



Reformation Covenant Church
O r e g o n C i t y

Membership Orientation



Revised: August 5th, 2021



Table of Contents

<i>Week 1: Introductions</i>	5
<i>Week 2: A Concept of Church Membership</i>	6
<i>Membership Vows</i>	8
<i>Week 2: Theology Proper</i>	17
<i>Week 3: Creation and the Sabbath</i>	18
<i>Week 4: Sin, Christ, and Salvation</i>	19
<i>Week 5: God's Order</i>	20
<i>Week 6: God's Mission and Means – pt.1</i>	21
<i>Week 7: God's Mission and Means – pt.2</i>	22
<i>Week 8: Current Cultural Climate</i>	23
<i>Appendix A: RCC Confession</i>	28
<i>Appendix B: Why We Worship Like We Do</i>	33
<i>Appendix C: Of the Law of God – WCF, chapter 19</i>	37
<i>Appendix D: The Christian Sabbath</i>	39
<i>Appendix E: Tithes and Offerings</i>	47
<i>Appendix F: Christian Education</i>	50
<i>Appendix G: Our Denominational Affiliation</i>	51
<i>Appendix H: Our Church Government</i>	52
<i>Appendix I: Your Commitment to Reformation Covenant Church</i>	56

Calendar of Classes:

Week 1	Introductions and Prayer
Week 2	Church Membership
Week 3	Theology Proper (RCC Confession 1-4)
Week 4	Creation and the Sabbath (RCC Confession 5-8, Appendix D)
Week 5	Sin, Christ, and Salvation (RCC Confession 9-12, Appendix B)
Week 6	God's Order (RCC Confession 13-16, Appendix C)
Week 7	God's Mission and Means – pt.1 (RCC Confession 17-19, Appendix H)
Week 8	God's Mission and Means – pt.2 (RCC Confession 20-23, Appendix E)
Week 9	Current Cultural Climate – (RCC Confession 24-25, Appendix F)
Week 10	Remaining Discussion Topic(s) – (RCC Distinctives)



“Covenant is the divinely established relationship between God and His people in mutual love and faithfulness.”

As a desire to reflect God’s covenantal character, here at RCC, we covenant with one another, agreeing that our relationship is one of mutual respect, faith, and love.



Week 1: **Introductions**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Please check below which statement best describes where you are in your spiritual journey:

- I am confident of my relationship with Christ, trusting him as Lord and Savior.
- I am not confident of my relationship with Christ, though in the past I think I have sought to trust him as Lord and Savior.
- I have never trusted Christ as my Lord and Savior but am presently investigating such a relationship.
- I now believe that Jesus is Lord and would like to follow Him, repent from my sin, and be baptized.

If you were to join Reformation Covenant Church, by what means would you join?

- Profession of faith in Christ (I've never been a member of another church.)
- Reaffirmation of faith in Christ (I am not currently a member of a church.)
- By transfer of another church (I am a member in good standing with another church within the last year.)

Please indicate your status regarding baptism:

- I have never been baptized.
- I was baptized as an infant.
- I was baptized as an adult.



Week 2: A Concept of Church Membership

People often ask, “Why do you emphasize membership? Where is that in the Bible?” The answer is simple: while the phrase “church membership” is not used explicitly in the Bible, the concept can be presupposed on every page. Real community takes real commitment. To be a member of a church is to make a public promise to live according to biblical teachings and to support the mission and ministry of the local church.

We believe that church membership is a biblical concept and an essential part of both demonstrating our commitment to one another and living out the truth that together we are members of Christ’s Body. If Reformation Covenant Church is to be your home church, we hope that you will formalize your membership with us. However, if you decide not to join RCC as a member, you may continue to worship with us, but you will not enjoy all the benefits of membership.

How do I become a member of Reformation Covenant Church?

All prospective members must go through a membership orientation prior to joining RCC. This provides an opportunity to learn more about who we are and what we believe of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Worship with us for a few weeks/months and get to know us.
2. Let one of the elders know that you desire to pursue membership.
3. Fill out a spiritual pilgrimage form that tells us basic info about your life with the Lord. This will help us get to know you better and discern ways you might best participate in the life of the church.
4. Meet with the Session.
5. Participate in New Member Orientation.
6. Take your vows before the Lord and His people.
7. Serve and be served by Christ and His church.

In a Presbyterian church it is the responsibility of the Session (a group of elders) to examine and receive all new members, and it is their responsibility to watch over the souls of all the members under the care. (In fact, the word *Presbyterian* comes from the Greek word for *elder*.)



After you express your desire to place membership and complete the spiritual pilgrimage form, you will meet with our elders to share your faith and express your affirmation of RCC's membership vows and any disagreements or questions you might have about our Confession.

The membership vows are designed to help you express your commitment to Christ and your commitment to His Church.

1. *Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of the Triune God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope except in His sovereign mercy?*¹
2. *Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered in the gospel?*²
3. *Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as a follower of Christ?*³
4. *Will you submit to the leadership and participate in the government of this church, diligently pursuing her unity and well-being; and, if you decide to pursue membership at another church, will you endeavor to transfer your membership in an orderly and godly manner?*⁴
5. *Will you strive to trust and obey all of God's law, as embodied in the person of Jesus Christ and revealed in the Ten Commandments – summarized by loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself?*⁵

¹ Romans 3:10-11, 23; 9:15; John 14:6

² Romans 6:23; 10:9; Matthew 14:33; 27:54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; John 1:49; 3:18

³ Romans 8:5, 10-11; 10:13; Acts 2:38-39; 16:31

⁴ Hebrews 13:7, 17; Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Peter 3:8

⁵ Matthew 5:17; John 14:15; Mark 12:29-31



Membership Vows

In his book, *The Creed of Presbyterianism*, Dr. Egbert W. Smith writes of the Presbyterian Church: “Her door of entrance is as wide as the gates of heaven.” In a large sense, this statement is very true. The requirements for membership in the church are basic and biblical.

People not already members of RCC may become so in a few different ways:⁶

- They may be received by the session (the elders) of a particular church on the basis of their transfer by letter from another evangelical church. (An evangelical church is one that requires a profession of faith in the historic Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ for membership.) Members who are received from other churches are not baptized again and are not required to make another public profession of faith, though they will still be asked to covenant themselves to Jesus and the saints at RCC.
- They may unite with a church by making a restatement or reaffirmation of their faith before the session. Sometimes for reasons of time or circumstance, it is impossible for a person to secure a certificate of membership in order that he may move his/her membership to another church. Some evangelical churches will not grant certificates of transfer allowing their members to unite with churches of other denominations. In such situations, the person who desires to join is asked to re-affirm his/her faith before the session by answering the same questions asked of those who unite with the church on profession of faith. Such persons, however, are not re-baptized or required to make another profession of faith.
- A new Christian may also become a member of the church by making a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. If a new believer gives evidence of faith in, and obedience to, Christ, the session votes to admit them to Church membership and the corresponding ordinances of the Church, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. They ordinarily then appear before the congregation to repeat their public profession of faith in Christ and their vows to RCC. At that time, they also

⁶ We believe that the children of one or more believing parents are included in the family of God by nature of His covenant promises. As a child of God, that child has a right to bear God’s name in baptism and eat at their Lord’s Table in Communion. He/she may choose to take formal membership vows at RCC upon adulthood, even though they are already a member, but we would not require a new profession of faith or the administration of Christian baptism.



receive Christian baptism, if they have not already been baptized.

Your Commitment to Christ: Vows 1-3

Christ's saving work is what unites you to Him, and therefore His people. Local church membership is a necessary consequence of who you have been saved by and to. Therefore, your obligation to the local church does not begin once you sign a church covenant, rather, you sign a church covenant because you are acknowledging your loyalty to Christ and His visible body, the Church.

Sin and Its Consequences

The **first** question asked of those who seek to become members of Reformation Covenant Church is:

1. *Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of the Triune God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope except in His sovereign mercy?*⁷

This question points to the fact of sin and what sin does in the lives of people. For a person to become a member of the church, he should know what sin is, that he himself is a sinner, and that sin leads to spiritual death and separation from God. No one who thinks himself “good” is prepared to understand his need for a Savior or accept Jesus Christ as Lord in full, Christian sense.

What is sin?

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, one of our doctrinal standards, in Q&A #14 answers:

“Sin is any want (lack) of conformity unto, or actual transgression of, the law of God.”

In other words, sin is “self” going against the will and the way of God. God made known His will and His way in His Commandments. When we violate the laws of God, we are guilty of sin. “Whosoever committed sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).

There are two ways of breaking the law:

- (1) by failing to do what the law requires, and
- (2) by doing what the law forbids.

A man who fails to pay his taxes breaks the law by failing to do what it requires. A man who drives fifty miles an hour in a thirty-mile speed zone breaks the law by doing what it forbids. Men violate God’s law in the same ways. Paul wrote, “For the good that I would,

⁷ Romans 3:10-11, 23; 9:15; John 14:6



I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” ([Romans 7:19](#)).

Who does sin offend?

Whoever else may be harmed by it, sin is basically an offense against God. When David had committed a grievous evil against Uriah and his wife, Bathsheba, he prayed to God, “Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight” ([Psalm 51:4](#)). Sin is so offensive to God that He cannot look on it: “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity” ([Habakkuk 1:13](#)).

Who does sin affect?

Sin touches and damages the life of every person. All who ever lived have sinned except one, and that is Christ himself. The Bible states very clearly that all are sinners and that all have sinned. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” ([1 John 1:8](#); see also [Ecclesiastes 7:20](#) and [Romans 3:23](#)). Not only does the Bible tell us we are sinners, but when we are honest with ourselves, our consciences tell us the same thing.

Where does sin lead?

It always leads to death. Death came to our first parents, because of their sin. All of their descendants have been sinners and have deserved death because of their sins. “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”([Romans 5:12](#); see also [Romans 6:23](#) and [Ezekiel 18:4](#)). Spiritual death means being separated from God forever ([Isaiah 59:2](#)).

In our own strength there is nothing we can do to overcome the evil effects of sin in our lives. We know what we ought to do, but we find ourselves unable to do it. Paul said, “For I know that in me [that is in my flesh] dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” ([Romans 7:18](#)).

If there is any help for us as sinners, it must come from someone else. Other people cannot help, because they are sinners too. Our help comes only from the Lord. There is nothing we can do about sin, but he has already done all that is necessary. We deserve death, but God takes away our sin and gives us eternal life in its place. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” ([Romans 6:23](#)).



Who Jesus Is and What He Does

The ***second*** question asked of those who would join Reformation Covenant Church is:

2. *Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered in the gospel?*⁸

In order for a person to say, “yes” to this question, he/she must know who Jesus is and what He does.

Jesus is God

When the Bible refers to Jesus as the Son of God, it clearly means that he is equal with God, that he is God. He said, “I and my Father are one” ([John 10:30](#)). Again he said, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” ([John 14:9](#)). The Bible ascribes to the Lord Jesus qualities, honors, and works that can belong to God alone. The clear estimate of the Scriptures is that Jesus Christ is God.

Jesus is Man

The Lord Jesus is also human. The Bible represents him as a human being who was born of a woman, who lived a truly human life, and who died a real death. The Scriptures leave no doubt as to the reality of his humanity. As to his nature, our Lord is both God and Man.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (see [Luke 19:10](#) and [Mark 10:45](#)). He could save others because he had no sin of his own for which to answer (see [1 Peter 2:22](#)). He died in the place of sinners to answer for *their* sins ([Romans 5:6,8](#)). He, the Son of God, took the punishment of those who were guilty in order that the guilty might share the reward of the innocent ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

The Lord Jesus died our death that we might live His life.

When we say that Jesus Christ saves people, we mean that he delivers them from the death and punishment they were to receive because of their sin. Instead of death and punishment, he gives them life and joy. There is a great difference between being saved and being lost (see [John 3:36](#)).

⁸ Romans 6:23; 10:9; Matthew 14:33; 27:54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; John 1:49; 3:18



Those who are saved by Christ have the hope of the resurrection and the hope of heaven (see [1 Thessalonians 4:16,17](#) and [John 14:2,3](#)). Those who have not found him do not have this hope.

When mealtime comes around, a healthy boy will know that he is hungry. He also knows that his mother loves him, and that she has prepared food for him and the rest of the family. He believes these things, but his belief must go one step more before his hunger can be satisfied and his body can be nourished. He must actually sit down and eat. Believing in Christ for salvation is very much like this. The sinner may believe that he is a lost sinner and that Christ can save him, but before he can be saved, he must accept Christ's salvation (see [Romans 10:9](#) and [John 1:12](#)).

It is so easy to be lost. All that is necessary is to neglect or refuse to accept Christ as Savior (see [John 3:18](#)). It is also easy to enter the door leading to salvation. All one must do is to receive deliberately God's free gift of life (See [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)).

We remember always one important fact which must never be overlooked: There is only one way to be saved, for there is none other Name given us but that of the Lord Jesus (see [Acts 4:12](#) and [John 14:6](#)).

How a Christian Should Live

The ***third*** question asked of those who desire unite with Reformation Covenant Church is this:

- 3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as a follower of Christ?*⁹

This question indicates that being a Christian makes a difference in the way a person lives. Before a person can faithfully make the promise that the question requires, he must know what the Christian life is and how he can go about living it.

The book of 1 John calls on Christians to "walk in the light" and "walk in love." Walking in the light means knowing and following the will of God as it is revealed in the Bible and doing so in fellowship with His people (see [Psalm 119:111,130](#)). Walking in love means living a life of love toward God and others. Jesus said that love of God and love of our neighbors is the fulfillment of the law ([Matthew 22:36-40](#)).

⁹ Romans 8:5, 10-11; 10:13; Acts 2:38-39; 16:31



This is not to suggest that we are saved *because* of the way we live but that we are free to *truly* live *because* we are saved!

We are saved by believing in what Christ did for our salvation and receiving Him ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). But we certainly will live in a different and better way because we are saved. . . because we are Christians.

Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, but saving faith is never alone—we are saved into a community of God's people and salvation produces good works which God has prepared beforehand for us to walk in ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)).

A Christian is a changed person, and he ought to live a changed life ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). The same Christ who saves from sin will, by his Spirit, help believers live the kind of lives they ought to live: “As ye therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” ([Colossians 2:6](#)). We receive Christ by faith. We must live the Christian life in the same way--faith. This was Paul’s secret of Christian living: “I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me” ([Philippians 4:13](#)).



Your Commitment to Christ's Church: Vows 4-5

[1] I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, [3] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. [4] There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—[5] one Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6] one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. [7] But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Ephesians 4:1-7

The Church and Its Work

The ***fourth*** question asked of those who desire to unite with Reformation Covenant Church is this:

4. *Will you submit to the leadership and participate in the government of this church, diligently pursuing her unity and well-being; and, if you decide to pursue membership at another church, will you endeavor to transfer your membership in an orderly and godly manner?*¹⁰

In order to answer this question honestly, a person must know several things about the government of the church.

Christ is the Head of the Church ([Colossians 1.18](#); [Ephesians 5.23](#)). Members of the church look to Him alone as the supreme authority. The task of the church, then, is to teach, explain, and enforce the law of Christ as we find it in the Scriptures.

RCC has a *confession*, a statement of what we believe the Bible teaches, and a *constitution*, a statement on how we will govern this particular body of Christ's Church. The confession is primarily doctrinal – the teaching of the Bible about *what* we are to believe and how we are to live. The constitution is primarily procedural – how we function in various matters related to the work and worship of our ministry here at RCC.

What does it mean when the church member promises to submit to the leadership, participate in the government, and pursue the unity and well-being of the church?

It means that he should know and obey the teaching(s) of the church, and that he should honor the officers of the church (elders and deacons) as they teach the Scriptures and enforce the constitution.

In regard to the confession, we know that various churches believe variations of the doctrines expressed in these statements. We want to uphold the principle set forth by Augustine,

¹⁰ Hebrews 13:7, 17; Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Peter 3:8



“In essentials unity, in non-essentials diversity, and in all things charity.”

The Church and Her Calling

The ***fifth*** question asked by those who unite with Reformation Covenant Church is this:

5. *Will you strive to trust and obey all of God’s law, as embodied in the person of Jesus Christ and revealed in the Ten Commandments – summarized by loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself?*¹¹

In order to answer this question, another question must be asked, which the Westminster Shorter Catechism frames well.

Q: What is the duty which God requires of man?

*A: The duty which God requires of man, is obedience to his revealed will.*¹²

As Christians, we all desire to love and obey God; we all want to do His will. Thankfully, God has not left us to tremble in fear whether or not we are doing His will. He has given us His Word, and in particular His commands, to know what He wants from us, which is best for us ([2 Timothy 3.16](#)).

We affirm with the Psalmist:

“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb” ([Psalm 19.7-10](#)).

At RCC, we strive to obey all of God’s law because we know in so doing, God is pleased, we are blessed, and God is honored. While most of God’s laws have had the universal agreement of the church throughout history (i.e. adultery and homosexuality are sin), there are some areas of His Word that have been debated (i.e. Sabbath practices, birth control, political affiliations).

Many of us at RCC have wrestled with some of these issues for decades to arrive where we are, but we also acknowledge that some people have not had that privilege yet.

For example, at RCC we maintain that God has given us His law for our good, the good of our neighbor, and the glory of His name, and we strive to obey the 4th Commandment in the honoring of the Lord’s Day (see Appendix F).

¹¹ Matthew 5:17; John 14:15; Mark 12:29-31

¹² Deuteronomy 29:29; Micah 6.8; 1 Samuel 15.22; 1 Peter 1.16-18



We believe that God has blessed us by giving us one whole day to worship Him, to rest from the acts and anxieties of our ordinary employments, and to strive to actively bless one another and our neighbor through works of necessity and mercy. One particular way we believe God's has sought to bless His creation is by calling His chosen people to refrain from taking advantage of our privilege to rest by causing others without this privilege to labor.

This is commonly explained that God's people are to "refrain from unnecessary buying and selling on the Sabbath," and this is the conviction held by RCC.

We will discuss this more in one of our sessions, but we know that there may be some people who have never even thought in these terms – as such were some of us.

We put this vow under your commitment to the church because we realize different churches have different understandings of how to live out God's law. In joining yourself to this particular manifestation of Christ's Church, you're vowing to submit yourselves to the teaching of the elders on these particular matters, while understanding we have a responsibility to pursue unity, submit to one another, and not unnecessarily bind the consciences of one another as the Holy Spirit works in our hearts, minds, and lives.

So, as a covenant member who may differ with us on these debatable matters, we ask that you *first and foremost* pursue the unity of the church. This means that you will give weight and regard to the time that many who have gone before you have spent studying these issues, and we ask that you remain teachable throughout your time here. And while we will not *require* you practice the *every* debatable matter in the *exact* ways we do, we do ask that you not cause your brother or sister to stumble by parading your view(s) and/or asking that they join you in your particular actions. Instead, in love and humility, allow us to come alongside you as you strive to obey God more and more in every area of life ([Romans 14.1-23](#)).

Leviticus 19:17–18

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

Mark 12:29–32

Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him.

James 2:8

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.



Week 2: **Theology Proper**

1. We believe that the Scriptures, contained in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are God's infallible Word and are our sole basis of absolute authority. We believe the Scriptures are inerrant in their original manuscripts.

2. We believe that God is one God, yet three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three persons are co-equal, co-eternal, and co-substantial. We therefore believe in the equal ultimacy of the one and the many.



Week 3: **Creation and the Sabbath**

3. We believe that God created all things, the heavens, the earth, and all that is in them; that He did so in six literal days, and that all that He created was very good.

4. We believe that after His work of creation, God rested on the seventh day, and established the Sabbath for man. Therefore, by both example and precept God has graciously conferred to us one day out of seven, the Lord's Day, to worship* and to rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ the risen Savior, God's purpose being that we and all our neighbors may pause from our customary labors and commerce, to engage in joyful fellowship, give rest to the weary and do acts of mercy.

5. We believe that God is the absolute sovereign over all His creation, that He has decreed whatsoever comes to pass, and that He, in His providence, orders, upholds and sustains all things and carries out His decree in the world.

6. We believe God the Creator is personally distinct from His creation, and from man, His creature. We believe that man, though he is created in the image of God and is the highest of all God's creatures, is absolutely different in essence from God, and is utterly dependent upon God for his existence, identity, and purpose.

7. We believe that God has declared in the Scriptures that man's chief end and purpose is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.



Week 4: **Sin, Christ, and Salvation**

8. We believe that in Adam's fall, we all sinned, and as a result sin has become pervasive throughout all creation. We believe that all men are conceived in sin and in rebellion against God, suppressing His truth in unrighteousness. We believe that man is unable and unwilling to repent of his sin and turn to God, apart from the elective work of the Holy Spirit.

9. We believe that God the Son, namely Jesus Christ, though existing eternally in the Godhead, was incarnate by the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary; that He lived a life in complete obedience to God's Law, and in submission to God the Father He suffered and died on the cross, bearing the sins of the elect.

10. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ was raised bodily from the dead on the third day, that He ascended into heaven and that He now sits at the right hand of the Father, having received all authority in heaven and on earth.

11. We believe that Jesus Christ shall come again in the same resurrected body, to judge both the living and the dead at His return on the Last Day. We believe that at the Last Day all men shall rise in their bodies and will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

12. We believe that everyone who, by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, is saved from eternal damnation and will live eternally with God. We believe that everyone who does not believe in Jesus Christ (being unable and unwilling to do so apart from the quickening of the Holy Spirit) will spend eternity in damnation and death.



Week 5: God's Order

13. We believe that man was originally commanded by God to be fruitful and multiply, and to exercise dominion over God's creation by filling and subduing the earth. With the fall of man, this cultural mandate was not removed, but was made more difficult. However, by regeneration in Christ man is able to walk in obedience to this calling, being renewed and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

14. We believe that the Law of God reflects His loving and holy character, and therefore God's Law is good and delightful, being graciously given to mankind for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness and godly wisdom.

15. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ embodies the fulfillment of the Law and is our example as the great Law-keeper, the only Man found righteous. We believe that those joined to Christ will evidence their faith by obedience to God's commands, and by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit will bear the fruit of good works unto God.

16. We believe that there is no authority except from God, and all governing authorities that He has put in place are subject to Him and His standards of justice and righteousness. As such, we believe that the civil statutes of the Old Testament, though given in the context of a particular time in redemptive history and cultural development, and while not being a precise blueprint, ought to inform and instruct governing authorities regarding perfect social justice for all cultures, including the protection of victims and the punishment of criminals. Because God is all-good and all-wise, to the extent societies conform to His will, they will thrive, and to the extent they disregard Him, societies will wither.



Week 6: **God's Mission and Means – pt.1**

17. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned His Church to go into all the world, to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing and teaching them to obey all things He has commanded.

18. We believe that we are to proclaim the whole counsel of God's Word at every opportunity, so that God, in His providence, may impart faith by the Word to the hearer.

19. We believe that as the Church fulfills Christ's commission, by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and that the gates of hell shall not withstand the earthly advance of the Church.



Week 7: **God's Mission and Means – pt.2**

20. We believe that God has given two signs and seals of His covenant, Baptism and Communion. We believe that all those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, along with their children, are both entitled and obliged to receive the waters of Baptism.

21. We believe that all who are baptized and profess faith in Jesus Christ, along with their baptized children, are invited by our Lord Jesus Christ to partake of His Supper. However, those who rebelliously and blasphemously demonstrate their rejection of God and His covenant should be barred from the Table.

23. We believe that Christian parents are commanded to disciple their own children in the Christian faith, by bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*



Week 8: **Current Cultural Climate**

22. We believe that Christians, in thankful response to God for his covenant promises and blessings, are to cheerfully bring tribute to Him through His tithe. We believe that the tithe is to be primarily directed to the local church for the support of her ministers. We also affirm that a portion of the tithe may be used by believers to enable them to gather together at special, convocated periods or seasons, designated by the local church for worship, instruction, and community rejoicing.

24. We believe that God, being both just and merciful, is a defender of widows and a Father to the fatherless. We believe that Scripture teaches that human life begins at conception, and we therefore oppose the sin of abortion, and condemn the heinous mass murder of unborn children purveyed by the abortion industry and its supporters, as well as by statist governments across the globe.

25. We believe that because God created mankind as male and female, He has ordained marriage to be a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled. Therefore, we believe that transgenderism, homosexuality, adultery, and any sexual acts outside of marriage are sinful, being out of accord with God's law and His design for human sexuality. The only remedy for these sins – as well as all other sins – is repentance and faith in the cleansing blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Epilogue: RCC Distinctives

Christ is the Head of His Church. Members of the Church look to Him alone as the supreme authority. At the same time, the task of the local church, is to teach, explain, and enforce the law of Christ, for God's people in their context. This means that at different times and in different places, it is good and right for the local church to emphasize certain principles over others in order to serve her people and the watching world better.

For that reason, Reformation Covenant Church has developed a confession, a set of statements stating what we believe the Bible teaches as a whole but also what we believe the church needs to focus on and apply to our current context.

What does it mean when the church member promises to submit to the government and discipline of the church and to study its purity and peace? It means that he should know and obey the constitution of the church, and that he should submit to and honor the officers of the church as they teach the Scriptures and enforce the constitution.

Into this fellowship, perhaps the Lord Jesus has called you who read these pages. If so, may He, the great and only Head of the Church lead you into ever fuller experiences of his grace and ever-increasing usefulness in his kingdom, and to Him be the glory.

See [Appendix A](#) for our full Confession (which we have covered in our class).

While by no means exhaustive, given our current cultural milieu, a few other distinctives that you will likely see and hear emphasized at RCC are as follows:

- The adherence to God's good and gracious law to inform all of life, even in the social and political sphere.
- Marriage between one man and one woman.
- A primacy of the Christian worldview, in particular the education of our children.



A Low View of God's Love and Holiness, as Manifest in His Law

And finally, we believe that a low view of God and His law are two issues that plague the church today.

Very few people would argue with the idea that Christians are to “love the Lord their God with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their mind and with all their strength,” and that they are “to love their neighbors as themselves,” (Mark 12:29-31) but in our particular time and place, even the definition of love has fallen on hard times. So, it's no wonder *how* to love would be a question worth answering.

Thankfully, Jesus answers the question of how to love all people at all times. He tells his disciples, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments (John 14:15).” Time and time again, Jesus rebukes the religious people in His day, not of telling people to keep God's commandments, but He rebukes them for *leaving* the commandments of God and holding to the traditions of men (Mark 7:7-9).

Jesus also says that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them, and not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished, and whoever relaxes one of the least of the commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But, whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:17-19).

At RCC, [we love God's law](#) because we believe that God's law is a manifestation of His character, and as any good Father would, He has given us family laws to live by.

[See Appendix C](#)

We believe that God has revealed to us the duties He requires of us (WSC Q39), primarily in the Moral Law (WSC Q40), which is summarily comprehended in the 10 Commandments (WSC Q41). We also believe that the 10 Commandments can be summarized by the same requirements laid out by our Lord and Savior, “to love the Lord our God” with all our heart, all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves (WSC Q41).



A low view of marriage

God's people have always needed to be warned to take marriage seriously. Just before the Flood, one of the most infamous judgments in all of history, we are told that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were attractive, and they took as their wives any they chose (Genesis 6:2). In Deuteronomy 7, as God was preparing His people to take possession of a new land, God tells them not to intermarry with anyone outside of the faith, "lest they turn away your sons (and daughters) from following me, to serve other gods (Deuteronomy 7:3-4)."

As per their usual, God's people ignored this (and other) command, and Ezra and Nehemiah cited marrying outside of the covenant community as one of the primary reasons for their downfall.

This warning was not given to God's people under the Old Covenant only. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul also says that a woman (and implicitly a man) may marry whoever she wishes, as long as he is "in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7.39).

So, as we can see, this warning has always been one that God has seen fit to highlight for His people. At RCC, we believe that the advent of oral contraception in 1960 and the legalization of birth control for all Americans in 1972 continued a trajectory that has fundamentally changed the way our culture views sex, and therefore marriage. A few years later, in 1969, then Governor Ronald Reagan signed the Family Law Act which made California the first state to permit "no-fault" divorce.

With the latest decision of Obergefell vs. Hodges in 2015, the sanctity of marriage is one of particular concern to God's people, and at RCC we hope to curb that tide. If marriage is a reflection of God's character, and how He relates to His people, then striving to hold the covenant of marriage in high regard is a matter of utmost importance.

It is for this reason, and others, at RCC we ask our members to *neither marry nor give in marriage outside of the Christian faith.*



A Misunderstanding of the Christian Worldview

Not unrelated to the above is the struggle for God's people to recognize and seek to actualize a worldview consistent with God's revelation.

God famously instructed His people from the earliest times,

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 6:4–7)

James Sire highlights that how people answer eight “[Worldview](#)” questions determine how all people, at all times, are living their lives. The questions are as follows:

1. What is prime reality?
2. What is the nature of the world around us?
3. What is a human being?
4. What happens to a person at death?
5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
6. How do we know right and wrong?
7. What is the meaning of human history?
8. What personal, life-orienting commitments are consistent with this worldview?

“One of the most pernicious and evil myths to plague the human race is [the myth of neutrality](#).”
R.J. Rushdoony

God warned His children, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6), and “Therefore, my people go into exile, for lack of knowledge; their honored men go hungry, and their multitude are parched with thirst” (Isaiah 5:13).

At RCC, we believe that God's Word is clear, and there is no such thing as a neutral idea. There are countless worldviews competing with God's for supremacy. It is for this reason that Christians are called to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10.5), and it is for this reason we ask all parents to *train and educate any children God may give me in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord*.



Appendix A: RCC Confession

1. We believe that the Scriptures, contained in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, are God's infallible Word and are our sole basis of absolute authority. We believe the Scriptures are inerrant in their original manuscripts.¹³
2. We believe that God is one God, yet three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three persons are co-equal, co-eternal, and co-substantial. We therefore believe in the equal ultimacy of the one and the many.¹⁴
3. We believe that God created all things, the heavens, the earth, and all that is in them; that He did so in six literal days, and that all that He created was very good.¹⁵ *
4. We believe that after His work of creation, God rested on the seventh day, and established the Sabbath for man. Therefore, by both example and precept God has graciously conferred to us one day out of seven, the Lord's Day, to worship* and to rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ the risen Savior, God's purpose being that we and all our neighbors may pause from our customary labors and commerce, to engage in joyful fellowship, give rest to the weary and do acts of mercy.¹⁶
5. We believe that God is the absolute sovereign over all His creation, that He has decreed whatsoever comes to pass, and that He, in His providence, orders, upholds and sustains all things and carries out His decree in the world.¹⁷
6. We believe God the Creator is personally distinct from His creation, and from man, His creature. We believe that man, though he is created in the image of God and is the highest of all God's creatures, is absolutely different in essence from God, and is utterly dependent upon God for his existence, identity, and purpose.¹⁸
7. We believe that God has declared in the Scriptures that man's chief end and purpose is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.¹⁹

¹³ Luke 16:29, 31; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 22:18, 19; II Pet. 1:19, 21; II Tim. 3:16; I John 5:9; I Thess. 2:13; I John 2:20, 27; John 16:13, 14; I Cor. 2:10, 11, 12; Isa. 59:21; Gal. 1:8, 9; Psalm 119:105, 130.

¹⁴ Deut. 6:4; I Cor. 8:4, 6; I John 5:7; Matt. 3:16, 17; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; John 1:14, 18; John 15:26; Gal. 4:6

¹⁵ Heb. 1:2; John 1:2, 3; Gen. 1:2; Job. 26:13; Job. 33:4; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:12; Ps. 104:24; Ps. 33:5, 6; Gen. 1 chap.; Heb. 11:3; Col. 1:16; Acts 17:24

¹⁶ Exod. 20:8, 10, 11; Isa. 56:2, 4, 6, 7; Gen. 2:2, 3; I Cor. 16:1, 2; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10; Exod. 20:8, 10, with Matt. 5:17, 18; Exod. 20:8; Exod. 16:23, 25, 26, 29, 30; Exod. 31:15, 16, 17; Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22; Isa. 58:13; Matt. 12:1 to 13

¹⁷ Eph. 1:11; Rom. 11:33; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:15, 18; Acts 2:23; Matt. 17:12; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; Prov. 16:33

¹⁸ Isa. 40:13, 14, 15, 16, 17; Job. 9:32, 33; I Sam. 2:25; Ps. 113:5, 6; Ps. 100:2, 3; Job. 22:2, 3; Job 35:7, 8; Luke 17:10; Acts 17:24, 25; Gen. 1:27; Gen. 2:7 with Eccles. 12:7 & Luke 23:43 and Matt. 10:28.; Gen. 1:26; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24.

¹⁹ Ps. 86:9; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rev. 4:11 Ps. 16:5-11; 144:15; Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:10; Phil. 4:4; Rev.21:3-4



8. We believe that in Adam's fall, we all sinned, and as a result sin has become pervasive throughout all creation. We believe that all men are conceived in sin and in rebellion against God, suppressing His truth in unrighteousness. We believe that man is unable and unwilling to repent of his sin and turn to God, apart from the elective work of the Holy Spirit.²⁰
9. We believe that God the Son, namely Jesus Christ, though existing eternally in the Godhead, was incarnate by the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary; that He lived a life in complete obedience to God's Law, and in submission to God the Father He suffered and died on the cross, bearing the sins of the elect.²¹
10. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ was raised bodily from the dead on the third day, that He ascended into heaven and that He now sits at the right hand of the Father, having received all authority in heaven and on earth.²²
11. We believe that Jesus Christ shall come again in the same resurrected body, to judge both the living and the dead at His return on the Last Day. We believe that at the Last Day all men shall rise in their bodies and will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.²³
12. We believe that everyone who, by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, is saved from eternal damnation and will live eternally with God. We believe that everyone who does not believe in Jesus Christ (being unable and unwilling to do so apart from the quickening of the Holy Spirit) will spend eternity in damnation and death.²⁴
13. We believe that man was originally commanded by God to be fruitful and multiply, and to exercise dominion over God's creation by filling and subduing the earth. With the fall of man, this cultural mandate was not removed, but was made more difficult. However, by regeneration in Christ man is able to walk in obedience to this calling, being renewed and empowered by the Holy Spirit.²⁵
14. We believe that the Law of God reflects His loving and holy character, and therefore God's Law is good and delightful, being graciously given to mankind for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness and godly wisdom.²⁶

²⁰ Gen. 1:27, 28 & Gen. 2:16, 17 and Acts 17:26 with Rom. 5:12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and I Cor. 15:21, 22, 49; Ps. 51:5; Gen. 5:3; Job 14:4, Job 15:14; Rom. 5:6; Rom. 8:7, Rom. 7:18; Col. 1:21; Gen. 6:5; Gen. 8:21; Rom. 3:10, 11, 12; James 1:14, 15; Eph. 2:1-5; Matt. 15:19; Rom. 5:6; Rom 8:7; John 15:5; Col. 2:13; John 6:44, 65; I Cor. 2:14; Titus 3:3, 4, 5.

²¹ John 1:1, 14; I John 5:20; Phil. 2:6; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14, 16, 17; Heb. 4:15; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Gal. 4:4; Luke 1:35; Col. 2:9; Rom. 9:5; I Pet. 3:18; I Tim. 3:16; Rom. 1:3, 4; I Tim. 2:5; Rom. 5:19; Heb. 9:14, 16; Heb. 10:14; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 3:25, 26; Dan. 9:24, 26; Col. 1:19, 20; Eph. 1:11, 14; John 17:2; Heb. 9:12, 15.

²² I Cor. 15:4; Ps. 68:18; Acts 1:11; Eph. 4:8; Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:33-34; Heb. 1:3; Matt. 16:27; Acts 17:31a

²³ Heb. 9:27-28; Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; I Cor. 6:3; Jude ver. 6; II Pet. 2:4; II Cor. 5:10; Eccles. 12:14; Rom. 2:16; Rom. 14:10, 12; Matt. 12:36, 37.

²⁴ Matt. 25:31 to the end; Rom. 2:5, 6; Rom. 9:22, 23; Matt. 25:21; Acts 3:19; II Thess. 1:7, 8, 9, 10.

²⁵ Gen. 1:28-31, 2:19-25; 3:17-19, 12:1-3; Deut. 29:29; Mic. 6:8; 1 John 5:2-3; Ezk. 36:27; Phil. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:23-24; 1 Thess. 5:23; Ezek. 36:25-27; Rom. 6:4, 6, 12-14; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 2:24

²⁶ Psalm 19, 119:103-104; James 1:25; James 2:8, 10, 11, 12; Rom. 13:8, 9; Deut. 5:32; Deut. 10:4; Ex. 34:1; Matt. 22:37, 38, 39, 40; II Tim 3:16; Ecc 12:13; Prov 1:1-9



15. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ embodies the fulfillment of the Law and is our example as the great Law-keeper, the only Man found righteous. We believe that those joined to Christ will evidence their faith by obedience to God's commands, and by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit will bear the fruit of good works unto God.²⁷
16. We believe that there is no authority except from God, and all governing authorities that He has put in place are subject to Him and His standards of justice and righteousness. As such, we believe that the civil statutes of the Old Testament, though given in the context of a particular time in redemptive history and cultural development, and while not being a precise blueprint, ought to inform and instruct governing authorities regarding perfect social justice for all cultures, including the protection of victims and the punishment of criminals. Because God is all-good and all-wise, to the extent societies conform to His will, they will thrive, and to the extent they disregard Him, societies will wither.²⁸
17. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned His Church to go into all the world, to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing and teaching them to obey all things He has commanded.²⁹
18. We believe that we are to proclaim the whole counsel of God's Word at every opportunity, so that God, in His providence, may impart faith by the Word to the hearer.³⁰
19. We believe that as the Church fulfills Christ's commission, by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and that the gates of hell shall not withstand the earthly advance of the Church.³¹
20. We believe that God has given two signs and seals of His covenant, Baptism and Communion. We believe that all those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, along with their children, are both entitled and obliged to receive the waters of Baptism.³²
21. We believe that all who are baptized and profess faith in Jesus Christ, along with their baptized children, are invited by our Lord Jesus Christ to partake of His Supper. However, those who rebelliously and blasphemously demonstrate their rejection of God and His covenant should be barred from the Table.³³

²⁷ Matt 5:17; Rom 8:8, 13:8; Jam 2:18-26; Gal 5:22-24

²⁸ Romans 13:1-10; Eph. 6:2; I John 2:3, 4, 7, 8; Matt. 5:17, 18, 19; James 2:8; Rom. 3:31; Rom. 7:12, 22, 25; Ps. 119:4, 5, 6; I Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; Rom. 7:7; Rom. 3:20; James 1:23, 24, 25; Rom. 7:9, 14, 24; Gal. 3:24; Rom. 7:24, 25; Rom. 8:3, 4; Jam. 2:11; Ps. 119:101, 104, 128; Ezra 9:13, 14; Ps. 89:30, 31, 32, 33, 34; Lev. 26:1 to 14 with II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 6:2, 3; Ps. 37:11 with Matt. 5:5; Ps. 19:11; Gal. 2:16; Luke 17:10; Rom. 6:12, 14; I Pet. 3:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, with Ps. 34:12, 13, 14, 15, 16; Heb. 12:28, 29; Gal. 3:21; Ezek. 36:27; Heb. 8:10 with Jer. 31:33

²⁹ Matt 28:16-20

³⁰ Rom 10:1-4, 8-17; Gal 6:9; 2 Thess 3:13; 1 Cor 12:28, 15:58; 2 Tim 4:1-2; 1 Pet 3:13-17; Eph. 4:11, 12, 13; Matt. 28:19, 20; Isa. 59:21

³¹ Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14; Dan 2:35-45; Matt 16:18; Luk 13:18-20

³² Rom. 4:11; Gen. 17:7, 10; Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:23; I Cor. 10:16; I Cor. 11:25, 26; Gal. 3:17; Rom. 15:8; Exod. 12:48; Gen. 34:14; Rom. 6:3, 4; I Cor. 10:16, 21; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 8:37, 38; Gen. 17:7, 9, 10 with Gal. 3:9, 14 and Col. 2:11, 12 & Acts 2:38, 39 & Rom. 4:11, 12; I Cor. 7:14; Matt. 28:19; Mark 10:13, 14, 15, 16; Luke 18:15.

³³ Acts 2:42-47; I I Cor. 11:23-29, 10:1-4, 16, 17, 21, 12:13, 5:6, 7, 13; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; Matt. 7:6.



22. We believe that Christians, in thankful response to God for his covenant promises and blessings, are to cheerfully bring tribute to Him through His tithe. We believe that the tithe is to be primarily directed to the local church for the support of her ministers. We also affirm that a portion of the tithe may be used by believers to enable them to gather together at special, convocative periods or seasons, designated by the local church for worship, instruction, and community rejoicing.³⁴
23. We believe that Christian parents are commanded to disciple their own children in the Christian faith, by bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.³⁵ *
24. We believe that God, being both just and merciful, is a defender of widows and a Father to the fatherless. We believe that Scripture teaches that human life begins at conception, and we therefore oppose the sin of abortion, and condemn the heinous mass murder of unborn children purveyed by the abortion industry and its supporters, as well as by statist governments across the globe.³⁶
25. We believe that because God created mankind as male and female, He has ordained marriage to be a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled. Therefore, we believe that transgenderism, homosexuality, adultery, and *any* sexual acts outside of marriage are sinful, being out of accord with God's law and His design for human sexuality. The only remedy for these sins – as well as all other sins – is repentance and faith in the cleansing blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.³⁷

³⁴ Lev. 27:30-32; Num 18:21-28; Deut. 12:6-17, 14:22-28, 26:12-14; 2 Chron 31:6-12, Neh 10:37-38, 12:44-13:12; Mal 3:8-10; Matt 23:23 w/5: 20; Heb 7:4-9; Psalm 16

³⁵ Deut 4:9, 6:1-7, 11:19, Deut 32:46, Gen 18:19, Ps 78:4-6, 102:18; Mal 2:15; 4:5-6 Eph 6:1-4; Matt 7:11, 11:25, 14:21, 18:3, 19:13-14, Acts 2:39, 21:5; 1 Cor 7:14, 2 Cor 12:14; Col 3:20-21; 1 Tim 3:4, 12, 5:10, 14, 2:4; 1 John 2:12-13;

³⁶ Deut 10:18, 24:17-21, 27:19; Ex 22:22; Ps 10:12-17, 68:4-5, 146:5-9; Zech 7:10; Acts 6:1; 1 Tim 5:3-16; Jam 1:27; Gen 25:23; Job 31:15; Ps 17:14, 139:13; Ecc 11:5; Isa 49:5; Jer 1:5; Lk 1:31-44; Ex 20:13; Num 35:9-34; Deut 5:17; Ps 82, 94:1-14; Matt 5:43-48

³⁷ Gen 1:27, 2:24, 5:2; Num 36; Ezra 10:2-10; Isa 62:5; Matt 19:3-12; Eph 5:31; Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor 7:9-28, 36-40; Exo 20:14; Lev 20:10; Ex 22:19, Lev 18:23, 29:15-16; Deut 5:18, 27:21; Prov 6:32; Matt 5:27-32, 15:19; Mk 7:21; Rom 13:9-13; 1 Cor 6:9, Gal 5:21; 1 Tim 1:10; Jam 2:11; 1 Pet 4:3; Rev 2:22



Other subordinate standards³⁸ that we affirm at RCC are the ecumenical creeds of the church:

- the [Apostles Creed](#), the [Nicene Creed](#) (381)
- the [definition of Chalcedon](#) (451),
- the [Athanasian Creed](#) (500),
- the [Westminster Confession of Faith](#) (1647),
- the [Westminster Larger](#) and [Shorter Catechisms](#) (1647),
- the [Belgic Confession](#) (1561),
- the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) (1563), and
- the [Canons of Dort](#) (1619).

*As members of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, we also commend the CREC memorials on Creation, Christian Education, Homosexuality, and Worship found at:
https://crechurches.org/documents/governance/CREC_Governance_Comprehensive_2017R.pdf#page=43

Again, the Westminster Shorter Catechism reminds us that the Scriptures alone are our ultimate authority for faith and life. Subordinate standards can and have erred, and while we acknowledge that we may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture, at RCC we believe that the supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture ([WCF, Chapter 1](#))

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

³⁸ A subordinate standard is such because we believe all standards are subordinate to the Scriptures.



Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. *The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.*

Appendix B: Why We Worship Like We Do

Every Christian church follows a liturgy—an order of worship or schedule of services—on the Lord’s day. Liturgy is simply the “service of the people.” In an effort to develop a God-glorifying order of worship, we follow a *covenant renewal pattern* of worship that is gospel-shaped, covenant-minded, and God-centered.

Worship is storytelling. Our approach to worship enables us to re-tell the Story of God both as Creator of the cosmos and as Redeemer of his church every week.

God the Creator called things that are not as though they were, and those things confess his name night and day; and he consecrated them by the power of his word, and they commune with him; and he commissioned them to perform special tasks and duties for his glory.

God the Redeemer calls sinners to drawn near to his throne of grace, and they confess their sins to him and confess their faith in him; and he consecrates them by the washing of water with the word, and they commune together with him at his table by sharing bread and wine; and he commissions them to be salt and light to the world.

Also, our approach to worship enables us to remember our place in the Story of God every week. The triune God called us out of darkness into light, and we confess our sins; and he consecrates us by means of the gospel and baptism, and we confess “Jesus is Lord”; and we commune with Christ and one another at the Lord’s table, and he commissions us to go shine like stars in the universe.

Covenant Renewal Worship helps us retell the Story of God in five movements that shape our life. A typical Order of Worship looks like this:

Call to Worship: God Gathers his People



We begin worship with a greeting, scripture reading, and prayer. People from every tribe, tongue and nation are called to worship God in spirit and in truth. Our music is a hybrid of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

Confession of Sin: God Forgives his People

When we confess our sins, the whole church takes a moment to confess our general sins generally, together and then quietly acknowledge personal sins to the Lord personally and seek his forgiveness in prayer. The minister reminds us that, in and because of Christ, God forgives our sins and remembers them no more.

Consecration: God Equips his People

We believe God's word prepares us for life in this world and the world to come. Before the sermon we listen to the public reading of Scripture. The sermon is always based on a text of the Bible and centered on Jesus. The goal of the sermon is to inform our minds, reform our hearts, and transform our lives according to God's word. After being reminded of God's grace to us in the gospel, we, in turn, bring our tithes and offerings in response to the grace given to us. The offerings are used to support our ministers, ministries, and mission in the gospel.

After the preaching of God's Word, and after we bring our offerings, and we confess our shared faith in the Lord delivered once for all by reciting or singing either one the historic creeds or another ecumenical confession of faith based on the Holy Scriptures.

Communion: God Nourishes his People

As members of God's family, we partake of the Lord's Supper each and every Lord's day. All who have been baptized into Christ are invited to reflect on and rejoice in the peace we have with God and one another by nature of our union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection as we take, receive, remember, believe and proclaim that we are His and He is ours. Lord's Day Communion is not only a time looking back but a time where long for and proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again.

Commission: God Sends his People

Finally, our ministers send God's people out into the world on mission with the blessings of God and for the life of the world.



As reflected in our covenant renewal service, worship is responsive, and the conversation is saturated with God's Word. It involves both receiving gifts from God and giving gifts to God. For God to give and preserve His Word for us is a great gift, and we rejoice that we are able to read it aloud together as God's people have done for millennia.

The Lord's Service by Jeffrey Meyers best summarizes Covenant Renewal Worship nicely:

The first [element of covenant renewal that calls for explanation] is the common practice of identifying our worship services with the phrase "covenant renewal." By this we do not mean that our covenant with God has only a set amount of time on it, and that it might expire like a lease if we do not renew it. Our covenant with God is eternal and will not expire. But it is also alive and is designed to grow and flourish. As sexual communion renews marriage, or as a meal renews the body, so also the worship of God renews our covenant with Him.

The second element of covenant renewal that calls for explanation is the pattern or structure of worship. Our services are "bookended" by the opening and closing. When the minister declares the "call to worship," the service is convened or established. At the conclusion of the service, when he commissions the congregation by means of the benediction, the people of God are sent out into the world to be salt and light, having been renewed in their walk with God.

The "innards" of the service follow a three-fold structure, which are confession, consecration, and communion. In the Old Testament, there were three distinct kinds of sacrifices—the guilt offering, the ascension offering (often translated as whole burnt offering), and the peace offering.

The guilt offering was intended to address a particular sin on the part of the worshiper. The ascension offering was an offering of "entire dedication." The whole sacrificed animal ascended to God in the column of smoke as an offering to Him. The peace offering was one which the worshiper was privileged to partake of as a covenant meal. Whenever those three offerings are mentioned together in the Old Testament, they are listed in that order, which makes good sense. You deal with the guilt first, you dedicate all to God, and then you have communion with God. This is why our covenant renewal services follow the structure they do, absent the sacrificed animals. Jesus Christ died once for all, in order to be the fulfillment of the entire sacrificial system—He was not



just the guilt offering. However, we are called to offer ourselves as living sacrifices holy and acceptable to God.

So, this is why our worship services, once God is invoked, contain these three elements:

- First, we confess our sins, and receive the assurance of pardon.
- Second, we dedicate ourselves to God (Scripture reading, sermon, offertory, etc.).
- And then last, we observe the Lord's Supper.

Once that is all done, we receive the benediction, we go out into a lost world that needs to hear about Jesus Christ. [<https://dougwils.com/books/covenant-renewal-2.html>]

God calls his people to assemble together to worship and serve him, to offer spiritual sacrifices and declare his praises, for the praise of his glory, and the good of his people (Rom 12:1-2; Phil 3:3; Heb 10:22-25; 1 Peter 2:5, 9). The true and living God is not a God of confusion but of peace, therefore all things must be done properly and orderly (1 Cor 14:33, 40). It is necessary to worship God on his terms alone for our God is a consuming fire (Heb 10:22-25; 12:28-29).



Appendix C: Of the Law of God – WCF, chapter 19

- I. God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of [life], by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.
- II. This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables: the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man.
- III. Beside this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the new testament.
- IV. To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.
- V. The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.
- VI. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as,



examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin, together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience.

It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin: and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof: although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works. So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law; and, not under grace.

- VII. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.



Appendix D: The Christian Sabbath

The purpose of this paper is to provide a synopsis of the teachings of the eldership of RCC relative to that portion of the Confession of RCC in which the person covenanting into membership with RCC vows to respect and strive to obey.

“Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Deuteronomy 5:12–15

In this, the second giving of the Ten Commandments, the covenant people of God were to keep the Sabbath because of God’s gracious redemption of them from slavery, and in the New Covenant, the Lord’s Day Sabbath is a gift God has given His people to be able to enjoy the ultimate freedom Christ purchased for His people from the slave masters of sin and death. Similarly, the Lord’s Day Sabbath remains a *response* of the people to God’s work on their behalf and new ability to work from and out of the perfect rest that is theirs in Christ. As such, He calls and blesses His people, providing an entire day of rest and worship, for them as and for their neighbors – as extensions of His grace and mercy.

Ezekiel 20:10-12 tells us that the Sabbath was a sign given to His people to remind them of their special status as His covenant people:

So, I led them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. I gave them my statutes and made known to them my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live. Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.

Ezekiel 20:10–12

Thus, the Sabbath law was a *covenant sign*: a sign of their relationship with the Lord.

By keeping the Sabbath, the people declared to God, themselves and to the world, that they were in covenant with God. Failure to keep the Sabbath law was a disregarding of the covenant, and God Himself, treating His grace as of little importance. Sabbath-breaking was, therefore, a very serious sin.

As Reformed Christians, we have a long Sabbatarian history, especially in the Puritan Reformation in England and America. The fourth commandment was considered to be



very important to the life of Christians individually, to the Christian community, and to society in general.

Does the Sabbath have an abiding validity and application for Christians in the New Covenant? If so, why and how?

I. The Sabbath Thread

A. The Sabbath as a Creation, Re-creation, and New Creation Ordinance

- i. The obvious place to begin a study of the Sabbath is at the creation, for it is there that we see the Sabbath instituted. By the power of His word, God called forth the universe into existence. The fact of His creative work and that He named the foundational parts of creation establishes His uncontested ownership and Sovereignty over the whole created order (Ps. 95:3-6). At the end of His creative work, God is said to have been finished; having evaluated His work, He called it “very good” (Gen. 1:31-2:1). Then in Genesis 2:2-3 we see that on the seventh day, after He had finished His work, God blessed the seventh day and set it aside as special. It was special because He blessed it.
- ii. Similarly, in re-creation, Christ makes His people new and calls them to rest in Him. This does not change man’s need to recognize God’s provision nor his need to rest, but the Lord’s Day Sabbath highlights man’s ability to work out of and into the re-creation inaugurated by Christ. The one-in-seven pattern
- iii. And finally, the one-in-seven creation pattern that God began in Creation and Christ fulfills in re-creation will continue in the New Creation. Thus, one-in-seven Sabbath principle, from beginning to end, is God’s gift to man, for man, and His eternal glory.

B. The Sabbath as a Response to and Reflection of God

- i. The Sabbath is part of the moral law of God, which expresses the moral character of God and, in turn, what He expects from us as His image bearers. The Ten Commandments are a summary of the whole law of God, which is embodied in the person and work of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. If the entirety of the Law is summed up to love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our mind, and all our strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves, like Jesus, the Lord’s Day Sabbath is an extension of loving God and our neighbor. We love God with our heart, mind, soul, and strength in Lord’s Day worship, and we love our neighbor as ourselves in giving them rest from their ordinary labors too.



II. The Sabbath in the New Covenant

A. Jesus and the Sabbath

- i. Jesus calls Himself the “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mk. 12:28). In the Gospel texts, Jesus sets forth the delight and life-giving nature of the Sabbath, over and against the burden that it had become at the hands of the Pharisees. He pointed people to God and one another as the foundation and telos of the Sabbath. He rejected the notion that work and rest could be simplified to activity and inactivity, respectively, and He restored the ideas of work and rest to their original meaning. Thus, *works* of mercy and necessity should always have (and have had) a God ordained place on the Sabbath because the Sabbath was made for man (Mk. 2:27). Nowhere does Christ denounce or overturn the Sabbath. Rather, He corrects the misapplications of it by the Pharisees (e.g. Matt. 12:1-14; Mk. 2:23-28; Lk. 6:1-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6), and points all His followers to Himself as the foundation and focus the Sabbath has and will always have.
- ii. Accordingly, the resurrection of the Lord of the Sabbath on the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1-2; Lk. 23:56-24:1; Jn. 20:1), and His making Himself known to His followers, repeatedly on the first day of the week (Lk. 24:13-35; 36-43; Mk. 16:12-14; Jn. 20:11-18; 19-25; 26-29; Acts 2:1 cf. Lev. 23:15-16) points us to the transformation of the Sabbath from the last day of the week to the first. The first day of the week has become the memorial of the resurrection of Christ, and the Christian Sabbath, the sign of the New Creation, and the full redemption of the sons of God. As such, we now understand that whereas in the Old Covenant, labor pulled the laborer to rest, in the New Covenant, the laborer is propelled to work from rest as he/she strives to enter the eternal rest all God’s people are striving for (Heb. 4:1-12)

B. The Apostles and the Sabbath

- i. The Apostolic practice of assembling for worship, the breaking of the bread, and the prayers with all the saints in the household of God, on the first day of the week, demonstrates that they treated it as the New Testament Sabbath (Acts 2:42-47, 20:6-16; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Rev.1:10). What we learn from these references to the first day of the week is that the Apostles taught the churches to gather on that day. It was the will of the Lord for the Churches to meet on the first day. Thus, not only was it their practice to do so, it was the teaching of the Apostles, who planted the churches and taught them what they were to do in obedience to the Lord.



- ii. The first day of the week became known among the churches as “the Lord’s Day.” Revelation 1:10 tells us that John was in the Spirit on “the Lord’s Day” (for the meaning of “Lord’s Day” cf. Is. 58:13-14) shows that he knew that the believers that he wrote to would know which day he was referring to. The commonly used term for the Christian Sabbath in the early Church was the Lord’s Day.
- iii. Moreover, Hebrews 3:6-4:13 teaches that there remains a sabbatismos, literally, a “sabbath-keeping” for the people of God because we have not fully and finally entered into God’s eternal rest (cf. 4:9). Hebrews 10:24-25 commands us, New Covenant believers, not to forsake the assembling (literally: “super-synagogue”) of ourselves together, which has reference to the time of Sabbatical weekly worship.

C. Disputed Texts

- i. The early church struggled over the question of *how* the Sabbath was to be kept in the New Covenant, not if the Sabbath was to be kept. Romans 14:5-6 deals with concerns between weak and strong Christians, with things “indifferent,” things they could choose to do or not do. In our day, this might apply to whether one practices the Church Calendar. A majority of the Christian Church observes the Christian Calendar and see no problem orienting their annual rhythms around the themes of Redemption. Some of our brothers and sisters would rejoice to practice the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons but reject the Lenten season and the calendar of the saints. And still others would see any following of an extra-biblical calendar as a violation of the one-in-seven pattern of creation. Nowhere in the New Testament or in early church history is there any record of disputation over the question of Christians worshipping on the first day of the week (the day we now call Sunday). The Lord’s Day was (and usually still is) indisputably a special day, regardless of the degree to which one holds other days as more or less special than others.
- ii. Galatians 4:9-11 emphasizes salvation by grace through faith. Some thought that righteousness was not by grace alone through faith, but included the necessity of doing the ceremonial works of the law (the observance of circumcision, and special feast days (sabbaths), i.e. days, months, seasons and years; all of which were a part of the Old Covenant system of types and shadows, prefiguring the work of our Savior Jesus Christ). Paul refuted this heresy, but he did not abrogate the Lord’s Day worship as a type of Christian Sabbath.



- iii. Likewise, in Colossians 2:16-17, Paul did not discount the Christian Sabbath. The Word ‘Sabbath’ is nowhere used in the New Testament of the Christian Lord’s day. That word was used exclusively to denote the holy days of the Old Covenant. The point is that during the time before the destruction of Jerusalem, many Christians observed both the seventh day (Saturday) Jewish Sabbath and Sunday Lord’s Day worship. Christians were obligated to observe the Lord’s Day celebrations (Heb. 4 & 10) but were free to decide whether or not to observe the Jewish practice of the Saturday worship. Paul commands that no judgments be made against the latter practice.

III. Sabbath Keeping Today

A. The Attitude of Sabbath Keeping: A Delight

- i. Our ability to call the Sabbath a delight comes primarily from a proper attitude towards God and what He has said about the Sabbath.

The Lord said, "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it...then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth" (Isaiah 58.13-14).

Those who love the Lord, delighting themselves in Him, will demonstrate that love in the way that they keep the Lord’s Day Sabbath. If you delight in the LORD, you will delight in His Sabbath; and if you delight in His Sabbath, you will more and more delight in the LORD.

- ii. We delight in the Sabbath when we understand that it was made for us! It is to our benefit and it is a blessing to us.
 1. Think about it: God has given us fifty-two days of vacation every year; 7 ½ weeks in which we are *commanded* not to work. Praise the Lord! We should not view the Sabbath as a burden or sacrifice. A day of rest every week is a gift from God. Why would we deny this gift from the Giver?
 2. Like most are willing to work before and after a vacation, similarly we work before and after the Sabbath, because it’s worth it!
- iii. The Sabbath is a delight when we keep it according to the way God has prescribed according to His will, not our imagination. The following are some prohibitions and commands the LORD gave His people to honor His Day.



B. The Actions of Sabbath Keeping

i. No ordinary work

1. *Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work. (Deut 5:13-14a)*

a. God gives us some specifics in His word (but these are not by any means exhaustive, thus, we must remember the general principle of no work on the Sabbath day, save acts of necessity and mercy). (Ex. 16:23-29; 20:10; 31:14-15; 35:2; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:14; Jer. 17:21-27).

i. Some of the specific examples of the above include firemen, doctors, policemen, et al.

ii. No commerce

1. *...you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock...that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. (Deut 5:14b-c)*

2. *...if the peoples of the land brought wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day...(Neh. 10:31)*

a. The idea here is the prohibition against God's people treating the working class as servants by engaging in commerce. You are not to keep your store or business open, nor are you to patronize a store or business.

b. Because we are image-bearers of God, we must rest from our work on the Sabbath day, as God did from His, but we are also to love our neighbor in giving them rest, as well.

iii. Civil Obligation

1. *or the sojourner who is within your gates...(Deut 5:14b)*

a. Another implication is that, if we have the opportunity to encourage the civil magistrate to enforce Sabbath obedience in society, we should seek the well-being of



iv. A Day of Feasting and Celebration

1. *Leviticus 23*

- a. The Sabbath in the Old Covenant was a day appointed for feasting and celebration of the grace of God in the lives of the people. Clearly the Sabbath was a delightful day. It was not a day designed by God to forbid man from the joys of life. A proper orientation for the Sabbath was one of joyful, happy celebration (Lev. 23:39; 24:5-9).
- b. In fact, the removal of joyful feasting and celebration on the Sabbath is specifically said to be a curse from God for unfaithfulness (Hos. 2:11). If the joy has gone out of the Sabbath, is it possible that it is because of unfaithfulness to the Lord?
- c. Joy, feasting, and celebration is the blessing of God specifically attached to the Sabbath; a lack of joy, feasting and celebration is the judgment of God in order to bring His people back to Him.
- d. Thus, a special characteristic of the Christian Lord's Day is godly recreation and joyful celebration in the finished work of our Savior. As such, it is proper to spend time with our families and Christian friends, enjoying one another to the glory of God.

v. A Day Centered around the Scriptures

1. Throughout the book of Acts, we see the practice of the Apostles on the Sabbath day being centered around the Scriptures, as had been done by God's people for centuries before (Acts 13:27, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4). Every household was to cease from their labors in order to assemble together. They would gather for worship, for reading of God's word, and for feasting.

vi. Works of Mercy and Necessity

1. Jesus was repeatedly challenged by the Jews for His willingness to heal on the Sabbath, which afforded Him the opportunity to reassert God's revealed primacy of love and mercy in Sabbath-keeping (Ex. 20:10; 23:4-5; Deut. 5:14; 22:1-4; Matt. 12:1-13; Mk. 2:23-28; 3:1-5; Lk. 6:1-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; Jn. 5:1-15). As the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:8), Jesus taught that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath (Mk. 2:27-28). For this reason, it is not only permissible, but it is a necessary application of God's Word to do works of mercy and necessity on the Sabbath.



Conclusion:

We live in a day where most Christians know little or nothing about the Sabbath and its application to our Christian lives. Therefore, we must strive to progressively study and apply the doctrine of the Christian Sabbath, the Lord's Day, and teach it whenever God affords us the opportunity, to the end that we will see a return of Sabbath-keeping in our land and the blessings that come with obeying our good God.

When properly understood and practiced, the biblical doctrine of the Sabbath is a great joy and delight for the Christian. While we are "Sabbatarians," we do not want to become Pharisaical in our application of the Sabbath. While we have a biblical obligation to hold one another accountable to keep the Sabbath, not doing our own pleasures, but God's, we must do so according to the Scriptures.

Therefore, our responsibility to one another is, first, to gather weekly with the people of God for worship, fellowship and celebration; Second, we should hold one another accountable to do no work on the Sabbath (i.e. buying and selling, laboring as we would the other six days, etc.); and finally, to help each other learn to take great joy in the Sabbath.

While it is not the intention of the Elders to destroy the liberty that lawfully exists for the Christian, they must at the same time be overseers of the flock of God (Prov. 27:23; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pet. 5:2-3). Thus, if a member of the church is not keeping the Lord's Day according to the Scriptures, the Elders must come alongside to instruct him in the biblical doctrine of the Sabbath so that he will be brought to repentance and walk in full obedience to God. In so doing, the Elders will assist the members of the church to delight in the Lord and His holy day.



Appendix E: Tithes and Offerings

“Expressing your gratitude for God’s blessings by cheerfully bringing tribute to Him through His tithe” is one of the membership vows. While this certainly includes much more than money, it does not include less.

God is sovereign over all things, yet he works through ordinary means to accomplish extraordinary ends. Like other institutions, churches need resources, including money, to carry out their ministry and mission in the world. A glad, generous, grace-giving church is able to do many more things for the glory of God and the good of others than a grumpy, greedy church.

God alone is Lord of the conscience, so we will not require any members to give beyond what they decide to give according to their faith and good conscience. However, we would like to see our members grow in the grace of giving – to make a commitment to give joyfully, intentionally, regularly, and generously as an act of worship.

Statistics show us that most Christians only give around 3% of their income. Yet we have received much more under the Gospel than our forefathers received under the Law. Therefore, we want to urge our members to make every effort to give *at least* 10% of their income to the Lord. As grace enables them, they may freely give above and beyond that. (Acts 11:29; 2 Corinthians 8:3, 8-9; 1 Timothy 6:17-18; Hebrews 13:5-8)

We want you to think and pray about ways you can faithfully steward what God has given you. Meet needs around you generously as you see needs. Give to specific ministry projects as they arise. Pay your bills and debts. Invest wisely. But, give the first-fruits of your money to the Lord first.

As Scripture says,

Proverbs 3:9-10 “Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.”



Malachi 3:10 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and test me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need.”

2 Corinthians 9:7 “Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

When we give in this way, we are trusting and obeying God’s word. We are also reminding ourselves that the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it. Finally, we are demonstrating that we possess our wealth, but it does not possess us.

Many of us have made poor decisions with our money. Perhaps this is a good time to admit that and get help to get out of debt, start saving for the future and doing whatever possible to live within your means. There are people in our church, particularly our deacons, who would love to help you on this issue. Doing this helps you live in much more freedom. And just think of all the money that you could give to the cause of Christ and the church instead of to credit card companies.

A Giving Plan:

1. Evaluate your own heart and life with regard to money. What do you most enjoy spending money on? What percentage of your income is going 1) to your local church, 2) God’s Kingdom (other Christian ministries), and 3) to help those in need (outside your family)? How close is it to 10% of your income?

*Read Matthew 6:19-34, 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:6-15

How might you need to adjust your giving in light of gospel virtues, in terms of eternal investments?

2. Do you have a regular plan for giving?

First, try to understand everything you own in light of God’s grace and how He would have you honor Him with your first fruits (based on His Word). Then, decide what percentage of your income you can and will give to the Lord’s work this year. Then, ask yourself if on the one hand, is this sacrificial, and, on the other hand, is this responsible. Last, whenever money comes in, set aside the Lord’s portion first, with the understanding that it is His, not yours.



3. We hope your local church is your primary avenue of spiritual growth and giving to your home church will be a first priority. But there are other churches, missionaries, and ministries that are worthy of support as well. Prayerfully distribute the money among Christian causes.
4. Evaluate your use of “non-liquid” resources. For example, are you using your car for God’s glory by giving people rides? Are you using your house to God’s glory by inviting people in? Do you have special resources that God has blessed you with? If so, are you generous with those?

A Giving Worksheet

Your income and giving is between you and the Lord. But this exercise might help you prioritize and set goals according to God’s word.

My gross annual income is: \$ _____.

A tithe of that income (10%) is: \$ _____.

My offering beyond the tithe will be: \$ _____.

You can give weekly or monthly, at church or online, at <http://www.reformationcovenant.org/give>.



Appendix F: Christian Education

"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'"

Abraham Kuyper

At RCC, we believe that what Abraham Kuyper said all those years ago includes the minds and hearts of our covenant children. As parents, our duty is to make sure that we are raising our children up in a world where Christ is presented truly as He is: source, means and goal of all things – including all our knowledge. We want to help parents fulfill that sacred responsibility.

God has commanded parents to bring up their children in the education and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4, Deut. 6:7). Given the importance of the task (Ps. 127:3–5, Deut. 6:7–9) and the impossibility of neutrality in education (Prov. 1:7, Matt. 12:30, Luke 6:40, Col. 2:1–10, 2 Cor. 10:3–5), we do heartily affirm the necessity of educating our children in a manner that is explicitly Christian in content and rigor.

Government schools tend to be, by decree and design, explicitly godless, and therefore normally should not be considered a legitimate means of inculcating true faith, holy living, and a decidedly Christian worldview in the children of Christian parents. Therefore, we strongly encourage Christian parents to seek alternative ways of educating their children, whether by means of Christian schools or homeschooling. In cases where Christian education is an impossibility, parents must be active and diligent in overseeing the education of their children.

Parents who do not fully understand the indispensability of Christian education are warmly received into membership. However, the leaders of RCC will encourage a thorough understanding of the divine imperative to disciple our children, the divine prohibition of rendering unto Caesar those who bear God's image (Matt. 22:20–21), the divine warning to those who cause their little ones to stumble (Matt. 18:6), and the divine promises to those who raise their children in faith (Deut. 7:9, Ps. 102:5–7, Ps. 103:17–18, Prov. 22:6, Luke 1:48–50, Acts 2:39).³⁹

³⁹ From [CREC Memorial](#) on Christian Education



Appendix G: Our Denominational Affiliation

The Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches

We use the word ***Communion*** in its common sense of being participants in one particular body gathered within the broader body, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

By ***Reformed***, we testify that we stand in the stream of historic Protestant orthodoxy and call to mind the importance of continual reformation and sanctification for the Church of Jesus Christ in light of Holy Scripture, which is the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

By ***Evangelical***, we confess that the Gospel of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation, and the Church's calling is to proclaim it with love and doctrinal integrity.

Our gathering of ***churches*** is not intended as a separation from other orthodox believers who confess the name of Christ, but rather as a gathering within that broader church, in order to work together effectively for reformation.





Appendix H: Our Church Government

As Head of the Church and the Savior of the body, the Lord Jesus Christ gave officers necessary for the edification of His Church and the perfecting of the saints. These officers are Elders (pastors/shepherds, overseers or rulers) and Deacons.

Elders have responsibility to oversee the whole work of the local church, with a focus on the ministry of the Word, prayer and worship.

Deacons have been given as assistants to the Elders to administer the work of the church.

The congregation is to follow with esteem and love the teaching and example of those who lead them.

Presbyterian Organization and Government

Presbyterian churches are governed by groups of men commonly called elders. (The Greek word for elder is presbyteros.) While some denominations make a distinction between teaching and ruling elders, at RCC we affirm that all men who are called and equipped by God to the office of elder are equal in responsibility and authority. We have some elders who serve full-time as ministers of the Word, but all of our elders are united under Christ as overseers of His church.

When Presbyterians use the word “church,” we often mean more than just the local congregation. The church exists in concentric circles of accountability, and the governing councils are historically known in Presbyterianism as the “courts” of the church.

A local church body is governed by its minister(s) and elders; this council is called the *session*. While we look forward to equipping and ordaining other men for the office of elder, at the present time, Reformation Covenant Church has six elders:

- Gary Barnard
- Bo Cogbill
- Matt Dau
- Michael Lortz
- Roger Payne
- Devin Smith



The job of the elders is essentially pastoral; they are to shepherd and lead the flock. The minister and elders are to receive, guide, direct, and guard (Acts 20:28-29; 1 Peter 5:1-3); to teach and exhort (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9); and to correct (Titus 1:9; Acts 20:30-31).

The pastoral duty of the elders, of course, includes dealing with sheep that go astray. As individuals and as a group, elders have a responsibility to instruct and warn believers who are falling into false doctrine or unbiblical patterns of behavior.

As a group, the members of church courts may exercise formal discipline over church members under their oversight. If necessary, they may impose the following formal censures: admonition (a formal warning to repent), suspension from the sacraments, suspension or removal from office (for ministers, elders, and deacons), and excommunication (the solemn removal of a person from membership in Christ's Church).

In all cases, strict controls are to be followed, and the goal is always for the wayward sheep to be welcomed back into the fold with celebration.

Elders are also to equip believers for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12) and oversee the various ministries of the church (1 Timothy 3:5; 5:7). This *does not* mean that the ministers and elders "run" the church, in the sense of micro-managing its day-to-day operations and ministries. To do this would not only distract them from their unique responsibilities, it would rob the men and women of the church of their opportunity to use their God-given abilities in ministry. Yet the ministers and elders do have a responsibility to ensure that the ministries are faithful to the theological vision of the church.

In addition to elders, RCC has one other "office," that of deacon.

The primary ministry of the deacons is to assist the elders in various ways, including the oversight of ministries of mercy to the poor and needy. The call of the deacon is a call to service and not rule. The deacon is called to serve the church in the areas of mercy ministry, benevolence, property, finance and missions--both local and global.

While we look forward to seeing other men grow into the office of deacon, at the present time, Reformation Covenant Church has five deacons:

- Jeff Cone
- Daniel Forster
- John Jackson (DIT)
- Bryan Hangartner
- David Tooze



In addition to the local church, which is served by deacons and ruled by elders, there is a regional church court, which is also governed by its ministers and elders; this court is known as the *presbytery*.

RCC is a part of the Anselm Presbytery of the CREC.

Currently we have 27 member churches:

- Ukraine – 5
- California – 4
- Oregon – 3
- Washington – 3
- Poland – 3
- Colorado – 2
- Alaska – 2
- Canada – 1
- Japan – 1
- Belarus – 1
- Bulgaria – 1
- Hungary – 1

The highest church council for the entire CREC also consists of ministers and elders; this is called the *Council*. It meets once every three years in various locations.

Important Note: When considering these Reformed & Presbyterian distinctives, please remember the following: No one is required to agree with every jot and tittle of Reformed doctrine in order to be a member of a RCC. (You don't have to be a Presbyterian to be a member of a Reformed and Presbyterian Church!).

We do, however, require elders to take a vow subscribing to the Constitutions and Confessions of Reformation Covenant Church and the CREC. Leaders of other ministries, such as children's classes, missional community groups, worship teams, et al are expected to understand our distinctives, to work with those of us who hold Reformed views, and not to undermine the distinctives of the church.

But **all that is required for church membership** is that one be a Christian.

So if you have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and are willing to covenant with Jesus and His saints at RCC, then you and your household are welcome to become a member(s) of Reformation Covenant Church!



I still have these questions about Christianity and/or Reformation Covenant Church:

Appendix I: Your Commitment to Reformation Covenant Church

The following are statements you should be able to affirm, in good conscience, before us and the Lord, as you covenant yourself to His people at RCC:

I joyfully enter into covenant with Reformation Covenant Church, thereby agreeing to respect* her Confession, and enter into the mutual edification of her members. I vow the following:

- 1. I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in the sight of the Triune God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope except in His sovereign mercy.⁴⁰*
- 2. I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and I receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered in the gospel.⁴¹*
- 3. I now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as a follower of Christ.⁴²*
- 4. I will submit to the leadership and participate in the government of this church, diligently pursuing her unity and well-being; and, if I decide to pursue membership at another church, I will endeavor to transfer my membership in an orderly and godly manner.⁴³*
- 5. I will strive to trust and obey all of God's law, as embodied in the person of Jesus Christ and revealed in the Ten Commandments – summarized by loving the Lord my God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving my neighbor as myself.⁴⁴*

⁴⁰ Romans 3:10-11, 23; 9:15; John 14:6

⁴¹ Romans 6:23; 10:9; Matthew 14:33; 27:54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; John 1:49; 3:18

⁴² Romans 8:5, 10-11; 10:13; Acts 2:38-39; 16:31

⁴³ Hebrews 13:7, 17; Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Peter 3:8

⁴⁴ Matthew 5:17; John 14:15; Mark 12:29-31

- By respect, we mean:
 - giving due weight and consideration to,
 - being teachable in regard to,
 - not teaching against,
 - and not inviting others into contradiction thereof