

21.7 DEPUTIES TRANSLATIONS DOCTRINAL CREEDS, FORMULARIES AND PRAYER (Artt 96, 182, 326)

- A. The Report is stated.
- B. **Decision:** The Report is referred to Commission Doctrinal Matters 2.
- C. Rev L du P van der Vyver reports on behalf of Commission Doctrinal Matters 2.

D. REPORT

FORMULARY PRAYERS

(Revised translations forwarded to churches for evaluation)

Christian prayers that are being used during gatherings, meetings of believers, in the homes of Christians and elsewhere

❖ Prayer at the beginning of gathering of the congregations

Our help is in the Name of the LORD who created heaven and earth. Amen.

A general confession of sins and a prayer before Sunday's sermon and on fasting days and days of prayer

O eternal God and Father of all mercy, we humble ourselves from the depths of our hearts before your high majesty against which we have so often and so badly sinned. We also admit that if You were to judge us, we would deserve nothing but eternal death. Before You all of us are through our inherited sin unclean and children of the wrath, received and born in sin and unrighteousness. Because of this many an evil desire dwells in us, causing enmity between us and You and us and our neighbour. Apart from this we have constantly been acting in such a way as to transgress your commandments by doing that which You have forbidden us to do and by leaving undone that which we should have done. All of us strayed like sheep and sinned greatly against You. We admit and confess this and repent. To our own shame and to the glory of your mercy with us, we admit and confess that our sins are more in number than the hair on our heads and that we owe ten thousand talents [Matt 18:24] while we are unable to pay anything at all. For this reason we are also not worthy of being called your children, neither are we worthy of lifting our eyes up to You in prayer. O Lord God and loving kind Father, we know that You do not prefer the death of the sinner [Ez 18:23], but rather desire that the sinner will be redeemed and will live. We do also know that the mercy You have for those who are converted and would mend their ways, is everlasting. Therefore we call on You from our hearts, trusting in our Mediator Jesus Christ, Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world [John 1:29]. We pray that You shall have mercy on our weaknesses and that You shall forgive us our sins for the sake of Christ. Cleanse us in the pure fountain of his blood that we may become pure and white as snow [Ps 51:9b]. Cover our nudity with his innocence and righteousness for the sake of your Name. Cleanse our minds from all blindness and release our hearts from obstinacy and wilfulness. Open now the mouth of your servant and fill the words that flow forth with wisdom and knowledge so that he may spread your Word with purity and confidence. Prepare our hearts so that we shall be ready to observe your Word, to understand and to keep it [Ps 105:45; 119:4, 11, 17, 22, 56, 57, 69, 115, 145]. Write your laws and statutes on our hearts according to your promise [Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10]. Provide in us the desire and the strength to follow these and to live to the praise and honour of your Name and to the strengthening and broadening of your congregation. All these things, o merciful God, we pray and desire in the Name of Jesus Christ who taught us to pray as follows:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your Name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

*Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen.* (Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)

❖ **Prayer for all the needs of the believers, to be used on the day of rest after the first sermon**

Almighty, loving kind God, we admit openly and confess before You that we certainly are not worthy of lifting up our eyes to heaven to lay our prayers before You if You should judge what we deserve and are worthy of. Our conscience accuses us of guilt and our sins bring witness against us. We do also know that You are a just Judge who will punish the sins of those who transgress your commandments. O Lord we do, however, reject all other assistance and rely on your loving kindness only. We do so because You have commanded us to seek your help when we are in need and because You, in your unspeakable mercy, has promised to hear our prayers - not because we deserve it (because this we cannot), but because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has earned for us, and whom You have revealed as Mediator and Intercessor [1 John 2:1]

On the one hand, o Lord, we realise that You have showered us with so many blessings that we cannot even fully grasp the extent of everything, and neither do we know how to express it in words. We realise, God, that You have led us to the light of your truth and to the knowledge of your holy Gospel. On the other hand, we fail to remember your deeds of kindness and mercy and we show ingratitude. We stray from You and follow our own ways and desires, and we do not honour You as we should. We keep on committing sin and if You should call us to your judgement-seat, we would not be justified in expecting anything better than the eternal death and total condemnation. O Lord, do rather look to your Anointed, instead of to our sins, so that your wrath may be pacified by his intercession by prayer [1 John 2:1]. Seal the mercy and grace of your Spirit in us, so that our old nature with all its wicked and unacceptable desires may perish the more day by day and that instead we may be renewed to live a better life.

It pleases You, Lord that we pray for all other people. We do therefore pray and ask, Lord, that You bless the education in your Word and the spreading of your Word among people so that it may be accepted and so that the world may be filled with the knowledge of You to their redemption and salvation. So doing those who are not yet aware of your Gospel would stand a chance of being converted, and those who are weak may be strengthened and everybody may proclaim your holy Name and worship You, not only by words but also by deeds. To this purpose send labourers into the harvest [Matt 9:37, 38] and equip them to fulfil their duty faithfully and successfully. And contrary to this eradicate those who present as false teachers, savage wolves that endanger the flock, and mere hirelings that do not care properly for the flock [Matt 20:28-30; John 10:12]. They seek their own honour and advantage only, without being concerned about the honour of your holy Name and the well-being of others.

We pray that You in your mercy protect and keep and govern your Christian churches called by You **to unite** them in true faith and devotion to You. Do so, Lord, so that the dominion of Satan may be put to shame and do continue till the completeness of your kingdom will come [HC, Sun 48, Q123] when You will be everything in everybody [1 Cor 15:28].

We also bring our prayer to You to pray for all the governments and authorities of the world, those who are in power [1 Tim 2:2]: In particular we pray for those who govern us. Direct their ruling in such a way that the King of all kings may govern over them and their subjects. Do so, Lord, so that we may lead a peaceable and quiet life in total devotion to You and reverence [1 Tim 2:2]. Grant that through them, too, the dominion of the devil will the longer the more severely be destroyed and demolished because it is a dominion of despicable deeds and wickedness.

Furthermore we pray for our fellow-believers who are being prosecuted by anti-Christ governments and people. Do comfort them with your Holy Spirit and mercifully release them from such enmity. Protect the remembrance of your Name on earth so that it will continue to exist and prevent those enemies of your truth from boasting about dishonouring your Name and speaking words of blasphemy. Silence them [Ps 8:2,3]. If it is your will that Christians must be imprisoned for speaking the truth about their faith, and if it happens that they must even be killed for testifying in your Name, be very close to them, God, to comfort them and to help them accept it from your hand. Help them to remain steadfast in following You in life and in death to your honour, to the reinforcement of your congregation and for the sake of their own salvation.

We also pray for all those who suffer because of poverty, imprisonment, physical disease or spiritual attacks. Their distress and needs are known to You and we pray that You comfort them. When enduring punishment let it serve to make them admit their sins and improve their lives.

Provide them with steadfast patience, ease their suffering and save them so that they may find joy in your goodness and may praise your Name forever. Comfort and console all those who have lost loved ones because You are their Father. Be with the women who are pregnant and in the process of giving birth. Have mercy on all those who are mentally impaired, to the greatness of your Name and to the benefit of their fellow-beings.

O Lord, take us and all our loved ones under your protection and keeping, and those who are travelling, or in whatever circumstances, to the advancement of your church and the prosperity of the country or also towards their own honest pursuit. Bless the yield of earth, supply favourable weather and bring about fruitful growth. Grant that we live according to your will at work in whatever tasks we have to perform. Grant that we shall use such talents and gifts as You have bestowed on us in such a way that we shall not be hindered by them but shall find them advantageous to our eternal life. Strengthen and reinforce and reassure us whenever we encounter spiritual attacks, so that we by fighting in faith, may be conquerors and may possess eternal life with Christ after this life [2 Tim 4:7].

For all these things we pray according to the way our faithful Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ himself has taught us:

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen. (Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)*

Do strengthen us in the true Christian faith so that we shall grow in faith day by day. About this we confess with our mouths and with our hearts [Rom 10] as follows:

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary;
who suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
who descended to hell;
and on the third day rose again from the dead;
ascended to heaven;
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from where he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit.
I believe in one holy general Christian church,
the communion of the saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.*

[The gathering of the congregation is adjourned after the usual words of blessing (benediction), as follows:]

Lift up your hearts to God and receive the blessing of the Lord:

*The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.
(Num 6:24-26)*

[Alternatives – according to present text of the Book of Psalms, not in Rutgers]:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all! Amen. (2 Cor 13:14 NKJ)

May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you! To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever! Amen. (1 Pet 5:10,11 NKJ).

❖ **A public confession of sins and shorter prayer before the sermon**

Heavenly Father, eternal and loving kind God, we admit and confess before your Godly majesty: we are but poor, wretched sinners; we are conceived and born in iniquity and wickedness, inclined to do evil and not capable of doing anything good [HC, Sun 3, Q8].; because of our sinful lives we constantly transgress your holy commandments. In doing so we bring your wrath upon us, and according to your just judgement we therefore burden ourselves with the eternal punishment. But, o Lord, we repent and are sad because we have made You angry; we accuse ourselves and complain about ourselves because of our bad deeds, while we also desire that You will regard us with your mercy and will reach out to us in our miserable condition. O most faithful and loving God and Father, do have mercy upon us [Ps 51], and do forgive us our sins because of the holy suffering of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Grant us also the mercy and grace of your Holy Spirit [HC, Sun 45; Luke 11:13], by whom we are taught to sincerely acknowledge our unrighteousness and to despise ourselves in the correct way. Do so, Lord, so that sin can be killed in us, that would allow for us to stand up again in a life anew – a life in which we bear the fruit of true holiness

and righteousness that would please You and be acceptable to You through Jesus Christ. Grant that we understand your holy Word according to your Godly will, so that we may learn from it to place all our trust in You alone while we take it away from other creatures [Acts 4:12; HC, Sun 50]. Let our old being together with all its desires be crucified more and more and day after day [Gal 5:24; Rom 6: 5,6,12,13; HC, Sun 33, Q89]. Let us devote ourselves to You as a living thanks-offering [HC, Sun12, Q32; Sun 16, Q43; 1 Pet 2:5] to the honour of your holy Name and to the benefit of our fellow-beings.

Be it your will to redeem and save all those who still stray from your truth, so that all of us may worship and serve You in unity, in holiness and in righteousness all the days of our lives.

This we ask of You through our Lord Jesus Christ who taught us and instructed us to pray as follows:

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen.* (Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)

❖ **Shorter prayer after the sermon**

Lord, almighty God, grant that your holy Name will not be blasphemed because of our sins [HC Sun 36]. Indeed, we have sinned against You in many ways because we do not obey your holy Word as we ought to. We have also in our ignorance and ingratitude and by complaining called your wrath upon us each day. You, therefore, punish us in all justness. O Lord, remember your great loving kindness and have mercy on us. Let us take cognisance of our sins and repent and do help us to improve our lives. Reinforce the servants of your churches so that they will be able to spread your holy Word faithfully and steadfastly. Be with our rulers and authorities so that they will be leaders in justness and fairness [Rom 13:4]. Protect us against falseness, deceit, hypocrisy and unfaithful conduct, and destroy all vain, evil, cunning and shrewd intentions that are being planned against You and your churches [Ps 2:2]. O Lord, do not take away from us your Spirit or your Word [Ps 51:11-13], but uphold and strengthen our faith with your hand, and make us patient, steadfast and confident in our suffering when things go against us [HC Sun 10 Q28]. Help your churches, especially when they need to be relieved from heavy burdens and suffering, mocking and tyranny. Be with those who are in misery and sadness and who feel faint-hearted, and who need the support of your strengthening. And give us your peace through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who gave us an unchanging promise by saying: *I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in my Name He will give you [John 16:23]*; and who instructed us to pray in this manner:

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,*

*But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.*

Amen. (Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)

❖ **A prayer before teaching of catechism starts**

O heavenly Father, the Word of God is perfect and converts the soul [Ps 19:8]. Your testimony is sure and certain, it makes wise the simple, it enlightens the eyes of the blind. It is the great power of God at work to save all those who believe [Rom 1:16]. We are, however, inclined to be blind and unable to do good [HC Sun 3, Q8]. It does not please You, Lord, to accept those who come to You without repentance or without a contrite heart and a humble attitude [Ps 51:19] neither do You prefer those who do not pay heed to your Word [Luke 18:15]. For this reason we do pray that You enlighten our dark minds through your Holy Spirit and develop within us a gentle heart from which the arrogance and self-conceitedness and worldly wisdom may be removed, because all of these are enmity against You [Rom 8:7]. We beg this of You so that we may understand your Word when we hear it, and interpret it correctly, so that we may live our lives accordingly. Be it your will in mercy to redeem and save all those who still stray from your truth, so that all of us may worship and serve You in unity, in holiness and in righteousness all the days of our lives. These prayers we present to You in asking, and we do so only for the sake of Christ, who taught us to pray in his Name and who promised to listen and pay heed to our prayers:

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen.*

(Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)

❖ **Prayer after catechism teachings**

O forgiving, compassionate God and Father, we thank You for establishing a Covenant of Mercy to bless the believers and their descendants after them [Gen 17:7]. Not only did You seal the covenant through the holy baptism, but You also confirm it daily when they and their children sing your praises and glorify You [Ps 8, Ps 18:3]. You make foolish the wisdom and the wise ones of this world (1 Cor 1:19). We pray that You continue to develop and establish your mercy within these young people so that they will keep on growing in Christ, your Son, until they grasp and experience the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and that they accomplish this in all wisdom and righteousness (Eph 4:13). Do grant us, too, your mercy, so that we shall educate them in your knowledge and worship, according to your command, so that through their complete dedication to You the dominion of the devil may constantly be destroyed and the kingdom of Jesus Christ may flourish and grow from strength to strength in this and other churches. Allow for this to happen, o Lord, to the honour of your holy Name and to the blessing of their eternal salvation. May it please You to bring this to pass through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who taught us to pray in this manner:

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen.* (Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)

❖ **Prayer before a meal (Grace)**

The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing (Ps 145:15-16).

Lord, almighty God, You have created everything and You continue to uphold and sustain everything in your Godly power. You fed the multitude of Israelites throughout their travels across the desert for many years. We pray, God: let your blessing descend upon us, your dependent servants; and bless these gifts of food that we have received from your bountiful and generous hand, so that we shall use what we have received in moderation and holiness according to your will of goodness, and so that we may acknowledge that You are our Father and the source of all good things. Grant that we shall always and above everything else seek the spiritual bread of your Word for indeed with it our souls are being fed towards eternal life, yes, eternal life that You have provided and made possible to us through the holy blood of your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen.* (Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)

In Luke 21:34-36 our Lord Jesus Christ warns us about the Day of the Lord, our eating and drinking habits and the importance of prayer, saying: *But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing [self-indulgence], drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*

❖ **Prayer after the meal [Thanks-giving prayer]**

In Deut 8: 10,11 the LORD speaks and says:

When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today.

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You for every good gift that comes from You [James 1:17] and which You always continue to provide us with from your abundant hand. We thank You that it is your Godly will to sustain us in this temporary life and to care for us with everything we may need. We do, however, desire to thank you in particular for making it

possible for us to be born again, and so to have the hope of a better life as You have revealed to us through your holy Gospel. We pray, God and Father, that You in your loving kindness shall prevent our hearts from being rooted in all these earthly and perishable things, We pray that instead we shall lift our eyes to heaven and to our Redeemer Jesus Christ, waiting for Him until He appears from heaven on the clouds to gather and save us.

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen.* (Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)

Praise the LORD! Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever [Ps 106:1].

❖ **Prayer for those who are ill and who suffer affliction**

Eternal and gracious God and Father, You are the everlasting salvation of the living and the everlasting life to those who pass away. In your hand only do you hold life and death. Your caring for us never stops, and you are in charge of whatever health or illness, or good or bad may occur in our lives. We know: No single hair will fall from our heads or You will know it, and for believers You turn around events to the best. Everything that happens is in your hand (Rom 8:28). We pray that You bestow upon us the mercy and accompaniment of the Holy Spirit because we need to learn from Him the patience and understanding that would help us correctly and safely through times of difficulties and suffering. We know that we deserve punishment ten thousands of times over, but we pray for mercy. We know that punishment is not a sign of your wrath but rather to our advantage so that we shall not suffer condemnation with the rest of the world (Heb 12:5-7; 1 Cor 11:32). Make the greater and stronger our faith, o Lord, through your Holy Spirit. Indeed, such is the working that we are even the more securely and lastingly included in the body of Christ, as members in the spiritual Head. You make us the more aware of his suffering as well as of his everlasting glory in conquering. Make our cross lighter so that we may bear it according to our weakness. We subject ourselves altogether to your will, whether You would have our souls dwell in this tent for longer or whether You would gather our souls up to eternal life. We are, as it is, Christ's property and can therefore not perish. Because of your mercy we may leave our weakened bodies behind in the hope of the blessed resurrection, a much more pleasant existence restored to us. Grant that we experience the wonderful comfort of the forgiving of sins and the establishment of righteousness through Christ, so that we shall use that shield to combat all attacks from Satan. Allow for his innocent blood to blot out all stains of sin within us. Allow for his righteousness to mediate for our unrighteousness in your last judgement. Help us to put on the armour of God in faith and in hope, so that fear and anxiety will no longer threaten us, not even in death. If our physical eyes grow dim, grant that our spiritual eyes be brightened to look upon You. And if we are deprived of our ability to speak out, let our hearts not stop calling on You. O Lord, we place ourselves and our souls in your hand. In your loving kindness do not forsake us and do remain with us till the end throughout our times of distress and need. Do so for the sake of Jesus Christ alone who informed us to pray as follows:

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.*

*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen. (Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)*

❖ **Morning prayer**

O gracious and merciful God, we thank you for faithfully keeping watch over us all night long. Let your Holy Spirit strengthen us. Let your Holy Spirit lead us from now on, throughout this day and all the days of our lives so that we may spend them in righteousness and holiness. Grant that our goals in life with everything we undertake may always be to advance and serve your honour, so that we may also expect to have prosperity on our undertakings coming from You alone, provided to us because You are good to all [Ps 145:16]. We need your tender mercies. Forgive us our transgressions according to your promises for the sake of the holy suffering and blood spilling of our Lord Jesus Christ, because, God, we sincerely repent and deeply regret our sins. Shed light into our hearts so that we may avoid all works of the darkness and live a new life as children of the Light in full devotion and dedication to You [Rom 13:12]. Grant your blessing wherever your Godly Word is being spread and made known. Destroy all the works of the devil, protect us from being overcome by evil and strengthen us to overcome evil with good [Rom 12:21]. Guide and strengthen your faithful servants in church as well as our authorities. Comfort and reassure all those who are being attacked and feeling anxious. This we pray through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, who promised that You would hear our prayers and give us what we ask in your Name, and who instructed us to pray in this way:

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen. (Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)*

Let your mercy descend upon us so that we may live according to your will, that will of yours that You have revealed to us in your Law and that has been made clear to us in these Ten Commandments:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

First commandment: *You shall have no other gods before Me.*

Second commandment: *You shall not make yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

Third commandment: *You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his Name in vain.*

Fourth Commandment: *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the day of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

Fifth Commandment: *Honour your father and your mother that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*

Sixth Commandment: *You shall not murder.*

Seventh Commandment: *You shall not commit adultery.*

Eighth Commandment: *You shall not steal.*

Ninth Commandment: *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.*

Tenth Commandment: *You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour's.*

(Ex 20 New King James Version)

❖ **Evening prayer**

O loving kind God, eternal Light that shines in the darkness, You who chase away the night of sin and all blindness of the heart; You created night for us to rest and day for us to work. We pray that we may sleep peacefully and rest well so as to be able to continue again with refreshed bodies to do the work you want us to do. Be with us as we sleep so that even in our times of sleep we shall in body and in soul remain protected against wrong-doing, and yes, that even our sleep be to your honour. Lighten up our mind so that we shall be awake to detect evil and not be caught slumbering when we should combat evil to release us from sin and so that we may expect salvation and redemption. Protect us thus against the onslaught of the devil because You accompany us at all times in your holiness. We admit, God, that we once again greatly sinned against you during the past day and we therefore pray that you cover our sins with your mercy and loving kindness, the same as when You cover all things on earth in the darkness of night, so that in your countenance we shall not stand rejected. Give rest and comfort to those who are ill and sad and who suffer from other forms of misery and distress and innermost battles. Do so Lord, we pray, through our Lord Jesus Christ who taught us to pray this prayer:

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be Your Name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the

power and the glory forever.

Amen.

(Matt 6:9-13 New King James Version)

❖ **Prayer at opening of church meetings**

Heavenly Father, eternal and gracious God, in your everlasting wisdom and loving kindness You have thought it appropriate to gather yourself a congregation from among all the people of the world and You have done so by the spreading of the holy Gospel [HC, Sun 21, Q54]. You have allowed for the congregation to be ruled and attended to by the service of people.

To such an office You have mercifully called us while also instructing us to take heed to ourselves and to all the flock that Christ gained with his dear blood [Acts 20:28]. We are now gathered here in your holy Name to pay attention to such matters as are relevant here today as related to the well-being and order of your churches, and to do so according to the example of the churches of the apostles and the demands of our office. For this reason we confess that we in our selves are incapable and under-equipped to proceed on our own, and we also from nature on lack the ability to bring about the necessary soundness and wholesomeness of thought and deed. O faithful God and Father, we therefore lift our prayers up to you to ask for your altogether truthful guidance and for your very presence in our meeting in your Holy Spirit according to your promise. Cleanse us then from all misunderstandings and wrong motives of the flesh; grant that your holy Word be the only measure and rule of all our discussions and considerations and decisions, so that what we are busy with and the way we are busy may be to the honour of your Name, to development and improvement of the congregation and to the removal of burdens from our conscience, through Jesus Christ, your Son, who in unity with You and the Holy Spirit is one God and the only true God that must at all times be praised and worshipped. Amen.

❖ **Prayer when church meetings come to an end**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank You from our hearts that your plan with us includes that there be churches of yours established in this country, that You have called leaders to serve such churches and that your mercy has provided for the spreading of your holy gospel and for all related religious activities to occur freely and openly and without prosecution here. We also thank You that You have been present in the Holy Spirit during our meeting while we were involved in processes of discussion and decision making and that you have directed these according to your will. Thank You for keeping us together in peace and uniting our hearts. We pray o faithful God and Father, that You mercifully bless our work and decisions and that You powerfully complete the work that You have given origin to. May You do so, Lord, while You always gather, keep and hold together a true church in pure doctrine, the correct implementation of the holy sacraments and proper application of church discipline. We do pray that You at the same time scatter and destroy the devil's forces and work that revolt against You, as well as every conspiracy against your Word [HC, Sun 48, Q 123]. Strengthen, support and encourage all those who are in service of your church in all its rich variety of duties and tasks and responsibilities and caring so that the activities will continue faithfully and steadfastly and your church may be blessed. Be with our rulers and authorities so that their ruling will be just and fair [Rom 13:4]. Grant that all of their ruling will be directed in a such a way that the King of all kings will govern over them and their subjects and, on the other hand, the dominion of the devil will perish (it being a dominion of shameful, despicable and wicked activities) so that all anti-Christ powers will be resisted, the longer the more severely opposed and destroyed [BC, art 36]. Grant that under their governing it will be possible for us to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence [1 Tim 2:2]. Hear our prayer, o God and Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, that together with You and the Holy Spirit as the only true God, must be honoured and praised forever. Amen.

❖ **[A prayer to open a meeting of deacons]**

[Merciful God and Father, not only did You point out that we shall always have the poor with us [Matt 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8], but also did You instruct us to assist them and help them along. To this purpose You have instituted the service of deacons in your church. As we, those who have been called to the office of deacon in this congregation, are now gathered here in your Name to proceed with relevant discussions, we humbly pray, for the sake of Jesus Christ, that You will be with us with the Spirit of sound distinction, so that we shall be able to distinguish between those who are really poor and those who are not. We pray that we shall in all delight and faithfulness distribute the gifts of charity collected by us among those who are in need while we also do not leave the needy members of your

beloved Son uncomforted and without encouragement, but at the same time also help us not to give to those who do not really need our contributions. Work in the hearts of members of the congregation to fill them with compassion for the poor so that they will willingly share what they have in earthly possessions over which you have appointed them managers. Grant that we who receive the means to distribute among the needy will do so from generous hearts and in faithful execution of our office without it being a burden to us. Grant that we shall not assist them with outwardly means only, but that we shall also comfort them with your holy Word. And seeing that humans do not live off bread alone, but also because of every word that flows forth from your mouth, please add your blessing to what we are doing so that the bread of the poor will become more and we shall all together glorify your Name while we await the blessed coming of your beloved Son Jesus Christ – He who became poor for our sake so that we may become rich in eternity. Amen.]

Decision: Approved – changes already made – Deputies Acta. The retranslation of “unity” is referred to the to-be-appointed Deputies for final determination.