Westminster Presbyterian Church is committed to the evangelical proclamation of the Gospel, rooted in Biblical authority and the historic Christian faith. We are a church body devoted to the cultivation of God-centered thinking, Christ-like character, and a faith expressed in deeds of love and mercy.

WPC is affiliated with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Please join us for morning worship on Sundays at 11am. The worship service is preceded by Sunday School at 9:45am, except during the summer months. We meet again for an evening service at 5pm.

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A Background to Liturgy

The word “liturgy” does not imply a highly formal structure of worship, such as is often supposed. The Greek root for this word simply denotes “acts of worship,” and in this sense, every church has some sort of liturgy, a more or less predictable way of conducting worship by including certain “acts” and omitting others. Liturgical considerations are based on two general principles, namely, elements and arrangement. Every church has to decide on what elements to include and how to arrange them, in order to make liturgy most conducive to the worship of God. However, choices with regards to elements and arrangement can easily obscure the most fundamental concern underlying the question of liturgy: What, after all, is worship?

Under the leadership of the Swiss Reformers, particularly Calvin, the most radical liturgical reform that the Christian church has ever known was brought about. It is important to retain the proper meaning of “reform.” The Reformers saw themselves not as reinventing the wheel or beginning over again, but as returning to the liturgy of the early/primitive church. Thus, it is not at all surprising that a juxtaposition of, say, the Geneva liturgy and the liturgy of Justin Martyr (103–65 AD) shows striking similarities. The early church included two main parts in its liturgy—the service of the Word (reading & preaching) and the service of Holy Communion. Intercessory prayers formed a bridge between the two. All in all, the church services consisted of four basic elements: prayer, singing (praise), the Word (preached and as Sacrament), as well as the giving of offerings, usually at the time of the Supper. This simple division was recovered in the Reformation, at a time when Roman Catholic services had all but abandoned the preaching of the Word, not to speak of other aggravating distortions, particularly relating to Communion and the exclusive use of Latin, a linguistic medium the common people no longer understood.

To these abuses the Reformers reacted intensely. They recognized that the liturgy in the Roman church placed stress almost exclusively on the Sacrament, whereas the early church had given equal emphasis on Word and Sacrament, and in this order. The order and balance was restored, and is also reflected in WPC’s liturgy. The sequence is crucial, since the Sacrament is meaningless without the definition of the Word, both read and preached. The Word (both read and preached) precedes the Sacrament. As is evident from WPC’s liturgical structure, offerings, singing, and praise are included as well, as they were in the early church and Reformed liturgy.

By far the most salient contribution of Reformed liturgical worship, however, is its theological rationale, and this notion corresponds with the above fundamental question of the nature and meaning of worship. The Reformers understood and practiced worship as a meeting of God and his people. Accordingly, God acts in public worship and the congregation responds in faith through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the defining aspect of Reformed liturgy is that God acts as the initiator and we react as responders. In worship, God and his people interact in the power of the Spirit.

Included is a representative liturgy of WPC with some further comments and thoughts.