

*W-4.0503: Conclusion of Service*

It is appropriate to recognize the conclusion of a period of service, giving thanks for the gifts and calling of particular persons—whether through ordered ministry, as deacons, ruling elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament†; in specific acts of discipleship; or in other forms of service to the church, in the community, or in the world. This recognition may take place in the context of the Service for the Lord’s Day, either as a response to the proclamation of the Word or as an act of sending, or in other services of worship. The service includes prayers of thanksgiving and intercession for those concluding their ministries. Other significant honors or accomplishments may also be celebrated in worship, always in the spirit of giving glory to God.

*W-4.0504: Censure and Restoration*

The church administers discipline as an expression of the authority of Christ, for the sake of the welfare of the church, and toward the goal of redemption and reconciliation, by God’s grace. Forms for censure and restoration are provided in the Rules of Discipline of this *Book of Order*. These occasions are to be observed in the spirit of prayer and pastoral concern, and in the context of worship within the appropriate community or council of the church.

**W-4.06: The Covenant of Marriage***W-4.0601 : Christian Marriage*

In Baptism, each Christian is claimed in the covenant of God’s faithful love. Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

*W-4.0602: Preparing for Marriage*

If they meet the requirements of the civil jurisdiction in which they intend to marry, a couple may request that a service of Christian marriage be conducted by a minister of the Word and Sacrament† in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is authorized, though not required, to act as an agent of the civil jurisdiction in recording the marriage contract. A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the minister of the Word and Sacrament†, who may agree to the couple’s request only if, in the judgment of the minister of the Word and Sacrament†, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values. In making this decision, the minister of the Word and Sacrament† may seek the counsel of the session, which has authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service.

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W-4.0601: 2 Helv. Conf. 5.245–5.251; West. Conf. 6.131–6.139.