

Scriptures & Prayers for Leading in Worship

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It is a privilege of immense value to be called upon to lead God's people in his worship. Cherish the opportunity. Strive to prove yourself worthy of it. What I want to do for you here is to assist you in leading in worship. What follows is a typical order of Reformed worship. I will give some directions and guidelines as well as sample passages and prayers appropriate for that moment.

Preparing

The order of worship (liturgy) is not the property of the liturgist (one leading) but of the consistory/session of the congregation that has called upon you to lead. Observe diligently the order of worship of the particular congregation.

Know the Bible version and songbook(s) a particular church uses and use them. Do not go in on a mission to convert everyone on the merits of the ESV as opposed to the NIV!

Before the Service

It is customary for the consistory/session to meet prior to the service. Be sure to arrive *at least fifteen minutes before* the scheduled beginning.

Have a pen, as prayer requests are often relayed just prior to the service. Also ask if there is anything important to pray for.

If any items in the order of worship seem obscure, or if the progression of the liturgy is not plain, *ask for clarification* before the service begins.

Determine what kind of microphone you will be using [lapel, pulpit] and whether you need to turn it on/off.

Ask about the procedure for the offering. Do the deacons come forward before and after the offering is received? Is there a prayer? Are you to announce the offering cause?

Find out if there is choral/special music and if you are to introduce it, if it will happen unannounced, and whether you are expected to thank the participants?

Find out where you are expected to be after the service in order to greet the congregants.

If there are announcements, ask how to pronounce any names and places [learn from a non-Dutch guy!].

Just prior to the time of the service, one of the members of the consistory/session will usually offer prayer. The procession to the sanctuary follows. You will either be clearly directly to the pulpit or escorted there by one of the officebearers (and perhaps an official handshake).

Call to Worship

Psalm 95:6

Psalm 96:9

Psalm 100

Psalm 118:19 or 24

Psalm 122:1

Isaiah 57:15 (Omit connectives like 'for,' as the focus is on the passage, not the context).

Habakkuk 2:20

John 4:23

Hebrews 4:14

Revelation 4:8b

For the evening service, I use a thematic call to worship, as a way of varying this form, as well as putting a theme before the people of God. Here are some examples:

Trust in him at all time, O people; pour out your hearts before him; God is a refuge for us.—*Psalm 62:8*

Arise, cry out in the night...pour out your heart like water before the presence of the LORD.—*Lamentations 2:19*

Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.—*Psalm 141:2*

And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.—*Revelation 8:3-4*

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?—*Psalm 42:1-2*

My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you.—*Isaiah 26:9*

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no

water.—*Psalm 63:1*

I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.—*Psalm 143:6*

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.—*John 7:37*

My soul cleaves to the dust; revive me according to your word.—*Psalm 119:25*

I am exceedingly afflicted; revive me, O LORD, according to your word.—*Psalm 119:107*

This is my comfort in my affliction, that your word has revived me.—*Psalm 119:50*

Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in your ways.—*Psalm 119:37*

The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup.—*Psalm 16:5*

“The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”—*Lamentations 3:24*

I cry to you, O Lord; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.”—*Psalm 142:5*

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.—*Psalm 73:26*

But the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.—*Deuteronomy 32:9*

In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.—*Psalm 119:14*

I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.—*Psalm 119:16*

Your testimonies are my delight; they are my counselors.—*Psalm 119:24*

For I find my delight in your commandments, which I love.—*Psalm 119:47*

Let your mercy come to me, that I may live; for your law is my delight.—*Psalm 119:77*

Trouble and anguish have found me out, but your commandments are my delight.—*Psalm 119:143*

I long for your salvation, O LORD, and your law is my delight.—*Psalm 119:174*

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!—*Psalm 95:2*

Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!—*Psalm 100:2*

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.—*Psalm 16:11*

Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!—*Psalm 105:4*

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us,
that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all
nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with
equity and guide the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!—*Psalms*
67:1-5

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory
and strength!—*Psalms 96:7*

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the
families of the nations shall worship before you.—*Psalms 22:27*

The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am
helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.—*Psalms*
28:7

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your
wonderful deeds.—*Psalms 9:1*

I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify
your name forever.—*Psalms 86:12*

Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the
company of the upright, in the congregation.—*Psalms 111:1*

You will say in that day: “I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you
were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort
me.—*Isaiah 12:1*

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity,
whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with
him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly,
and to revive the heart of the contrite.”—*Isaiah 57:15*

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.—
Psalms 34:18

For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly.—*Psalms 138:6*

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look at him! A
glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!”—*Matthew*
11:19

Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, who stand by night in
the house of the LORD! *Ps. 134:1*

By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with
me, a prayer to the God of my life. *Ps. 42:8*

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most
High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness
by night. *Ps. 92:1-2*

O LORD, God of my salvation; I cry out day and night before you. *Ps. 88:1*
In the day of my trouble I seek the LORD; in the night my hand is stretched
out without wearying. *Ps. 77:2*

There are many who say, “Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of
your face upon us, O LORD!” You have put more joy in my heart than they
have when their grain and wine abound. *Ps. 4:7–8*

Our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. *Ps. 33:21*

The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am
helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. *Ps. 28:7*

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. *Ps. 45:1*

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing
for joy to the living God. *Ps. 84:2*

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in
your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. *Ps. 19:14*

Advent

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for
the Lord!—*Psalms 27:14*

Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.—*Psalms 33:20*

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for
the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for
the morning.—*Psalms 130:5–6*

Votum (“confession” or “declaration”)

Psalm 124:8: “Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and
earth.”

Psalm 121:1–2: “I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?
My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.”

Salutation (also called Greeting/God’s Greeting)

The church has reserved to those duly ordained to the ministry the right to
pronounce the opening salutation (greeting) and the concluding benediction.

Therefore, you should either turn the greeting into the form of a prayer or use a short prayer of invocation/blessing. If the former, then phrase it like this:

Changed into an opening prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord, may your grace, mercy, and peace be upon us, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Invocation

1—Book of Common Prayer (1662)

Almighty God, to you our hearts are open, our desires are known, and from you no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the gracious power of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

2—Book of Common Prayer (1662)

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and to give more than we desire, or deserve; pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy; forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

3—Book of Common Prayer (1928)

Grant, we beseech you, merciful God, that your church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may manifest your power among all peoples, to the glory of you Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

4—Book of Common Prayer (1928)—[adapted]

O God, who on the mount revealed to chosen witnesses your only begotten Son wonderfully transfigured, in clothing white and pure; mercifully grant that we, being delivered from the disquietude of this world, may be permitted to behold the King in his beauty, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, world without end. Amen.

5—Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God, 1645—[adapted]

In all reverence and humility acknowledging the incomprehensible greatness and majesty of the Lord, (in whose presence they do then in a special manner appear,) and their own vileness and unworthiness to

approach so near him, with their utter inability of themselves to so great a work; and humbly beseeching him for pardon, assistance, and acceptance, in the whole service then to be performed; and for a blessing on that particular portion of his word then to be read: And all in the name and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

6—Richard Baxter

Eternal, Almighty, and most gracious God: heaven is your throne, and earth is your footstool; holy and reverend is your name; you are praised by the angels of heaven, and in the gathering of your church on earth. Despite our unworthiness, you have invited us through our Mediator, Jesus Christ, to present ourselves and our prayers to you. Receive us graciously. Help us by your Spirit. Let us stand in awe of you. Put your law into our hearts, and write it on our minds. Let your word come to us in power, and help us receive it in love, with attentive, reverent, and teachable minds. Through your word, allow us to taste the flavor of eternal life. Make us fervent in prayer and joyful in praise. Help us serve you this day without distraction, that we may find that a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere, and that it is good for us to come near to God; through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

7—French Huguenot Church of Charleston

Almighty God and heavenly Father! We have come together for the public sanctification of this Lord's Day, to offer unto you our praises and our prayers, and to hear your holy Word. You have promised to listen favorably unto all those who call upon you in the name of your Son. We therefore beseech you to look down upon us in mercy, and to purify our thoughts and affections, that we may render unto you an acceptable service. Great God! We humble ourselves before you. We adore your majesty; we extol your wisdom, power, and goodness, which appear with such brightness in the marvelous works of creation and redemption. We acknowledge your tender love in the manifold favors, spiritual and temporal, which we continually receive at your hand; but we praise you more especially, with all Christians who are assembled this day, that you sent your Son into the world to save us, and that he rose from the dead for our justification. We bless you that you have given us, by his glorious resurrection, so lively a hope of everlasting life. O God! Your glory is great in all your churches, and the praise of your name is heard in all the assemblies of your saints! May our thanksgivings ascend unto your throne! Make us worthy to be partakers of the resurrection of the just, and of the glory of the kingdom of heaven, whither Jesus Christ has entered as our forerunner; where he lives and reigns; where he is adored and glorified, with you and the Holy Spirit, God blessed forever. Amen.

Songs

Do's

First, songs have stanzas, poems have verses.

Second, announce song numbers like this: "Let us sing number three-hundred-seventy-two;" not, "Let us sing number three-hundred-and-seventy-two."

Third, use variety in introducing songs depending on the place in the liturgy. For example, "Let us respond to God's law by singing/by turning to/by using...."

Fourth, be aware that all hymns are songs, while not all songs are hymns (some are psalms).

Fifth, repeat the song number and stanza numbers slowly and clearly twice.

Sixth, identify how the song is being used in the liturgy: as a prayer, as a response, as a confession of sin.

Seventh, ask the accompanist (not "accompanyist") to play a song through if the tune is unfamiliar.

Don'ts

First, sing into the microphone in a way that covers the congregation's singing.

Second, change the songs you've chosen, unless you know for certain the organist can handle the change (as a guest you won't know).

Third, routinely read the entire first stanza of each song while the congregants are finding their place in the hymnal.

Fourth, sing more stanzas than are meaningful for that moment in the liturgy (it is not the mark of piety to sing all eleven stanzas!)

The Law

The word “Law” appears in some orders for worship without further specification. What is meant is the Decalogue as it is recorded in Exodus 20:1–17 [also Deuteronomy 5:6–21]. Usually the summary of the Law found in Matthew 22:37–40 is read immediately thereafter.

Various passages of Scripture are also appropriate, such as:

Leviticus 19:2b–4, 9–18, 31–37
Deuteronomy 27:9–10, 15–26
Matthew 5:17–48
Romans 3:10b–20
Galatians 3:1–10
Galatians 5:13–26
Colossians 3:1–17

Confession of Sin

Scripture passages for confession of sin:

Psalm 32
Psalm 51
Psalm 130

Prayers of confession:

1—URCNA

Dearly loved brothers and sisters, we are called to examine ourselves in the light of God’s Law. Let us go to God in public confession:

¶ Prayed in unison:

Our Father, we are sinful and you are holy.
We recognize that we have heard in your Law difficult words,
knowing how often we have offended you in thought, word and deed,
not only by obvious violations,
but by failing to conform to its perfect commands,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
There is nothing in us that gives us reason for hope;
for where we thought we were well, we are sick in soul.
Where we thought we were holy, we are in truth unholy and ungrateful.
Our hearts are filled with the love of the world;
our minds are dark and are assailed by doubts;
our wills are too often given to selfishness
and our bodies to laziness and unrighteousness.
By sinning against our neighbors,
we have also sinned against you,
in whose image they were created.
In this time of silent confession we bring you our particular sins.

¶ An opportunity for silent confession may be given.

¶ Prayed by the minister:

Our Father, although you are a holy God who cannot look upon sin, look upon Christ our Savior and forgive us for his sake. You have promised us that if we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. For if we do sin, we have an Advocate before your throne, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins. Give us your pardon by your mercies, dear Father, for you have clothed us in Christ's righteousness. We ask also that you would give us an increase of the grace of your Holy Spirit, so that we may learn the wisdom of your ways and walk in your holy paths, for your glory and the good of our neighbor. Amen.

2—Book of Common Prayer

Dearly beloved, the law causes us to acknowledge and confess our many sins and wickedness; not hiding them from the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father but confessing them with a humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart that we may obtain forgiveness, by his infinite goodness and mercy. Therefore I urge you to join me with a pure heart and humble voice, before the throne of grace, praying:

¶ Prayed in unison:

Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep,

we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,
we have offended against your holy laws,
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;
and there is no health in us.

But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders,
spare us, as we confess our faults,
restore us, as we are penitent,
according to your promises declared unto us in Christ Jesus our Lord;
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of your holy Name. Amen.

3—*The Liturgy of Strasbourg (1539)*

Make confession to God the Lord, and let everyone acknowledge with me his sin and iniquity:

Almighty, eternal God and Father, we confess and acknowledge unto You that we were conceived in unrighteousness and are full of sin and transgression in all our life. We do not fully believe Your Word nor follow Your holy commandments. Remember Your goodness, we beseech You, and for Your Name's sake be gracious unto us, and forgive us our iniquity which, alas, is great Amen.

4—*The Liturgy of Strasbourg (1545)*

My brethren, let each of you present himself before the face of the Lord, and confess his faults and sins, following my words in his heart:

O Lord God, eternal and almighty Father, we confess and sincerely acknowledge before Your holy Majesty that we are poor sinners, conceived and born in iniquity and corruption, prone to do evil, incapable of any good, and that in our depravity we transgress Your holy commandments without end or ceasing; therefore we purchase for ourselves, through Your righteous judgment, our ruin and perdition. Nevertheless, O Lord, we are grieved that we have offended You, and we condemn ourselves and our sins with true repentance, beseeching Your grace to relieve our distress. O God and Father, most gracious and full of compassion, have mercy upon us in the name of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And as You do blot out our sins and stains, magnify and increase in us day by day the grace of Your Holy Spirit; that as we acknowledge our unrighteousness with all our heart, we may be moved by that sorrow which shall bring forth true repentance in us, mortifying all our sins, and producing in us the fruits of righteousness and innocence which are pleasing to You, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

5—*English Congregation at Geneva, 1556*

O Lord God, which art mighty and dreadful, thou that keepest covenant, and shewest mercy to them that love thee and do thy commandments: We have sinned; we have offended; we have wickedly and stubbornly gone back from thy laws and precepts. We would never obey thy servants the prophets that spake in thy name, to our kings and princes, to our forefathers, and to all the people of our land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee; unto us pertaineth nothing but open shame, as it is come to pass this day unto our miserable country of England; yea unto all our nations, whether they be far or near, through all lands, wherein they are scattered for the offences that they and we have committed against thee, so that the curses and punishments which are written in thy law are now poured upon us; and thou hast performed those words wherewith thou didst menace us and our rulers that governed us, in bringing the same plagues upon us which before were threatened. And yet notwithstanding, both they and we proceed in our iniquity, and cease not to heap sin upon sin. For they which once were well instructed in the doctrine of thy gospel, are now gone back from the obedience of thy truth, and are turned again to that most abominable idolatry, from the which they were once called by the lively preaching of thy word. And we, alas! to this day, do not earnestly repent us of our former wickedness, neither do we rightly consider the heaviness of thy displeasure. Such is thy just judgment, O Lord, that thou punisheth sin by sin, and man by his own inventions, so that there can be no end of iniquity, except thou prevent us with thy undeserved grace. Therefore convert us, O Lord, and we shall be converted; for we do not offer up our prayers trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold mercies. And although thou hast once of thy especial grace delivered us from the miserable thralldom of error and blindness, and called us many times to the sweet liberty of thy gospel, which we notwithstanding have most shamefully abused, in obeying rather our own lusts and affections, than the admonitions of thy prophets; yet we beseech thee once again, for thy name's sake, to pour some comfortable drop of thy accustomed mercies upon us; incline thine ears, and open thine eyes, to behold the grievous plagues of our country, the continual sorrows of our afflicted brethren, and our woeful banishment. And let our afflictions and just punishments be an admonition and warning to other nations among whom we are scattered, that with all reverence they may obey thy holy gospel; lest for like contempt, in the end, like or worse plagues fall upon them. Wherefore, O Lord, hear us! O Lord, forgive us! O Lord, consider and tarry not over long! but for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, be merciful unto us, and deliver us. So shall it be known to all the world, that thou only art the selfsame God, that ever showeth mercy to all such as call upon thy holy name.

6—*English Congregation at Geneva, 1556*

O eternal God and most merciful Father, we confess and acknowledge here, before thy divine majesty, that we are miserable sinners, conceived and born in sin and iniquity, so that in us there is no goodness. For the flesh evermore rebels against the spirit, whereby we continually transgress thy holy precepts and commandments, and so purchase to ourselves, through thy just judgment, death and damnation. Notwithstanding, O heavenly Father, forasmuch as we are displeased with ourselves for the sins that we have committed against thee, and do unfeignedly repent us of the same, we most humbly beseech thee, for Jesus Christ's sake, to show thy mercy upon us, to forgive us all our sins, and to increase thy Holy Spirit in us: that we, acknowledging from the bottom of our hearts our own unrighteousness, may from henceforth not only mortify our sinful lusts and affections, but also bring forth such fruits as may be agreeable to thy most blessed will; not for the worthiness thereof, but for the merits of thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, whom thou hast already given [as] an oblation and offering for our sins, and for whose sake we are certainly persuaded that thou wilt deny us nothing that we shall ask in his name, according to thy will. For thy Spirit does assure our consciences that thou art our merciful Father, and so lovest us thy children through him, that nothing is able to remove thy heavenly grace and favour from us. To thee, therefore, O Father, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. So be it.

7—*The Liturgy of Heidelberg (1563)*

Heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God; we acknowledge and confess before your divine Majesty that we are poor miserable sinners, conceived and born in sin and corruption, prone to all evil, and unfit for any good. By our sinful life, we have continually transgressed your holy commandments, provoked your wrath against us and incurred your just judgment to eternal death. But, O Lord, we repent in sorrow that we have thus offended you, we condemn our iniquities, and ourselves and implore you mercifully to help us in our wretchedness and misery. Have mercy upon us, therefore, O most gracious God and Father, and pardon all our sins, for the sake of the holy suffering of your dear Son; Jesus Christ our Lord. And condescend to grant to us, henceforth, the grace of your Holy Spirit, that He may teach: us heartily to know our unrighteousness, and make us so to abhor ourselves, that sin may be slain in us, and we may arise to newness of life. Thus shall we produce the perfect fruits of holiness and righteousness with which, for Christ's sake, You are well pleased.

8—*BCP*

Most merciful God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and hast promised forgiveness to all those who confess and forsake their sins; We

come before thee in an humble sense of our own unworthiness, acknowledging our manifold transgressions of thy righteous laws. But, O gracious Father, who desirest not the death of a sinner, look upon us, we beseech thee, in mercy, and forgive us all our transgressions. Make us deeply sensible of the great evil of them, and work in us an hearty contrition; that we may obtain forgiveness at thy hands, who art ever ready to receive humble and penitent sinners; for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ, our only Savior and Redeemer. Amen.

9—*BCP*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy great mercy hast promised forgiveness of sins to all those who, with hearty repentance and true faith, turn unto thee; Have mercy upon us; pardon and deliver us from all our sins; confirm and strengthen us in all goodness; and bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

10—*Psalter Hymnal*

Heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God, we acknowledge and confess before your divine majesty that we are poor miserable sinners. We were conceived and born in utter wickedness and corruption and are prone to all manner of evil and incapable by nature of doing any good. By our sinful life we transgress your holy commandments without ceasing, and thereby incur your wrath and bring down upon ourselves eternal damnation according to your righteous judgment.

But, we are penitent, Lord, and we grieve because of our sins, whereby we provoked your wrath. We bring accusation against ourselves and lay transgression to our own charge. Yet we make bold to desire that you may in mercy regard our miseries. Have compassion on us, most merciful God and Father, and be pleased to forgive all our sins for the sake of the passion of your dear Son, Jesus Christ.

Grant us also the grace of your Holy Spirit, in order that he may teach us to confess our sins in sincerity of heart, to abhor ourselves indeed, and may lead us to the mortification of sin in our lives. For we earnestly desire to return to a life that is truly holy and righteous and that is acceptable to you through Jesus Christ.

May it also please you to lead us into the comprehension of the holy Word according to your divine will, in order that we may be taught to put our trust wholly in your and not to repose confidence in any creature. May our old nature with all its lusts be increasingly mortified day by day, and may we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to you, to the honor of your name and the edification of our neighbor.

We also beseech you, gracious God, to turn unto yourself in true penitence all that depart from your truth, for we eagerly desire that we all of one accord may serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. This we ask of you through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught and commanded us to pray, saying, Our Father . . .

11—Psalter Hymnal

O eternal God and merciful Father, we humble ourselves before thy great majesty, against which we have frequently and grievously sinned. We acknowledge that if Thou shouldst enter into judgment with us, we would deserve nothing less than eternal death. We are deeply conscious of the fact that, on account of our original sin, we are unclean before Thee and children of wrath. Since we are conceived and born in sin, all manner of evil desires against Thee and our neighbor fill our soul. We continually transgress Thy commandments, failing to do what Thou hast commanded us, and doing that which Thou hast expressly forbidden. We all like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way. We acknowledge our waywardness, and are heartily sorry for all our sins. We confess to our humiliation and to the praise of Thy mercy that our transgressions are innumerable, and that our debt is so great that we cannot even begin to repay. We are not worthy to be called Thy children, nor to lift up our eyes heavenward to Thee in prayer.

Nevertheless, O Lord God and gracious Father, we know that Thou dost not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn to Thee and live; we know that Thy mercy toward those who turn to Thee is infinite; and so we take courage to call upon Thee from the depths of our hearts, trusting in our Mediator Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. We pray that Thou, forgiving all our sins for Christ's sake, wilt have compassion upon us in our infirmities. Wash us in the pure fountain of his blood, so that we may become clean and white as snow. Cover our nakedness with His innocence and righteousness, for the glory of Thy Name. Deliver our understanding from all blindness, and our hearts from all wilfulness and rebellion.

Open now the mouth of Thy servant, and fill it with Thy wisdom and knowledge, that he may boldly proclaim Thy Word in all its purity. Prepare our hearts to receive it, to understand it, and to preserve it. Inscribe Thy law, as Thou hast promised, upon the tablet of our heart, and give us the desire and the strength to walk in the ways of Thy precepts, to the praise and glory of Thy Name, and to the edification of the Church.

All this, gracious Father, we implore in the Name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying: Our Father...Amen.

12—*Book of Common Prayer*

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against your Divine Majesty, provoking most justly your wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance/Declaration of Pardon [Absolution]

Scripture passages for the Assurance of Pardon

Isaiah 1:18

Isaiah 55:6–7

John 3:16

Romans 5:6, 8

Romans 8:1

Galatians 3:13

Titus 2:11–14

1 John 1:9

1 John 2:1C–2

Offering

It is appropriate to speak a brief Scriptural sentence just prior to the offering. Here is the list adapted from the *BCP (1662)*:

Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him; the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land. Psalm 41:1–2

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matt. 5:16

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your

heart will be also. Matt. 6:19–21

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35b

Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. 1 Cor. 9:13–14

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

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9:6–7

Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Gal. 6:6–10

Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 1 Tim. 6:6–7

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. 1 Tim. 6:17–19

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Heb. 13:16

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's

love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:16-18

Offering Prayer

O God, most merciful and gracious of whose bounty we have all received; We beseech Thee to accept this offering of Thy people. Remember is Thy love those who have brought it, and those for whom it is given. And so follow it with Thy blessing that it may relieve those that are needy, and advance the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (Christian Reformed Church Directory, 1928)

Most merciful God and Father; We praise Thee who of Thy bounty has supplied all our needs according to the riches of Thy grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. We beseech Thee to accept our offering, and to help us by Thy Holy Spirit to be good stewards of Thy manifold grace. May this offering bring a blessing to our souls, may it benefit our fellow-men, and above all, may it promote the coming of Thy Kingdom, to the glory and honor of Thy Holy Name; For Jesus' sake. Amen. (Christian Reformed Church Directory, 1928)

Benediction/Closing Prayer

Changed into a closing prayer:

Let us pray.

We pray that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit may be with us all. Amen.

Suggested closing prayers:

May Your peace, O God, which passes all understanding, guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus all the days of our life. Amen.

Grant, Lord, that the glory of Your face which we have beheld in faith through the worship of Your Name in this place may radiate from us, to the increase of Your praise and honor among all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dismiss us, Father, in the conviction of Your constant love, in the certainty of our Savior's grace, and in the assurance of the Holy Spirit's fellowship. Amen.

Lord, our gracious Father, be with our spirits. May your grace be with us always, in Jesus' name. Amen.