with your spirit.
Phil. 4:23

Grace be with you.
Col. 4:18, 1 Tim. 6:21, 2 Tim. 4:22

May the God of peace
sanctify you entirely;
and may your spirit and soul and body
be kept sound and blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
The one who calls you is faithful
and will do this.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you.
1 Thess. 5:23-24, 28

Now may the Lord of peace
give you peace at all times
and in all ways.
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be with all of you.
2 Thess. 3:16, 18

The Lord be with your spirit.
Grace be with you.
2 Tim. 4:22

Grace be with all of you.
Titus 3:15, Heb. 13:25

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be with your spirit.
Philem. 25

Peace to all of you
who are in Christ.
1 Pet. 5:14

May grace and peace be yours in abundance
in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
2 Pet. 1:2

Grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To him be the glory
both now and to the day of eternity.
2 Pet. 3:18

Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us
from God the Father
and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son,
in truth and love.
2 John 3

Peace to you.
3 John 15

Now to the One who is able
to keep you from falling,
and to make you stand without blemish
in the presence of God's glory with rejoicing,
to the only God our Savior,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, power, and authority,

before all time and now and forever. Amen.
Jude 24-25

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,”
says the Lord God,
who is and who was and who is to come,
the Almighty.
Rev. 1:8

Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and might
be to our God forever and ever! Amen.
Rev. 7:12

Jesus says, “Surely I am coming soon.”
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
The grace of the Lord Jesus
be with all the saints. Amen.
Rev. 22:20-21

Charge

These biblical and confessional words of commissioning are appropriately spoken by an elder or deacon at the conclusion of the service. They may be spoken from the door of the church as a call to love and serve God and neighbor in the world.

*An appropriate congregational response is **Amen**.*

May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in
hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Rom. 15:13

Now to God who is able to strengthen you
according to the gospel
and the proclamation of Jesus Christ,
according to the revelation of the mystery
that was kept secret for long ages
but is now disclosed,
and through the prophetic writings
is made known to all the Gentiles,
according to the command of the eternal God,
to bring about the obedience of faith—
to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ,
be the glory forever! Amen.
Rom. 16:25-27

Especially for Advent

God will strengthen you to the end,
so that you may be blameless
on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
1 Cor. 1:8-9

Christ was faithful over God's house as a son,
and we are his house
if we hold firm the confidence
and the pride that belong to hope.
Heb. 3:6

For we have become partners of Christ,
if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.
Heb. 3:14

Now may the God of peace,
who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep,

by the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you complete in everything good
so that you may do God's will,
seeking that which is pleasing in God's sight,
through Jesus Christ,
to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
Heb. 13:20-21

Especially for Advent

Be patient, therefore, beloved,
until the coming of the Lord.
The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth,
being patient with it
until it receives the early and the late rains.
You also must be patient.
Strengthen your hearts,
for the coming of the Lord is near.
James 5:7-8

Therefore prepare your minds for action;
discipline yourselves;
set all your hope on the grace
that Jesus Christ will bring you
when he is revealed.
1 Pet. 1:13

All of you, have unity of spirit,
sympathy, love for one another,
a tender heart, and a humble mind.
Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse;
but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing.
It is for this that you were called—
that you might inherit a blessing.
1 Pet. 3:8-9

All of you, have unity of spirit,
sympathy, love for one another,
a tender heart, and a humble mind.
Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse;
but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing.
It is for this that you were called—
that you might inherit a blessing.
For "Those who desire life
and desire to see good days,
let them keep their tongues from evil
and their lips from speaking deceit;
let them turn away from evil and do good;

let them seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and God's ears are open to their prayer."
1 Pet. 3:8-12

Those who desire life
and desire to see good days,
let them keep their tongues from evil
and their lips from speaking deceit;
let them turn away from evil and do good;
let them seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and God's ears are open to their prayer.
1 Pet. 3:10-12

In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord.
Always be ready to make your defense to anyone
who demands from you an accounting
for the hope that is in you;
yet do it with gentleness and reverence.
Keep your conscience clear.
1 Pet. 3:15-16

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another
with whatever gift each of you has received.
Whoever speaks must do so
as one speaking the very words of God;
whoever serves must do so
with the strength that God supplies,
so that God may be glorified in all things
through Jesus Christ.
To God be the glory and the power
forever and ever. Amen.
1 Pet. 4:10-11

Humble yourselves therefore
under the mighty hand of God,
so that God may exalt you in due time.
Cast all your anxiety on the Lord
who cares for you.
Discipline yourselves, keep alert.
The God of all grace,
who has called you to eternal glory in Christ,
will restore, support,
strengthen, and establish you.
To God be the power forever and ever. Amen.

1 Pet. 5:6-8

You must make every effort
to support your faith with goodness,
and goodness with knowledge,
and knowledge with self-control,
and self-control with endurance,
and endurance with godliness,
and godliness with mutual affection,
and mutual affection with love.

2 Pet. 1:5-7

Grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To him be the glory
both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

2 Pet. 3:18

And now, little children, abide in Christ,
so that when he is revealed we may have confidence
and not be put to shame before him at his coming.

1 John 2:28

Little children, let us love,
not in word or speech,
but in truth and action.

1 John 3:18

This is God's commandment,
that we should believe
in the name of Jesus Christ
and love one another,
just as he has commanded us.
All who obey his commandments abide in him,
and he abides in them.
And by this we know that he abides in us,
by the Spirit that he has given us.

1 John 3:23-24

Beloved, build yourselves up
on your most holy faith;
pray in the Holy Spirit;
keep yourselves in the love of God;
look forward to the mercy
of our Lord Jesus Christ
that leads to eternal life.

Jude 20-21

Be patient in adversity,
grateful in the midst of blessing,
and trust our faithful God and Father
for the future,
assured that no creature
shall separate us from God's love.
Heidelberg Catechism, 4.028

To be reconciled to God
is to be sent into the world
as God's reconciling community.
We are entrusted with God's message
of reconciliation,
sharing the labor of healing the enmities
that separate people from God
and from each other.
Christ has called us to this mission
and given us the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Confession of 1967, 9.31

We know our efforts cannot bring in God's kingdom.
But hope plunges us into the struggle
for victories over evil that are possible now
in the world, the church, and our individual lives.
Hope gives us courage and energy
to contend against all opposition,
however invincible it may seem,
for the new world and the new humanity
that are surely coming.
Jesus is Lord!
He has been Lord from the beginning.
He will be Lord at the end.
Even now he is Lord.
Declaration of Faith, 10.5

Go from this place praising God,
who sends us into the world
to proclaim the gospel
and to work for justice and peace.
Give yourselves over to God's wise and gracious rule,
knowing that God can be trusted
to make all things work together for good,
now and forever.
Belonging to God Catechism, Based on Q 35, 59

Section Two: The Christian Year

The Christmas Cycle

Season of Advent

Nativity of the Lord

Epiphany of the Lord

Time after Epiphany / Ordinary Time

Baptism of the Lord

Transfiguration of the Lord

The Easter Cycle

Ash Wednesday

Season of Lent

Palm/Passion Sunday

Maundy Thursday

Good Friday

Resurrection of the Lord

Season of Easter

Ascension of the Lord

Day of Pentecost

Time after Pentecost / Ordinary Time

Trinity Sunday

All Saints' Day

Christ the King / Reign of Christ

The Christmas Cycle

Season of Advent

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use in the Season of Advent.

Call to Confession

Jesus has appeared once for all
at the end of the age
to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.
And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once,
and after that the judgment,
so Christ, having been offered once
to bear the sins of many,
will appear a second time,
not to deal with sin,
but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.
Heb. 9:26-28

Peace

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
**and he is named Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.**
His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
**He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.**
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.
Isa. 9:6-7

Affirmation of Faith

As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded
that there shall be a day of judgment,

both to deter all people from sin,
and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity;
so will he have that day unknown to all,
that they may shake off all carnal security,
and be always watchful,
because they know not at what hour the Lord will come;
and may be ever prepared to say,
Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.
Westminster Confession, 6.182

How is Christ to be exalted
in his coming again to judge the world?
**Christ is to be exalted
in his coming again to judge the world,
in that he, who was unjustly judged
and condemned by wicked persons,
shall come again at the last day in great power,
and in the full manifestation of his own glory,
and of his Father's,
with all his holy angels,
with a shout,
with the voice of the archangel,
and with the trumpet of God,
to judge the world in righteousness.**
Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.166

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"
Brief Statement of Faith, 10.4

In Christ God gave us a glimpse of the new creation
he has already begun and will surely finish.
**We do not know when the final day will come.
In our time we see only broken and scattered signs
that the renewal of all things is under way.**
We do not yet see the end of cruelty and suffering
in the world, the church, or our own lives.
**But we see Jesus as Lord.
As he stands at the center of our history,
we are confident he will stand at its end.**
He will judge all people and nations.
Evil will be condemned
and rooted out of God's good creation.
There will be no more tears or pain.

All things will be made new.
Declaration of Faith, 10.2

Nativity of the Lord

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on the Nativity of the Lord / Christmas.

Peace

Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom God favors!

Luke 2:14

Affirmation of Faith

When the fullness of time came
God sent his Son,
his eternal wisdom,
the substance of his own glory,
into this world,
who took the nature of humanity
from the substance of a woman, a virgin,
by means of the Holy Ghost.
And so was born the “just seed of David,”
the “Angel of the great counsel of God,”
the very Messiah promised,
whom we confess and acknowledge to be Emmanuel,
true God and true human,
two perfect natures united and joined in one person.
We acknowledge and confess that this wonderful union
between the Godhead and the humanity in Christ Jesus
did arise from the eternal and immutable decree of God
from which all our salvation springs and depends.
Scots Confession, 3.06 – 3.07

What is the meaning of:
“Conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary”?
**That the eternal Son of God,
who is and remains true and eternal God,
took upon himself our true humanity
from the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary
through the action of the Holy Spirit,
so that he might also be the true seed of David,
like his fellow human beings in all things,
except for sin.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.035

What benefit do you receive
from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

**That he is our Mediator,
and that, in God's sight,
he covers over with his innocence and perfect holiness
the sinfulness in which I have been conceived.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.036

We believe and teach that the Son of God,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
was predestinated or foreordained from eternity by the Father
to be the Savior of the world.

And we believe that he was born,
not only when he assumed flesh of the Virgin Mary,
and not only before the foundation of the world was laid,
but by the Father before all eternity in an inexpressible manner.

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.062

We believe that the Son of God,
the second Person in the Trinity,
being very and eternal God,
of one substance,
and equal with the Father,
did, when the fullness of time was come,
take upon him humanity's nature,
with all the essential properties
and common infirmities thereof;
yet without sin;
being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost,
in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance.
So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures,
the Godhead and the humanity,
were inseparably joined together in one person,
without conversion, composition, or confusion.
Which person is truly God and truly human,
yet one Christ,
the only Mediator between God and humanity.

Westminster Confession, 6.044

How did Christ, being the Son of God,
become human?

**Christ, the Son of God, became human
by taking to himself a true body,
and a reasonable soul,
being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost,
in the womb of the Virgin Mary,**

**of her substance, and born of her,
yet without sin.**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.147

How did Christ humble himself
in his conception and birth?

**Christ humbled himself in his conception and birth,
in that, being from all eternity the Son of God
in the bosom of the Father,
he was pleased in the fullness of time
to become the Son of Man,
made of a woman of low estate,
and to be born to her.**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.157

Jesus, the long expected Savior,
came into the world as a child,
descended from David,
conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of Mary, a virgin.

Declaration of Faith, 4.1

Epiphany of the Lord

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on the Epiphany of the Lord.

Peace

By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
**to give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Luke 1:78

Affirmation of Faith

We most surely believe
that God preserved,
instructed,
multiplied,
honored,
adorned,
and called from death to life his Church
in all ages since Adam
until the coming of Christ Jesus in the flesh.
Scots Confession, 3.05

We believe that the Son of God,
the second person in the Trinity,
being very and eternal God,
of one substance,
and equal with the Father,
did, when the fullness of time was come,
take upon himself human nature,
with all the essential properties
and common infirmities thereof;
yet without sin:
being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost,
in the womb of the Virgin Mary,
of her substance.
So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures —
the Godhead and the humanity —
were inseparably joined together in one person,
without conversion, composition, or confusion.
This person is truly God and truly human,

yet one Christ,
the only mediator
between God and humankind.
Westminster Confession, 6.044

Jesus Christ,
as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture,
is the one Word of God
which we have to hear
and which we have to trust and obey
in life and in death.
Barmen Declaration, 8.11

Out of Israel,
God in due time raised up Jesus.
His faith and obedience
were the response of the perfect child of God.
He was the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel,
the beginning of the new creation,
and the pioneer of the new humanity.
He gave history its meaning and direction
and called the church to be his servant
for the reconciliation of the world.
Confession of 1967, 9.19

Time after Epiphany / Ordinary Time

Baptism of the Lord

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on the Baptism of the Lord.

Affirmation of Faith

How does holy Baptism remind and assure you that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross avails for you?

In this way:

Christ has instituted this external washing with water and by it has promised that I am as certainly washed with his blood and Spirit from the uncleanness of my soul and from all my sins, as I am washed externally with water which is used to remove the dirt from my body.

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.069

What does it mean to be washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ?

It means to have the forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, for the sake of Christ's blood which he shed for us in his sacrifice on the cross, and also to be renewed by the Holy Spirit and sanctified as members of Christ, so that we may more and more die unto sin and live in a consecrated and blameless way.

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.070

Baptism was instituted and consecrated by God.

First John baptized,

who dipped Christ in the water in Jordan.

From him it came to the apostles,

who also baptized with water.

The Lord expressly commanded them to preach the Gospel and to baptize

“in the name of the Father

and of the Son

and of the Holy Spirit.”

And in Acts, Peter said to the people
who inquired what they ought to do:
“Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ
for the forgiveness of your sins;
and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
Hence baptism is called a sign of initiation for God’s people,
since by it the elect of God are consecrated to God.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.185

There is but one baptism in the Church of God;
and it is sufficient to be once baptized or consecrated unto God.
For baptism once received continues for all of life,
and is a perpetual sealing of our adoption.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.186

Now to be baptized in the name of Christ
is to be enrolled, entered, and received
into the covenant and family,
and so into the inheritance of the children of God;
yes, and in this life to be called after the name of God;
that is to say, to be called a child of God;
to be cleansed also from the filthiness of sins,
and to be granted the manifold grace of God,
in order to lead a new and innocent life.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.187

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament,
ordained by Jesus Christ,
not only for our solemn admission into the visible Church,
but also to be unto us a sign and seal of the covenant of grace,
of our ingrafting into Christ,
of regeneration,
of remission of sins,
and of our giving up unto God,
through Jesus Christ,
to walk in newness of life;
this sacrament is, by Christ’s own appointment,
to be continued in his church until the end of the world.
Westminster Confession, 6.154

What is Baptism?

**Baptism is a sacrament,
wherein the washing with water,
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost,
signifies and seals our ingrafting into Christ,**

**and our partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace,
and our engagement to be the Lord's.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.094

By humble submission to John's baptism,
Christ joined himself to humanity in our need
and entered upon his ministry of reconciliation
in the power of the Spirit.

Christian baptism marks the receiving of the same Spirit
by all his people.

Baptism with water represents not only cleansing from sin,
but a dying with Christ and a joyful rising with him to new life.
It commits all Christians to die each day to sin
and to live for righteousness.

In baptism,
the church celebrates the renewal of the covenant
with which God has bound his people to himself.

By baptism,
individuals are publicly received into the church
to share in its life and ministry,
and the church becomes responsible
for their training and support in Christian discipleship.

When those baptized are infants,
the congregation, as well as the parents,
has a special obligation to nurture them in the Christian life,
leading them to make, by a public profession,
a personal response to the love of God
shown forth in their baptism.

Confession of 1967, 9.51

We believe that in Baptism
the Spirit demonstrates and confirms God's promise
to include us and our children in his gracious covenant,
cleansing us from sin,
and giving us newness of life,
as participants in Christ's death and resurrection.
Baptism sets us in the visible community of Christ's people
and joins us to all other believers by a powerful bond.
In baptism we give ourselves up in faith and repentance
to be the Lord's.

For both children and adults, baptism is a reminder
that God loves us long before we can love him.

For both, God's grace and our response to it
are not tied to the moment of Baptism,
but continue and deepen throughout life.

Declaration of Faith, 6.5

Transfiguration of the Lord

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on the Transfiguration of the Lord.

Affirmation of Faith

We affirm that Jesus was born of woman
as is every child,
yet born of God's power
as was no other child.

In the person and work of Jesus,
God and a human life
are united but not confused,
distinguished but not separated

The coming of Jesus was itself
the coming of God's promised rule.

Through his birth, life, death, and resurrection,
He brings about the relationship between God and humanity
that God always intended.

Declaration of Faith, 4.1

The Easter Cycle

Ash Wednesday

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on Ash Wednesday. See also the resources for the Season of Lent.

Affirmation of Faith

What is sin?

**Sin is any want of conformity unto,
or transgression of, the law of God.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.014

What is repentance unto life?

**Repentance unto life is a saving grace,
whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of sin,
and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ,
does, with grief and hatred of sin,
turn from it unto God,
with full purpose of, and endeavor after,
new obedience.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.087

What misery did the Fall bring upon humankind?

**The Fall brought upon humankind
the loss of communion with God,
his displeasure and curse;
so as we are by nature children of wrath,
bond-slaves to Satan,
and justly liable to all punishments
in this world and that which is to come.**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.137

Season of Lent

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use in the Season of Lent.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that,
by the transgression generally known as original sin,
the image of God was utterly defaced in us,
and we and our children became by nature
hostile to God, slaves to Satan, and servants to sin.
And thus everlasting death has had, and shall have,
power and dominion over all
who have not been, are not, or shall not be
reborn from above.
This rebirth is wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost
creating in the hearts of God's chosen ones
an assured faith in the promise of God
revealed to us in his Word;
by this faith we grasp Christ Jesus
with the graces and blessings promised in him.
Scots Confession, 3.03

What is repentance?
By repentance we understand
the recovery of a right mind in our sinful humanity
awakened by the Word of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit,
and received by true faith,
by which we acknowledge our innate corruption
and all our sins accused by the Word of God;
and grieve for them from our hearts,
and not only bewail and frankly confess them before God
with a feeling of shame,
but also with indignation abominate them;
and now zealously consider the amendment of our ways
and constantly strive for innocence and virtue
in which conscientiously to exercise ourselves
all the rest of our lives.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.093

True repentance is conversion to God,
a sincere turning to God and all good,
and earnest turning away from the devil and all evil.
This repentance is a sheer gift from God.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.094

As Jesus Christ is God's assurance
of the forgiveness of all our sins,
so in the same way and with the same seriousness
is he also God's mighty claim upon our whole life.
Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance
from the godless fetters of this world
for a free, grateful service to his creatures.
We reject the false doctrine,
as though there were areas of our life
in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ,
but to other lords—
areas in which we would not need justification
and sanctification through him.
Barmen Declaration, 8.14 – 8.15

To be reconciled to God
is to be sent into the world as his reconciling community.
This community, the church universal,
is entrusted with God's message of reconciliation
and shares his labor of healing the enmities
which separate us from God and from each other.
Christ has called the church to this mission
and given it the gift of the Holy Spirit.
The church maintains continuity
with the apostles and with Israel
by faithful obedience to his call.
Confession of 1967, 9.31

Palm/Passion Sunday

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on Passion / Palm Sunday.

Peace

Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord!

**Peace in heaven,
and glory in the highest heaven!**

Luke 19:38

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that Christ Jesus was in the form of God;
yet he laid no claim to equality with God,
but made himself nothing,
assuming the form of a slave.

Bearing the human likeness,
sharing the human lot,
he humbled himself and was obedient
even to the point of death,
death on a cross!

Therefore God raised him to the heights
and bestowed on him the name above all names,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—
in heaven, on earth, and in the depths—
and every tongue acclaim “Jesus Christ is Lord,”
to the glory of God the Father.

Phil. 2:6-11 (Revised English Bible)

We confess that our Lord Jesus offered himself
a voluntary sacrifice unto his Father for us,
that he was wounded and plagued for our transgressions,
that he, the clean innocent Lamb of God,
was condemned in the presence of an earthly judge,
that we should be absolved before the judgment seat of our God;
that he suffered not only the cruel death of the cross,
which was accursed by the sentence of God;
but also that he suffered for a season
the wrath of his Father which sinners had deserved.
Yet we avow that he remained the only,
well beloved,
and blessed Son of his Father
even in the midst of his anguish and torment

which he suffered in body and soul
to make full atonement for the sins of his people.
From this we confess and avow
that there remains no other sacrifice for sin.
Scots Confession, 3.09

What benefit do we receive
from the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross?
**That by his power our old self is crucified,
put to death, and buried with him,
so that the evil passions of our mortal bodies
may reign in us no more,
but that we may offer ourselves to him
as a sacrifice of thanksgiving.**
Heidelberg Catechism, 4.043

In what way was Christ humiliated?
**Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born,
and that in a low condition,
made under the law,
undergoing the miseries of this life,
the wrath of God,
and the cursed death of the cross;
in being buried,
and continuing under the power of death for a time.**
Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.027

The reconciling work of Jesus
was the supreme crisis in the life of humankind.
His cross and resurrection
become personal crisis and present hope for us
when the gospel is proclaimed and believed.
In this experience,
the Spirit brings God's forgiveness to us,
moves us to respond in faith, repentance, and obedience,
and initiates the new life in Christ.
Confession of 1967, 9.21

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.
Brief Statement of Faith, 10.2

Religious leaders hated Jesus ^{[[1]]}_{SEP}
because he criticized their hypocrisy ^{[[1]]}_{SEP}
and reproved their neglect of justice and mercy.

They charged him with blasphemy and sedition [L][SEP]
when he claimed to speak and act with God's authority. [L][SEP]
One of Jesus' followers betrayed him.
Others abandoned and denied him
because they were afraid to stand with him.
Civil authorities condemned him
because he provoked unrest among the people.
He was sentenced, mocked, beaten,
and crucified as a common criminal.
We confess that in the execution of Jesus [L][SEP]
the sin of the human race reached its depths.
The only innocent one was condemned and put to death, [L][SEP]
not by sinfulness of one nation, [L][SEP]
but by the sinfulness of us all.
In the presence of Jesus,
who lived out what God wants us all to be,
we were threatened beyond endurance.
Blinded by our rebellion against our Creator,
we killed his Son when we met him face to face.
Declaration of Faith, 4.4

Maundy Thursday

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on Maundy Thursday.

Affirmation of Faith

The end and purpose of Christ's institution,
for which it should be used,
is set forth in the words,
"Do this in remembrance of me,"
and "For as often as you eat this bread
and drink this cup you do show"—
that is, extol, preach, magnify, and praise—
"the Lord's death, until he comes."
Scots Confession, 3.22

How are you reminded and assured in the Holy Supper
that you participate in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross
and in all his benefits?

In this way:

**Christ has commanded me and all believers
to eat of this broken bread,
and to drink of this cup in remembrance of him.
He has thereby promised
that his body was offered
and broken on the cross for me,
and his blood was shed for me,
as surely as I see with my eyes
that the bread of the Lord is broken for me,
and that the cup is shared with me.
Also, he has promised
that he himself as certainly feeds
and nourishes my soul to everlasting life
with his crucified body and shed blood
as I receive from the hand of the minister
and actually taste the bread and the cup of the Lord
which are given to me as sure signs
of the body and blood of Christ.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.075

What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ
and to drink his shed blood?

**It is not only to embrace with a trusting heart
the whole passion and death of Christ,
and by it to receive the forgiveness of sins**

**and eternal life.
In addition,
it is to be so united more and more
to his blessed body
by the Holy Spirit
dwelling both in Christ and in us
that, although he is in heaven and we are on earth,
we are nevertheless flesh of his flesh
and bone of his bone,
always living and being governed by one Spirit,
as the members of our bodies are governed by one soul.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.076

The Supper of the Lord
(which is called the Lord's Table,
and the Eucharist, that is, a Thanksgiving),
was instituted by Christ at his last supper,
and still represents it,
because in it the faithful are spiritually fed
and given drink.

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.193

By this sacred rite
the Lord wishes to keep in fresh remembrance
that greatest benefit which he showed to human beings,
namely, that by having given his body and shed his blood
he has pardoned all our sins,
and redeemed us from eternal death
and the power of the devil,
and now feeds us with his flesh,
and gives us his blood to drink,
which, being received spiritually by true faith,
nourish us to eternal life.

And this so great a benefit is renewed
as often as the Lord's Supper is celebrated.
For the Lord said: "Do this in remembrance of me."
This holy Supper also seals to us
that the very body of Christ was truly given for us,
and his blood shed for the remission of our sins,
lest our faith should in any way waver.

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.195

As we must by eating receive food into our bodies
in order that it may work in us,
and prove its efficacy in us—
since it profits us nothing when it remains outside us—
so it is necessary that we receive Christ by faith,

that he may become ours,
and he may live in us and we in him.
For he says: "I am the bread of life;
the one who comes to me shall not hunger,
and the one who believes in me shall never thirst."
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.200

Our Lord Jesus,
in the night wherein he was betrayed,
instituted the sacrament of his body and blood,
called the Lord's Supper,
to be observed in his Church to the end of the world;
for the perpetual remembrance
of the sacrifice of himself in his death,
the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers,
their spiritual nourishment and growth in him,
their further engagement in and to all duties
which they owe to him;
and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him,
and with each other,
as members of his mystical body.
Westminster Confession, 6.161

What is the Lord's Supper?
**The Lord's Supper is a sacrament,
wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine,
according to Christ's appointment,
his death is showed forth;
and the worthy receivers are,
not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith,
made partakers of his body and blood,
with all his benefits,
to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.**
Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.096

The Lord's Supper is a celebration
of the reconciliation of humanity with God
and with one another,
in which we joyfully eat and drink together
at the table of our Savior.
Jesus Christ gave his church this remembrance
of his dying for sinful humanity
so that by participation in it
we have communion with him
and with all who shall be gathered to him.
Partaking in him as we eat the bread and drink the wine
in accordance with Christ's appointment,

we receive from the risen and living Lord
the benefits of his death and resurrection.
We rejoice in the foretaste of the kingdom
which he will bring to consummation at his promised coming,
and go out from the Lord's Table with courage and hope
for the service to which he has called us.
Confession of 1967, 9.52

We believe that at the Lord's Supper
the community of believers is renewed
by the memory of Christ's life and death,
by his real presence in the power of the Holy Spirit,
and by the promise of his coming again.
Christ makes himself known to us in the breaking of bread.
He offers us his body broken for our sake
and his blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins.
We accept his promises and gifts
and depend on his life to sustain ours.
In turn we offer ourselves in thanksgiving
to the risen Lord who has conquered death.
We celebrate his victory here and now
and anticipate the joyous feast in his coming kingdom.
Reunited around one loaf and cup,
we receive strength and courage
to continue our pilgrimage with God in the world.
Declaration of Faith, 6.5

Good Friday

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on Good Friday. See also the resources for Passion / Palm Sunday.

Affirmation of Faith

In the days of his flesh,
Jesus offered up prayers and supplications,
with loud cries and tears,
to the one who was able to save him from death,
and he was heard because of his reverent submission.
Although he was a Son,
he learned obedience through what he suffered;
and having been made perfect,
he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.
Heb. 5:7-9

Christ suffered for you,
leaving you an example,
so that you should follow in his steps.
“He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”
When he was abused, he did not return abuse;
when he suffered, he did not threaten;
but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.
He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross,
so that, free from sins,
we might live for righteousness;
by his wounds you have been healed.
For you were going astray like sheep,
but now you have returned
to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.
1 Pet. 2:21-25

How did Christ humble himself in his death?
**Christ humbled himself in his death,
in that having been betrayed by Judas,
forsaken by his disciples,
scorned and rejected by the world,
condemned by Pilate,
and tormented by his persecutors;
having also conflicted with the terrors of death
and the powers of darkness,
felt and borne the weight of God’s wrath,
he laid down his life an offering for sin,**

enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

In what way was Christ humbled after his death?

**Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried,
and continuing in the state of the dead,
and under the power of death till the third day,
which has been otherwise expressed in these words:
"He descended into hell."**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.159 – 7.160

God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery
which the Scriptures describe in various ways.

It is called the sacrifice of a lamb,
a shepherd's life given for his sheep,
atonement by a priest;
again it is ransom of a slave,
payment of debt,

vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty,
and victory over the powers of evil.

These are expressions of a truth
which remains beyond the reach of all theory
in the depths of God's love for humankind.

They reveal the gravity, cost, and sure achievement
of God's reconciling work.

Confession of 1967, 9.09

Christ's suffering makes the church sensitive
to all the sufferings of humankind

so that it sees the face of Christ
in the faces of people in every kind of need.

His crucifixion discloses to the church

God's judgment on our inhumanity to one another
and the awful consequences of our own complicity in injustice.

In the power of the risen Christ

and the hope of his coming,

the church sees the promise
of God's renewal of human life in society

and of God's victory over all wrong.

Confession of 1967, 9.32

We believe that in the death of Jesus on the cross
God achieved and demonstrated once for all
the costly forgiveness of our sins.

Jesus Christ is the reconciler between God and the world.

He acted on behalf of sinners as one of us,
fulfilling the obedience God demands of us,

accepting God's condemnation of our sinfulness.

In his lonely agony on the cross

Jesus felt forsaken by God
and thus experienced hell itself for us.
Yet the Son was never more in accord with the Father's will.
He was acting on behalf of God,
manifesting the Father's love that takes on itself
the loneliness, pain and death
that result from our waywardness.
Each of us beholds on the cross
the Savior who died in our place,
so that we may no longer live for ourselves,
but for him.
In him is our only hope for salvation.
Declaration of Faith, 4.4

Resurrection of the Lord

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on the Resurrection of the Lord / Easter. See also the resources for the Season of Easter.

Affirmation of Faith

For I handed on to you as of first importance
what I in turn had received:
that Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the scriptures,
and that he was buried,
and that he was raised on the third day
in accordance with the scriptures,
and that he appeared to Cephas,
then to the twelve.
Then he appeared
to more than five hundred brothers and sisters
at one time,
most of whom are still alive,
though some have died.
Then he appeared to James,
then to all the apostles.
1 Cor. 15:3-7

We undoubtedly believe,
since it was impossible that the sorrows of death
should retain in bondage the Author of life,
that our Lord Jesus
crucified, dead, and buried,
who descended into hell,
did rise again for our justification,
and the destruction of the author of death,
and brought life again to us
who were subject to death and its bondage.
We know that his resurrection was confirmed
by the testimony of his enemies,
and by the resurrection of the dead,
whose sepulchers did open,
and they did rise and appear to many
within the city of Jerusalem.
It was also confirmed by the testimony of his angels,
and by the senses and judgment of his apostles
and of others, who had conversation,
and did eat and drink with him after his resurrection.
Scots Confession, 3.10

What benefit do we receive from the resurrection of Christ?

First, by his resurrection he has overcome death that he might make us share in the righteousness which he has obtained for us through his death. Second, we too are now raised by his power to a new life. Third, the resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge to us of our blessed resurrection.

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.045

How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?

Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death, and having the very same body in which he suffered, really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead the third day by his own power; whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death, and to be Lord of quick and dead. All this he did as a public person, the head of his church, for their justification, quickening in grace, support against enemies, and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.162

The risen Christ is the Savior for all humanity. Those joined to him by faith are set right with God and commissioned to serve as his reconciling community. Christ is head of this community, the church, which began with the apostles and continues through all generations.

Confession of 1967, 9.10

God raised Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

Brief Statement of Faith, 10.2

Jesus was dead and buried, but God raised him from the dead.

The risen Lord appeared to his followers.
They recognized him as their Master
who had been crucified.
Before Jesus left them,
he commissioned them to proclaim to all people
the good news of his victory over death,
and promised to be with them always.
Declaration of Faith, 4.5

Season of Easter

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use in the Season of Easter. See also the resources for the Resurrection of the Lord / Easter.

Peace

While they were talking about this,
Jesus himself stood among them
and said to them,
“Peace be with you.”
Luke 24:36

When it was evening on that day,
the first day of the week,
and the doors of the house where the disciples had met
were locked,
Jesus came and stood among them and said,
“Peace be with you.”
John 20:19

Affirmation of Faith

We are set apart for the gospel of God,
which he promised beforehand
through his prophets in the holy scriptures,
the gospel concerning his Son,
who was descended from David according to the flesh
and was declared to be Son of God with power
according to the spirit of holiness
by resurrection from the dead,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Rom. 1:1-4

What comfort does the resurrection of the body give you?

**That after this life
my soul shall be immediately taken up to Christ, its Head,
and that this flesh of mine, raised by the power of Christ,
shall be reunited with my soul,
and be conformed to the glorious body of Christ.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.057

What comfort does the life everlasting give you?

**That, since I now feel in my heart
the beginning of eternal joy,
I shall possess, after this life,**

**perfect blessedness,
which no eye has seen,
nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
and thereby praise God forever.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.058

We believe and teach
that the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
in his true flesh in which he was crucified and died,
rose again from the dead,
and that not another flesh was raised
other than the one buried,
or that a spirit was taken up instead of the flesh,
but that he retained his true body.
Therefore, while his disciples thought they saw
the spirit of the Lord,
he showed them his hands and feet
which were marked by the prints of the nails and wounds,
and added: "See my hands and my feet,
that it is I myself;
handle me, and see,
for a spirit has not flesh and bones
as you see that I have."

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.073

By his passion and death
and everything which he did and endured for our sake
by his coming in the flesh,
our Lord reconciled all the faithful to the heavenly Father,
made expiation for sins,
disarmed death,
overcame damnation and hell,
and by his resurrection from the dead
brought again and restored life and immortality.
For he is our righteousness, life and resurrection,
in a word, the fullness and perfection of all the faithful,
salvation and all sufficiency.

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.076

What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?
**The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness,
and do immediately pass into glory;
and their bodies, being still united to Christ,
do rest in their graves until the resurrection.**

What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?
At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory,

**shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the Day of Judgment,
and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.037 – 7.038

Life in Christ is life eternal.

The resurrection of Jesus is God's sign
that he will consummate his work of creation and reconciliation
beyond death
and bring to fulfillment the new life begun in Christ.

Confession of 1967, 9.26

We are certain that Jesus lives.

He lives as God with us,
touching all of human life with the presence of God.
He lives as one of us with God.
Because he shares our humanity
and has bound us to himself in love,
we have an advocate in the innermost life of God.

Declaration of Faith, 4.5

In the death of Jesus Christ

God's way in the world seemed finally defeated.

But death was no match for God.

The resurrection of Jesus was God's victory over death.

Death often seems to prove that life is not worth living,
that our best efforts and deepest affections go for nothing.

We do not yet see the end of death.

But Christ has been raised from the dead,
transformed and yet the same person.

In his resurrection is the promise of ours.

We are convinced that the life God wills for each of us
is stronger than the death that destroys us.

The glory of that life exceeds our imagination

but we know we shall be with Christ.

So we treat death as a broken power.

Its ultimate defeat is certain.

In the face of death we grieve.

Yet in hope we celebrate life.

No life ends so tragically
that its meaning and value are destroyed.

Nothing, not even death, can separate us
from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Declaration of Faith, 10.3

Ascension of the Lord

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on the Ascension of the Lord.

Affirmation of Faith

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors
in many and various ways by the prophets,
but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son,
whom he appointed heir of all things,
through whom God also created the worlds.
He is the reflection of God's glory
and the exact imprint of God's very being,
and he sustains all things by his powerful word.
When he had made purification for sins,
he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
having become as much superior to angels
as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.
Heb. 1:1-4

We do not doubt but that the selfsame body
which was born of the virgin,
was crucified, dead, and buried,
and which did rise again,
did ascend into the heavens,
for the accomplishment of all things,
where in our name and for our comfort
he has received all power in heaven and earth,
where he sits at the right hand of the Father,
having received his kingdom,
the only advocate and mediator for us.
We believe that the same Lord Jesus
shall visibly return for the Last Judgment
as he was seen to ascend.
Scots Confession, 3.11

How do you understand the words:
"He ascended into heaven"?

**That Christ was taken up from the earth into heaven
before the eyes of his disciples
and remains there on our behalf
until he comes again to judge the living and the dead.**
Heidelberg Catechism, 4.046

What benefit do we receive

from Christ's ascension into heaven?

**First, that he is our Advocate
in the presence of his Father in heaven.
Second, that we have our flesh in heaven
as a sure pledge that he, as the Head,
will also take us, his members, up to himself.
Third, that he sends us his Spirit as a counterpledge
by whose power we seek what is above,
where Christ is,
sitting at the right hand of God,
and not things that are on earth.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.049

Why is there added:

“And sits at the right hand of God”?

**Because Christ ascended into heaven
so that he might manifest himself there
as the Head of his Church,
through whom the Father governs all things.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.050

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ,
in his same flesh,
ascended above all visible heavens
into the highest heaven,
that is, the dwelling-place of God
and the blessed ones,
at the right hand of God the Father.

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.074

On the third day Christ arose from the dead,
with the same body in which he suffered;
with which also he ascended into heaven,
and there sits at the right hand of his Father,
making intercession;
and shall return to judge humans and angels,
at the end of the world.

Westminster Confession, 6.046

In what way is Christ exalted?

**Christ's exaltation consists
in his rising again from the dead on the third day,
in ascending up into heaven,
in sitting at the right hand of God the Father,
and in coming to judge the world at the last day.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.028

How was Christ exalted in his ascension?

**Christ was exalted in his ascension,
in that having, after his resurrection,
often appeared to, and conversed with his apostles,
speaking to them of the things
pertaining to the Kingdom of God,
and giving them commission
to preach the gospel to all nations;
forty days after his resurrection,
he, in our nature, and as our head,
triumphing over enemies,
visibly went up into the highest heavens,
there to receive gifts for humanity,
to raise up our affections there,
and to prepare a place for us,
where he himself is,
and shall continue until his second coming
at the end of the world.**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.164

We declare that Jesus is Lord.

His resurrection is a decisive victory
over the powers that deform and destroy human life.

His lordship is hidden.

The world appears to be dominated by people and systems
that do not acknowledge his rule.

But his lordship is real.

It demands our loyalty and sets us free
from the fear of all lesser lords who threaten us.

We maintain that ultimate sovereignty
now belongs to Jesus Christ
in every sphere of life.

Jesus is Lord!

He has been Lord from the beginning.

He will be Lord at the end.

Even now he is Lord.

Declaration of Faith, 4.5

Almighty God,

who raised Jesus Christ from the dead
and set him above all rule and authority,
has given to him all power in heaven and on earth,
not only in this age but also in the age to come.

God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ
and has made Christ Head of the Church,
which is his body.

The Church's life and mission

are a joyful participation
in Christ's ongoing life and work.
Book of Order, F-1.0201

Day of Pentecost

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on the Day of Pentecost.

Peace

Jesus said: “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything,
and remind you of all that I have said to you.
Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled,
and do not let them be afraid.”
John 14:25-27

Affirmation of Faith

Our faith and its assurance
do not proceed from flesh and blood,
that is to say, from natural powers within us,
but are the inspiration of the Holy Ghost;
whom we confess to be God,
equal with the Father and with the Son,
who sanctifies us,
and brings us into all truth.
Scots Confession, 3.12

The Holy Spirit,
the third Person in the Trinity,
proceeding from the Father and the Son,
of the same substance
and equal in power and glory,
is, together with the Father and the Son,
to be believed in, loved, obeyed,
and worshiped throughout all ages.
Westminster Confession, 6.051

The Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of life,
everywhere present,
and the source of all good thoughts,
pure desires,
and holy counsels in people.

By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
all believers are vitally united to Christ,
who is the Head,
and thus united to one another in the Church,
which is his body.
He calls and anoints ministers
for their holy office,
qualifies all other officers in the Church
for their special work,
and imparts various gifts and graces
to its members.
He gives efficacy to the Word
and to the ordinances of the gospel.
By him the Church will be preserved,
increased,
purified,
and at last made perfectly holy
in the presence of God.
Westminster Confession, 6.052, 6.054

God the Holy Spirit
fulfills the work of reconciliation in humanity.
The Holy Spirit creates and renews the church
as the community in which we are reconciled to God
and to one another.
He enables us to receive forgiveness
as we forgive one another
and to enjoy the peace of God
as we make peace among themselves.
In spite of our sin, he gives us power
to become representatives of Jesus Christ
and his gospel of reconciliation to all.
Confession of 1967, 9.20

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.
The same Spirit
who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,
engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.

In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"
Brief Statement of Faith, 10.4

The Holy Spirit is God active in the world.
By the Spirit God raised up leaders and prophets in Israel.
By the Spirit Jesus was conceived, baptized, and empowered.
By the Spirit the risen Christ is present with his church.
We affirm that the Holy Spirit is the Lord and giver of life,
the renewer and perfecter of God's people
the one who makes real in us what God has done for us.
Declaration of Faith, 5.1

We believe that by the power of the Holy Spirit
the church can be set on its way again,
even when it seems beyond hope of renewal.
We are grateful heirs of reformations and awakenings.
We are faithful to the reformers of the past
when we hold ourselves open in the present
to the reforming and renewing work of the Spirit.
Declaration of Faith, 5.2

Time after Pentecost / Ordinary Time

Trinity Sunday

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on Trinity Sunday.

Affirmation of Faith

We confess and acknowledge one God alone,
to whom alone we must cleave,
whom alone we must serve,
whom only we must worship,
and in whom alone we put our trust.

Who is eternal,
infinite,
immeasurable,
incomprehensible,
omnipotent,
invisible;
one in substance
and yet distinct in three persons,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
By whom we confess and believe
all things in heaven and earth,
visible and invisible,
to have been created,
to be retained in their being,
and to be ruled and guided
by his inscrutable providence,
for such end as his eternal wisdom,
goodness, and justice have appointed,
and to the manifestation of his own glory.

Scots Confession, 3.01

We confess that God the Father created us
when we were not;
that his Son, our Lord Jesus, redeemed us
when we were enemies to him;
and that the Holy Spirit does sanctify and regenerate us,
without respect to any merit proceeding from us.
For by ourselves we are not capable
of thinking one good thought,
but he who has begun the work in us
alone continues us in it,

to the praise and glory of his undeserved grace.
Scots Confession, 3.12

We believe and teach that God is one in essence or nature,
subsisting in himself,
all sufficient in himself,
invisible,
incorporeal,
immense,
eternal,
Creator of all things both visible and invisible,
the greatest good,
living,
quickening and preserving all things,
omnipotent and supremely wise,
kind and merciful,
just and true.

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.015

We believe and teach
that the same immense, one, and indivisible God
is in person inseparably and without confusion distinguished
as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
so, as the Father has begotten the Son from eternity,
the Son is begotten by an ineffable generation,
and the Holy Spirit truly proceeds from them both,
and the same from eternity
and is to be worshiped with both.

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.016

In the unity of the Godhead
there are three Persons
of one substance, power, and eternity:
God the Father,
God the Son,
and God the Holy Ghost.
The Father is of none,
neither begotten nor proceeding;
the Son is eternally begotten of the Father;
the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding
from the Father and the Son.

Westminster Confession, 6.013

What is God?

**God is a Spirit,
infinite, eternal, and unchangeable
in his being, wisdom, power, holiness,**

justice, goodness, and truth.

Are there more Gods than one?

**There is but one only,
the living and true God.**

How many Persons are there in the Godhead?

**There are three Persons in the Godhead:
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
and these three are one God,
the same in substance,
equal in power and glory.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.005 – 7.007

What is God?

**God is a Spirit,
in and of himself infinite in being,
glory, blessedness, and perfection;
all-sufficient, eternal,
unchangeable, incomprehensible,
everywhere present, almighty;
knowing all things,
most wise, most holy, most just,
most merciful and gracious,
long-suffering,
and abundant in goodness and truth.**

Are there more Gods than one?

**There is but one only,
the living and true God.**

How many persons are there in the Godhead?

**There are three persons in the Godhead:
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;
and these three are one true, eternal God,
the same in substance,
equal in power and glory.**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.117 – 7.120

Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God,
the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.

**Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Brief Statement of Faith, 10.1, 10.6

We believe in one true and living God.
We acknowledge one God alone,
whose demands on us are absolute,
whose help for us is sufficient.
That One is the Lord,
whom we worship, serve, and love.
Declaration of Faith, 1.1

The Spirit is one with the Father and the Son.
In the presence of the Holy Spirit
the first Christians experienced God's own presence,
not a power different from God or less than God.
In Jesus Christ they met God himself,
not a second God or one who is only like God.
Yet they worshiped with the people of Israel
one God alone.
Reflecting on this mystery,
the ancient church formulated the doctrine of the Trinity.
We believe with the church through the centuries
that God is what he has shown himself to be
in his story with his people:
One God
who is the Creator and Sustainer,
the Savior and Lord,
the Giver of life
within, among, and beyond us.
Declaration of Faith, 5.8

We affirm the unity of God's being and work.
We may not separate the work of God as Creator
from the work of God as Redeemer.
We may not set the Son's love against the Father's justice.
We may not value the Holy Spirit's work
above the work of the Father and Son.
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God.
Declaration of Faith, 5.8

In what name are you baptized?
In the name of the Trinity.
After he was raised from the dead,
our Lord appeared to his disciples
and said to them,
"Go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son and

of the Holy Spirit.”

What is the meaning of this name?

It is the name of the Holy Trinity.

The Father is God,

the Son is God,

and the Holy Spirit is God.

And yet they are not three gods,

but one God in three persons.

We worship God in this mystery.

Study Catechism, Q 75, 76

All Saints' Day

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on All Saints Day.

Peace

To all God's beloved,
who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Rom. 1:7

Affirmation of Faith

These are they who have come out of the great ordeal;
they have washed their robes and made them white
in the blood of the Lamb.
For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and worship him day and night within his temple,
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.
They will hunger no more,
and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them,
nor any scorching heat;
for the Lamb at the center of the throne
will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
Rev. 7:14-17

The chosen departed are in peace,
and rest from their labors;
not that they sleep and are lost in oblivion;
but that they are delivered from all fear and torment,
and all the temptations
to which we and all God's chosen
are subject in this life.
Scots Confession, 3.17

What do you understand by the communion of saints?

**First, that believers one and all,
as partakers of the Lord Christ,
and all his treasures and gifts,
shall share in one fellowship.
Second, that we ought to know**

**that we are obliged to use our gifts
freely and with joy
for the benefit and welfare of other members.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.055

We acknowledge the saints
to be living members of Christ
and friends of God
who have gloriously overcome the flesh and the world.
Hence we love them as brothers and sisters,
and also honor them;
yet not with any kind of worship
but by an honorable opinion of them
and just praises of them.
We also imitate them.
For with ardent longings and supplications
we earnestly desire to be imitators of their faith and virtues,
to share eternal salvation with them,
to dwell eternally with them in the presence of God,
and to rejoice with them in Christ.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.026

Those whom God has accepted in his Beloved,
effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit,
can neither totally nor finally fall away
from the state of grace:
but shall certainly persevere to the end,
and be eternally saved.
This perseverance of the saints depends,
not upon their own freewill,
but upon the immutability of the decree of election,
flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father;
upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ;
the abiding of the Spirit
and of the seed of God within them;
and the nature of the covenant of grace.
Westminster Confession, 6.094 – 6.095

All saints being united to Jesus Christ their head,
by his Spirit and by faith,
have fellowship with him in his graces,
sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory;
and, being united to one another in love,
they have communion in each other's gifts and graces.
Saints by their profession
are bound to maintain a holy fellowship
and communion in the worship of God,

and in performing such other spiritual services
as tend to their mutual edification;
as also in relieving each other in outward things,
according to their abilities and necessities.
This communion, as God offers opportunity,
is to be extended to all those who, in every place,
call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.
Westminster Confession, 6.146 – 6.147

Christ the King / Reign of Christ

These worship resources from Scripture and the confessions are selected for use on Christ the King / Reign of Christ Sunday.

Peace

Jesus said: "I have said this to you,
so that in me you may have peace.
In the world you face persecution.
But take courage;
I have conquered the world!"
John 16:33

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink
but righteousness and peace
and joy in the Holy Spirit.
Rom. 14:17

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
to which indeed you were called in the one body.
Col. 3:15

Grace to you and peace
from God who is
and who was
and who is to come,
and from Jesus Christ,
the faithful witness,
the firstborn of the dead,
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.
Rev. 1:4-5

Affirmation of Faith

What comfort does the return of Christ
to judge the living and the dead give you?
That in all affliction and persecution
I may await with head held high
the very Judge from heaven
who has already submitted himself
to the judgment of God for me
and has removed all the curse from me;
that he will cast all his enemies and mine
into everlasting condemnation,
but he shall take me,

**together with all his elect,
to himself into heavenly joy and glory.**

Heidelberg Catechism, 4.052

What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

**Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices
of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king,
both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.**

How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

**Christ executes the office of a prophet
in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit,
the will of God for our salvation.**

How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

**Christ executes the office of a priest
in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice
to satisfy divine justice,
and reconcile us to God,
and in making continual intercession for us.**

How does Christ execute the office of a king?

**Christ executes the office of a king
in subduing us to himself,
in ruling and defending us,
and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.023 – 7.026

Why do we pray “Thy kingdom come”?

**We pray that Satan’s kingdom may be destroyed,
and that the Kingdom of grace may be advanced,
ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it,
and that the Kingdom of glory may be hastened.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.102

How does Christ execute the office of a king?

**Christ executes the office of a king,
in calling out of the world a people to himself;
and giving them officers, laws, and censures,
by which he visibly governs them;
in bestowing saving grace upon his elect,
rewarding their obedience,
and correcting them for their sins,
preserving and supporting them
under all their temptations and sufferings;
restraining and overcoming all their enemies,
and powerfully ordering all things
for his own glory, and their good;
and also in taking vengeance on the rest,**

**who know not God,
and obey not the gospel.**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.155

How is Christ exalted
in his sitting at the right hand of God?

**Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God,
in that as God and human
he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father,
with all fullness of joy, glory, and power
over all things in heaven and earth;
gathering and defending his church,
and subduing their enemies;
furnishing his ministers and people with gifts and graces,
and making intercession for them.**

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.164

Jesus Christ is the judge of all.

His judgment discloses the ultimate seriousness of life
and gives promise of God's final victory
over the power of sin and death.

To receive life from the risen Lord

is to have life eternal;

to refuse life from him

is to choose the death which is separation from God.

All who put their trust in Christ

face divine judgment without fear,

for the judge is their redeemer.

Confession of 1967, 9.11

Biblical visions and images of the rule of Christ,

such as a heavenly city,

a father's house,

a new heaven and earth,

a marriage feast,

and an unending day

culminate in the image of the kingdom.

The kingdom represents the triumph of God

over all that resists God's will and disrupts God's creation.

Already God's reign is present as a ferment in the world,

stirring hope in us

and preparing the world

to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption.

With an urgency born of this hope,

the church applies itself to present tasks

and strives for a better world.

It does not identify limited progress

with the kingdom of God on earth,
nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat.
In steadfast hope,
the church looks beyond all partial achievement
to the final triumph of God.
Confession of 1967, 9.54 – 9.55

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick
and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts,
forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.
Brief Statement of Faith, 10.2

Jesus announced the coming of God's kingdom
and its hidden presence in the midst of the world's kingdoms.
He taught his disciples to seek God's kingdom first.
We believe Christ gives us and demands of us
lives in pilgrimage toward God's kingdom.
Like Christ we may enjoy on our journey
all that sustains life and makes it pleasant and beautiful.
No more than Christ are we spared
the darkness, ambiguity, and threat of life in the world.
We are in the world, but not of the world.
Our confidence and hope for ourselves and other people
do not rest in the powers and achievements of this world,
but in the coming and hidden presence of God's kingdom.
Christ calls each of us to a life appropriate to that kingdom:
to serve as he has served us;
to take up our cross,
risking the consequences of faithful discipleship;
to walk by faith, not by sight,
to hope for what we have not seen.
Declaration of Faith, 9.5

Section Three: Other Topics and Themes

God the Father
Jesus Christ
The Holy Spirit
The Word
The Sacraments
Ministry
The Church

God the Father

These excerpts from Scripture and the confessions address the theme of God as Father. They may be used for Affirmations of Faith following the proclamation of the Word.

Lead a life worthy of the calling
to which you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness,
with patience,
bearing with one another in love,
making every effort
to maintain the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.

**There is one body and one Spirit,
just as we were called
to the one hope of our calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all
and through all
and in all.**

Eph. 4:1-6

We do see Jesus,
who for a little while was made lower than the angels,
now crowned with glory and honor
because of the suffering of death,
so that by the grace of God
he might taste death for everyone.

It was fitting that God,
for whom and through whom all things exist,
in bringing many children to glory,
should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect
through sufferings.

For the one who sanctifies
and those who are sanctified
all have one Father.

For this reason Jesus is not ashamed
to call them brothers and sisters, saying,
“I will proclaim your name
to my brothers and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation
I will praise you.”

Heb. 2:9-12

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

By his great mercy he has given us a new birth
into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
and into an inheritance that is imperishable,
undefiled,
and unfading,
kept in heaven for you,
who are being protected by the power of God through faith
for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
1 Pet. 1:3-5

Beloved, let us love one another,
because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
Whoever does not love does not know God,
for God is love.
God's love was revealed among us in this way:
God sent his only Son into the world so that
we might live through him.
In this is love, not that we loved God
but that God loved us
and sent his Son
to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
Beloved, since God loved us so much,
we also ought to love one another.
No one has ever seen God;
if we love one another, God lives in us,
and his love is perfected in us.
1 John 4:7-12

God is love,
and those who abide in love abide in God,
and God abides in them.
Love has been perfected among us in this:
that we may have boldness on the day of judgment,
because as he is, so are we in this world.
There is no fear in love,
but perfect love casts out fear;
for fear has to do with punishment,
and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.
We love because he first loved us.
Those who say, "I love God,"
and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars;
for those who do not love a brother or sister
whom they have seen,
cannot love God whom they have not seen.
The commandment we have from him is this:

those who love God
must love their brothers and sisters also.
1 John 4:16-21

We believe that the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who out of nothing
created heaven and earth with all that is in them,
who also upholds and governs them
by his eternal counsel and providence,
is for the sake of Christ his Son
our God and Father.

We trust in him so completely
that we have no doubt that he will provide us
with all things necessary for body and soul.
Moreover, whatever evil he sends upon us
in this troubled life
he will turn to our good,
for he is able to do it, being almighty God,
and is determined to do it, being a faithful Father.
Heidelberg Catechism, 4.026

The almighty and ever-present power of God
still upholds by his own hand
heaven and earth together with all creatures,
and rules in such a way that leaves and grass,
rain and drought,
fruitful and unfruitful years,
food and drink,
health and sickness,
riches and poverty,
and everything else,
come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand.
Heidelberg Catechism, 4.027

We believe that all things in heaven and on earth
and all creatures,
are preserved and governed by the providence
of the wise, eternal, and almighty God.
For he who is the truth
says that the birds of the air are fed by him,
and the lilies of the field are clothed by him;
he also says that the hairs of our head are numbered.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.029

Our good and almighty God created all things,
both visible and invisible,
by his co-eternal Word,

and preserves them by his co-eternal Spirit.
As Scripture says,
everything that God had made was very good,
and was made for the profit and use of humankind.
All those things proceed from one beginning.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.032

We affirm the majesty,
holiness,
and providence of God
who creates,
sustains,
rules,
and redeems the world
in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love.
Book of Order, F-2.05

God created the heavens and the earth
and made human beings in God's image,
charging them to care for all that lives;
God made men and women to live in community,
responding to their Creator with grateful obedience.
Even when the human race broke community
with its Maker and with one another,
God did not forsake it,
but out of grace chose one family for the sake of all,
to be pilgrims of promise,
God's own Israel.
God liberated the people of Israel from oppression;
God covenanted with Israel to be their God
and they to be God's people,
that they might do justice,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with the Lord;
God confronted Israel with the responsibilities of this covenant,
judging the people for their unfaithfulness
while sustaining them by divine grace.
2010 *Book of Order*, G-3.0101

What do you believe
when you confess your faith in "God the Father Almighty"?
**That God is a God of love,
and that God's love is powerful beyond measure.**
Study Catechism, Q 7

Jesus Christ

These excerpts from Scripture and the confessions address the person of Jesus Christ. They may be used for Affirmations of Faith following the proclamation of the Word.

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation;
for in him all things in heaven and earth were created,
things visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions
or rulers or powers—
all things have been created through him and for him.
He himself is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.
He is the head of the body, the church;
he is the beginning,
the first-born from the dead,
so that he might come to have first place in everything.
For in him all the fullness of God
was pleased to dwell,
and through him God was pleased
to reconcile to himself all things,
by making peace through the blood of his cross.
Col. 1:15-20

There is one God;
there is also one mediator
between God and humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human,
who gave himself a ransom for all.
1 Tim. 2:5-6

Great indeed, we confess,
is the mystery of our religion:
Christ Jesus was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen by angels,
preached among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
taken up in glory.
1 Tim. 3:16 (Revised Standard Version)

The saying is sure:
If we have died with Christ,
we will also live with him;
if we endure,

we will also reign with him;
if we deny him,
he will also deny us;
if we are faithless,
he remains faithful—
for he cannot deny himself.

2 Tim. 2:11-13

We do see Jesus,
who for a little while was made lower than the angels,
now crowned with glory and honor
because of the suffering of death,
so that by the grace of God
he might taste death for everyone.
It was fitting that God,
for whom and through whom all things exist,
in bringing many children to glory,
should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect
through sufferings.

For the one who sanctifies
and those who are sanctified
all have one Father.

For this reason Jesus is not ashamed
to call them brothers and sisters, saying,
“I will proclaim your name
to my brothers and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation
I will praise you.”

Heb. 2:9-12

In the days of his flesh,
Jesus offered up prayers and supplications,
with loud cries and tears,
to the one who was able to save him from death,
and he was heard because of his reverent submission.
Although he was a Son,
he learned obedience through what he suffered;
and having been made perfect,
he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Heb. 5:7-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy he has given us a new birth
into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
and into an inheritance that is imperishable,
undefiled,

and unfading,
kept in heaven for you,
who are being protected by the power of God through faith
for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
1 Pet. 1:3-5

You know that you were ransomed
from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors,
not with perishable things like silver or gold,
but with the precious blood of Christ,
like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.
He was destined before the foundation of the world,
but was revealed at the end of the ages
for your sake.
Through him you have come to trust in God,
who raised him from the dead and gave him glory,
so that your faith and hope are set on God.
1 Pet. 1:18-21

Christ suffered for you,
leaving you an example,
so that you should follow in his steps.
“He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”
When he was abused, he did not return abuse;
when he suffered, he did not threaten;
but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.
He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross,
so that, free from sins,
we might live for righteousness;
by his wounds you have been healed.
For you were going astray like sheep,
but now you have returned
to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.
1 Pet. 2:21-25

Christ suffered for sins once for all,
the righteous for the unrighteous,
in order to bring you to God.
He was put to death in the flesh,
but made alive in the spirit,
in which he also went and made a proclamation
to the spirits in prison,
who in former times did not obey,
when God waited patiently in the days of Noah,
during the building of the ark,
in which a few, that is, eight persons,

were saved through water.
And baptism, which this prefigured,
now saves you—
not as a removal of dirt from the body,
but as an appeal to God for a good conscience,
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
who has gone into heaven
and is at the right hand of God,
with angels, authorities, and powers
made subject to him.

1 Pet. 3:18, 21-22

Our only comfort, in life and death,
is that we belong—
body and soul, in life and in death—
not to ourselves but to our faithful Savior,
Jesus Christ,
who at the cost of his own blood
has fully paid for all our sins
and has completely freed us
from the dominion of the devil;
that he protects us so well
that without the will of our Father in heaven
not a hair can fall from our heads;
indeed, that everything must fit his purpose
for our salvation.
Therefore, by his Holy Spirit,
he also assures us of eternal life,
and makes us wholeheartedly willing and ready
from now on to live for him.
Heidelberg Catechism, 4.001

Jesus Christ is ordained by God the Father
and anointed with the Holy Spirit
to be our chief Prophet and Teacher,
fully revealing to us the secret purpose and will of God
concerning our redemption;
to be our only High Priest,
having redeemed us by the one sacrifice of his body
and ever interceding for us with the Father;
and to be our eternal King,
governing us by his Word and Spirit,
and defending and sustaining us
in the redemption he has won for us.
Heidelberg Catechism, 4.031

We believe and teach that the Son of God,

our Lord Jesus Christ,
was predestined or foreordained from eternity
by the Father
to be the Savior of the world.
And we believe that he was born,
not only when he assumed flesh of the Virgin Mary,
and not only before the foundation of the world was laid,
but by the Father before all eternity.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.062

We believe and teach
that the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
in his true flesh in which he was crucified and died,
rose again from the dead.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.073

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ,
in his same flesh,
ascended above all visible heavens,
into the highest heaven,
that is, the dwelling-place of God
and the blessed ones,
at the right hand of God the Father.
And from heaven the same Christ will return in judgment.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.074

This is a longer version of the excerpt above.
We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ,
in his same flesh,
ascended above all visible heavens,
into the highest heaven,
that is, the dwelling-place of God
and the blessed ones,
at the right hand of God the Father.
And from heaven the same Christ will return in judgment,
when wickedness will then be at its greatest in the world
and when the Antichrist,
having corrupted true religion,
will fill up all things
with superstition and impiety
and will cruelly lay waste the Church
with bloodshed and flames.
But Christ will come again to claim his own,
and by his coming to destroy the Antichrist,
and to judge the living and the dead.
For the dead will rise again
and those who on that day will be alive

will be changed “in the twinkling of an eye”
and all the faithful will be caught up
to meet Christ in the air,
so they may enter with him
into the blessed dwelling-places to live forever.
But the unbelievers and ungodly
will descend with the devils into hell
to burn forever
and never to be redeemed from torments.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.074

By his passion and death
and everything which he did
and endured for our sake
by his coming in the flesh,
our Lord reconciled all the faithful
to the heavenly Father,
made expiation for sins,
disarmed death,
overcame damnation and hell,
and by his resurrection from the dead
brought again and restored
life and immortality.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.076

Christ is our righteousness,
life,
and resurrection,
in a word,
the fullness and perfection of all the faithful,
salvation and all sufficiency.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.076

We believe that 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 humankind,
the prophet, priest, and king,
the head and savior 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, 6.043

Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

**The only Redeemer of God's elect
is the Lord Jesus Christ,
who, being the eternal Son of God,
became human,
and so was, and continues to be,
God and human,
in two distinct natures,
and one Person forever.**

How did Christ, being the Son of God, become human?

**Christ, the Son of God, became human,
by taking to himself a true body
and a reasonable soul,
being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost,
in the womb of the Virgin Mary,
and born of her,
yet without sin.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.021 – 7.022

What offices does Christ exercise as our Redeemer?

**Christ, as our Redeemer,
exercises the offices of a prophet,
of a priest,
and of a king,
both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.**

How does Christ exercise the office of a prophet?

**Christ exercises the office of a prophet
in revealing to us,
by his Word and Spirit,
the will of God for our salvation.**

How does Christ exercise the office of a priest?

**Christ exercises the office of a priest
in his once offering up of himself as a sacrifice
to satisfy divine justice,
and reconcile us to God,
and in making continual intercession for us.**

How does Christ exercise the office of a king?

**Christ exercises the office of a king
in subduing us to himself,
in ruling and defending us,
and in restraining and conquering
all his and our enemies.**

In what does Christ's humiliation consist?
**Christ's humiliation consists in his being born,
and that in a low condition,
made under the law,
undergoing the miseries of this life,
the wrath of God,
and the cursed death of the cross;
in being buried,
and continuing under the power of death
for a time.**

In what does Christ's exaltation consist?
**Christ's exaltation consists
in his rising again from the dead on the third day,
in ascending up into heaven,
in sitting at the right hand of God the Father,
and in coming to judge the world at the last day.**
Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.023 – 7.028

Why was our Mediator called Jesus?
**Our Mediator was called Jesus,
because he saves his people from their sins.**

Why was our Mediator called Christ?
**Our Mediator was called Christ,
because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost
above measure;
and so set apart,
and fully furnished with all authority and ability,
to exercise the office of prophet,
priest,
and king of his church,
in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.**
Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.151 – 7.152

Jesus Christ,
as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture,
is the one Word of God
which we have to hear
and which we have to trust and obey
in life and in death.
Theological Declaration of Barmen, 8.11

As Jesus Christ is God's assurance
of the forgiveness of all our sins,
so in the same way and with the same seriousness
is he also God's mighty claim upon our whole life.
Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance

from the godless fetters of this world
for a free, grateful service to his creatures.
Theological Declaration of Barmen, 8.14

In Jesus Christ,
God was reconciling the world to himself.
We confess that Jesus Christ is God with us.
He is the eternal Son of the Father,
who became human and lived among us
to fulfill the work of reconciliation.
He is present in the church
by the power of the Holy Spirit
to continue and complete his mission.
This work of God,
the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
is the foundation of all we confess
about God, humanity, and the world.
Therefore, the church calls all people
to be reconciled to God and to one another.
Confession of 1967, 9.07

In Jesus of Nazareth,
true humanity was realized once for all.
Jesus, a Palestinian Jew,
lived among his own people
and shared human needs, temptations,
joys, and sorrows.
He expressed the love of God in word and deed
and became a brother to all kinds of sinful people.
But his complete obedience
led him into conflict with his people.
His life and teaching judged their goodness,
religious aspirations,
and national hopes.
Many rejected him and demanded his death.
In giving himself freely for them,
he took upon himself the judgment
under which all people stand convicted.
God raised him from the dead,
vindicating him as Messiah and Lord.
The victim of sin became victor,
and won the victory over sin and death for all.
Confession of 1967, 9.08

God's sovereign love is a mystery
beyond the reach of the human mind.
We ascribe to God superlatives of power,

wisdom,
and goodness.
But God reveals his love in Jesus Christ
by showing power in the form of a servant,
wisdom in the folly of the cross,
and goodness in receiving sinful people.
The power of God's love in Christ
to transform the world
discloses that the Redeemer
is the Lord and Creator
who made all things
to serve the purpose of his love.
Confession of 1967, 9.15

The reconciling work of Jesus
was the supreme crisis in the life of humankind.
His cross and resurrection
become personal crisis and present hope for all
when the gospel is proclaimed and believed.
In this experience,
the Spirit brings God's forgiveness to people,
moves people to respond in faith,
repentance,
and obedience,
and initiates the new life in Christ.
The new life takes shape in a community
in which we know that God loves and accepts us
in spite of what we are.
We therefore accept ourselves and love others,
knowing that no one has any ground on which to stand,
except God's grace.
Confession of 1967, 9.21, 22

Jesus, the long expected Savior,
came into the world as a child,
descended from David,
conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of Mary, a virgin.
He lived as a Jew among Jews.
He announced to his people
the coming of God's kingdom
of justice and peace on earth.
We affirm that Jesus was born of woman
as is every child,
yet born of God's power
as was no other child.
In the person and work of Jesus,

God himself and a human life
are united but not confused,
distinguished but not separated.
The coming of Jesus was itself
the coming of God's promised rule.
Through his birth,
life,
death,
and resurrection,
he brings about the relationship
between God and humanity
that God always intended.
Declaration of Faith, 4.1

The Word which was with God
from the beginning
was embodied in Jesus Christ.
We hold that what God says to us
and does for us
centers in Jesus Christ our living Lord
as he is remembered, known, and expected.
In Christ God's Word of acceptance takes flesh:
by grace through faith
we are set right with God,
adopted as children of God,
not because of anything we have done,
but because of what Christ has done.
In Christ God's Word of demand is lived out:
to love God and neighbor as he did
is what God requires of us.
The Spirit adds no different Word from God,
but leads us deeper
into the truth of God uttered in Jesus Christ.
Declaration of Faith, 6.2

In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
God kept his promises.
All that we can ever hope for
was present in Christ.
But the work of God in Christ is not over.
God calls us to hope
for more than we have yet seen.
The hope God gives us is ultimate confidence
that supports us when lesser hopes fail us.
In Christ God gives hope
for a new heaven and earth,
certainty of victory over death,

assurance of mercy and judgment beyond death.
This hope gives us courage for the present struggle.
Declaration of Faith 10.1

What do you affirm
when you confess your faith in Jesus Christ as “our Lord”?

**That having been raised from the dead
he reigns with compassion and justice
over all things in heaven and on earth,
especially over those who confess him by faith;
and that by loving and serving him above all else,
we give glory and honor to God.**

Study Catechism, Q 31

In affirming with the earliest Christians
that Jesus is Lord,
the Church confesses that he is its hope,
and that the Church, as Christ’s body,
is bound to his authority
and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality
of the grace of God.

Book of Order, F-1.0204

God was incarnate in Jesus Christ,
who announced good news to the poor,
proclaimed release for prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
let the broken victims go free,
and proclaimed the year of the Lord’s favor.
Jesus came to seek and to save the lost;
in his life and death for others
God’s redeeming love for all people was made visible;
and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ
there is the assurance of God’s victory over sin and death
and the promise of God’s continuing presence in the world.

2010 *Book of Order*, G-3.0102

The Holy Spirit

These excerpts from Scripture and the confessions address the subject of the Holy Spirit. They may be used for Affirmations of Faith following the proclamation of the Word.

Our faith and its assurance
do not proceed from flesh and blood,
that is to say, from natural powers within us,
but are the inspiration of the Holy Ghost;
whom we confess to be God,
equal with the Father and with his Son,
who sanctifies us,
and brings us into all truth by his own working,
without whom we should remain forever
enemies to God
and ignorant of his Son, Christ Jesus.
By nature we are so dead, blind, and perverse,
that neither can we feel when we are pricked,
see the light when it shines,
nor assent to the will of God when it is revealed,
unless the Spirit of the Lord Jesus
quicken that which is dead,
remove the darkness from our minds,
and bow our stubborn hearts
to the obedience of his blessed will.
And so, as we confess that God the Father
created us when we were not,
as his Son our Lord Jesus redeemed us
when we were enemies to him,
so also do we confess that the Holy Ghost
does sanctify and regenerate us,
without respect to any merit proceeding from us,
be it before or after our regeneration.
We willingly disclaim any honor and glory
for our regeneration and sanctification;
for by ourselves we are not capable
of thinking one good thought,
but he who has begun the work in us
alone continues us in it,
to the praise and glory of his undeserved grace.
Scots Confession, 3.12

How do we share in the redemption of Christ?
**We share in the redemption of Christ
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
who convinces us of our sin,**

**enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ,
and renews our wills,
persuading and enabling us
to embrace Jesus Christ,
freely offered to us in the gospel.**

Adapted from Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.029 – 7.031

God's redeeming and reconciling activity in the world
continues through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit,
who confronts individuals and societies
with Christ's Lordship of life
and calls them to repentance and to obedience
to the will of God.

2010 *Book of Order*, G-3.0103

What do you believe
when you confess your faith in the Holy Spirit?
**That apart from the Holy Spirit,
our Lord can neither be loved, nor known, nor served.
The Holy Spirit is the personal bond
by which Jesus Christ unites us to himself,
the teacher who opens our hearts to Christ,
and the comforter who leads us to repentance,
empowering us to live in Christ's service.**

Study Catechism, Q 54

The Word

These excerpts from the Bible and the confessions address the theme of the Word of God in Scripture. They may be used for Affirmations of Faith following the proclamation of the Word.

The interpretation of Scripture, we confess,
does not belong to any private or public person,
nor yet to any Church for pre-eminence or precedence,
personal or local, which it has above others,
but pertains to the Spirit of God
by whom the Scriptures were written.
When controversy arises about the right understanding
of any passage or sentence of Scripture,
or for the reformation of any abuse within the Church of God,
we ought not so much to ask
what others have said or done before us,
as what the Holy Ghost uniformly speaks
within the body of the Scriptures
and what Christ Jesus himself did and commanded.
Scots Confession, 3.18

We believe and confess the canonical Scriptures
of the holy prophets and apostles of both Testaments
to be the true Word of God,
and to have sufficient authority of themselves,
not from human beings.
For God himself spoke to our ancestors,
prophets,
apostles,
and still speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures.
And in this Holy Scripture,
the universal Church of Christ
has the most complete exposition
of all that pertains to a saving faith,
and also to the framing of a life acceptable to God;
and in this respect it is expressly commanded by God
that nothing be either added to or taken from the same.
The Second Helvetic Confession, 5.001-5.002

Under the name of Holy Scripture,
or the Word of God written,
are contained all the books
of the Old and New Testaments,
all which are given by inspiration of God,
to be the rule of faith and life.
Westminster Confession, 6.002

The supreme judge
by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined,
and all decrees of councils,
opinions of ancient writers,
human doctrines,
and private spirits,
are to be examined,
and in whose sentence we are to rest,
can be no other but the Holy Spirit
speaking in the Scripture.
Westminster Confession, 6.010

In the gospel God declares his love for the world
and his desire that all people should be saved;
reveals fully and clearly the only way of salvation;
promises eternal life to all
who truly repent and believe in Christ;
invites and commands all to embrace the offered mercy;
and by his Spirit accompanying the Word
pleads with all people to accept his gracious invitation.
Since there is no other way of salvation
than that revealed in the gospel,
and since in the divinely established and ordinary method of grace,
faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God;
Christ has commissioned his church
to go into all the world
and to make disciples of all nations.
Westminster Confession, 6.056, 6.058

What rule has God given to direct us
how we may glorify and enjoy God?
**The Word of God
which is contained in the Scriptures
of the Old and New Testaments
is the only rule to direct us
how we may glorify and enjoy God.**
Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.002

The Word of God
which is contained in the Scriptures
of the Old and New Testaments
is the only rule to direct us
how we may glorify and enjoy God.
The Scriptures principally teach
what we are to believe concerning God,
and what duty God requires of us.

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.002 – 7.003

The Holy Scriptures are to be read
with a high and reverent esteem of them;
with a firm persuasion that they are the very Word of God,
and that he only can enable us to understand them;
with desire to know, believe, and obey
the will of God revealed in them;
with diligence, and attention to the matter and scope of them;
with meditation, application, self-denial, and prayer.

Westminster Larger Catechism, 7.267

The one sufficient revelation of God
is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate,
to whom the Holy Spirit bears unique and authoritative witness
through the Holy Scriptures,
which are received and obeyed as the word of God written.
The Scriptures are not a witness among others,
but the witness without parallel.
The church has received the books of the Old and New Testaments
as prophetic and apostolic testimony
in which it hears the word of God
and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated.

Confession of 1967, 9.27

God's word is spoken to his church today
where the Scriptures are faithfully preached
and attentively read
in dependence on the illumination of the Holy Spirit
and with readiness to receive their truth and direction.

Confession of 1967, 9.30

God instructs his church and equips it for mission
through preaching and teaching.
By these, when they are carried on in fidelity to the Scriptures
and dependence upon the Holy Spirit,
the people hear the word of God
and accept and follow Christ.

Confession of 1967, 9.49

The Bible is the account of God's word and action in history
together with his people's response in faith.
It tells how the Lord has moved with Israel and the church
toward the kingdom of God,
his just and loving rule over all.
It is the story of the one God,
who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

That story is still unfolding
and in faith we make it our own.
It forms our memory and our hope.
It tells us who we are and what we are to do.
To retell it is to declare what we believe.
Declaration of Faith, 1.4

The Word which was with God
from the beginning
was embodied in Jesus Christ.
We hold that what God says to us
and does for us
centers in Jesus Christ our living Lord
as he is remembered, known, and expected.
In Christ God's Word of acceptance takes flesh:
by grace through faith
we are set right with God,
adopted as children of God,
not because of anything we have done,
but because of what Christ has done.
In Christ God's Word of demand is lived out:
to love God and neighbor as he did
is what God requires of us.
The Spirit adds no different Word from God,
but leads us deeper
into the truth of God uttered in Jesus Christ.
Declaration of Faith, 6.2

The Sacraments

These excerpts from Scripture and the confessions address the theme of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They may be used for Affirmations of Faith following the proclamation of the Word.

We assuredly believe
that by Baptism we are engrafted into Christ Jesus,
to be made partakers of his righteousness,
by which our sins are covered and remitted,
and also that in the Supper rightly used,
Christ Jesus is so joined with us
that he becomes the very nourishment and food of our souls.
Scots Confession, 3.21

What are the Sacraments?
**They are visible, holy signs and seals
instituted by God in order that by their use
he may more fully disclose and seal to us
the promise of the gospel,
namely, that because of the one sacrifice of Christ
accomplished on the cross
he graciously grants us the forgiveness of sins
and eternal life.**
Heidelberg Catechism, 4.066

The principal thing which God promises in all sacraments
and to which all the godly in all ages direct their attention
is Christ the Savior—that only sacrifice,
and the Lamb of God slain
from the foundation of the world;
that rock, also, from which all our ancestors drank,
by whom all the elect are circumcised without hands
through the Holy Spirit,
and are washed from all their sins,
and are nourished with the very body and blood of Christ
unto eternal life.
Second Helvetic Confession, 5.175

Sacraments are holy signs and seals
of the covenant of grace,
immediately instituted by God,
to represent Christ and his benefits,
and to confirm our interest in him;
as also to put a visible difference
between those that belong to the church,

and the rest of the world;
and solemnly to engage them
to the service of God in Christ,
according to his Word.

There are only two sacraments
ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel,
baptism and the supper of the Lord.

Westminster Confession, 6.149, 6.152

What is a sacrament?

**A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ,
wherein, by sensible signs,
Christ and the benefits of the new covenant
are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.**

Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?

**The sacraments of the New Testament
are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.**

Westminster Shorter Catechism, 7.092 – 7.093

We believe that the sacraments are joined to the Word
in order that the Word may be more fully confirmed.

The sacraments are pledges to us and seals of God's grace,
giving needed aid and comfort to our faith.

Baptism is given to us as the pledge of our adoption.

In Baptism we are grafted into the body of Christ,
and renewed in holiness of life by his Spirit.

Although we are baptized only once,
the benefit it signifies lasts through life and death.

The holy Supper of our Lord is a testimony
of our unity with Jesus Christ,

who died only once and was raised for our sake.

The body and blood of Jesus Christ
are food and drink for the soul

just as bread and wine are nourishment for the body.

We believe that God truly and effectively gives us
what is represented in the Lord's Supper and in Baptism,
that the signs are united with the true possession
and benefit of all they present.

Adapted from the French Confession of 1559, based on a translation of the original text by Dr. Ellen Babinsky,
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and Dr. Joseph D. Small, Office of Theology and Worship, PC(USA)

Out of the life and ministry of Jesus,
the church received Baptism and the Lord's Supper
as special Sacraments of God's saving action.

We believe that in the washing with water
and in the eating of bread and drinking of wine
the Holy Spirit demonstrates and confirms the promises

of the embodied, written, and preached Word
with vividness and power.
In these concrete human actions
believers declare their acceptance of the promises.
As the Word is acted out in the Sacraments
so the Sacraments are to be accompanied by the Word.
Declaration of Faith, 6.5

Ministry

These excerpts from Scripture and the confessions address the theme of the church's ministry. They may be used for Affirmations of Faith following the proclamation of the Word.

For as in one body we have many members,
and not all the members have the same function,
so we, who are many, are one body in Christ,
and individually we are members one of another.
We have gifts that differ
according to the grace given to us:
prophecy, in proportion to faith;
ministry, in ministering;
the teacher, in teaching;
the exhorter, in exhortation;
the giver, in generosity;
the leader, in diligence;
the compassionate, in cheerfulness.
Romans 12:4-8

Think of us in this way,
as servants of Christ
and stewards of God's mysteries.
It is required of stewards
that they be found trustworthy.
1 Cor. 4:1-2

Deacons must be serious;
they must hold fast to the mystery of faith
with a clear conscience.
Those who serve well as deacons
gain a good standing for themselves
and great boldness in the faith
that is in Christ Jesus.
1 Tim. 3:8-9, 13

Now as an elder myself
and a witness of the sufferings of Christ,
as well as one who shares
in the glory to be revealed,
I exhort the elders among you
to tend the flock of God that is in your charge,
exercising the oversight,
not under compulsion but willingly,
as God would have you do it.
1 Pet. 5:1-2

The Church

These excerpts from Scripture and the confessions address the subject of the church. They may be used for Affirmations of Faith following the proclamation of the Word.

Lead a life worthy of the calling
to which you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness,
with patience,
bearing with one another in love,
making every effort to maintain
the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**There is one body and one Spirit,
just as we were called
to the one hope of our calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all
and through all
and in all.**

Ephesians 4:1-6

As we believe in one God,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
so we firmly believe that from the beginning
there has been,
now is,
and to the end of the world shall be,
one Church,
one company and multitude of people chosen by God,
who rightly worship and embrace him
by true faith in Christ Jesus,
who is the only Head of the Church,
even as it is the body and spouse of Christ Jesus.
This Church is catholic, that is, universal,
because it contains the chosen of all ages,
of all realms, nations, and tongues,
be they of the Jews or be they of the Gentiles,
who have communion and society with God the Father,
and with the Son, Christ Jesus,
through the sanctification of his Holy Spirit.
It is therefore called the communion,
not of profane persons, but of saints,
who, as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem,
have the fruit of inestimable benefits,
one God, one Lord Jesus, one faith, and one baptism.

Scots Confession, 3.16

The notes of the true Church, therefore,
we believe, confess, and avow to be:
first, the true preaching of the Word of God,
in which God has revealed himself to us,
as the writings of the prophets and apostles declare;
secondly, the right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus,
with which must be associated the Word and promise of God
to seal and confirm them in our hearts;
and lastly, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered,
as God's Word prescribes,
whereby vice is repressed and virtue nourished.
Then wherever these notes are seen and continue for any time,
be the number complete or not,
there, beyond any doubt, is the true Church of Christ,
who, according to his promise, is in its midst.

Scots Confession, 3.18

The Church is an assembly of the faithful
called or gathered out of the world;
a communion of all saints,
namely, of those who truly know
and rightly worship and serve
the true God in Christ the Savior,
by the Word and Holy Spirit,
and who by faith are partakers of all benefits
which are freely offered through Christ.

Second Helvetic Confession, 5.125

The Christian Church is the congregation
in which Jesus Christ acts presently as the Lord
in Word and Sacrament through the Holy Spirit.
As the Church of pardoned sinners,
it has to testify in the midst of a sinful world,
with its faith as with its obedience,
with its message as with its order,
that it is solely his property,
and that it lives and wants to live solely
from his comfort and from his direction
in the expectation of his appearance.

Barmen Declaration, 8.17

The church's commission,
upon which its freedom is founded,
consists in delivering the message
of the free grace of God to all people

in Christ's stead,
and therefore in the ministry of his own Word and work
through sermon and Sacrament.

Barmen Declaration, 8.26

Jesus Christ has given the church
preaching and teaching,
praise and prayer,
and Baptism and the Lord's Supper
as means of fulfilling its service of God.
These gifts remain,
but the church is obliged to change the forms of its service
in ways appropriate to different generations and cultures.

Confession of 1967, 9.48

The church is marked by the Holy Spirit.
Across the centuries since the church was founded,
the Spirit has formed and identified it.
We recognize the true church of Jesus Christ
wherever the work of the Spirit is evident:
in preaching and sacraments,
in the new life and continuous growth of believers,
in the sharing of spiritual gifts and material things,
in mission and service to the world.
The boundaries of the church are not clearly known to us,
but God knows those who are his.

Declaration of Faith, 7.2

The Church is called to be a sign in and for the world
of the new reality
which God has made available to people in Jesus Christ.
The new reality revealed in Jesus Christ
is the new humanity,
a new creation,
a new beginning for human life in the world:
Sin is forgiven.
Reconciliation is accomplished.
The dividing walls of hostility are torn down.
The Church is the body of Christ,
both in its corporate life
and in the lives of its individual members,
and is called to give shape and substance to this truth.

2010 *Book of Order*, G-3.0200

The unity of the Church
is a gift of its Lord
and finds expression in its faithfulness

to the mission to which Christ calls it.
The Church is a fellowship of believers
which seeks the enlargement of the circle of faith
to include all people
and is never content
to enjoy the benefits of Christian community
for itself alone.

2010 *Book of Order* G-4.0201

We believe that we are God's covenant people—
a people called into a special relationship
with God and with one another.

We believe in God
who led Israel out of slavery in Egypt,
gave us the Ten Commandments through Moses,
and brought us into the land that God promised.

We believe that though some remain faithful,
people too often worship other gods
and do not love each other as God commanded.

We believe in God
who loves us even when we sin,
who sent us the Messiah,
forgives our sins,
and remains faithful always.

Based on *Belonging to God: A First Catechism*, Q 17, 20-21