

**G-1.04 CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) includes baptized members, active members, and affiliate members.

*G-1.0401 Baptized Member*

A baptized member is a person who has received the Sacrament of Baptism, whether in this congregation or elsewhere, and who has been enrolled as a baptized member by the session but who has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Such baptized members receive the pastoral care and instruction of the church, and **may participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**.

*G-1.0402 Active Member*

An active member is a person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has been received into membership of the church, has voluntarily submitted to the government<sup>d</sup> of this church, and participates in the church's work and worship. In addition, active members participate in the governance of the church and may be elected to ordered ministry (see G-2.0102). Active members shall regularly, after prayerful consideration, recommit themselves to the disciplines and responsibilities of membership outlined in G-1.0304. The session shall have responsibility for preparing those who would become active members of the congregation.

*G-1.0403 Affiliate Member*

An affiliate member is a member of another congregation of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who has temporarily moved from the community where the congregation of membership is situated, has presented a certificate of good standing from the appropriate council or governing body of that congregation, and has been received by the session as an affiliate member. An affiliate member may participate in the life of the congregation in the same manner as an active member except that an affiliate member may not vote in congregational meetings or be elected to ordered ministry or other office in the congregation.

*G-1.0404 Other Participants*

Persons who are not members of, or who may have ceased active participation in, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are welcome and may participate in the life and worship of this church and receive its pastoral care and instruction. The invitation to the Lord's Supper is extended to all who have been baptized, remembering that access to the table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love (W-3.0409). Confessing members of other Christian churches may present children for baptism, in conformity with W-3.0403.

Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God’s gracious action in history and the model for our grateful response to God. In Jesus we find the full and clear revelation of who God is; in him we also discover who God is calling us to be. Therefore we worship Jesus Christ as Lord, even as he leads us in the worship and service God desires.

*W-1.0105: The Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit is “the giver and renewer of life” (B. Stat. 11.4), who instills our faith and enables us to follow Jesus Christ. The Scriptures describe how the Spirit moved at the dawn of creation, anointed Christ in baptism, raised Jesus from the dead, and was poured out on the Church at Pentecost. The same Spirit is still at work in the life of the Church and the life of the world.

The Holy Spirit manifests God’s gracious action and empowers our grateful response. The Spirit gathers us for worship, enlightens and equips us through the Word, claims and nourishes us through the Sacraments, and sends us out for service. To each member of Christ’s body, the Spirit gives gifts for ministry in the Church and mission in the world.

*W-1.0106: Word and Sacrament*

In Christian worship Jesus Christ is **truly present and active among us**, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the gifts of Word and Sacrament. Wherever the Scriptures are read and proclaimed and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are celebrated, the Church bears witness to Jesus Christ, the living Word, and proclaims the mystery of faith. **Through these means of grace, God imparts and sustains our faith, orders our common life, and transforms the world. Through these same acts of worship, we share in the life of the Spirit, are united to Jesus Christ, and give glory to God.**

*W-1.0107: Worship and the Church*

God’s gifts of Word and Sacrament **establish and equip** the Church as the body of Christ in the world. The mission of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church flows from Baptism, is **nourished** at Lord’s Supper, and serves to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all. In the same way, the **Church’s ministry emerges from the font, arises from the table, and takes its shape from the Word of the Lord.** Therefore the worship of the triune God is the center of our common life and our primary way of witness to the faith, hope, and love we have in Jesus Christ.

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- W-1.0105: John 14:15–31; 1 Cor. 12:1–11; Nic. Creed 1.3; Ap. Creed 2.3; Scots Conf. 3.12–3.13; 2 Helv. Conf. 5.005; West. Conf. 6.051–6.054, 6.183–6.186; Conf. 1967 9.20, 9.31; B. Stat. 11.4.
- W-1.0106: Luke 24:13–35; Scots Conf. 3.18; Heid. Cat. 4.065; 2 Helv. Conf. 5.134–5.135; West. Conf. 6.078–6.080, 6.140–6.145; S. Cat. 7.088; L. Cat. 7.264; Barm. Dec. 8:16–8.18, 8.26; Conf. 1967 9.27, 9.30, 9.35–9.37; B. Stat. 11.4.
- W-1.0107: Isa. 55:1–13; Matt. 28:1–20; John 21:15–19; 1 Cor. 13:13; 2. Cor. 13:13; Eph. 4:1–16; Nic. Creed 1.3; Barm. Dec. 8.26; Conf. 1967 9.48–9.52.

Other forms of proclamation include song, drama, dance, visual art, and testimony. Like the sermon, these are to illuminate the Scripture(s) read in worship and communicate the good news of the gospel. When these forms of proclamation are employed, worship leaders should connect them with the witness of the Scripture(s) to the Triune God.

*W-3.0306: Affirmation of Faith*

Responding to the Word proclaimed, we affirm our faith in the holy, triune God. This affirmation of faith is drawn from sentences of Scripture or the creeds, confessions, and catechisms. A congregational song, anthem, or other musical response may serve as an affirmation of faith. Opportunities for personal testimony may also be provided at this time. When Baptism or the reaffirmation of Baptism takes place, the Apostles' Creed is spoken in the context of the baptismal liturgy. The Nicene Creed, our earliest ecumenical confession of faith, is traditionally associated with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

*W-3.0307: Baptism and Baptismal Discipleship*

The Sacrament of Baptism (W-3.0402–W-3.0408) and other services associated with the baptismal covenant ordinarily take place as a **response to the Word**. Such services include the reaffirmation of Baptism on profession of faith (W-4.0203), the reception of new members (W-4.0204), commissioning for service (W-4.03), ordination and installation to ordered ministry (W-4.04), transitions in life or ministry (W-4.05), commemorations of communal events, Christian marriage (W-4.06), and witness to the resurrection (W-4.07). An invitation to discipleship may also be spoken at this time, calling worshipers to be baptized or to live into the promises of their Baptism.

*W-3.0308: Prayers of Intercession*

In response to the Word, we pray for the world God so loves—joining Christ's own ministry of intercession and the sighs of the Spirit, too deep for words. These prayers are not the work of a single leader, but an act of the whole congregation as Christ's royal priesthood. We affirm our participation in the prayer through our "amen" and other responses.

Prayers of intercession and supplication are offered for: the mission and ministry of the universal Church and the local congregation; care of creation and the right use of resources; peace and justice in the world; the leaders and peoples of all nations; the poor, hungry, and oppressed; compassion and reconciliation in the local community; healing and wholeness for all who suffer; and other special needs. These prayers may be led from the communion table or from the midst of the congregation. They may include musical responses or symbolic action. The peace of Christ may follow, if not previously shared.

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W-3.0306: 1 Cor. 15:1–11; Phil. 2:5–11; Col. 1:15–20; 1 Tim. 3:16.

W-3.0307: Matt. 28:16–20.

W-3.0308: John 3:16–17; Rom. 8:26–27; 1 Tim. 2:1–7; Heb. 4:14–16; 1 Pet. 2:4–10; Heid. Cat. 4:116–4.118; 2 Helv. Conf. 5.218–5.220; West. Conf. 6.114–6.115; S. Cat. 7.098–7.099; L. Cat. 7.288–7.297; Conf. 1967 9.50.

Because pastors are called to serve as good shepherds for God’s people, it is fitting for a minister of the Word and Sacrament† to lead the prayers of intercession and supplication. Because deacons are responsible for ministries of compassion and ruling elders are charged with the nurture of the congregation, **it is also fitting for a deacon or ruling elder to lead these prayers**. Other persons with a gift for prayer may be invited to lead the intercessions.

*W-3.0309: Offering and Lord’s Supper*

The collection of tithes and offerings (W-3.0411) and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper (W-3.0409–W-3.0414) take place as a response to the Word. These actions are signs of our gratitude for the grace of God proclaimed in the gospel. If the Lord’s Supper is omitted, a prayer of thanksgiving and dedication follows the collection of the offering (W-3.0415).

**W-3.04: Sacrament**

*W-3.0401: Theology of the Sacraments*

The Sacraments are the Word of God **enacted and sealed** in the life of the Church, the body of Christ. They are **gracious acts of God, by which Christ Jesus offers his life to us in the power of the Holy Spirit**. They are **also human acts of gratitude**, by which we offer our lives to God in love and service. The Sacraments are both **physical signs and spiritual gifts**, including words and actions, surrounded by prayer, in the context of the Church’s common worship. They employ **ordinary things**—the basic elements of water, bread, and wine—in proclaiming the extraordinary love of God. **The Reformed tradition recognizes the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (also called Eucharist or Holy Communion) as having been instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ through the witness of the Scriptures and sustained through the history of the universal Church.**

*W-3.0402: Theology of Baptism*

Baptism is the **sign and seal of our incorporation into Jesus Christ**. In his own baptism, Jesus identified himself with sinners—yet God claimed him as a beloved Son, and sent the Holy Spirit to anoint him for service. In his ministry, Jesus offered the gift of living water. Through the baptism of his suffering and death, Jesus set us free from the power of sin forever. After he rose from the dead, Jesus commissioned his followers to go and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them to obey his commands. The disciples were empowered by the outpouring of the Spirit to continue Jesus’ mission and ministry, inviting

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W-3.0401: Scots Conf. 3.21–3.23; Heid. Cat. 4.066–4.068; West. Conf. 6.149–6.153; L. Cat. 7.286–7.287.

W-3.0402: Gen. 1:2; 6:1–9:17; 17:1–14; Exod. 14:1–31; Isa. 43:1–4; 44:1–4; 55:1–3; Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:25–27; 47:1–12; Amos 5:21–24; Matt. 3:1–17; 28:16–20; Mark 1:1–11; 10:35–40; Luke 3:1–22; John 1:19–34; 3:1–5; 4:7–15; 7:37–38; Acts 1:4–5; 2:37–41; 22:16; Rom. 6:3–11; 1 Cor. 6:11; 10:1–4; 12:12–13; 2 Cor. 1:21–22; Gal. 3:27–29; Eph. 1:13–14; 2:11–22; 4:4–6; 5:14; Col. 2:11–12; Titus 3:4–7; 1 Pet. 3:18–22; Rev. 7:13–17; 21:6; 22:1–5, 17; Scots Conf. 3.21–3.23; Heid. Cat. 4.069–4.074; 2 Helv. Conf. 5.185–5.192; West. Conf. 6.154–6.160; S. Cat. 7.094–7.095; L. Cat. 7.275–7.277; Conf. 1967 9.51.

## The Service for the Lord's Day

others to join this new way of life in Christ. As Paul wrote, through the gift of Baptism we are “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11).

The Sacrament of Baptism holds a deep reservoir of theological meaning, including: dying and rising with Jesus Christ; pardon, cleansing, and renewal; the gift of the Holy Spirit; incorporation into the body of Christ; and a sign of the realm of God. The Reformed tradition understands Baptism to be a sign of God's covenant. The water of Baptism is linked with the waters of creation, the flood, and the exodus. Baptism thus connects us with God's creative purpose, cleansing power, and redemptive promise from generation to generation. Like circumcision, a sign of God's gracious covenant with Israel, Baptism is a sign of God's gracious covenant with the Church. In this new covenant of grace God washes us clean and makes us holy and whole. Baptism also represents God's call to justice and righteousness, rolling down like a mighty stream, and the river of the water of life that flows from God's throne.

Baptism enacts and seals what the Word proclaims: God's redeeming grace offered to all people. Baptism is at once God's gift of grace, God's means of grace, and God's call to respond to that grace. Through Baptism, Jesus Christ calls us to repentance, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through Baptism, the Holy Spirit gives the Church its identity and commissions the Church for service in the world.

Baptism is the bond of unity in Jesus Christ. When we are baptized, we are made one with Christ, with one another, and with the Church of every time and place. In Christ, barriers of race, status, and gender are overcome; we are called to seek reconciliation in the Church and world, in Jesus' name.

Both believers and their children are included in God's covenant love. The baptism of believers witnesses to the truth that God's gift of grace calls for our grateful response. The baptism of our young children witnesses to the truth that God claims people in love even before they are able to respond in faith. These two forms of witness are one and the same Sacrament.

God's faithfulness to us is sure, even when human faithfulness to God is not. God's grace is sufficient; therefore Baptism is not repeated. There are many times in worship, however, when we may remember the gift of our baptism and acknowledge the grace of God continually at work in us. These may include: profession of faith; when participating in another's baptism; when joining or leaving a church; at an ordination, installation, or commissioning; and at each celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Baptism marks the beginning of new life in Christ. The new way of life to which God calls us is one of deep commitment, disciplined discernment, and growth in faith. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, given with and through Baptism, equip and strengthen us for the challenges of Christian faith and life.

Baptism is ordinarily celebrated on the Lord's Day in the gathering of the people of God. The presence of the covenant community bears witness to the one body of Christ, into whom we are baptized. When circumstances call for the administration of Baptism apart from public worship, the congregation should be represented by one or more members.

**As there is one body, there is one Baptism.** The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) recognizes all baptisms by other Christian churches that are administered with water and performed in the name of the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*W-3.0403: Responsibility for Baptism*

Baptism shall be authorized by the session and administered by a minister of the Word and Sacrament†. The session’s responsibilities for Baptism include: **encouraging** parents (or those exercising parental responsibility) to present their children for Baptism **without undue haste or undue delay**; **encouraging** new believers to be baptized; **examining** candidates for Baptism, or their parents, and **instructing** them in the significance of the Sacrament; **enrolling** those who are baptized as members of the congregation; and **providing for their ongoing nurture and formation** for baptismal life in the world. The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the universal Church, is **responsible for nurturing baptized persons** in Christian life. The session may designate certain members of the congregation as sponsors or mentors for those who are baptized or for their parents.

When a young child is presented for Baptism at least one parent (or person exercising parental responsibility) should be an active member of a Christian church, **normally** the congregation in which the baptism takes place. The session may consider a request to baptize a child whose parent is an active member of another church. If the session approves such a request, it should communicate with the council of the other congregation and notify them when the Sacrament has been administered. **Those presenting children for Baptism will promise to nurture and guide them until they are ready to make a personal profession of faith and assume the responsibility of active church membership.**

A council may authorize a Baptism, to be administered by a minister of the Word and Sacrament†, in certain situations beyond the congregational setting, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, military bases, or other ministry settings. In these cases, the minister of the Word and Sacrament† is responsible for ensuring that the name of the newly baptized person is placed on the appropriate roll of a council (G-3.02, G-3.03).

*W-3.0404: Presentation*

The minister of the Word and Sacrament† introduces the Sacrament of Baptism with sentences of Scripture; other sentences of Scripture may be spoken by ruling elders, members of the congregation, or ecumenical witnesses. On behalf of the session, a ruling elder presents each candidate for Baptism. Those desiring Baptism for their children or themselves express their intent to receive the Sacrament. Parents, sponsors (if applicable), and the congregation make vows to support and nurture those being baptized. **No one comes to Baptism alone; we are encouraged by family or friends and surrounded by the community of faith.**

*W-3.0405: Profession of Faith*

Candidates for Baptism or their parents shall renounce evil and profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Those who are being baptized upon profession of faith declare their intent to participate actively and responsibly in the church’s worship and mission. Together with the congregation they profess their faith, using the Apostles’ Creed, the baptismal affirmation of the early Church.

*W-3.0406: Thanksgiving over the Water*

At the place of baptism, a minister of the Word and Sacrament† leads the people in prayer: giving thanks for God's covenant faithfulness through history; praising God's gracious and reconciling action in Jesus Christ; and asking the Holy Spirit to attend and empower the Baptism, give deliverance and rebirth, and equip the church for faithfulness.

*W-3.0407: The Act of Baptism*

Accompanied by a visible and generous use of water, the minister of the Word and Sacrament† shall address each person by their Christian or given name and say: “[Name], I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). The water used for Baptism should be from a local source, and may be applied with the hand, by pouring, or through immersion.

Other actions signifying the gift of the Holy Spirit, such as the laying on of hands and anointing with oil, may be included. However, the central act of baptizing with water in the name of the triune God must not be overshadowed.

*W-3.0408: Welcome*

The newly baptized person is welcomed as a member of the Church, the body of Christ. Appropriate gifts may be given, such as a candle (reflecting the light of Christ) or a baptismal garment (signifying being clothed with Christ). The peace of Christ may be exchanged, if not previously shared.

The Church's way of welcome into the body of Christ involves the unrepeatable Sacrament of Baptism and the repeatable Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Christ bathes us with mercy, then feeds us with grace. Since this ancient pattern of initiation includes both Sacraments, the Lord's Supper appropriately follows Baptism; those who have just been baptized may be invited to receive communion first.

*W-3.0409: Theology of the Lord's Supper*

The Lord's Supper (or Eucharist) is the **sign and seal** of our **communion with the crucified and risen Lord**. Jesus shared meals with his followers throughout his earthly life and ministry—common suppers, miraculous feasts, and the covenant commemorations of the people of God. Jesus spoke of himself as the bread of life, and the true vine, in whom we are branches. On the night before his death, Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples.

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W-3.0409: Exod. 12:1–28; 16:1–36; Ps. 107:1–3; Isa. 25:6–9; 43:5–7; 55:1–3; Matt. 5:23–24; 8:11; 14:13–21; 15:32–39; 22:1–14; 26:17–29; Mark 6:30–44; 8:1–10; 14:12–25; Luke 4:18–21; 5:27–32; 7:36–50; 9:10–17; 10:38–42; 14:15–24; 22:7–23; 24:13–43; John 2:1–13; 5:1; 6:1–13; 7:1–39; 10:22–42; 12:1–3; 13:1–35; 21:1–14; Acts 1:1–11; 2:42–47; Rom. 14:1–23; 1 Cor. 8:1–13; 10:14–33; 11:17–34; 15:20–28; Gal. 3:27–29; Eph. 1:22–23; Phil. 2:5–11; Col. 3:1–4; 1 Thess. 4:16–17; Jas. 2:1–7, 14–17; 1 John 3:16–18; Rev. 19:9; Scots Conf. 3.21–3.23; Heid. Cat. 4.075–4.082; 2 Helv. Conf. 5.193–5.210; West. Conf. 6.161–6.168; S. Cat. 7.096–7.097; L. Cat. 7.278–7.285; Conf. 1967 9.52.

He spoke of the bread and wine as his body and blood, **signs of the new covenant** and told the disciples to remember him by keeping this feast. **On the day of his resurrection, Jesus made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of the bread.** The disciples continued to devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, prayers, and the common meal. As Paul wrote, when we share the bread and cup in Jesus' name, "we who are many are one body" (1 Cor. 10:17).

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper offers an **abundant feast of theological meaning**, including: **thanksgiving** to God the Father; **remembrance** of Jesus Christ; **invocation of the Holy Spirit**; **communion in the body of Christ**; and a **meal of the realm of God**. The Reformed tradition understands the Lord's Supper to be a **sign of God's covenant**. The bread of the Lord's Supper is linked with the **bread of Passover** and the **gift of manna** in the wilderness. The Lord's Supper thus connects us with **God's saving power and providential care from generation to generation**. Like the offering of sacrifices, a sign of Israel's thanksgiving for God's faithfulness, the **Lord's Supper is a sacrifice of praise** and a **sign of our gratitude for God's steadfast love**. The Lord's Supper represents God's **gracious invitation** to an everlasting covenant. The Lord's Supper also reflects our calling to **feed others** as we have been fed, and **offers a foretaste of that heavenly banquet** when God will wipe away every tear and swallow up death forever.

The Lord's Supper **enacts and seals** what the Word proclaims: **God's sustaining grace offered to all people**. The Lord's Supper is at once God's **gift of grace**, God's **means of grace**, and God's **call to respond to that grace**. Through the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ nourishes us in righteousness, faithfulness, and discipleship. Through the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit renews the Church in its identity and sends the Church to mission in the world.

When we gather at the Lord's Supper the Spirit **draws us into Christ's presence** and **unites with the Church in every time and place**. We join with all the faithful in heaven and on earth in offering thanksgiving to the triune God. **We reaffirm the promises of our baptism and recommit ourselves to love and serve God, one another, and our neighbors in the world.**

The opportunity to eat and drink with Christ is not a right bestowed upon the worthy, **but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love**. All who come to the table are offered the bread and cup, regardless of their age or understanding. If some of those who come have not yet been baptized, an invitation to baptismal preparation and Baptism should be graciously extended.

Worshippers prepare themselves to celebrate the Lord's Supper by putting **their trust in Christ**, **confessing their sin**, and **seeking reconciliation with God and one another**. **Even those who doubt may come to the table in order to be assured of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ.**

The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated as a **regular part** of the Service for the Lord's Day, preceded by the proclamation of the Word, in the gathering of the people of God. When local circumstances call for the Lord's Supper to be celebrated less frequently, the session may approve other schedules for celebration, **in no case less than quarterly**. If the Lord's Supper is celebrated less frequently than on each Lord's Day, public notice is to be given at least one week in advance so that all may prepare to receive the Sacrament.



*W-3.0410: Responsibility for the Lord's Supper*

The Lord's Supper shall be authorized by the session and administered by a minister of the Word and Sacrament†. **It is appropriate that a presbytery authorize and train ruling elders to administer the Lord's Supper in the event of the absence of pastors (G-3.0301b).** The session may authorize the celebration of the Lord's Supper at events other than the Service for the Lord's Day, including services of Christian marriage, ordination and installation, services of wholeness, ministry to the sick, and services of witness to the resurrection. **At all such events, the Word is to be read and proclaimed.** When the Lord's Supper takes place apart from public worship, **the congregation shall be represented by one or more members.**

A council may authorize the celebration of the Lord's Supper in certain contexts beyond the congregational setting, such as hospitals, prisons, schools, military bases, or other ministry settings (G-3.02, G-3.03).

*W-3.0411: Offering*

Christian life is an offering of one's self to God. In the Lord's Supper we are presented with the costly self-offering of Jesus Christ for the life of the world. As those who have been claimed and set free by his grace, we respond with gratitude, offering him our lives, our spiritual gifts, and our material goods. Every service of worship shall include an opportunity to respond to Christ's call to discipleship through self-offering. The gifts we offer express our stewardship of creation, demonstrate our care for one another, support the ministries of the church, and provide for the needs of the poor.

Tithes and offerings are gathered as an act of thanksgiving to God. Gifts of food for the poor may also be collected at this time, and the table may be prepared for the Lord's Supper. All of these gifts are received with a prayer of dedication to God, spoken or sung. Because ruling elders and deacons are charged with the stewardship of the church's resources and leadership in ministry to the poor, it is fitting for a ruling elder or deacon to lead this prayer. Signs of Christ's peace and reconciliation may be exchanged, if this did not take place earlier in the service.

*W-3.0412: Great Thanksgiving*

Following the offering and the preparation of the table, a minister of the Word and Sacrament† invites worshipers to the Lord's Supper using sentences of Scripture. At the table, facing the people, the minister of the Word and Sacrament† shall lead the people in a prayer to the triune God: **giving thanks for God's creative power, providential care, and covenant faithfulness, along with particular blessings of the day;** remembering God's acts of salvation through **Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and promised return,**

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W-3.0411: Gen. 1:28–31; 2:15–17; Lev. 23:22; Num. 18:21–29; Deut. 28:1–12; 1 Chr. 29:10–22; 2 Chr. 24:8–14; Mal. 3:8–10; Acts 2:43–47; 4:32–37; Rom. 12:1–8; 1 Cor. 12; 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:1–15; 9:6–15; Eph. 4:1–16; 1 Tim. 5:17–18; Jas. 2:1–8; 3 John 5–8; Scots Conf. 3.14; 2 Helv. Conf. 5:110–5.123, 5.211; West. Conf. 6.087–6.093, 6.146–6.148.

as well as Jesus' institution of the Sacrament (if not otherwise spoken at the invitation to the table or the breaking of the bread); and **calling on the Holy Spirit** to draw worshipers into the presence of the risen Lord, **nourish them** in the body and blood of Christ, **unite them** with Christ in the communion of saints and the Church in every place, and **send them** in mission to the world. The prayer ends with praise to the triune God. Musical acclamations, such as "Holy, holy, holy," "Christ has died," and "Amen," may be included. The Lord's Prayer follows.

*W-3.0413: Breaking the Bread*

At the table, in **full view of the people**, the minister of the Word and Sacrament† **breaks the bread and pours the cup**, or **lifts a cup that has already been filled**. These actions may be accompanied by sentences of Scripture or performed in silence. **The use of one loaf and one cup expresses the unity of the body of Christ and the communal nature of the Sacrament**. The bread used for the Lord's Supper should be **common to the culture** of the congregation; those who prepare the bread shall make provision for the **full participation** of the congregation. The session will determine whether wine is used; a non-alcoholic option shall be provided and clearly identified.

*W-3.0414: Communion*

The bread and cup are shared in the manner **most appropriate to the occasion**. **Worshipers may gather at the table, come forward to meet the servers, or receive the bread and cup where they are**. The bread may be broken and placed in people's hands or they may receive pieces of bread prepared for distribution. They may drink from a common cup, receive individual cups, or dip the broken bread into the cup. **Ordinarily ruling elders, deacons, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament† serve the bread and cup; the session may authorize other church members to do so**. While the bread and cup are shared worshipers may sing, other music may be offered, appropriate passages of Scripture may be read, or the people may pray in silence.

When all have received the bread and cup the remaining elements are placed on the table. The minister of the Word and Sacrament† then leads the people in prayer, **thanking God for the gift of the Sacrament and asking for grace to live and serve faithfully until the coming of Christ's realm in fullness**.

**As soon as possible after the service** (ordinarily on the same day), the bread and cup may be shared with absent, homebound, or hospitalized members by **two or more persons in ordered ministry**. Those who carry out this extended service of communion shall be authorized by the session; equipped with the necessary theological, pastoral, and liturgical gifts and resources; and instructed to maintain the unity of Word and Sacrament through the reading of Scripture and offering of prayers.

At the conclusion of the Service for the Lord's Day, the bread and cup are to be removed from the table and used or disposed of in a manner approved by the session, in keeping with the Reformed understanding of the Sacrament and principles of good stewardship. This may be accomplished by consuming what remains or returning the elements to the earth.

## Chapter Four: Pastoral and Occasional Services

### W-4.01: Services Claiming and Completing Baptism

#### *W-4.0101: Flowing from Baptism*

As a sign and seal of God’s gracious action and our grateful response, Baptism is the foundation for all Christian commitment. The following pastoral and occasional services are all rooted in the baptismal covenant and flow from the promises of Baptism. Such occasions may be appropriately celebrated following the proclamation of the Word during the Service for the Lord’s Day, or may be recognized in other services of public worship. They are fittingly led from the church’s baptismal font or pool.

### W-4.02: Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant

#### *W-4.0201: Nurturing the Baptized*

In Baptism each Christian is set free from sin, marked as Christ’s own, sealed by the Holy Spirit, welcomed to the Lord’s Supper, made a member of the Church, and set apart for a life of service. It is the responsibility of the whole congregation, particularly exercised through the session, to nurture those who are baptized as they grow in faith and seek to respond to Christ’s call to discipleship. When a person is baptized as a child, the session should equip and support the parent(s) (or those exercising parental responsibility) in this endeavor. When a person is baptized upon profession of faith, the session should provide ongoing opportunities for Christian formation and instruction.

#### *W-4.0202: Welcoming to the Table*

**In cases where baptized children who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord’s Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, they shall be welcomed to the table and the session should ensure they receive ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments.**

#### *W-4.0203: Public Profession*

When those who have been baptized as children are ready to make a public profession of faith and accept the responsibility of life in the church (sometimes called “confirmation”), the session shall provide an opportunity for them to do so. They are to be instructed in the faith, examined by the session, received as active members, and presented to the congregation in public worship. At this time, they reaffirm the vows of Baptism by renouncing evil and affirming their reliance on God’s grace, professing their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and declaring their intent to participate actively and responsibly in the worship, life, governance, and mission of the church. On such occasions, it is fitting for all worshipers to reaffirm the baptismal covenant.