

ON THE CORPORATE WORSHIP OF GOD

Adopted by the Session – August 2015

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS: At Christ Covenant Church, we emphasize God-centered worship on the Lord's Day according to His Word. The Bible is the authoritative Word of God, which is our only rule to guide us in worship. We hold to the "regulative principle", which is defined as worshipping God as He has instructed us in His Word. True worship is to God alone, (Exodus 20:3, Matthew 4:10, Deuteronomy 6:13), and He is the audience of our worship. The following elements of worship are either prescribed or supported in God's Word:

1. Prayer through Christ (Acts 2:42; 1 Timothy 2:8; Ephesians 2:18; Colossians 3:17; James 4:3)
2. Reading of Scripture (Romans 10:17)
3. Sound Preaching and Faithful Hearing of the Word (Colossians 1:17-18; Acts 2:42)
4. Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs (Acts 2:42; Colossians 3:16)
5. Confession of Faith in Christ (Hebrews 10:23-24)
6. Presentation of Tithes and Offerings (Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:2)
7. Solemn Vows (1 Timothy 4:14)
8. Sacraments (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24)

THE WORD: God's Word as revealed to us in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is central to the worship at Christ Covenant Church. The Word is prayed, sung, read, confessed, preached, and faithfully heard during our service.

THE SACRAMENTS: The Lord's Supper and Baptism are essential to the life of the Church. At Christ Covenant, the Lord's Supper is administered ordinarily on the first Sunday of each month. The primary meaning of the Lord's Supper is to communicate the ongoing fellowship we enjoy with Christ by grace and through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. We believe that the elements of this sacrament are common bread and wine, but do spiritually represent the body and blood of our Lord. This Covenant meal is more than a mere commemoration of the Lord's death. It is a means of grace. When a believer partakes of the Supper by faith the Holy Spirit spiritually nourishes him, as all the saving benefits of Christ are applied to the believer. In contrast, anyone who partakes of the Supper in an unworthy manner, (unbelievers, young children not yet admitted to the table by the Session, or anyone who cannot discern the body and blood) will be drinking judgment on himself (1 Corinthians 11:29). The meaning of baptism is to show forth the work of God the Holy Spirit in cleansing the heart from sin and thereby regenerating a dead sinner to newness of life. At Christ Covenant, we hold to Covenant Theology. As such, we believe that recipients of the sacrament of baptism are believers and their children. Our view of baptism is based on what God does in sovereignly saving lost sinners. We believe that baptism is a sign and a seal of the Covenant God has made with his people. When an infant is baptized, we celebrate this Covenant and anticipate the day when the child will repent and turn to Christ in faith.

ORDER OF WORSHIP: Worship is giving God the glory due His name (Psalm 29:1-2). We are created and redeemed to give praise to God. The congregation of God's people gather on the Lord's Day to worship God, enjoy His blessings, hear Him speak to us, and respond in praise and gratitude. At Christ Covenant, our typical order of worship includes:

1. **SILENT PREPARATION** – The congregation lets go of the things of the world and considers instead things eternal, preparing to be focused on the worship of our God.

2. **CALL TO WORSHIP** – God speaks to us first in worship, calling us from his Word into his presence to give him praise.
3. **HYMN OF ADORATION** – The congregation responds by singing praises of adoration back to God.
4. **INVOCATION AND LORD’S PRAYER** – We respond again by praying to God asking Him to receive our worship and then praying to God in the way that He taught us.
5. **SONG OF PRAISE** – The congregation sings praises in response to God’s goodness to us.
6. **TAKING OF VOWS** - As occasions arise, vows are taken (membership, ordination and/or installation of officers).
7. **SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM** - As occasions arise, Baptisms are administered.
8. **CONFESSION OF FAITH** – The congregation stands and boldly confesses what we believe to be true, using God’s Word directly or creeds and confessions (Nicene Creed, Apostles Creed, Westminster Confession, Heidelberg Catechism).
9. **READING OF GOD’S WORD** – The congregation hears God speaking to us through His Word.
10. **CONFESSION OF SIN AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON** – The congregation confesses our sins individually and then hears God’s Assurance of His pardon for those that believe in Him.
11. **SONG OF REFLECTION** – The congregation responds in humble gratitude through song.
12. **PASTORAL PRAYER** – The congregation is led in a prayer of praise and adoration as well as intercession and petition.
13. **OFFERING** – The congregation gives back to God through tithes and offerings.
14. **DOXOLOGY** – Praise is given to God in song remembering our blessings.
15. **SERMON** – God speaks to the congregation through the sound preaching of His Word. The congregation responds through the faithful hearing of the Word preached.
16. **HYMN OF RESPONSE** – The congregation responds once more with songs of praise to God.
17. **SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER** – On the first Lord’s Day of the month, the Lord’s Supper is served.
18. **BENEDICTION** – God’s blessing is pronounced on the congregation and the worship service is dismissed.