



**CROPS AND INDUSTRY SERVICE, 2015**  
**SEVENTH REFORMED CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

**A PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Our heavenly Father, as we contemplate bringing our supplications to you, we continue to prepare our hearts to do so in confession of our sins. We turn to you in repentance, not simply of sin in general, but of our particular sins as a church family, and confess them particularly. We cannot follow in this spiritual exercise the confessions of our Savior, for he had no sin; but Scripture reveals how you were honored in the laments of your servants Ezra and Daniel,<sup>[1]</sup> who realized, in the later words of the apostle Peter, that judgment must first begin at your house.<sup>[2]</sup>

We confess, first, that we have too often taken you for granted. In days of spiritual immaturity, we came to you preoccupied with our petitions, more interested in our desires than in fellowship with you. We are not yet free from the temptation of operating out of the flesh, and thus have remained in, or are capable of reverting to such days. Too often, our adoration has been insincere or superficial; confession has been trite, selective, and with little understanding of what our sins cost the Lord Jesus; thanksgiving has sometimes been an ulterior motive to get what we want irrespective of your will. In your great mercy you have frequently given us that for which we asked, notwithstanding the mixture of our prayers. Yet, sometimes you have, in your fatherly love, granted us that for which we craved yet sent leanness to our souls.<sup>[3]</sup> We come to you, then, desiring you first and foremost, for there is no one and nothing we desire on earth in comparison with you.<sup>[4]</sup>

We also confess that we have not always honored your Word. Our hearts have been slow to delight in it, and we have found ourselves unready to meditate on it day and night.<sup>[5]</sup> We are capable of picking and choosing the bits we like, to the detriment of the rest. Sometimes we do so for the sake of license and sometimes on account of legalism. We acknowledge, on the one hand, ignoring your Word to gain license for the flesh, sometimes twisting what your Word says of our freedom

in Christ.<sup>[6]</sup> And having experienced accordingly the complications of sin, we confess we do not necessarily turn back to you because your honor and reputation has been sullied in the eyes of others, but because our reputations and comforts are endangered. On the other hand, we confess that we are prone to make much of things not found in your Word, and to turn our attention from its priorities. In straining at the gnat and swallowing the camel, we have created and accepted divisions which have neither purified your church nor encouraged our covenant children to stay. Instead, we have limited the effectiveness of your church, claiming the desire to see the lost converted, but satisfied to live with offences other than Christ and obstructions not found in your Word which prevent them hearing of Jesus.

As we come in confession, please forgive us that we have not always embraced conviction of sin, and where we have evaded it, we have undercut your desire for intimate fellowship with us; the purpose of Christ to grant our souls a true sense of forgiveness; and have grieved the Spirit whose work it is to grow us in Christlikeness. Yet, invited to confess our sins, we do not despair of your pardon and forgiveness through Christ's shed blood, but ready ourselves to pray for the world in its sins, asking that we, your church, may set an example of how to use the material blessings you send to honor your name, to make much of Christ, and to live in dependence on your Spirit. Help us, then, we ask in Jesus' name, to die to self, even as we seek to live for you. Amen.

<sup>[1]</sup> Ezra 9; Daniel 9.

<sup>[2]</sup> 1 Peter 4:17.

<sup>[3]</sup> Psalm 106:15.

<sup>[4]</sup> Psalm 73:25.

<sup>[5]</sup> Psalm 1:1-3.

<sup>[6]</sup> Galatians 5:13.



**CROPS AND INDUSTRY SERVICE, 2014**  
**SEVENTH REFORMED CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

**A PRAYER OF CONFESSION IN UNISON**

Our heavenly Father, we are come together to call on your name. You are our Creator, our Provider, and our Redeemer. Whom have we in heaven but you?[1]

We consider your greatness, the beauty of your holiness, your presence everywhere, and your knowledge of all things. We exclaim: "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?"[2] Not only are we small—like grasshoppers in your sight[3]—we have provoked you at every turn.

Our race and many in our society deny or question your existence. Your Son, the gift of your love and our Savior, is ignored or blasphemed by many. His work is despised, and his church marginalized. Your law, written on human hearts, is rejected. The unborn are daily destroyed. The frail and elderly are under threat. Numbers are massacred with no end in sight. Holy matrimony you ordained is being redefined and imposed. Greed and corruption stains high places, litigation and injustice abounds. Men and women have made idols of public figures, many of whom flout your law. Denying dependence on you, many are enslaved to substances. Void of your fellowship, addictions multiply. Your lament during Noah's day rings true of ours: "My Spirit shall not contend with man forever."[4]

You have set us, your people, apart for your glory. We are called to be your salt and light in the world. We confess we have not always restrained the world or dispelled the darkness. We have been affected by the materialism of the age, and prone to live for the blessings rather than the Giver. We have not always returned thanks to you for previous blessings, nor have we always given back the first fruits of our labor. There have been times we have robbed you.[5] Times we have preferred the idols of the age to the pure worship of your name. We have not always valued your courts as lovely.[6] Truly, shame and

weakness belongs to us at this time.[7] In the midst of the years, revive your work. In your wrath, O Lord, remember mercy.[8]

Be, we pray, the first blessing we seek. We crave you, a sight of your glory and greatness;[9] fellowship with you on the basis of sins forgiven. Grant us, then, O Lord, the consciousness of pardon received; of our first love reignited. Teach us afresh, O Father, to delight in you again; O Jesus, to glory in your cross; O Spirit, to be satisfied in your comfort. Strengthen our faith and mature our daily repentance. Restore days of rejoicing in your great love and kindness. Only in light of the blessing you are may we seek the blessings you give. And in calling on you for the blessings you give, keep us ever shy of confusing them with the blessing you are.

Our boldness to ask for your blessings is found in you alone. You promised never again to flood the earth.[10] You have said that rains and fruitful seasons witness to your existence, your love, and your grace.[11] We seek such blessings for your glory's sake, to see your power in sustaining the earth, in drawing sinners to yourself, and in cheering the hearts of your people. We humbly implore you to bless our nation yet; to bless us as we intercede, as your holy Priesthood, for those who do not or will not pray. We submit to your answers and humbly ask for grace to use well the blessings you send our way. In Jesus' great name we pray. Amen.

**Word of assurance:** Daniel 9:20–23.

[1] Psalm 73:25; [2] Psalm 8:4; [3] Isaiah 40:22; [4] Genesis 6:3; [5] Malachi 3:8; [6] Psalm 84:1; [7] Daniel 9:7–8; [8] Habbakuk 3:2; [9] Exodus 33:18; [10] Genesis 8:21–22; [11] Acts 14:17.



*Prayers of Confession*  
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**CROPS AND INDUSTRY SERVICE, 2013**  
**SEVENTH REFORMED CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

**A PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

We come to you in humility, our God. In your three persons you are our heavenly Father, our elder Brother, our Comforter! We worship you for all that you are, and for what you have revealed yourself to be. You are all powerful, all knowing, and present everywhere. You are just and holy, loving and true. By your creation we exist. By your providence we prosper. By your salvation we express our gratitude.

We do so now for the many gifts we possess—gifts of intellect, calling, opportunity, and prosperity. We praise you that you enable us to use your gifts for your glory. We praise you that in Jesus we know their highest use. We praise you that by the Spirit we enjoy glorifying you. Thank you that we know richness toward you!

We confess we do not always remember your hand in our prosperity. Nor do we always recall the priorities of your kingdom. Forgive us when materialism blunts our spiritual senses, when our materialism grieves your Spirit. Take from us any indifference to Christ's cause. We repent of those sins at odds with your will. Help us to walk in Christ's footsteps, resisting temptations within and without. Renew our first love for you. Reduce to our second love, we pray, your generous material blessings.

We confess our dependence on you for fresh blessings. It is before the cross of Christ that we seek them. May we honor your name with them, extolling your name before a watching world. You are the God who makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good. You send rain on the just and the unjust. It is by your greatest gift of Christ that redemption is received. It is by your general gifts of kindness that sinners are led to repentance.

Hear us we pray. In doing so, ever remind us to return with our thanks. In Jesus Christ our Savior, we pray. Amen.