THE ORDER FOR THE SACRAMENT
OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

The Constitution of the Reformed Church in America (Article 9, Section 5) states that “the order for the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper must be read.” The congregation may use this revised Order or either of the two Orders from Liturgy and Psalms, 1906, given on p. 75 and p. 85.

In this revision, the Order of Worship will be followed through the Offering and Doxology. If the Exhortation from the Preparatory Service has not been read, it should be used before the Prayer of Confession. After the Offering, the service proceeds as follows. The minister may read the Meaning of the Sacrament as given under I or II.

Meaning of the Sacrament

I

Beloved in the Lord, as we come to the holy Supper of our Lord and Savior, it is fitting that we consider to what end our Lord has instituted it.

“This do,” he said, “in remembrance of me.”

We are, therefore, to remember that our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the promises made in the Old Testament, was sent of the Father into the world; that he assumed our flesh and blood; that he bore for us the wrath of God, under which we should have perished everlastingly; that he fulfilled for us all obedience to the divine law; that he, although innocent, was condemned to death so that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God; that he took upon himself the curse due to us so that he might fill us with his blessings; that he humbled himself unto death, even the bitter and shameful death of the cross, when he cried out with a loud voice, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” so that we might be accepted of God and never be forsaken of him; and finally, that he confirmed with the shedding of his blood the new and eternal covenant of grace and reconciliation, when he said, “It is finished.”

“This is my body, broken for you,” he said, “This cup is the new testament in my blood.”

We are, therefore, to believe these promises which Jesus Christ, who is the truth, has himself given us. It is his will that we be partakers of his body and blood and share in all his benefits, so that he may dwell in us and we in him. We may not doubt that he will perform in our hearts and lives all that these outward signs signify and that he who is the true heavenly bread will nourish and strengthen us to life eternal. For in this Supper we share in the infinite goodness of our Savior and are made partakers of all his blessings, of life eternal, righteousness, and glory.

But in this Supper of remembrance and communion we must also lift up our hearts in hope. For we do this, as he commanded, till he come. As we eat this break and drink this cup, he gives us a pledge and foretaste of that feast of love of which we shall partake when his kingdom has fully come. Under the veil of earthly things we now have communion with him. But with unveiled face we shall behold him, rejoicing in his glory, made like unto him in his glory. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

And as by his death, resurrection, and ascension he has obtained for us the life-giving Spirit who, dwelling in him as the Head and in us as his members, unites us all in one body, so are we to receive this Supper in brotherly love, mindful of the communion of saints. As the holy Apostle says, “We being many are one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.” Hereto assist us the almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through his Holy Spirit. Amen.

Or,
II

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 this glory.

Since by his death, resurrection, and ascension he has obtained for us the life-giving Spirit who unites us all in one body, so are we to receive this Supper in true brotherly love, mindful of the communion of saints.

Come, for all things are now ready.

Hymn

During the singing of this hymn, the minister and consistory shall take their places at the Lord's Table, if they have not already done so. Before the singing of this hymn, an invitation to partake of the Sacrament may be extended to communicants present who are not members of this particular congregation.

Communion Prayer

Having taken his place at the Lord's Table, the minister shall say:

Let us lift up our hearts unto the Lord!

Holy and right it is and our joyful duty to give thanks to thee at all times and in all places, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God. Thou didst create the heaven with all its hosts and the earth with all its plenty. Thou hast given us life and being and dost preserve us by thy providence. But thou hast shown us the fullness of thy love in sending into the world thy eternal Word, even Jesus Christ our Lord, who became man for us men and for our salvation. For the precious gift of this mighty Savior who has reconciled us to thee we praise and bless thee, O God.

Therefore with thy whole Church on earth and with all the company of heaven we worship and adore thy glorious name.

Here may be said or sung:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!
A short period of silence.

Holy and righteous Father, as we commemorate in this Supper that perfect sacrifice once offered 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 to thee ourselves as holy and living sacrifices. Send thy Holy Spirit upon us, we pray thee, that the bread which we break may be to us the communion of the body of Christ and the cup which we bless the communion of his blood. Grant that being joined together in him we may attain to the unity of the faith and grow up in all things into him who is the Head, even 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 thy whole Church may soon be gathered from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

And now, as our savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

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. And 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.

If no confession of faith has been made previously in the Order, it shall be made here.

Communion

The minister shall then say:

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread (here he shall take the bread in his hand); and when he had given thanks, he broke it (here the minister shall break the bread) and gave it to them, saying, “Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.”

After the same manner also, he took the cup (here the minister shall take the cup in his hand), when they had supped, saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.”

In distributing the bread, the minister shall say:

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

And in giving the cup:

The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Communion Thanksgiving

After the communion, the minister shall proceed as follows, the congregation reading its part responsively or in unison with the minister.

Beloved in the Lord, since the Lord has now fed our souls at his Table, let us therefore jointly praise his holy name with thanksgiving and everyone say with mouth and heart:

Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless his holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
And forget not 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 requite 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 pities his children,  
So the Lord pities 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.

Prayers of Intercession

The following prayers may be used, or the minister may choose from the Intercessory Prayers in the Treasury of Prayers, or suitably express the intercessions in his own words.

Let us pray.

Thanksgiving and praise be to thee, O Lord, that thou hast fed us at thy Table. Grateful for thy gifts and mindful of the communion of thy saints, we offer to thee our prayers for all men everywhere.

God of all pity, we remember before thee the poor and the afflicted, the sick and the dying, the prisoners and the lonely, the victims of war, injustice, and inhumanity, and all who suffer from whatever their suffering may be called.

Silence.

Sovereign Master of the world, who dost hold the destiny of the nations in thy hand, we pray for our country. Assist those who exercise authority among us in the discharge of their duty. Grant peace to the world so that all men may live and serve thee in righteousness and liberty.

Silence.

Look upon thy Church in its struggle on the earth. Have mercy on its weakness, bring to an end its unhappy divisions, scatter its fears, increase its courage, strengthen its faith, and inspire its witness to the people even to the ends of the earth.

Silence.

Author of grace, our Father, send thy blessing on thy children here present; keep their hearts and their thoughts in Jesus Christ thy Son, our only Savior.

To him be glory with thee, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and forevermore. Amen.

Hymn
During the singing the table may be covered.

Benediction

The following or another suitable form may be used.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your minds and hearts in the knowledge and love of God and of Jesus Christ his Son, our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be and abide with you, now and always. Amen.

When the Lord’s Supper is celebrated in the sickroom, the reading of Meaning of the Sacrament (II), that part of the Prayer beginning with Holy and righteous Father, the Words of Institution, and the Communion Thanksgiving will be a satisfactory order, by direction of the General Synod.