The Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America

SECOND REFORMED CHURCH
NEWBRUNSWICK NEW JERSEY
The following forms of worship are adapted from the Reformed Church in America’s *Worship the Lord*. 
THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

ORDER FOR THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

PREPARATION The minister addresses the congregation:
Hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: All authority in heaven and on
earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.
And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20

BIBLICAL WITNESS(ES)

EXPLANATION The minister continues, using one or more of the following:
Baptism is the sign and seal of God’s promises to this covenant people. In
baptism God promises by grace alone: to forgive our sins; to adopt us into
the Body of Christ, the Church; to send the Holy Spirit daily to renew and
cleanse us; and to resurrect us to eternal life. This promise is made visible in
the water of baptism. Water is poured into the font at this time. Water
cleanses; purifies; refreshes; sustains: Jesus Christ is living water. Through
baptism Christ calls us to new obedience: to love and trust God completely;
to forsake the evil of the world; and to live a new and holy life. Yet, when
we fall into sin, we must not despair of God’s mercy, nor continue in sin, for
baptism is the sign and seal of God’s eternal covenant of grace with us.

PRESENTATION An elder presents the adult candidates or the parents of children
for baptism:
On behalf of the Board of Elders
I present (using full names) [who bring their child/children] to receive the
sacrament of baptism.

PROFESSION OF FAITH The minister addresses the parents or candidates:
Beloved of God, you stand before us [having brought this child/these children] to receive the sacrament of baptism. I ask you, therefore, before God and Christ’s church to reject evil, to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, and to confess the faith of the church. Do you renounce sin and the power of evil in your life and in the world?

**I renounce them.**

Who is your Lord and Savior?

**Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.**

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**At the baptism of adults:**

Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, and through worship and service seek to advance God’s purposes here and throughout the world?

**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

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**At the baptism of infants or young children:**

Do you promise to instruct this child/these children in the truth of God’s word, in the way of salvation through Jesus Christ; to pray for them, to teach them to pray; and to train them in Christ’s way by your example, through worship, and in the nurture of the church?

**I do, and I ask God to help me.**

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*The congregation shall rise; the minister or elder addresses the members of the congregation:*

Do you promise to love, encourage, and support these brothers and sisters by teaching the gospel of God’s love, by being an example of Christian faith and character, and by giving the strong support of God’s family in fellowship, prayer, and service?

**We do.**

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**THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

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**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
We give you thanks, O holy and gracious God, for the gift of water. In the beginning of creation your Spirit moved over the waters. In the waters of the flood you destroyed evil. You led the children of Israel through the sea into the freedom of the promised land. In the river Jordan, John baptized our Lord and your Spirit anointed him. By his death and resurrection Jesus Christ, the Living Water, frees us from sin and death and opens the way to life everlasting. We thank you, O God, for the gift of baptism. In this water you confirm to us that we are buried with Christ in his death, raised to share in his resurrection, and are being renewed by the Holy Spirit. Pour out on us your Holy Spirit, so that those here baptized may be washed clean and receive new life.

To you be all honor and glory, dominion and power, now and forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

What is your name? or What is the name of this child?

N__________, For you Jesus Christ came into the world; for you he died and for you he conquered death; All this he did for you, little one, though you know nothing of it as yet. We love because God first loved us.

THE BAPTISMAL FORMULA

N__________, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE BAPTISMAL ANNOINTING

The minister may place a hand on the person’s head and may mark on the forehead the sign of the cross, saying to each:

N__________, child of the covenant, in baptism, you are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ’s own forever. Amen.

DECLARATION, BLESSING, AND WELCOME

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church, this child/these children of God is/are now received into the visible membership of the holy catholic Church, engaged to confess the faith of Christ, and to be God’s faithful servant/s until life’s end.

Let us pray.
Gracious God, we thank you that you cleanse and renew these your children through your grace alone. Bless and strengthen them daily with the gift of your Holy Spirit; unfold to them the riches of your love, deepening their faith, keeping them from the power of evil and enabling them to live a holy and blameless life until your kingdom comes. Amen.

At the baptism of children:
Look with kindness upon these parents. Let them ever rejoice in the gift you have given them. Grant them the presence of your Holy Spirit that they may bring up these children to know you, to love you, and to serve you. Amen.

THE WELCOME
Welcome our new brothers and sisters in Christ. Joyfully we receive you into the body of Christ. Join with us as we give witness in the world to the good news, for we are all one in Christ Jesus. Alleluia.

THE BAPTISMAL BLESSING
The following blessing may be said or sung by the congregation while the elders may greet the baptismal group:
The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.
PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH

ORDER FOR PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH

PART I: BEFORE THE ELDERS
Scripture promises:
If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that
God raised him from the dead,
you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified,
and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, “No
one who believes in him will be put to shame.” Romans 10:9-11

Let us pray.
O Lord, source of all light and life, illumine us with your wisdom that what
we do at this time may be pleasing in your sight; that your church may be
strengthened and increased; and that your name be glorified among your
people in both the church and the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SHARING OF FAITH STORIES

THE QUESTIONS
Dearly beloved in the Lord, in baptism, we are grafted into Christ, received
into the household of faith, and
made inheritors of the covenant of which baptism is the sign and seal. In
grace and mercy, God, by the Holy Spirit, has implanted faith through Word
and sacrament. You have come now before God and the church to profess
your faith in Christ.

Do you believe in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and do you confess
Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?
I do.
Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the only rule for faith and life?
I do.
Do you, relying on the grace of God, promise to confess Christ publicly before others, to serve Christ daily, and to walk in Jesus’ way?
I do.
Do you promise to exhibit the joy of new life in Christ; to share fully in the life of the church; to be faithful in worship and service; and to offer your prayers and gifts?
I do.
Do you promise to accept the spiritual guidance of the church; to walk in a spirit of Christian love with this congregation; and to seek those things which make for unity, purity, and peace?
I do.

BLESSING
Be assured that as you declare your faith, God will be faithful to strengthen you, and to renew you by the Holy Spirit, that you may grow in grace and knowledge, and may keep this covenant faithfully all your days.
Let us pray.
Almighty God, we praise you that by the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself; and that by the sealing of your Holy Spirit you have bound us to Christ and his service. We thank you for the baptismal covenant you make with all your servants. As your grace has drawn Ns ____________ to you, continue to strengthen and sustain them. By your Holy Spirit, daily increase in them your gifts: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the reverence of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who has taught us to pray, saying: Our Father in heaven…Amen.

PART II: BEFORE THE CONGREGATION

PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION The minister addresses the congregation from the font:
Hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.
And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
*Matthew 28:18-20*

Hear also these words from Holy Scripture: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.
*Ephesians 4:4-6*

**PRESENTATION**

The elders of Second Reformed Church have welcomed these persons who appeared before them and made profession of their Christian faith.

\[Ns\]____________________

They have been baptized into the body of Christ, and in making public this profession of faith they affirm the meaning of their baptism. We ask them now to declare their faith before God and Christ’s church, that we may rejoice together and welcome them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Please come forward.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

Beloved of God, I ask you before God and Christ’s church to reject evil, to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, and to confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce sin and the power of evil in your life and in the world?
**I renounce them.**

Who is your Lord and Savior?
**Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.**

Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, and, through worship and service, seek to advance God’s purposes here and throughout the world?
**I will, and I ask God to help me.**

Do you promise to accept the spiritual guidance of the church, to walk in a spirit of Christian love with this congregation, and to seek those things that make for unity, purity, and peace?
**I do.**

*The congregation shall rise and the minister or elder addresses the members of the congregation:*
Do you promise to love, encourage, and support *these brothers and sisters* by teaching the gospel of God’s love, by being an example of Christian faith and character, and by giving the strong support of God’s family in fellowship, prayer, and service?

**We do.**

**THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Minister and Elders continue by laying hands on the heads of all those being received, offering the prayer of blessing.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Defend, O Lord, this your servant N__________ with your heavenly grace, that he/she may continue yours forever, and daily increase in your Spirit more and more, until he/she comes to your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The minister invites the congregation to stand:*

By the Holy Spirit all who believe and are baptized receive a ministry to witness to Jesus as Savior and Lord, and to love and serve those with whom they live and work. We are ambassadors for Christ, who reconciles and makes whole. We are the salt of the earth; we are the light of the world. Welcome our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Joyfully we receive you. Join with us as we give witness in the world to the good news, for we are all one in Christ Jesus. Alleluia.**

*The following blessing may be said or sung by the congregation while the elders greet the new confessing members:*

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen. **Numbers 6:24-26**
THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S TABLE

THE ORDER FOR THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S TABLE

MEANING OF THE SACRAMENT
Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy Supper which we are about to celebrate is a feast of remembrance, of communion, and of hope. We come in remembrance that our Lord Jesus Christ was sent of the Father into the world to assume our flesh and blood and to fulfill for us all obedience to the divine law, even to the bitter and shameful death of the cross. By his death, resurrection, and ascension he established a new and eternal covenant of grace and reconciliation that we might be accepted of God and never be forsaken by him. We come to have communion with this same Christ who has promised to be with us always, even to the end of the world. In the breaking of the bread he makes himself known to us as the true heavenly Bread that strengthens us unto life eternal. In the cup of blessing he comes to us as the Vine in whom we must abide if we are to bear fruit. We come in hope, believing that this bread and this cup are a pledge and foretaste of the feast of love of which we shall partake when his kingdom has fully come, when with unveiled face we shall behold him, made like unto him in his glory. Since by his death, resurrection, and ascension Christ has obtained for us the life-giving Spirit who unites us all in one body, so are we to receive this Supper in true love, mindful of the communion of saints.

INVITATION

COMMUNION PRAYER
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts!
We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.
Holy and right it is, and our joyful duty to give thanks to you at all times and in all places, O Lord our Creator, almighty and everlasting God! You created heaven with all its hosts and the earth with all its plenty. You have given us life and being, and preserve us by your providence. But you have shown us the fullness of your love in sending into the world your Son, Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, made flesh for us and for our salvation. For the precious gift of this mighty Savior who has reconciled us to you we praise and bless you, O God. With your whole Church on earth and with all the company of heaven we worship and adore your glorious name.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**
**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**
**Hosanna in the highest!**
**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**
**Hosanna in the highest!**

Most righteous God, we remember in this Supper the perfect sacrifice offered once on the cross by our Lord Jesus Christ for the sin of the whole world. In the joy of his resurrection and in expectation of his coming again, we offer ourselves to you as holy and living sacrifices. Together we proclaim the mystery of the faith:

**Christ has died!**
**Christ is risen!**
**Christ will come again!**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray, that the bread which we break and the cup which we bless may be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Grant that, being joined together in him, we may attain to the unity of the faith and grow up in all things into Christ our Lord. And as this grain has been gathered from many fields into one loaf, and these grapes from many hills into one cup, grant, O Lord, that your whole Church may soon be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom. **Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**

**COMMUNION**

The Lord Jesus, the same night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you: do this in remembrance of me.”
Lifting the cup, the minister shall say: After the same manner also, he took the cup when they had supped, saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

In partaking of the bread it shall be said:
The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

In partaking of the cup it shall be said:
The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

Adapted from Psalm 103, with additions

Brothers and sisters, since the Lord has now fed us at his Table, let us praise God’s holy name with heartfelt thanksgiving! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.

The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

As a father has compassion for his children,
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him,
who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, and will also give us all things with him.

Therefore shall my mouth and heart show forth the praise of the Lord, from this time forth forevermore. Amen.
INTERCESSION FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS

ORDER FOR PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN HEALING & WHOLENESS

LITANY OF INTERCESSION
O God the Father, whose will for us and for all your people is health and salvation,

have mercy on us.
O God the Son, who came that we might have life and have it in abundance,

have mercy on us.
O God the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling makes our bodies the temples of your presence,

have mercy on us.

O Triune God, we pray you to hear us, and that you will grant your grace to all who stand in need of healing both of body and spirit, and lead them to look with confidence to you, especially…

Ns

O Wise God, we pray you to hear us, and that in your providential grace you will grant guidance, discernment and direction to all in need of it, and lead them to look with confidence to you, especially…

Ns

O God, who in Jesus Christ called us out of the darkness into your marvelous light; enable us always to declare your wonderful deeds, thank you for your steadfast love, and praise you with heart, soul, mind, and strength, now and forever. Amen.
BIBLICAL WITNESS
Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.  

James 5.13-16

INVITATION
In the name of the Lord Jesus, who sent forth his disciples to preach the kingdom of God and to heal, we invite you who wish to receive the laying on of hands and the anointing with oil to come forward. If you desire us to come to you, please raise your hand or ask a neighbor to do so for you. We invite all here present to participate in this act of faith through the offering of silent prayers for those who seek Christian healing.

BLESSING AND ANNOINTING WITH OIL
Eternal God, for Jesus’ sake, send your Holy Spirit upon your servant, N____________; drive away all sickness of body and spirit; make whole that which is broken. Grant deliverance from evil and true faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING
Most gracious God, source of all healing, we give thanks to you for all your gifts, but most of all for the gift of your Son, through whom you gave and still give health and salvation to all who believe. As we wait in expectation for the coming of that day when suffering and pain shall be no more, help us by your Holy Spirit to be assured of your power in our lives and to trust in your eternal love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS

ORDER FOR THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

PRESENTATION
Beloved in the Lord, we have come to ordain and install elders and deacons in Christ’s holy church.
Christ alone is the source of all Christian ministry, through the ages calling men and women to serve.
By the Holy Spirit all who believe and are baptized receive a ministry to witness to Jesus as Savior and Lord, and to love and serve those with whom they live and work. We are ambassadors for Christ, who reconciles and makes whole. We are the salt of the earth; we are the light of the world. Following Christ’s resurrection and ascension, God has given the church apostles, prophets, and teachers, deeds of power, gifts of healing, forms of assistance and leadership. We stand within a tradition where God calls and empowers deacons, elders, and ministers of Word and sacrament.

The elder vice president of consistory invites the candidates forward, saying:
This congregation has elected the following people to the offices of deacon and elder:

NN/s ___________________________, to be ordained and installed to the Office of Deacon;

NN/s ___________________________, to be ordained and installed to the Office of Elder;

NN/s ___________________________, to be installed as deacon;
and NN/s ___________________, to be installed as elder.

The candidates shall remain standing; the presiding minister continues:
Deacons and elders are called to serve as Christ served. We look to them to be people of spiritual commitment, exemplary life, compassionate spirit, and sound judgment. Deacons are set apart for a ministry of mercy, service, and outreach. They gather gifts and offerings, care for them faithfully, and distribute them with wisdom and compassion to persons in need and for purposes that advance God’s kingdom on earth. Deacons visit and comfort the distressed, provide for whatever necessities may arise, and assist the congregation at services of worship. Elders are set apart for a ministry of watchful and responsible care for the welfare and order of the church. They have oversight of all members, including one another, the deacons, and the minister, equipping everyone to live in harmony with God’s Word. They ensure the Word of God is rightly proclaimed and taught, and the sacraments faithfully administered. Elders assist the minister/s with their good counsel, and serve all Christians with advice, consolation, and encouragement. Elders and deacons, together with the minister, form the consistory to lead God’s people in proclaiming good news to the poor, righteousness to the nations, and peace among all. The consistory provides for the welfare of the church, stewardship of property and finance, and the spiritual benefit and growth of all Christ’s people. As the three offices of deacon, elder, and minister of Word and sacrament, are united in Christ, so also in the church one office is not separate from the others. The minister of Word and sacrament does not serve without the elder and neither without the deacon. Together they enable the whole mission of the church. Everything in the church will be done decently and in order when faithful persons are called to office, and responsibly fulfill their charge.

The presiding minister addresses the deacons- and elders-elect:
Brothers and sisters, before almighty God, and in the presence of this congregation, answer sincerely these questions:
Do you confess together with us and the church throughout the ages your faith in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
Yes, truly, with all my heart.
Let us all stand with these brothers and sisters, confessing our faith in the words of the Apostles’ Creed.
I believe in God, the Father almighty....Amen.
The congregation is seated; the candidates remain standing; the presiding minister addresses the candidates:

Do you believe in your heart that you are called by Christ’s church, and therefore by God, to this office?

Yes, truly, with all my heart.

Do you believe the books of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and the perfect doctrine of salvation, rejecting all contrary beliefs?

Yes, truly, with all my heart.

Will you be diligent in your study of Holy Scripture and in your use of the means of grace? Will you pray for God’s people and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you accept the church’s order and governance, submitting to ecclesiastical discipline should you become delinquent in either life or doctrine?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Will you be loyal to the witness and work of the Reformed Church in America, using all your abilities to further its Christian mission here and throughout the world?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

The presiding minister shall address the candidates for the Office of Deacon:

As deacons, will you faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully manifest Christ’s love and care, gather and distribute the offerings of God’s people, visit and comfort the distressed, minister to the poor and needy, and strive to advance God’s reign of justice and peace?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

The presiding minister shall address the candidates for the Office of Elder:

As elders, will you faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully study God’s Word, oversee the household of faith, encourage spiritual growth, maintain loving discipline, and provide for the proclamation of the gospel and the celebration of the sacraments?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

ORDINATION

Those who are to be ordained shall kneel individually before the presiding minister for prayer with the laying on of hands. The great consistory may join in the laying on of
hands during the prayer. When all have come forward and are in place, the presiding minister shall say:

Let us pray.
God of grace, pour out your Holy Spirit, gentle as a dove, burning as fire, upon \[N\]__________________, and fill her/him with grace and power for this ministry of deacon/elder in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

When all ordinands have received prayer with the laying on of hands, the presiding minister continues:
In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only head of the church, I declare that \[NNs\]________________, are ordained to the Office of Deacon and \[NNs_________________________] are ordained to the Office of Elder.

INSTALLATION
Elders and deacons of the great consistory extend the right hand of fellowship to the new elders and deacons before returning to their places. All elders and deacons being installed face the congregation. The presiding minister addresses them:

Elders \[N/s\]__________________, and deacons \[N/s\]________________________, be faithful in performing your duties, magnify the One who has called you to these high and holy offices, be zealous for the church of Christ, hospitable, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. Love goodness, holding always to the mystery of the faith.

The presiding minister addresses the congregation:
Members of Second Reformed Church, please rise to affirm your covenant with the elders and deacons whom God has given us. Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, do you receive in the name of the Lord, these deacons and elders as duly elected and ordained servants of Christ?

We do.
Do you promise to respect them for the sake of the offices for which they have been chosen and ordained?

We do.
Do you promise to encourage and pray for them, to labor together in obedience to the gospel for the unity, purity, and peace of the church, the welfare of the whole world, and the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ?

We do.
Beloved people of God, receive these deacons and elders as Christ’s own servants. Support them in love, that their work may bear fruit. In the name and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, I declare that these brothers and sisters are duly installed deacons and elders in this church. 

Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION with THE LORD’S PRAYER
Almighty and ever loving God, you taught us to pray for ourselves and for others, and to give thanks for all of life. May every grace of ministry rest on these elders and deacons, keep them strong and faithful, that your church may prosper in peace. Grant them wisdom, courage, discretion, and benevolence, that they may fulfill their charge to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Lord in your mercy…Hear our prayer;
Bestow your grace on this people that they may support these deacons and elders with prayer, cooperation, and encouragement, to guard them from growing weary in doing what is right. Inspire your whole church with your Spirit of power, unity, and peace. Grant that all who trust you may live together in love.

Lord in your mercy…Hear our prayer;
Lead all nations in the way of justice. Direct those who govern; may they be fair, maintain order, support those in need, and defend the oppressed, that the world may know true peace.

Lord in your mercy…Hear our prayer;
Give grace to all who proclaim the gospel through Word and sacrament and deeds of mercy, that by such proclaiming the gospel others may come to live for you.

Lord in your mercy…Hear our prayer;

Comfort and deliver, O Lord, all who are in trouble…sorrow…poverty…sickness…grief… Heal them in body, mind, spirit, or circumstance, working in them, by your grace, wonders beyond their dreams and hopes, through Jesus Christ our Savior, who taught us to pray, boldly saying:
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Or

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

THE STANDARDS

A THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Or

B THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets, and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

A THE APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.
THE APOSTLES’ CREED
I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the
Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was
crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he
rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the
right hand of God the Father almighty. From thence he shall come to
judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy
catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

OUR SONG OF HOPE

Our Song of Hope
We sing to our Lord a new song;
We sing in our world a sure Hope:
Our God loves this world,
God called it into being,
God renews it through Jesus
Christ,
God governs it by the Spirit.
God is the world's true Hope.

II. Our Song in a Hopeless World
2. We know Christ to be our only hope. We have enmeshed our world in a realm of sin, rebelled against God, accepted inhuman oppression of humanity, and even crucified God's son. God's world has been trapped by our fall, governments entangled by human pride, and nature polluted by human greed.

I. Our Hope in the Coming of the Lord
1. We are a people of hope waiting for the return of our Lord. God has come to us through the ancient people of Israel, as the true Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, as the Holy Spirit at work in our world. Our Lord speaks to us now through the inspired Scriptures. Christ is with us day by day.

III. Jesus Christ our only Hope
3. Our only hope is Jesus Christ. After we refused to live in the image of God, He was born of the virgin Mary, sharing our genes and our instincts, entering our culture,
speaking our language, fulfilling the law of our God. Being united to Christ's humanity, we know ourselves when we rest in Him.

4. Jesus Christ is the hope of God's world. In His death, the justice of God is established; forgiveness of sin is proclaimed. On the day of the resurrection, the tomb was empty; His disciples saw Him; death was defeated; new life had come. God's purpose for the world was sealed.

5. Our ascended Lord gives hope for two ages. In the age to come, Christ is the judge, rejecting unrighteousness, isolating God's enemies to hell, blessing the new creation in Christ. In this age, the Holy Spirit is with us, calling nations to follow God's path, uniting people through Christ in love.

IV. Our Hope in God's Words

6. The Holy Spirit speaks through the Scriptures. The Spirit has inspired Hebrew and Greek words, setting God's truth in human language, placing God's teaching in ancient cultures, proclaiming the Gospel in the history of the world. The Spirit speaks truly what the nations must know, translating God's word into modern languages, impressing it on human hearts and cultures.

7. The Holy Spirit speaks through the Church, measuring its words by the canonical Scriptures. The Spirit has spoken in the ancient creeds, and in the confessions of the Reformation. The world is called to bear witness to Christ in faithfulness to the Scriptures, in harmony with the church of the ages, and in unity with all Christ's people.

8. God's Spirit speaks in the world according to God's ultimate word in Christ. In every time and place, in ancient cities and distant lands, in technology and business, in art and education, God has not been left without a witness. The Word has entered where we have failed to go.

9. In each year and in every place we expect the coming of Christ's Spirit. As we listen to the world's concerns, hear the cry of the oppressed, and learn of new discoveries, God will give us knowledge, teach us to respond with maturity, and give us courage to act with integrity.

V. Our Hope in Daily Life

10. As citizens we acknowledge the Spirit's work in human
government for the welfare of the people, for justice among the poor, for mercy towards the prisoner, against inhuman oppression of humanity. We must obey God above all rulers, waiting upon the Spirit, filled with the patience of Christ.

11. We pray for the fruits of the Spirit of Christ who works for peace on earth, commands us to love our enemies, and calls for patience among the nations. We give thanks for God's work among governments, seeking to resolve disputes by means other than war, placing human kindness above national pride, replacing the curse of war with international self-control.

12. We hear the Spirit's call to love one another opposing discrimination of race or sex, inviting us to accept one another, and to share at every level in work and play, in church and state, in marriage and family, and so fulfill the love of Christ.

13. As male and female we look to the Spirit Who makes us the stewards of life to plan its beginning, to love in its living, and to care in its dying. God makes us the stewards of marriage with its lifelong commitment to love; yet God knows our frailty of heart.

14. The Spirit leads us into Truth--the Truth of Christ's salvation, into increasing knowledge of all existence. He rejoices in human awareness of God's creation and gives freedom to those on the frontiers of research. We are overwhelmed by the growth in our knowledge. While our truths come in broken fragments, we expect the Spirit to unite these in Christ.

VI. Our Hope in the Church

15. Christ elects the church to proclaim the Word and celebrate the sacraments, to worship God's name, and to live as true disciples. He creates a community to be a place of prayer, to provide rest for the weary, and to lead people to share in service.

16. The Holy Spirit sends the church to call sinners to repentance, to proclaim the good news that Jesus is personal Savior and Lord. The Spirit sends it out in ministry to preach good news to the poor, righteousness to the nations, and peace among all people.

17. The Holy Spirit builds one church, united in one Lord and one hope, with one ministry around one table. The Spirit calls all believers in Jesus to respond in worship together, to accept all the
gifts from the Spirit, to learn from each other's traditions, to make unity visible on earth.

18. Christ places baptism in the world as a seal of God's covenant people, placing them in ministry, assuring them of the forgiveness of sins. God knows those who are baptized in Jesus' name, guiding the church gently to lead us, calling us back when we go astray, promising life amid trials and death.

19. Christ places the Lord's table in this world. Jesus takes up our bread and wine to represent His sacrifice, to bind His ministry to our daily work, to unite us in His righteousness. Here Christ is present in His world proclaiming salvation until He comes, a symbol of hope for a troubled age.

VII. Our Hope in the Age to Come

20. God saves the world through Jesus. Those who call on that name will have life. Christ's hand reaches out beyond those who say "Lord" to the infants who live in the atmosphere of faith, even to the farthest stars and planets all creation. The boundaries of God's love are not known, the Spirit works at the ends of the world before the church has there spoken a word.

21. God will renew the world through Jesus, who will put all unrighteousness out, purify the works of human hands, and perfect their fellowship in divine love. Christ will wipe away every tear; death shall be no more. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, and all creation will be filled with God's glory.

OUR PRAYER  
Come, Lord Jesus: We are open to your Spirit. We await your full presence.  
Our world finds rest in you alone.