MMU – August 24, 2026

Note from Lisa – What I am/What we are

I encourage each Session member to review The Foundation of Presbyterian Policy in the Book of Order. This section highlights our shared mission, fostering a sense of purpose and unity in serving God's calling. In section F-1.0304, we read about "The Great Ends of the Church," Reminding us we are to proclaim the gospel for the salvation of humankind.

I've been reading the book *Generously Reformed: Theology Rooted Deep and Reaching Wide* by J. Todd Billings, Suzanne McDonald, and Alberto La Rosa Rojas. These three Professors of Theology provide an accessible and diverse guide to reformed theology. In the section on Reformed Theology and the Church's Mission: Faith, Justice, and the Gospel, the authors discuss the core of the Gospel Christians are to proclaim.

According to the authors, the good news of the Gospels is not only that Jesus died on the Cross for our sins and gives us eternal life, nor is it only liberation from chains of oppression that transform us into people who care for those who are marginalized. They write that the core of the good news is union with the triune God of love. The authors write,

> The love of God creates, restores, heals, unites, and binds up a broken and hurting creation, and it is what fuels the church's work of justice and evangelism. The love of God is the beating heart of the good news of the kingdom of God that Jesus inaugurates. It is what he teaches across his home region of Galilee and in Jerusalem, and it is why he sends his disciples to go throughout the nations to teach and proclaim the gospel. (Billings, McDonald and La Rosa Rojas 2026)

According to these theologians, we are called to proclaim this good news in our words and in our deeds. We are supported in this mission by the Spirit, who gives us the Words, and by the love of God, which provides us with the strength we need for this mission.

The second in the list of great ends of the Church is: the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God. Followed closely by the third great end: the maintenance of divine worship. In the Directory for Worship, we read about the theology of Christian worship and the standards and norms for Reformed worship that are to guide the Ruling Elders in their responsibilities for providing for a congregation's worship and Christian Education. This directory helps us focus on the primary purpose of worship: to honor and glorify God. When we gather to worship, we need to remember that we are all worshipping God together and that the purpose is to give our best to God in that moment.

The Directory for Worship also includes a section on the Church's ministry within the Community of Faith (W-5.02). This section reminds us that Christian nurture begins in the Service for the Lord's Day, and continues with opportunities for educational programs, instruction for ruling elders and deacons, and discipleship of all members. The larger church is responsible for additional opportunities for Christian nurture, including seminary instruction, workshops, camps, and conferences. Finally, Christian nurture includes pastoral care, an extension, "of Christ's grace and peace in homes, hospitals, hospices, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces." (W-5.0204)

I encourage you to read and study both the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and the Directory for Worship to gain a deeper understanding of who we are as Presbyterians. Next week, I will discuss the final three great ends of the Church.

What I am, what we are, is Presbyterian, more than people who use a particular form of government to be the church, but rather a way of serving God's mission in the world.

## References

Billings, J. Todd, Suzanne McDonald, and Alberto La Rosa Rojas. 2026. *Generously Reformed: Theology Rooted Deep and Reaching Wide.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.