

2016 DECLARATORY ACT

(A&P 2016, p. 285, 16)

MINISTER OF WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES PRESIDING AT THE LORD'S TABLE

In response to Overture No. 4, 2014 and on a recommendation of the Committee on Church Doctrine, the 2015 General Assembly affirmed that '...ordained ministers of churches which are members of the World Communion of Reformed Churches are permitted to preside at the Lord's Table at the discretion of the moderator and interim moderator of the relevant session'. (A&P 2015, p. 255)

Because the Assembly agreed that this is an affirmation of existing law and practice and not a new piece of legislation that would require being sent to presbyteries under the Barrier Act, the Clerks of Assembly believe it is an appropriate matter to be the subject of a Declaratory Act (see p. 283–84 re the scope and purpose of a Declaratory Act). By adopting a Declaratory Act on this issue, it can be easily referenced in the Book of Forms whenever the question of who can preside at the Lord's Table arises.

The pertinent legislation regarding the regulation of presiding at the Lord's Table is found at Book of Forms section 198.1:

198.1 It belongs to the presbytery to regulate matters concerning the performance of public worship and the administration of the sacraments, within its bounds. It must take cognizance of practices inconsistent with the laws and settled usage of the church. It should enjoin the discontinuance of novel practices calculated to cause division or strife in any congregation.

Clerks of Assembly, Recommendation No. 5 (adopted, p. 16)

That the following Declaratory Act regarding the eligibility of ministers of member churches of The World Communion of Reformed Churches to preside at the Lord's Table be added to Book of Forms section 198.1.

Ordained ministers of churches that are members of the World Communion of Reformed Churches are permitted to preside at the Lord's Table at the discretion of the moderator or interim moderator of the relevant session. (A&P 2015, p. 255)