

Times of Celebration

Anniversaries and Landmarks

Occasions for Commission Rededication and Recommitment for Service

A Litany of Prayer and Thanksgiving
For an Anniversary or Celebration

On this anniversary day we thank you, Lord,
for our church here in _____

We praise you for all the joy we have known in this fellowship,
and we pray for all those who together
make up this community of your people,
so that our church may be a real home
for all who share its life.

We pray for those who bear responsibility for leadership:
for
our minister, elders and teachers, ...

that they may be guided by your wisdom
and sustained by your strength.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for our young people:
for

the Pilots, Junior Church, Youth Group ...

that they may grow in faith
and renew the vision of the church.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for those who work to enhance our worship:
through singing and music,
through the reading of the scriptures,
through the arrangement of flowers,
through ...

that they may be channels of your grace
and find joy in your service.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for those who meet for Bible study, and for prayer,
that through their devotion the whole fellowship may be
enriched.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for the groups that meet for friendship and
recreation:
for

*the women's fellowship,
the ...*

that in them people may find true fellowship
and discover Christ in their neighbour.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for all who maintain the fabric of our church:
for

the maintenance team and the caretakers,.....

and for all who hold office in the church,
that they may be ever aware that they are workers in your
kingdom.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for all who use our premises,
that they may find us welcoming and hospitable.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

Lord God, you have called us to share the joy and fullness of life
that you give in your Son, Jesus Christ.
Grant that our church may be a blessing to all in this
neighbourhood,
so that more and more people may come to love and trust you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Wendy Baskett

Petition and Intercession for a Church Anniversary or Celebration

Lord God
we offer our prayers to you today
for our church here in _____;
that your Holy Spirit may inspire our worship
and lead us into deeper fellowship;
that we may continue to pass on our faith,
hope and love to succeeding generations;
that we may serve the community in which we live
with commitment, vision and enthusiasm;
that within our fellowship there may be found
comfort for the sorrowful,
strength for the anxious,
compassion for the sick,
and concern and love for all.

We pray for the minister and elders of this church;
for all who hold positions of responsibility
in worship, teaching, caring or administration;
and for each member with their particular gifts;
that together we may fulfil our calling
eagerly, conscientiously, and with imagination,
strengthened by your Spirit
and upheld by one another's prayers.

We pray for those for whom we are particularly concerned:
those who are ill, at home or in hospital;
those who are housebound or unable to get to church;
those who are bereaved or face losing someone they love;
those who are worried or depressed;
and for those who no longer come to church,
that they may be drawn back into our fellowship.

Lord, we thank you
for the lives of your faithful people in every age
and especially for members of this community
who have been witnesses to your love.

We remember especially...

We, with them, are the living stones
with which you build your church.
We pray that we, too, may remain faithful to our calling,
as did your Son, Jesus Christ,
that by your grace our lives may be the examples
on which those after us may build,
to your praise and glory.

Amen

Wendy Baskett

Loving Gracious God

Loving gracious God,
we come before you
as we mark another year in the life of this church.
We give you thanks for your guidance,
your prodding and your leading over this past year.
We give you thanks for all
we have accomplished in your name,
but we also know sometimes
we have missed the mark.
We thank you for all those with whom
we have had contact over this last year,
Whether it was for joyous reasons
or sad ones, or for whatever reason
they found themselves here in this building.
May we through that contact however brief
have shared something of your love for all people.
Today we thank you for the past year
and all it has contained.
At this anniversary time we cannot
stand only looking backwards,
we must also look forward.
So at this time we thank you
that you will walk with us into the coming year
in the life of this church.
May we who this day celebrate and remember
the past year in our constant walk with you,
go forward in hope and joy,
into your future.

Amen

David Coote

A Time for Rededication

Leader: We come Lord God
to rededicate ourselves to your purposes.

All: **Gracious God**
 as a body of your people
 and as individual members of that body.
 We come now to rededicate ourselves to
 the task you have set before us your church.
 We also at this time rededicate ourselves
 anew to living a life that reflects your
 presence with us and your love for each one
 of us.
 We rededicate our lives to your service
 and the service of others,
 just as our Lord came to serve.
 Loving God renew and strengthen in us
 the joy of knowing you,
 and our faith and trust
 in your Son our Saviour.

Amen

David Coote

The Challenge of the Call

This dramatic reading may be included in a service of commissioning or rededication focussing on the challenge of call.

Water from the Rock

Narrator: The whole Israelite community left the desert of Sin and made a camp at Rephidim, where they quarrelled with Moses, saying...

People: Give us water to drink,
for we are thirsty and ready to die.

- Narrator:** Then Moses cried to the Lord,
- Moses:** What am I to do with these people?
They are almost ready to stone me!
- Narrator:** And the Lord answered Moses:
- God:** Take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.
I will stand before you on the rock of Horeb.
Strike the rock and water will come out of it for the people to drink.
- Moses:** I struck the rock with such force, that the water simply gushed to the surface.
Like slitting an artery, the glistening fluid bled from its source and spurted forth and everyone got drenched.
- Is.1:** For the first time in ages our thirst was assuaged and we were able to drink again.
- Is 2:** Extravagant, gaping mouths snatched greedily at every passing droplet,
freeing shrivelled tongues from the imprisonment of drought.
- Is 3:** Torn and blistered feet found soothing relief in the sudden miraculous appearance of rock pools.
- Narrator:** The people danced for joy
- Is 1:** We had been desperate for water for days. Not since Marah had we been blessed with such a prodigiously sweet outpouring.
- Is 2:** The desert, with eager determination had once more sought our rasping throats and wrung them dry, until scored and scorched, they felt like sandpaper, leaving us choking on our own dry spittle.

- Is 3:** Oh yes. We had been desperate.
- Moses:** So desperate in fact that they turned on me.
- Is 1:** Why did you bring us here, to this forsaken hellhole?
- Is 2:** To watch our livestock die?
- Is 3:** To see our children perish?
- Moses:** Then they gathered rocks to stone me.
- Narrator:** Desperation can drive a people to the very edge. It may sharpen the instinct for survival but in the end, in extremity, it turns even those of mildest disposition into beasts who then turn on each other. It also shortens memories.
- God:** How quickly they have forgotten the cruel oppression of their Egyptian overlords, and the miraculous escape across the Sea of Reeds.
Now, suddenly, years of intolerable slavery take on an almost rosy glow, and they begin to reminisce about 'the good old days'.
But I have heard it all a thousand times before. Moan, moan, moan. The sane old scratchy record.
Poor Moses you've certainly got your work cut out.
- Moses:** So Lord, tell me what to do? I'm really struggling with this one.
Give me Pharaoh any day.
- Narrator:** Thirst and frustration finally gives way to rage.
- Is 1:** We've had enough and he should know it too.

- Is 2:** Our leader.
- Is 3:** The man who speaks in secret with our God,
in private session,
behind billowing clouds of smoke.
- Is 1:** Striking bargains.
- Is 2:** Negotiating terms.
- Is 3:** It's all very well but we never get a say.
- Is 1:** Let's face it, the man who performed so
dramatically in public, on our behalf, in front
of Pharoah,
just a little while ago ...
- Is 2:** Waving that magic stick of his, that swallowed
snakes and all,
and struck the Nile and turned it red with blood
...
- Is 3:** Well, he now looks pretty unconvincing.
- Is 1:** He's not the fighter he was.
- Is 2:** It's a different ball game out here in the desert
and it's not what I'd call liberation either. Egypt
may have been servitude, yes, but at least we
knew where we stood. We were fed and had a
roof over our heads.
- Is 3:** To be honest, I don't think he's up to it any
more. Past his sell-by date if you ask me but
then he's getting on.
- Narrator:** The honest broker becomes the convenient
whipping boy, a scapegoat for a thousand
smouldering resentments.

- God:** If I were you I'd hit someone or something.
- Moses:** I brought the staff down so heavily that I only missed their heads by a whisker.
I suppose it was my way of re-asserting authority. (His or mine you may ask) or it could have been sheer exasperation.
Any way, whatever ... it did the trick.
- God:** It was most impressive. The moment the rock was struck, a huge jet shot up over their heads and everyone got soaked. Quite amazing really. One for the record books I'd say.
- Moses:** Dear God, will we always be driven to the limits before we encounter your saving hand?
- God:** Probably.
- Narrator:** So Moses did this in the sight of the people, and he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord saying ...
- People:** Is the Lord among us or not?

Helena McKinnon

Strike the Rock

Great God do you know what you are asking?
This Rock of yours is Holy ground to us – a precious stone,
that moulded by the years has shaped our own lives too.

Strike the rock.

It has been both sure foundation and building block, for
from it we have cut and carved the stone that built the great
cathedrals, churches, chapels to your name.

Strike the rock.

Your people too have made their mark. Through centuries
of service and self-sacrifice, history has borne witness to that
boundless love entered in and paid the price.

Strike the rock.

Together we weathered storms of fire, flood and persecution.
But now age, erosion, indifference and internal wrangling eat
at the very fabric of our faith – both walls and worshippers
are wearing thin and there seems more life outside the church
than in.

Strike the rock.

This rock has been our refuge and our strength, a very present
help in time of need.

A home, a sanctuary, a house of prayer, where those who seek
your solace come to plead.

And yet, you ask that we should take your hand and smite the
Holy Ground on which we stand?

Strike the rock.

So Moses raised his staff and struck the rock.

And so he did.

And dare we do the same?

Release the living water from its core that all may drink,
be satisfied and want more?

Helena McKinnon

At an Induction or Recommitment

I recommit myself to the Holy One,
to the company of Christ's friends
and the highway of the Spirit of Wisdom.
I concur with the gospel call to repentance,
looking inside myself and round about
for those things which impede
God's commonwealth of justice and peace.
I embrace life on the margins of church and society,
a sentinel, fully sentient,
hunting for and gathering together
gifts to be used in the building of community.

Janet Lees

Vineyard Kyrie

Vine-grower God, we have forgotten it is your vineyard.
Lord, have mercy.
True Vine Christ, we have forgotten we are your co-workers.
Christ, have mercy.
Fruitful Spirit, we have forgotten how to co-operate.
Lord, have mercy.
Retrain us; prune us for a new harvest,
In which first and last are reversed.
In your mercy, hear our prayer.

*(This could be used with any of the Kyries at number 5 in
Rejoice and Sing)*

Janet Lees

Sir, We Would See Jesus

'Sir, we would see Jesus'.
So enquired the Greeks.
Andrew heard them and
Took them to meet his Lord.
There they could talk
Because Jesus was home in Galilee.

'Sir, we would see Jesus'.
So enquired eager worshippers,
But he was not to be found,
In hymns, music or prayers.
Absent from the sermon,
Because Jesus has gone to Galilee.

'Sir, we would see Jesus'.
So enquired a newly ordained minister,
Seeking him in committees,
Enmeshed in denominational structures.
Striving to witness to an absent Christ,
Because Jesus has gone to Galilee.

'Sir, we would see Jesus'.
Where can he be found?
Why do we fail?
Have we missed the clue?
Directions are clear enough.
He's gone before us in Galilee.

'Sir, we would see Jesus'.
He is still to be found,
In his old haunts,
The work-a-day world,
Anywhere there are people.
This is our contemporary Galilee.

'Sir, we would see Jesus'.
Our task is to engage with Him,
Reveal the Lord of life who is present
In the modern work place,
Confirming our intrinsic worth.
Christ who dwells in our Galilee.

Y Mochyn Daear

The Body of Christ

That's us, the Church!
How gross it is.
No longer lithe and supple
Full of energy.
Now twisted and deformed,
Lethargic in the extreme.

Once I dreamed
As all young men do
Of a vibrant renewed Church.
United yet not uniform.
Exhibiting its rich diversity
In all aspects of its life.

Can we break free,
From the 'strait jacket of tradition?
Remove the ritual's noose
That would choke
Any outreach of the spirit,
Beyond the enmeshing structures.

Uniting together with one mission,
Affirming all we hold in common,
Spelling out the differences,
Respecting each other in love,
Acknowledging our ignorance
About each other and our faith.

If we are unfit
Our bodies suffer.
Likewise within the Church.
Shed the weighty burden
Of outmoded structures and customs,
Adopt a healthy spiritual diet.

As Christ's human body
Was broken and scarred
So the Church bears signs
Of conflict and dissent.
Yet healing is possible
Gained through this timeless victory.