

2017 Bible Study  
and  
Study of the  
Proposed  
Revised Directory for Worship

## Introduction to the study

Friends,

The 2017 Bible Study and study of the PC(USA) is a offering to you from ten teaching elders and two ruling elders, all leaders in the Presbytery of Wabash Valley.

The proposed, revised directory, part of the Book of Order, was overwhelmingly approved by the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly and now goes to the denomination's 171 presbyteries, a majority of which must ratify it to be adopted.

The new directory has been 10 years in development. Kristin Saldine, a consultant to the writing team, likened the directory to a compass. This is not a book of rules and regulations, but gives us bearings and direction, pointing to the primary purpose of worship – to give glory to God – and navigating between form and freedom and encouraging a variety of styles.”

Seven principles guided the directory's development:

Uphold essentials of Reformed faith, life and worship.

Respond to changing contexts and congregations.

Provide for more flexibility and more diverse expressions.

Use “we” vs. “they” language for the people of God.

Streamline contents and make organization more user-friendly.

Simplify language and make style more accessible.

Eliminate redundancy and reduce length.

Enhance the directory's usefulness as a teaching document.

The Directory for Worship was last revised in 1989, after Presbyterian reunion. The new directory has just 25 mandatory directions, as opposed to more than 120 in the current directory. The new directory encourages a variety of styles of worship and contains five chapters, versus seven, and comes in at 18,000 words – one-third shorter than the old directory.

We worked together to pair scripture with various sections of the revised Directory, so that the Presbytery would have a common, widely useful Bible study, that honors our presbytery commitment to study Scripture together. This guide offers us all a chance to become familiar with the proposed changes and the richness of the revised resource, as we prepare to vote on it at the May meeting of the Assembly on May 23, 2017.

We thank our contributors for your thoughtful contributions and commend this study to you for your personal, committee, congregational and presbytery use in the new year.

To God be the glory,

Sarah Sanderson-Doughty

Presbytery Assembly Moderator

Jennifer Burns Lewis

Visioning and Connecting Leader

## January - Introduction to the Directory

W. 1.01-1.0304

### 2 Peter 1:2 (Common English Bible)

“May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”

from W-1.0101

“God claims us as beloved children; we proclaim God’s saving love.”

from W-1.0203

“... space for Christian worship is primarily established by the presence of the risen Lord and the communion of the Holy Spirit in the gathering of the people of God. Space that is set apart for worship should encourage community, be accessible to all, and open to reverence for God. It is not an escape from the world, but a place for encountering the God of all creation who gathers us in and sends us out.”

*What wonderful words from 2 Peter to us all, reminding us who we really are! But, unfortunately we are living in an increasingly violent, wounded, anxious and self-destructive world, as the news confirms every day, tempting us to forget who God made us to be. Grace and peace? But our loving God never forgets. Worship is one of the most important places to encounter God who keeps reminding us who we really are. In worship, through Word, sacraments and actions, we can encounter God’s life-changing love, despite living in a fear-based world. The proposed Directory of Worship underlines this: “God claims us as beloved children; we proclaim God’s saving love.” [W-1.0101]*

*The proposed Directory of Worship can re-inspire worship in our churches in thoughtful and fresh ways, offering resources so that people can begin to encounter the life-transforming knowledge and presence of our loving God and of Jesus our Lord, helping us to remember who we really are.*

*When our churches gather in worship as Christ’s body, we have a choice: to dare to freshly create sacred space for God to speak and embody this life-changing/world-changing truth of God’s love for all who come wounded and yearning for intimate encounter with God, bringing new hope for God’s world; OR... our churches can gather in worship to serve out theological “pablum” as usual, patting frightened and wounded people on the head, ‘protecting’ them from intimately knowing/encountering God’s life-changing, healing presence of love and truth, but consequently passively letting God’s beloved creation self-destruct around us.*

#### Question for reflection/discussion

**In this wounded world, as we study together this introduction to the proposed Directory of Worship and consider prayerfully using it and its resources to plan worship, how does your church yearn to be a transformational place of worship where all can come to intimately encounter the abundant grace and peace of our loving and life-changing God, and glorify “the God who is present and active among us” [W-1.0101], even in this stressful world?**

Marcia Smith-Wood, Teaching Elder



## February- Leadership

### W 2.01-2.0305

#### Isaiah 2:2-3, Common English Bible (CEB)

2 In the days to come  
the mountain of the Lord's house  
will be the highest of the mountains.

It will be lifted above the hills;  
peoples will stream to it.

3 Many nations will go and say,  
"Come, let's go up to the Lord's mountain,  
to the house of Jacob's God  
so that he may teach us his ways  
and we may walk in God's paths."  
Instruction will come from Zion;  
the Lord's word from Jerusalem.

#### From W-2.0201- Royal Priesthood

In Jesus Christ, the Church is called to be a royal priesthood, giving glory to God in worship and devoting itself to God's service in the world. Worship is a collective activity of the people of God and an expression of our common life and ministry. It demands the full, conscious, and active participation of the whole body of Christ, with heart, mind, soul, and strength.

*Together we're called. We're called together. We're called to gather— to give glory to God, to seek to learn God's ways that we might walk in God's paths. In some churches the clergy are called priests, but it is not so among us— for we affirm with 1st Peter that we, all of us, the church, are a royal priesthood, together the body of Christ, the one true priest. All the baptized are ministers, servants of Christ in the world. And one of the primary ways in which we carry out our servant ministry is through the act of worship. It may seem like pastors and liturgists, musicians and other appointed worship leaders are the only active participants in worship, but worship is the work of all the people— that's what the word liturgy means!*

#### Questions for reflection/discussion:

1. The scripture suggests people from all nations will gather to worship that they might learn God's ways. The DOW suggests we worship "to give glory to God." Why do you worship?
2. How might we encourage "the full, conscious, and active participation" of all worshippers? How do we cultivate this in ourselves? What are barriers to such participation?
3. What is the work of those "in the pews"?

Sarah Sanderson-Doughty, Teaching Elder and 2017 Presbytery Assembly Moderator

## March- The Lord's Day

### Hebrews 10:19-25

#### W 3.01-3.0205

#### Hebrews 10:19-25 (Common English Bible)

19 Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 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. 23 Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

#### W-3.0205: Confession and Forgiveness

Having praised the holiness of God, we must also face the sinful state of the world and of our lives, confessing our unworthiness to enter into God's presence. Nevertheless we approach God with confidence, trusting in the mercy of Jesus Christ. This turn from communal praise to corporate confession, established on the promise of God's grace, is one of the hallmarks of the Reformed tradition. A call to confession expresses God's initiative in calling for repentance and promising forgiveness in Christ. As members of Christ's body, we confess the reality of sin, captivity, and brokenness in personal and common life and ask for God's saving grace. The prayer of confession may include the singing of a prayer for grace, such as "Lord, have mercy." A declaration of forgiveness proclaims the good news of God's mercy and offers the assurance of pardon in Jesus' name. Leading this element of worship from the font connects our confession with the grace and cleansing of Baptism, and the baptismal call to new life in Christ. Because of these associations with the ministry of Word and Sacrament, it is fitting for a teaching elder† to lead the call to confession and proclaim the good news of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Other actions may follow—a song of praise, such as "Glory be to the Father" or "Glory to God"; a summary of the law or call to faithfulness; and the sharing of peace as a sign of reconciliation in Christ.

*Section 3 of the Proposed Directory for Worship addresses when we worship and the order of worship. In this study time we will focus on a scriptural guide to confess our sins relying on the grace of God to receive forgiveness and what difference confession and forgiveness makes in our daily life.*

#### Questions for Reflection/Discussion:

1. Confession of Sin is rarely or never used in some churches. Why do you suppose this is so and what meaning does this part of worship have for you and your worshipping community?
2. Reformed faith puts great emphasis on the sinfulness of humanity, our propensity toward sin. What are options for expressing our corporate and individual sin in worship?
3. In light of verses 24 and 25, how can we respond to forgiveness? What are we called to do and be because of such great forgiveness? In our personal lives, our faith community lives, our Presbytery lives?
4. What "Day" is approaching? What does this have to do with Confession and Declaration of Pardon?

David Smook, Teaching Elder and 2017 Council Moderator

## April- The Word

**Revelation 2:7**

**W 3:03- 3.0309**

**Revelation 2:7 (NLT)**

“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.”

### **from W-3.0301: Theology of Proclamation**

The Scriptures bear witness to the Word of God, revealed most fully in Jesus Christ, the Word who “became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:14). Where the Word is read and proclaimed, Jesus Christ the living Word, is present by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, reading, hearing, preaching, and affirming the Word are central to Christian worship and essential to the service for the Lord’s Day.... When the Word is proclaimed, we are called, above all, to discern Jesus Christ, receive his grace, and respond to his call with obedience. All of these things depend on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, whom we seek in prayer.

*Allowing God to breathe life into our worship and work is often one of our greatest challenges. We, too often, find ourselves so busy doing what we define as God’s will and work that we do not take the time to listen to the Spirit and understand what God is saying to us in our churches and presbytery.*

### **Questions for Reflection/Discussion**

- 1. Compare the words of the prophet Jeremiah {6:10 MSG} "I've got something to say. Is anybody listening? I've a warning to post. Will anyone notice? It's hopeless! Their ears are stuffed with wax—deaf as a post, blind as a bat. It's hopeless! They've tuned out GOD. They don't want to hear from me." with today's Revelation scripture. Where do we find life in our congregation's worship?**
- 2. How do we as individuals, congregations, and our presbytery receive grace and respond?**
- 3. How do you see us discerning Jesus Christ, receiving his grace, and responding to His call with obedience in the Presbytery of Wabash Valley?**
- 4. What does it mean for the Presbytery of Wabash Valley to be victorious?**

Chuck Compton, Teaching Elder, Moderator, Commission on Preparation for Ministry



## May- Baptism

### Matthew 28:18-20

#### W 3.0401-3.0408

#### Matthew 28:18-20 (Common English Bible)

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

#### W-3.0401: Theology of the Sacraments

...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....

*It’s amazing how God can take the ordinary and use it to do the extraordinary! In W-3.0401 it reminds us that the sacraments themselves “take ordinary things - the basic elements of water, bread, and wine - in proclaiming the extraordinary love of God.” In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus takes the simple, life-giving element of water and tells us that we, as ordinary people, have the power to make disciples of all people. We, ordinary people, with ordinary water have the ability to show people the extraordinary gift of Grace that no one earns or deserves and no one can “undeserve” it either.*

*We are chosen and called by Christ to remember that what may seem ordinary to others is touched by God’s unbelievable power of love and grace. For us Christians, there is no “ordinary.” When we remember our baptism, we remember that we are called to the extraordinary!*

#### Questions for Reflection/Discussion

1. How often do we remember our baptism? That we are made extraordinary through God’s extraordinary love?
2. How often do we forget that there is no such thing as “ordinary” when it comes to God?
3. How often do we remind others and embody that through our worship and discipleship?

Quincy Worthington, Teaching Elder

## **June- The Lord's Supper**

### **1 Corinthians 10:16-17**

#### **W 3.0409-3.0503**

#### **1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (Common English Bible)**

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

#### **From W-3.0412 Theology of Baptism**

“Unite them with Christ in the communion of saints and the Church in every place, and send them in mission to the world.”

*One of my greatest joy as a Presbyterian Pastor is our congregation's connection with various Mission co-workers across the globe. Likewise, I love participating in wider denominational conferences and assemblies. One cannot leave any of these events without a sense of being part of a Christian community that spans the globe.*

*It is easy to remain focused at The Table only upon our personal faith and salvation. The celebration can also become a time when we go through the motions. This is especially true for those who serve the church as clergy and officers of the church.*

*The Lord's Supper invites us into the great opportunity to not only commune with our sisters and brothers sharing sacred space in the sanctuary, but also a wider community of saints in disparate places, where none of us have ever traveled, in situations and environments some of us couldn't imagine. In God's divine imagination, the bread that we break and the cup that we share “unites us with Christ in the communion of saints and the Church in every place.” For that, I give thanks.*

#### **Questions for Reflection/Discussion**

- 1. What connections do you perceive between the Lord's Table and the Mission of the Church?**
- 2. Share a time or experience of communion in which you felt connected to “a wider community of saints in disparate places.”**
- 3. How might our celebrations of communion within the congregations of the PWV and as a PWV assembly make us more mindful of our unity “with Christ in the communion of saints and the Church in every place?”**

Erika Parkinson-Kilbourne, Teaching Elder

## July- Services that claim/complete baptism

W 4.03-4.0404

### Galatians 5:22-26 (RSV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another.

### W-4.0205: Renewal and Fresh Commitment

In the lives of believers and in congregational life there are special occasions of awakening, renewal, or commitment; these are appropriately celebrated through the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant. People should be encouraged to share these decisive moments and stirrings of the Spirit with the session, so that they may be acknowledged and affirmed in public worship.

*The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the initiation rite of the Church, is for most a one time thing with the emphasis on "getting it done." We bring the infants to the font, baptize them, and say that it is a great day in the life of the child, family and the Church. Then, we never get wet again with the holy water from the baptismal font.*

*The Directory of Worship says that Holy Baptism is the "foundation for all Christian commitment." But who can remember that foundational moment, especially when that moment occurred for most of us before we can remember. The beauty of this rite for infants is the sign of God's grace claiming the child and the entrance into the covenant community. The disadvantage is that this very public and dramatic act cannot be remembered in any meaningful way.*

*It is thus incumbent upon the Church to offer opportunities in which this "foundation of commitment" can be renewed and experienced on more regular occasions. The Book of Common Worship has an excellent liturgy for the Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant for individuals and a congregation. It is important for us to remember as did Luther every morning, "I am baptized," but not just with our head but in a physical way as we actually get wet, by taking the holy water from the baptismal font and touch it with our hands, put it to our heads, as we make the sign of the cross and identify again with our Lord. For it is in the baptismal waters (and its remembrance) that we realize the foundation of Christian commitment.*

### Questions for Reflection/Discussion

1. What strikes you in the reading from Galatians?
2. How might a remembrance of Baptism help to nurture gifts of the Spirit in us?
3. How does the worship life of your congregation help to foster a remembrance of baptism? Share particularly meaningful experiences of baptismal renewal that you have experienced in congregational worship.
4. Do you have practices by which you remind yourself of your identity as a child of God and disciple of Christ, a baptized member of Christ's body? If yes, please share a witness to your practices.

Paul Anderson, Teaching Elder

## August- Commissioned for Service

### W 4.03-4.04

#### Romans 12: 3-8 (NRSV)

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

#### from W-4.0401: Called to Ministry

In Baptism each Christian is called to ministry in Christ's name. God calls some persons from the midst of congregations to fulfill particular functions, so that the ministry of the whole people of God may flourish.

Reflection from J. FREDERICK HOLPER "What does it mean to be ordained?"

Republished from the May 2001 issue of *Presbyterians Today*

*"Presbyterians have remained open to change regarding our understanding of ordination because of three unchanging beliefs:*

*We believe that God is the source and summit of all ministry in the church. For Presbyterians ordination is not synonymous with ministry. We believe all Christians are called by God and equipped by the Spirit for service in the world when they are joined to the ministry of Jesus Christ at their baptism. On the other hand, not every member is called or equipped by God for the exercise of particular offices of ministry within the church.*

- 1. Presbyterians hold the conviction, voiced in chapter 1 of the Book of Order, that "truth is in order to goodness." Truth includes our shared convictions about who should be ordained, to what offices, for what purposes, and with what preparation and standards of accountability. The measure of this truth, however, does not depend upon logical coherence or philosophical argument, but from the character of the fruit it bears.*
- 2. Presbyterians believe that ordained ministry should be collegial (shared with others), non-hierarchical (shared by clergy and laity), and communal (representing the whole church and not merely a congregation). We also believe those called to ordained offices in the church should be subjected to a process in which their calls are tested and confirmed by the church."*

#### Questions for Reflection/Discussion

- 1. Thinking of your gifts – which ones challenge your ego, humble you, inspire you?**
- 2. Is there a difference between discipleship and service?**
- 3. Holper writes "not every member is called or equipped by God for the exercise of particular offices of ministry within the church" – what is your reaction?**
- 4. How can we encourage every member to engage in ministry (within the church and out in the world) using their gifts to God's glory?**
- 5. Reflect on this quote from Frederick Buechner—"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."**

Catherine Moran, Teaching Elder and Moderator, Commission on Ministry

## September- Transitions

### W 4.05-4.0704

#### Song of Solomon 8:6-7 (NRSV)

Set me as a seal upon your heart,  
as a seal upon your arm;  
for love is strong as death,  
passion fierce as the grave.  
Its flashes are flashes of fire,  
a raging flame.

7 Many waters cannot quench love,  
neither can floods drown it.  
If one offered for love  
all the wealth of one's house,  
it would be utterly scorned.

*W-4.05: Marking Transitions, W-4.06: The Covenant of Marriage, W-4.07: Death and Resurrection are quoted in full here because we may be surprised by the details of these sections. Some key words are underlined to aid in quickly scanning these sections. Note what you might highlight differently. Use the questions for reflection below to guide your analysis of this material:*

#### Questions for Reflection

1. Which of these many sections are theological?
2. Which incorporate cultural or ethnic rituals?
3. Which of these sections are about polity?
4. Which are declaratory and which are permissive?

#### W-4.0501: God's Constant Grace

In Baptism each Christian is assured of God's constant grace and sustaining care through every transition, season, trial, and celebration of life. Services on occasions of transitions in ministry bear witness to this grace, and allow worshipers to express their thanksgiving, support, or concern.

#### W-4.0502: Departing Members

The recognition of departing members appropriately takes place in the context of the Service for the Lord's Day, either as a response to the proclamation of the Word or as an act of sending. The service may include prayers of thanksgiving and intercession for those members who are departing: that they may remain in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

#### W-4.0503: Conclusion of Service

It is appropriate to recognize the conclusion of a period of service, giving thanks for the gifts and calling of particular persons—whether through ordered ministry, as deacons, ruling elders, or teaching elders<sup>†</sup>; in specific acts of discipleship; or in other forms of service to the church, in the community, or in the world. This recognition may take place in the context of the Service for the Lord's Day, either as a response to the proclamation of the Word or as an act of sending, or in other services of worship. The service includes prayers of

thanksgiving and intercession for those concluding their ministries. Other significant honors or accomplishments may also be celebrated in worship, always in the spirit of giving glory to God.

#### **W-4.0504: Censure and Restoration**

The church administers discipline as an expression of the authority of Christ, for the sake of the welfare of the church, and toward the goal of redemption and reconciliation, by God's grace. Forms for censure and restoration are provided in the Rules of Discipline of this Book of Order. These occasions are to be observed in the spirit of prayer and pastoral concern, and in the context of worship within the appropriate community or council of the church.

#### **W-4.06: The Covenant of Marriage**

##### **W-4.0601: Christian Marriage**

In Baptism, each Christian is claimed in the covenant of God's faithful love. Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

##### **W-4.0602: Preparing for Marriage**

If they meet the requirements of the civil jurisdiction in which they intend to marry, a couple may request that a service of Christian marriage be conducted by a teaching elder† in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is authorized, though not required, to act as an agent of the civil jurisdiction in recording the marriage contract. A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the teaching elder†, who may agree to the couple's request only if, in the judgment of the teaching elder†, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values. In making this decision, the teaching elder† may seek the counsel of the session, which has authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service.

##### **W-4.0603: Order of Worship**

The marriage service shall be conducted in a manner appropriate to this covenant and to the forms of Reformed worship, under the direction of the teaching elder† and the supervision of the session (W-2.03). In a service of marriage, the couple marry each other by exchanging mutual promises. The teaching elder† witnesses the couple's promises and pronounces God's blessing upon their union. The community of faith pledges to support the couple in upholding their promises; prayers may be offered for the couple, for the communities that support them, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness.

##### **W-4.0604: Recognizing Civil Marriage**

A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the statements made shall reflect the fact that the couple is already married to one another according to the laws of the civil jurisdiction.

#### **W-4.0605: Nothing Shall Compel**

Nothing herein shall compel a teaching elder† to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the teaching elder† or the session believes is contrary to the teaching elder's† or the session's discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God.

#### **W-4.07: Death and Resurrection**

##### **W-4.0701: Witness to the Resurrection**

In Baptism each Christian shares in Christ's dying and rising, and receives the promise of eternal and abundant life in him. We understand the Christian funeral to be the completion of Baptism. In the face of death, we affirm with tears and joy the good news of the gospel and the hope of the resurrection. We do not grieve in isolation, but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith

##### **W-4.0702: Policies for Funerals**

The session may establish general policies concerning services on the occasion of death, providing for funerals that are simple, dignified, expressive of good stewardship, bear witness to resurrection hope, and convey the centrality of Christian community.

##### **W-4.0703: Setting for the Service**

The service of witness to the resurrection is most appropriately held in the congregation's usual place of worship, demonstrating continuity with the community's faith, life, and hope. When there are important reasons not to hold the service in the usual place of worship, it may be held in another place, such as a home, funeral home, crematorium, or graveside. It may be observed on any day, and may, with the approval of the session, occur as a part of the Service for the Lord's Day. The service may take place before or after the committal of the body. The service is under the direction of the teaching elder† of the congregation in which it is held. Others may be invited to share in leadership at the discretion of the teaching elder†.

##### **W-4.0704: Order of Worship**

When a member of the community dies, the body of the deceased will be buried, cremated, donated for medical use, or otherwise disposed of in a responsible and reverent manner. Ordinarily the family of the deceased, members of the community, and the pastor(s) of the church will accompany the body of the deceased to the place of disposition, engaging in prayer, blessings, and other acts of worship.

As a part of accompanying the body to the place of disposition, or at another time before or after this takes place, a more full service of worship may be held. The service begins with sentences of Scripture, bearing witness to the resurrection and the living hope we have in Christ. Worshipers may sing hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs that affirm our faith in the resurrection, everlasting life, and the communion of saints. The act of confession and pardon may be included as an opportunity for healing and reconciliation. Scripture is read and the Word is proclaimed, expressing our trust in the risen Lord; an affirmation of faith may follow. Prayer is offered: giving thanks to God for life in Christ, the promise of the gospel, the life and witness of the one who has died, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of the community of faith; making intercessions for those who grieve, those who minister to the bereaved, and all who suffer loss; asking for faith and grace in this time of loss; and concluding with the Lord's Prayer (if not included in the eucharistic liturgy). The Lord's Supper may be celebrated, with the approval of the session. The service ends the one who has died to the care of the eternal

God, committing the body of the deceased to by commending the place of disposition (unless this is performed at another time), and sending the people forth with God's blessing.

The casket or urn may be covered with a pall, a symbol of being clothed with Christ in Baptism. The service may begin at the baptismal font. If using a paschal candle is part of the practice of the congregation, it may be placed near the casket. Music directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. Flowers and other decorations reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. The service may include other actions common to the community of faith and its cultural context, provided that these actions do not distract from the Christian understanding of death and resurrection. Fraternal, civic, or military rites are to be conducted separately.

*The scriptural passage, Song of Solomon 8:6-7, is often chosen for weddings. One blogger wrote: "These are sober words of warning. Love can kill you. It's not a game, something to be taken lightly, because your whole existence is tied up with it... The Good News Bible paraphrases this verse as follows: 'Close your heart to every heart but mine; hold no one in your arms but me.' I think that if you can respect both dimensions of the reality and responsibility of love—the power of love to give and life and enrich it, and the power of love to kill—you will be on the way to a relationship that is blessed and that will be a blessing to others."*

#### Questions for Discussion

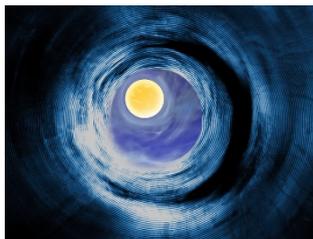
5. **How does this interpretation fit with your experience of love and marriage?**
6. **Where is the theology or guidance for times when marriage no longer holds sacrificial love or when mutual support is gone or one no longer maintains "the rights and obligations of the married couple in society" or when experiences show the marriage is no longer "for the well-being of the entire human family," or even the immediate family?**
7. **What wisdom in this passage might apply to life's transitions in addition to marriage?**

*For a season, the Presbytery of Wabash Valley has used the scriptural image of Joshua Journey to signify its process for discerning specific ways to transition with vision from what it was to what it will be.*

#### Questions for Discussion

8. **How you discern the Holy Spirit is inviting the Presbytery of Wabash Valley to keep moving along Joshua Journey's transition in your conversation today?**
9. **Is this transition apparent in the presbytery work before you this day?**

Linda Long, Ruling Elder and Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Wabash Valley





## **October- Worship and Christian Life**

**W 5.01-5.0105**

### **Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NRSV)**

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.[a] 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. 6 Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. 7 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. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem[b] on your forehead, 9 and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

### **W-5.0101: Personal Life**

We respond to God's grace both in public worship and service and in personal acts of devotion and discipleship. Personal life and public worship are deeply connected. Christian life springs from Christian worship, where we find our identity as believers and discover our calling as disciples. Christian life flows back into worship as we present to God the prayers of our hearts and the offering of our lives. In personal life we seek to live out our faith through daily disciplines of prayer, other practices of discipleship, household worship, and Christian vocation and service. Our lives as Christians are shaped by the Word and empowered by the Spirit as we grow more and more each day into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*In keeping with Scripture, the Directory of Worship calls us to make worship a part of our daily lives, not just something we do on Sundays. Congregations tend to facilitate this well during seasons like Advent and Lent, but do not necessarily continue during the rest of the year.*

### **Questions for Reflection/Discussion**

- 1. In what ways does your congregation equip households for making worship a part of daily life during seasons like Advent and Lent?**
- 2. Describe a time when you experienced some kind of worship at home that was especially meaningful.**
- 3. How can your congregation equip households to engage in spiritual practices and worship all year long?**
- 4. In what ways can PWV help its congregations to do this work?**

Anna Parkinson, Teaching Elder

## November- Worship and Ministry

### W 5.02-5.0206

#### Ephesians 4:1-6

4 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

#### W-5.0201: The Church's Ministry within the Community of Faith

God calls the Church in the name of Jesus Christ to mutual love and service. Jesus' ministry and the church's worship are deeply connected; indeed, worship is ministry. The church's ministry springs from its worship, where God builds up the body of Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The church's ministry flows back into worship as we bring to God the celebrations and concerns of the community of faith. Within the church, we seek to love and serve one another through the rhythm of daily prayer, the ministries of Christian education and pastoral care, the activities of councils of the church, and other gatherings of believers. The church's ministries are shaped and nourished by the Word and Sacraments, and are to be carried out in the spirit of constant prayer.

*Gordon Lathrop, in Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1998, p. 116) says "A pool of water, powerful words, a shared loaf and cup... they are things that are used by God. They are holy. They are set aside ... by God's intention. That is, in the midst of them and by means of them, God speaks grace and mercy." One would think, therefore, that all people everywhere would be clamoring for these holy things. Yet, Pew Research polls have indicated for a while that worship attendance is decreasing in the US. Some, when asked why they don't come to worship, respond with answers such as, 'because I can worship God out on the golf course', or 'I don't need to be with a group of people in order to believe,' or 'they're just a bunch of hypocrites.'*

#### Questions for Reflection/Discussion

1. **How can we share this life and soul-feeding experience with others in a way that will be heard?**
2. **How does worship inform your life within the congregation?**
3. **How does worship prepare you to be sent into the larger community outside your church's doors?**
4. **This section in the proposed Directory for Worship connects the life of the congregation (in Christian education, pastoral care, and also in gatherings of councils) with the act of worship. Have you ever made that connection? How does our worship speak to and inform these areas?**
5. **There could be tension between the words of Ephesians 4:4-6, and the final paragraph of 5.0206, when we are called to be with those who 1) are Christian but not Reformed, and 2) are not Christian and do not agree with the statement in Ephesians. Where do you see tension here, and how can faithful Presbyterians bear witness faithfully yet with respect?**

Toby Mueller, Teaching Elder

## December- Mission in the World

### W 5.03-5.0401

#### Isaiah 56:1-7 (NRSV)

56 Thus says the Lord:

Maintain justice, and do what is right,  
for soon my salvation will come,  
and my deliverance be revealed.

2 Happy is the mortal who does this,  
the one who holds it fast,

who keeps the sabbath, not profaning it,  
and refrains from doing any evil.

3 Do not let the foreigner joined to the Lord say,  
“The Lord will surely separate me from his people”;  
and do not let the eunuch say,  
“I am just a dry tree.”

4 For thus says the Lord:

To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths,  
who choose the things that please me  
and hold fast my covenant,

5 I will give, in my house and within my walls,  
a monument and a name  
better than sons and daughters;

I will give them an everlasting name  
that shall not be cut off.

6 And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,  
to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord,  
and to be his servants,  
all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it,  
and hold fast my covenant—

7 these I will bring to my holy mountain,  
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;  
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices  
will be accepted on my altar;

for my house shall be called a house of prayer  
for all peoples.

#### W-5.0301: The Church's Mission in the World

Our mission is to enhance our worship with the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Our mission in the world is not just worship but the sharing of the blessings we receive as we practice prayer and sacraments during worship.

*“Keep justice, and do righteousness, for my salvation is about to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.” Is 56: 1.*

*Our worship shapes our mission and mission is particularly shaped and nourished by the sacraments. As we reach out to our communities, country and the world, we share our prayers. They are all guided by the Holy Spirit to*

*strengthen the work of Jesus Christ in the world. By sharing the joys and the sufferings of the world we bring the mission of the church to all of our areas of worship.*

*We implement all of this mission through the use of prayer. With the help of the Holy Spirit our prayers provide comfort and compassion to the world in all things.*

*“For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” Is 56: 7.*

**Questions for Reflection/Discussion**

- 1. How is the world present in your congregational worship experiences?**
- 2. Discuss the link that you perceive between prayer and mission.**
- 3. How do your experiences of worship prepare you to share blessings with the world?**

Rick Ryan, Commissioned Ruling Elder, 2017 Vice Moderator, Presbytery of Wabash Valley