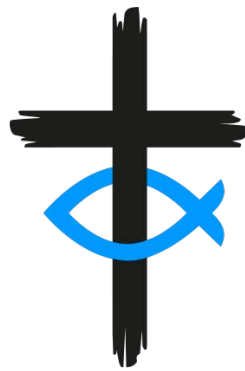

Worship: *from*



The
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Church**

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Wedding Service

*The phrases marked by a star * and in bold italic print are alternative forms of the words required by law in England and Wales. Guidance notes are available from the Registrar for those conducting weddings in Scotland.*

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Hymn or Song
3. Statement of Purpose
4. Prayer
5. Readings from Scripture
6. Sermon
7. Declarations
8. Prayer for Assurance and Sincerity
9. The Promises
10. The Vows
11. The Giving and Receiving of Rings
12. The Marriage Blessing
13. The Declaration of Marriage
14. Greeting
15. Hymn or Song
16. Prayers of Intercession
17. The Lord's Prayer
18. Hymn or Song
19. The Signing of the Registers
20. Blessing
21. Alternative Vows

1. Welcome and Introduction

Welcome tochurch,
for the celebration of the marriage between AB and CD.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us worship God.

This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24

or

Love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave...
Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.

Song of Songs 8:6b-7a

or

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God,
and God abides in them.

1 John 4:16b

or

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

John 13:34

2. Hymn or Song

3. Statement of Purpose

We have come together in the presence of God
to witness the wedding of AB and CD,
to rejoice with them
and to surround them with our prayers.
We are created male and female in the image of God
and marriage is a gift of God within creation.
God has given us marriage so that husband and wife
may live faithfully together.

In plenty or in need, in sorrow or in joy,
they give each other strength, friendship and healing.
With delight and tenderness they may know each other in love,
and so belong to one another in honour and in joy.

*(In marriage, children may be born and nurtured
that they may grow up in the security of love
and come to know the freedom of faith.)*

In marriage, husband and wife begin a new life together.
They are a sign to the world of unity and loyalty;
their love enriches society and strengthens community.
Marriage is a way of life made holy by God.
It is both joy and demand, grace and work.
It is a gift and calling of God
and is not to be entered into lightly or thoughtlessly,
but reverently and responsibly.
This is the way of life that A and C have chosen.
They come to accept each other freely,
to give their consent to one another in solemn promises,
and to ask for God's blessing.

4. Prayer

Eternal God,
you are with us this day
in the fullness of your love.
In the love of one for another
we see your will for all creation.
In the tenderness of love's embrace
we remember your love once made flesh for us.
In the marriage of minds
we know your Spirit between us and among us.
Your love fills our hearts
and draws us to one another with holy desire.
Your love in us offers forgiveness
and sets us free to be together in peace.
Your love creates community
and heals our deepest loneliness.
This love you renew continually
in A and C
and in all your people.

Make them today a sign to us
of your love in all creation,
of your enduring affection and faithfulness,
and of your joy in all that you have made.
May we see this day, before our eyes,
the joy of love and the hope of faith.
Bless our celebration with your presence
and touch us with your Spirit,
in Christ's name we pray,

Amen.

5. Readings from Scripture

Some suggested readings:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):
Genesis 1:26-28, 31a, Psalm 23, Song of Songs 7:10-13

New Testament:
Matthew 5:1-9, Mark 10:6-9, John 2:1-11,
I Corinthians 13: 1-8a,13, Ephesians 3:14-21, I John 4:7-19

6. Sermon

*The readings and the sermon may come later in the service,
after the marriage ceremony.*

7. Declarations

The minister says to the couple:

Before God and before this congregation,
I will ask you to declare your freedom and readiness
to enter into the covenant of marriage.

I will also ask your families and this congregation
to affirm their willingness to support you today
and in the years to come.

Legal declarations:

Due notice of the intention of AB and CD to be married has been given and no objection has been made.

or

I ask the congregation:
if you know of any reason in law
why AB and CD may not be joined in marriage,
please declare it now.

To the couple:

I ask you, A and C,
to declare that you know of no reason in law
that you may not be married.

*As required by law each one declares in the presence of the
Authorized Person, or the Registrar, and two witnesses:*

***I declare that I know of no legal reason
why I, AB,
may not be joined in marriage to CD. ****

***I declare that I know of no legal reason
why I, CD,
may not be joined in marriage to AB. ****

or

***I do solemnly declare
that I know not
of any lawful impediment
why I, AB,
may not be joined in matrimony
to CD.****

***I do solemnly declare
that I know not
of any lawful impediment
why I, CD,
may not be joined in matrimony
to AB.****

or

Are you, AB, free lawfully to marry CD?

I am. *

Are you, CD, free lawfully to marry AB?

I am. *

8. Prayer for Assurance and Sincerity

O God of all faithfulness,
we pray for those who will make promises today:
bless them with sincerity and give them your grace.
May A and C know that their love
is both your will and your delight.
May the promises they make govern the life they will lead.
May your presence surround them,
your faithfulness encourage them,
your Spirit strengthen and guide them.

Amen.

9. The Promises

The man is asked:

AB will you take CD
to be your wife in Christian marriage?
Will you love, comfort, honour and protect her,
in times of prosperity and health
and in times of trouble and suffering?
And will you be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

I will.

The woman is asked:

CD will you take AB
to be your husband in Christian marriage?
Will you love, comfort, honour and protect him,
in times of prosperity and health
and in times of trouble and suffering?
And will you be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

I will.

If either, or both, has children:

Will you promise to be faithful, loving and caring parents to N (and N)?

We will.

The immediate family is asked:

Will you, the families of A and C,
give your blessing to their marriage
and will you always support and encourage them?

We will.

The congregation is asked:

Will you, the friends of A and C,
support and encourage them in their marriage?

We will.

10. The Vows

*The couple turn to face each other and join right hands.
In the presence of the Authorized Person, or the Registrar,
and two witnesses they exchange vows in this form or one
of the alternative forms (pp 177-179).*

**I, AB, do take you (thee), CD,
to be my wedded wife:*
in accordance with God's holy will,
to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish
till death us do part.
This is my solemn vow.**

**I, CD, do take you (thee), AB,
to be my wedded husband:*
in accordance with God's holy will,
to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish
till death us do part.
This is my solemn vow.**

II. The Giving and Receiving of Rings

The rings are given to the minister who prays:

Eternal God,
whose love encircles us all,
bless the giving and receiving of these rings.
May they be signs of a love which never ends,
beautiful, holy and strong.
May they be tokens of commitment and faithfulness
and reminders of the promises and vows made today.
In the name of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Creator, Christ and Spirit.*)

Amen.

Each says in turn:

**I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
all that I have I share with you,
within the holy love of God.**

or

**I give you this ring in God's name
as a sign of all that we have promised
and all that we shall share.**

If only one ring is used, the minister prays:

Eternal God,
whose love encircles us all,
bless the giving and receiving of this ring.
May it be a sign of a love which never ends,
beautiful, holy and strong.
May it be a token of commitment and faithfulness
and a reminder of the promises and vows made today.
In the name of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Creator, Christ and Spirit.*)
Amen.

The man says:

**I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
all that I have I share with you,
within the holy love of God.**

or

**I give you this ring in God's name
as a sign of all that we have promised
and all that we shall share.**

the woman replies:

**I receive this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
all that I have I share with you,
within the holy love of God.**

or

**I receive this ring in God's name
as a sign of all that we have promised
and all that we shall share.**

*The couple may exchange other appropriate symbols
and gifts.*

12. The Marriage Blessing

Most gracious God, source of all true love,
we give you thanks that A and C
have answered your call
and have given themselves today to one another
in the covenant of marriage.
Pour out the fullness of your blessing on them.
Lead them into that love
which never comes to an end.
Give them grace to forgive when words or actions hurt.
Give them strength to persevere through times of testing
and to support each other through darkness and distress.
May they be thankful
for all that has brought them to this moment.
May they joyfully embrace this new beginning,
and journey on with ever new delight.
Bless their families and friends,
that they may be a constant source of strength.
Bless their home,
that it may be a place of welcome.
*(Bless them in the gift of children,
that they may be wise and loving parents).*
Bless all who celebrate with A and C,
that love may flourish
and friendship touch the lonely.
And grant that we, who today have witnessed
the sharing and exchange of words and signs of love,
may find our faith renewed and our hope restored.
May love, the greatest of all your gifts,
stronger than death, gentle as a touch,
bring us through every passing moment
closer to Jesus Christ, our lover and our Lord.

Amen.

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

Amen.

13. The Declaration of Marriage

A and C have declared before God and before you that they will live together in Christian marriage. They have made promises to one another, have exchanged solemn vows and have symbolised their marriage today by joining hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. (*a ring*) I therefore declare them to be husband and wife, in the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Creator, Christ and Spirit.*) Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.

14. Greeting

The couple may kiss. The congregation may applaud. The sign of peace may be shared.

15. Hymn or Song

16. Prayers of Intercession

O God of love,
we pray for all those who
have made a commitment to love another;
for all those newly married today,
for those in the first days of love,
and for those who have celebrated many anniversaries.
Be with us all in the joy and vulnerability of loving.
Strengthen us in commitment and loyalty,
guide us when love is difficult or costly,
and comfort us whenever love ends.

We pray for the Church,
the church communities we know,
and the one Church throughout the world.
May your people be united in love,
embody your peace and grow in faith.
May our worship be joyful and sincere
and our communities welcoming and warm.
Let faith be expressed with integrity
and service to the world offered with love.

We pray for the world,
that the peace of God will reign among the nations
and between all peoples.
May there be an end to conflict and aggression,
a growth in understanding between faiths and traditions,
and among all people a desire for justice.
May the hungry be fed, the enslaved set free,
and the weak find their strength.
May the earth be honoured
and all creatures treated with respect.

We pray for all in need, in sorrow or pain,
for those who are sick,
for those who are sad to be alone,
and for all afraid for the future
or grieving for the past which is gone.
May all in agony find comfort,
all who cry aloud be heard,
all in silent sorrow find the solace of friends.

On this day so full of joy and promise,
we bring the sorrows and struggles which are always with us,
in the confidence that you will hear us
and that your love will bless us with new hope.
We pray in the name of Christ,
and in the power of the Holy Spirit,

Amen.

17. The Lord's Prayer

The service may continue with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

18. Hymn or Song

19. The Signing of the Register(s)

The register(s) or the marriage schedule is/are signed in the presence of witnesses.

20. Blessing

May God who is light shine in your darkness.
May God who is love be the love between you.
May God who is life be your life everlasting.
And the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, (*Creator, Christ and Spirit*)
be with you all, now and for ever,

Amen.

or

May the God who made us for one another,
who loves us with a faithful love
and whose spirit makes us passionate and strong,
bless you and embrace you, now and for ever,

Amen.

21. Alternative Vows

Text A

***I, AB, do take you (thee), CD,
to be my wedded wife.*
I declare my love for you.
I give myself to you
as your husband in Christian marriage.
From this day,
I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.
I will love you and honour you.
I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.
This is my vow.***

***I, CD, do take you (thee), AB,
to be my wedded husband.****

**I declare my love for you.
I give myself to you
as your wife in Christian marriage.
From this day,
I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.
I will love you and honour you.
I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.
This is my vow.**

Text B

***I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, AB,
do take thee, CD,
to be my lawful wedded wife: *
in accordance with God's holy will,
to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish
till death us do part.
This is my solemn vow.***

***I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, CD,
do take thee, AB,
to be my lawful wedded husband: *
in accordance with God's holy will,
to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish
till death us do part.
This is my solemn vow.***

Text C

***I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, AB,
do take thee, CD,
to be my lawful wedded wife: *
I declare my love for you.
I give myself to you
as your husband in Christian marriage.
From this day,
I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.
I will love you and honour you.
I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.
This is my vow.***

***I call upon these persons here present
to witness that I, CD,
do take thee, AB,
to be my lawful wedded husband: *
I declare my love for you.
I give myself to you
as your wife in Christian marriage.
From this day,
I will share with you
in sorrow and joy,
in poverty and prosperity,
in sickness and health.
I will love you and honour you.
I promise to be faithful to you,
until death parts us.
This is my vow.***



Blessing of a Marriage

This service may be used after a civil marriage. It may take place in a church building or another place - on the same day as the civil marriage or on a subsequent occasion. It is desirable that elders and members of the local church are present, along with the person conducting the service (normally a minister), to make evident and real the presence of the Church.

A service of blessing does not supersede or invalidate any marriage previously solemnized and no record should be entered in a marriage register.

1. Welcome
2. Hymn or Song
3. Prayer
4. Statement
5. Readings from Scripture
6. Sermon
7. Hymn or Song
8. Prayer
9. The Promises
10. The Rings
11. The Prayer of Blessing
12. Declaration
13. Greeting
14. Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession
15. The Lord's Prayer
16. Hymn or Song
17. Blessing

1. The Welcome

The minister welcomes the people and continues:

Bless God,
and acknowledge him in the presence of all the living
for the good things he has done for you.
Bless and sing praise to his name.
With fitting honour declare to all people
the deeds of God.

Tobit 12:6

2. Hymn or Song

3. Prayer

God of love,
on this day of joy
we come to praise you.
When two people find love together
you are with them
and in their faces we see your delight.
When love is expressed in promises
we see a faithfulness like yours.
When the future beckons with hope
we are restored and renewed.
Bless our celebration today
with your presence and promise,
that all of us may be touched by grace
and strengthened with joy,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

4. Statement

A and B have been married in law.
They have made solemn vows
and have contracted to live together
as husband and wife
until death parts them.
Now they come before God,
in the presence of the Church,
to ask for a blessing for their marriage.
We rejoice in the love they share
and gladly pray for the blessing of God upon them.
In marriage,
a man and woman love each other.
They promise to be faithful,
in good times and in bad,
and to honour one another for all their days.
*(In marriage,
children may be born and grow up,
in the security of a loving home.)*
In marriage,
a new community is made
and all may celebrate a sign of unity and faithfulness.
Marriage is a gift and a calling,
and God's blessing strengthens us
to live according to the promises we have made.

5. Readings from Scripture

Some suggested readings:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):
Psalm 67

New Testament:
Philippians 4:4-9, Colossians 3:12-17
Matthew 5:1-9, John 2:1-11
(Tobit 8: 4b-9a may also be used)

6. Sermon

7. Hymn or Song

8. Prayer

Eternal God,
whose love is always faithful
and whose promises never fail,
we pray for A and B
as they ask for your blessing on their marriage.
Strengthen them by your Spirit,
that they may remember the vows they have made,
grow in love and honour for one another
and live according to your holy will.
Fill them with joy,
guide them in future days
and surround them with your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

9. The Promises

The husband says to his wife:

**B, you are my wife.
I promise to be faithful to you,
to love and honour you,
to comfort and protect you,
as long as we both shall live.
This is my solemn promise.**

The wife says to her husband:

**A, you are my husband.
I promise to be faithful to you,
to love and honour you,
to comfort and protect you,
as long as we both shall live.
This is my solemn promise.**

*If either, or both, has children
the minister may say to the couple:*

Do you promise to include N (and N)
within the circle of your love?

We do.

Do you promise to care for the children you now have,
and to welcome those who may be given to you?

We do.

10. The Rings

Eternal God,
whose love, like a circle, never ends,
we pray that these rings
may be signs of unending faithfulness.
Give A and B a love that lasts,
joy in one another,
and years of peace together.
And may your presence,
the perfect Trinity of love,
be always with them.

Amen.

If there is only one ring, the minister prays:

Eternal God,
whose love, like a circle, never ends,
we pray that this ring
may be a sign of unending faithfulness.
Give A and B a love that lasts,
joy in one another,
and years of peace together.
And may your presence,
the perfect Trinity of love,
be always with them.

Amen.

II. The Prayer of Blessing

God our Creator,
you make us in your image,
and bless us with the gift of love.
In the longing of our bodies,
the passion of love's touch
and the strong bonds of affection,
your love and blessing are already known.
We pray for your blessing to be upon
A and B, married in your sight.
Lord Jesus Christ,
who once blessed a wedding
by turning water into wine,
we pray that A and B
may taste the good wine
of a happy and joyful marriage.
Holy Spirit,
bless them with your gifts
of love and joy,
of peace, patience and kindness,
that they may be good for one another
through the years to come,
and have strength to go on
through times of sorrow and struggle.
May your love, bound with theirs,
keep them faithful to one another,
and close to you all the days of their life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

Amen.

12. Declaration

A and B you are husband and wife.
You have declared your commitment to one another
before your friends and before God.
In the presence of the Church,
in the strength of God's grace, you have made solemn vows.
Let no-one separate you. Be together always.

13. Greeting

The couple may kiss. The people may applaud. The sign of peace may be shared.

14. Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Loving God,
we thank you for every blessing we have known.
Thank you for the simple, everyday pleasures of life
and for the great, amazing days when life is made as new.
Thank you for the moments when we know
that we are blessed and that life is good.
Thank you for this day,
for what it means to A and B and to all of us,
and for everyone for whom today brings joy.

You promise blessing for those who are suffering
and on the darkest days in all our lives you are there.
We pray that the poor will be blessed with justice,
that those who are sad will find comfort and strength,
and that all who work and pray for peace will receive their reward.
We pray that broken hearts will be mended,
that bitter disputes will be resolved
and aggression be smoothed by gentleness.
Where your creation is cursed by suffering and struggle,
come with blessing upon us all.

We thank you that we have seen this day,
and witnessed such joy together.
May we carry your blessing with us
to our homes, our friends, our families.
May the places where we live, and the places where we work,
the people we love, and the people we serve,
be blessed by your presence and by holy joy.
May your name be blessed,
among us and through all the world,
this day and for ever.

Amen.

15. The Lord's Prayer

16. Hymn or Song

17. Blessing

God our Maker gives joy to bride and groom!
Christ our Saviour gives life to the world!
The Holy Spirit brings us together in love!
The blessing of God,
the Trinity of love,
be with you today and always.

Amen.

Funeral Services

Worship offered with the dying and after a death needs to be prepared and conducted with dignity, grace and sensitivity. The mourners want to do what is right to give honour to the one who has died. The Church seeks to minister to those who grieve, to proclaim that God's presence is with us in every sorrow, and that Christ is victorious over death itself.

In recent times there have been significant changes in the ways in which funerals are conducted, giving rise to a wide variety of practice. Whereas a service in church followed by a committal used to be quite normal, now these may take place the other way round. Some mourners want a simple service at the crematorium and a further act of worship as the ashes are scattered or buried. The receiving of the body into church on the night before the funeral, and prayers around the coffin, are other possibilities to consider. Those who grieve are increasingly taking a more active part in planning the worship and in contributing to it. Practices and customs vary across different regions. Sometimes innovation is sought, and sometimes simply the comfort of tradition.

For all these reasons, a variety of resources have been provided here - and there are more on the CD Rom. The first service has brought together familiar material in a new and more readily usable way. It has taken much of the best of the 1980 and 1989 books and recast them in a service which is both simple and easy to use. This service is one of powerful witness to the Resurrection. The second service has been newly written for this publication. It draws from pastoral theology a strong awareness of the experience of grief and the changes which any death brings. It does not assume what people feel, but provides a space for the expression of what they genuinely experience. People in the congregation are encouraged to be active and to participate in the service, which draws deeply from the traditions of our faith while setting them in a modern context. The third service is simpler in format and language, and reflects the down-to-earth immediacy which is an important part of our tradition.

All the services (and the further material on the CD Rom) may be used creatively and freely, as a source of material and ideas rather than prescriptive texts. Every funeral service, like every human life, is unique and brings its own special circumstances. There is always more to do than read from 'the book'.

A selection of readings appropriate for funeral services is provided in full at the end of the funeral section.

Services for a Funeral - One

Prayers with the Dying

1. Scripture Sentence
2. Prayer of Assurance
3. The Lord's Prayer
4. Commendation at the Time of Death
5. Nunc Dimittis
6. Prayers with the Family

When death is near the minister may be asked to be with the one who is dying and his or her family, loved ones and carers.

1. Scripture Sentence

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Ps 46:1

2. Prayer of Assurance

Gracious God,
look upon N, (*your child through baptism,*)
may *he/she* know your love now and always;
the love from which nothing
in life or death can ever separate us.
And may *he/she* be comforted
with the promise of eternal life,
given in the resurrection of your Son, our Saviour.

Amen.

3. The Lord's Prayer

4. Commendation at the Time of Death

Depart, O Christian soul, out of this world:
in the name of God the Father almighty, who created you;
in the name of Jesus Christ, who redeemed you;
in the name of the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies you;
may you rest in the peace of God's eternal kingdom.

Into your hands, O merciful Saviour,
we commend your servant N.
Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you,
a sheep of your own fold,
a lamb of your own flock,
a sinner of your redeeming.
Receive *him/her* into the arms of your mercy,
into the blessed rest of everlasting peace,
and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

Amen.

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
the busy world is hushed
the fever of life is over and our work is done:
then, Lord, in your mercy, grant us safe lodging,
a holy rest and peace at the last:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

5. Nunc Dimittis

Now Lord you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal you to the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.

6. Prayers with the Family

Loving God, we turn to you now in our need.
The moment of death has come.
May we find the strength and faith
to release N to you,
confident that *he/she* may know the joy
of your eternal keeping.
You have shared these last days and hours
as you share all our days.
Stay close to us in the days to come.
Be our good shepherd,
light for our darkness, hope for our sorrow.
Hold us now and always
in the comfort and peace of your love.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Amen.

or

Holy and gracious God,
we thank you that death is past
and you welcome home your precious child, N.
As we have waited and watched and prayed,
you have been with us.
Because you love us so much
we may trust N to your mercy
and ourselves to your care.
We thank you for the years shared,
the precious memories that remain,
the legacy of love that is treasure beyond price.
Now we turn to you for hope, strength and comfort,
and cling to your promise to be with us always.
Guide us in the ways of your love
and lead us to the glory of your eternity.

Amen.

Service before a Funeral

This order may be used when a service is requested at the home, at the chapel of rest, or in church at some time before the funeral.

1. Scripture Sentences
2. Prayer of Approach
3. Readings from Scripture
4. Prayers of Assurance
5. The Lord's Prayer
6. The Grace

1. Scripture Sentences

I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11:25-26

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 46:1

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation,
who consoles us in all our affliction.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4a

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

2. Prayer of Approach

Eternal God,
Lord of life and conqueror of death,
our help in every time of trouble,
comfort us who mourn;
and give us grace, in the presence of death,
to worship you, the ever-living,
so that we may have sure hope of eternal life
and be enabled to put our whole trust
in your goodness and mercy:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

or

Merciful God,
you are our help in times of trouble,
and the source of our consolation,
to you we turn in times of sadness.
Comfort and strengthen us
by the power of your Holy Spirit,
that we may trust in your promise of eternal life
and know your goodness and mercy:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

or

God, our strength and our hope,
our hearts cry out to you in our grief.
In Christ you wept at the grave of a friend,
hold us now in our weeping.
In Christ you healed those who came to you in their need,
touch us now to heal our pain.
In Christ you gave your life for us and conquered death,
comfort us now with your words of eternal life.

In our believing and in our doubting,
may we know you as the God of all love and compassion:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

3. Readings from Scripture

4. Prayer of Assurance

Loving God,
Lord of life and death,
we praise you that all people are made in your image
and held under your care;
we praise you that we are made to need each other's love
and so reflect your truth and life.
We thank you for the life of N,
for the love and mercy *he/she* received from you
and gave to us.
Above all we rejoice
in the gift of your love in Jesus Christ.
Give us the confidence to believe
that as Jesus has conquered death,
nothing can separate us from your love.
We ask that we may at the last share with N
the completeness of your eternal kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Almighty God,
Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort,
deal graciously, we pray,
with those who mourn,
that, casting all their care on you,
they may know the consolation of your love:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

or

God of the living and the dead,
trusting that your compassion bears all our burdens
and gives us strength beyond ourselves,
we place this day before you.
We prepare now to give thanks
for the life of N whom we have loved
and to commend *him/her* to your sure keeping.
May we know your gifts of grace:
hope for our sorrow,
light for our darkness,
peace for our troubled hearts,
faith for our future.
In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

5. The Lord's Prayer

6. The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all evermore.

Amen.

A service of Witness to the Resurrection

1. Scripture Sentences
2. Preface
3. Hymn or Song
4. Prayers of Approach and Confession
5. Readings from Scripture
6. Sermon on the Christian Hope
7. Hymn or Song
8. Thanksgiving for the Victory of Christ
9. Thanksgiving for the Life of the Departed
10. Prayers of Petition and Intercession
11. The Lord's Prayer
12. Hymn or Song
13. Commendation
14. Blessing

Committal

15. Scripture Sentences
16. Words of Committal
17. The Lord's Prayer
18. Prayer
19. Dismissal and Blessing

I. Scripture Sentences

The minister may lead the funeral procession into church saying:

I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

John 11:25-26

The eternal God is your dwelling place,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Deuteronomy 33:27a (RSV)

No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life.
As I was with Moses, so I will be with you;
I will not fail you or forsake you.

Joshua 1:5

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalms 27:1

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you;
he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

Psalms 55:22

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms.

Isaiah 40:11a

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3:16

Do you not know that
all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus
were baptized into his death?
Therefore we have been buried with him
by baptism into death,
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead
by the glory of the Father,
so we too might walk in newness of life.
For if we have been united with him in a death like his,
we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Romans 6:3-5

2. Preface

We have come together to worship God;
to give thanks and praise for the life of N,
whose days among us here have drawn to a close.
We are here to share our grief
for one loved and respected by those who knew *him/her*,
and one whose own love and concern have,
through the years, strengthened others.
We are here to pray for the comfort and strength
that God promises us
and to affirm the Christian conviction that,
while death is the end of human life,
it marks a new beginning in our relationship with God.

3. Hymn or Song

4. Prayers of Approach and Confession

Eternal God,
the creator and upholder of all things,
your ways are not our ways,
nor your thoughts our thoughts;
your wisdom is unsearchable;
your purposes cannot fail.
Humbly we worship you,
and as trusting children we come to you.
Let not our hearts be troubled,
neither let them be afraid.
Comfort us in the natural grief of parting,
and help us bear ourselves as Christian people,
for whom death itself is swallowed up in victory;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

or

God of comfort and compassion,
we come seeking the faith to trust that N is with you.
We come seeking the peace you promise to us.
We come to open our hearts to you.
In the pain of grieving,
may your strong love hold us.
In the joy of treasured memories,
may your peace comfort us.
In the love and support of family and friends,
may your grace keep us.
Grant us strength for today and hope for tomorrow
as we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

or

God who gave us birth,
you are ever more ready to hear than we are to pray.
You know our needs before we ask,
and our ignorance in asking.
Show us now your grace,
that as we face the mystery of death
we may see the light of eternity.
Speak to us once more
your joyful message of life and of death overcome.
Help us to live as those who are prepared to die,
and when our days here are ended,
enable us to die as those who go forth and live,
so that living or dying
our life may be in Jesus Christ our risen Saviour.

Amen.

God of compassion and grace,
faced now with the reality of death, sorrow and sin,
grieving and guilt intertwine.
In our frailty we confess
the regrets we can do nothing to change
and the unfulfilled hopes of what might have been.
We ask you to heal our hurt with pardon and love.
In the mystery and mercy of your eternal love
from which nothing in life or death can ever separate us,
may our freedom, hope and peace be in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:
'Your sins are forgiven.'
Thanks be to God.

Amen.

5. Readings from Scripture

Loving God,
we turn to you now, and to your Word,
so that we may renew our trust and our hope,
and be lifted from darkness and distress
into the light and peace of your presence,
through Jesus Christ, the Living Word.

or

In scripture we read:

‘Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life’.

John 6:68

6. Sermon on the Christian Hope

7. Hymn or Song

8. Thanksgiving for the Victory of Christ

Almighty and everlasting God,
we thank you that you sent your Son Jesus Christ
to die for us and rise again.
His cross declares your love to be without limit;
his resurrection that death, our last enemy, is doomed.
By his victory we are assured of the promise
that you will never leave us or forsake us;
that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come,
can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

9. Thanksgiving for the Life of the Departed

Eternal God,
before whose face the generations rise and pass away;
we praise you for all your servants
departed this life in your faith and love,
especially for N,
each of us recalling, in a moment of silence,
what *he/she* has meant
to *his/her* loved ones, friends and colleagues....
We give thanks for all your goodness towards *him/her*;
all *he/she* accomplished by your grace;
and all that *he/she* was to those who loved *him/her*.
And now we praise you that for *him/her*
sorrow and sickness are ended,
death itself is past,
and *he/she* lives for ever in your love and care;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

10. Prayers of Petition and Intercession

God of all compassion,
We bring to you all who mourn N now,
especially those whose loss is deepest,
whose need is greatest....
(*mourners may be named*).
May they cling to your firm promises
and know the strength and comfort of your love.
May they find beyond their tears
the light of your eternity,
and receive from your treasure-store
gifts beyond human giving; peace, hope, joy and faith,
gifts for their grieving and gifts for their future.
Through the bonds of family and friendships
may we be channels of your grace.
We pray through Jesus Christ your Son and our Saviour
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever.

Amen.

11. The Lord's Prayer

12. Hymn or Song

13. Commendation

Holy God,
by your mighty power you gave us life,
and in your love you have given us new life in Jesus Christ.
We now entrust N to your merciful keeping:
in the faith of Christ Jesus, your Son our Lord,
who died and rose again to save us,
and is now alive and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit in glory for ever.

Amen.

Rest eternal grant to *him/her*, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon *him/her*.

or

May *he/she* rest in peace
and rise in glory.

Now to him who is able to keep you from falling,
and to make you stand without blemish
in the presence of his glory with rejoicing,
to the only God our Saviour,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, power, and authority,
before all time and now and for ever.

Jude:24-25

Amen.

14. Blessing

The peace of God,
which is beyond all understanding,
guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.

And the blessing of God our Creator,
Christ, our Saviour,
and the Holy Spirit, our Comforter,
be with you always.

Amen.

or

The blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you,
now and evermore.

Amen.

or

The Grace

The funeral party may proceed from the church to the place of committal.

Committal

15. Scripture Sentences

Come to me,
all you that are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

So you have pain now;
but I will see you again,
and your hearts will rejoice,
and no one will take your joy from you.

John 16:22

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us
from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead,
the first fruits of those who have died.
So it is with the resurrection of the dead.
What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.
It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.
It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

1 Corinthians 15:20, 42-43

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy he has given us
a new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:3

They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;
for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Revelation 7:16-17

16. Words of Committal

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life,
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
we commend to almighty God our *brother/sister N*,
and commit *his/her* mortal body *to the ground/to the elements:*
(earth to earth,) ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
trusting in the infinite mercy of God
and the victory of Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Rest eternal grant to *him/her*, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon *him/her*.

Amen.

17. The Lord's Prayer

18. Prayer

Almighty God,
you have bound together all your people
in heaven and on earth
in one holy fellowship:
let not our thoughts linger here,
but help us to believe
that your servant's life has made a new beginning,
with your mercy and your love still around *him/her*.
Strengthened by this assurance,
may we return to the duties which await us in the world,
resolved to be more faithful to you
and more helpful to one another,
for the sake of those no longer with us upon earth;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Amen.

19. Dismissal and Blessing

May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Go in the peace of Christ.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with you now and always.

Amen.

Services for a Funeral - Two

A Service of Committal

When the committal precedes the service of thanksgiving and release.

1. Scripture Sentence
2. Words of Introduction
3. Readings from Scripture
4. Prayers
5. Words of Committal
6. Affirmation of Faith
7. Prayers
8. The Grace

The minister greets the mourners at the cemetery or crematorium and leads them into the chapel or to the graveside.

1. Scripture Sentence

Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.'

John 11:25-26

2. Words of Introduction

We have come together in the name of Jesus Christ,
our risen and ascended Lord.
Through him God has given us new birth into a living hope,
which nothing can destroy, or spoil, or wither.

We come to commit our beloved N into God's hands
where *he/she* will be safe and complete for ever.

We come to seek strength from God
to face the unknown future
without N's presence and support.

We come to find a place of quiet calm,
in which we may express private grief
before facing in public
the wider world of N's circle of family,
friends, and acquaintances.

Let us hear from the Scriptures the promises of God,
and receive their comfort.

3. Readings from Scripture

4. Prayers and Lord's Prayer

Let us thank God for N's life,
as we recall how much *he/she* meant to us;

let us commit N to God's sure keeping;

let us offer our grief to God
and ask for God's comfort in our sorrow;

let us remember others who also mourn loved ones today;

let us pray for grace and strength
to reach out to others in their need;

may we so live that we may not be afraid to die.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayers.

Let us gather up our prayers in the words which Jesus taught us:

Our Father....

5. Words of Committal

Now that the earthly life of N has come to an end,
we commit *his/her* mortal body to *the ground/the elements*,
(*earth to earth*), ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
trusting in the infinite mercy of God,
creator of all things, visible and invisible,
and the victory over death of Jesus Christ our Lord.
To God be glory for ever.

6. Affirmation of Faith

God will swallow up death for ever.
Then the Lord God will wipe away
the tears from all faces.
It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him,
so that he might save us.
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 25:8a,9

7. Prayer

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
in every generation.
From everlasting to everlasting you are God.
You stand beside us
in every experience of joy or sorrow,
happiness or desolation.

As we walk through death's dark valley,
help us to trust in your steadfast love
until the day dawns,
the morning stars sing together,
and the whole creation shouts your praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

8. The Grace

This may be said by everyone.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, evermore.

Amen.

A Service of Thanksgiving and Release

1. Call to Worship
2. Hymn or Song
3. Words of Introduction
4. Prayer
5. Readings from Scripture
6. Sermon on Christian hope
7. Hymn or Song
8. Lighting of Thanksgiving Candles
9. Tribute
10. Prayers of Thanksgiving
11. Hymn or Song
12. The Commendation
13. The Lord's Prayer
14. Blessing

If the service precedes the committal the minister meets the coffin and the mourners at the entrance to the church or chapel. The following sentences may be read during the entry or when all have taken their places.

1. Call To Worship

Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 124:8

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 46:1

For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to mourn and a time to dance.

Ecclesiastes 3:1,2a,4b

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5: 4

The souls of the righteous are in God's hands;
no torment will touch them. They are at peace.

Wisdom 3:1,3b

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy God has given us
a new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled
and unfading.

I Peter 1: 3-4b

2. Hymn or Song

Approaching the Mystery

3. Words of Introduction

We have come together because N has died and the life we shared with *him/her* has come to an end. This is a time of parting, loss and sadness.

All of us who knew N had a unique relationship with *him/her*. Death does not bring to an end *his/her* influence nor the love and respect in which *he/she* was held during *his/her* life. They will continue to be powerful for as long as *he/she* is remembered.

N was made in the image of God
(*and was baptised into the Christian family of faith.*¹)
Every moment of *his/her* life *he/she*
was a dearly loved child of God.
His/ her death does not alter God's love for *him/her*.
He/she bears God's name
and is lovely in the eyes of God who created *him/her*.

At the heart of death there is mystery.
There is much we cannot know or understand.
Death marks for every person the boundary
between the life God gives in this world
and the new life God gives beyond death.
We stand on this boundary,
not knowing what lies beyond our seeing,
our hearing or our imagining.
Yet by faith we grasp God's promise,
declared in the resurrection of Jesus,
that we shall not die into oblivion but shall all be changed.
Even in sorrow,
we are empowered by the Holy Spirit
working in our hearts to say
'Thanks be to God who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

¹ The words in italics should be omitted where baptism has not taken place.

4. Prayer

Creator God,
Lord of life and conqueror of death,
our hearts are grieving because N, whom we love, has died.

His/her death reminds us that our lives are brief
and will one day come to an end.

As we stand on the boundary between life and death,
we praise you for your precious gift of life,
for giving N to be with us,
and for the journey which we have shared
with *him/her* on earth.

Help us to release *him/her* as *he/she* journeys on,
confident that death is not an abyss of destruction
but a crossing over into new and richer experiences
of your love and grace.

In the midst of our grief and loss,
give us the peace of Christ,
who passed through the deep waters of death for us all,
and by your power was raised to glorious life.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Amen.

Celebrating Hope

5. Readings from Scripture

In times of loss,
God's people have always drawn strength
from the promises of God in the Bible.
Let us now listen for God's word of life
as the Scriptures are read to us.

*The prayer verse 'Nothing in all creation' (R&S 397)
may be sung between each reading.*

6. Sermon on Christian hope

7. Hymn or Song

Remembering with Thanksgiving

8. Lighting of Thanksgiving Candles

The minister or another representative person may light a central thanksgiving candle saying:

‘I light this candle in thanksgiving for N as.... ‘

Members of the family, church members, representatives of the community, work colleagues or friends may also light candles.

At the end the minister may say:

Thanks be to God for the light which N has brought into our lives.

9. Tribute

A tribute may be given.

10. Prayers of Thanksgiving

Eternal God,
we thank you for the light
that has come into the world
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
and for his promise that whoever follows him
will have the light of life.
Hear us as we remember and give thanks for N
and for everything *he/she* meant to us.

Silent Prayer

Thank you for giving *him/her* to us,
for everything *he/she* achieved
by your grace during *his/her* life,
for the gracefulness, warmth and tenderness
which *he/she* embodied.
Thank you for....

Silent Prayer

Eternal God,
giver of life and conqueror of death,
we praise you that for N
all suffering and sorrow are ended,
death itself is past,
and *he/she* lives for ever in your love and care.
In the midst of our sorrow
we boldly affirm our faith
that there is nothing in all creation
that can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We pray for those among us whose loss is greatest,
especially A and B and C.
We remember those who lovingly cared for N
and ministered to *his/her* needs.
Give courage to all who mourn.
Comfort them when their pain seems unrelenting
and no light shines in their darkness.
Help us as a community to offer support and comfort,
to know when to speak and when to be silent.

Silent Prayer

Lord, remembering N with gratitude,
and celebrating *his/her* life and deeds,
we also give thanks for all whom we love
who have passed from our sight
into the joy of your heavenly kingdom.
Keep us united in one holy and joyful fellowship
until, at the last, all shall be gathered up in Christ,
and the whole universe shall praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

11. Hymn or Song

Releasing in Hope

12. The Commendation

The congregation is invited to stand.

Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
who have died in the faith of Christ,
and with whom we lift up our hearts to God,
we now commend N
to God's eternal care and keeping.

Let us find wisdom, safety and delight
within the communion of saints.
Let us know that those we love are not lost,
but remain with us in the same family,
led by the same Spirit,
and sustained by the same faith.
Let us rejoice in Jesus our Lord,
who died in weakness,
but was raised by the power of God
to whom be glory and praise, for ever and ever.

God of peace,
you brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant.
Show us the peace we should seek,
show us the peace we must try to give,
show us the peace we may keep,
show us the peace you have given,
and make us what you want us to be:
through Jesus Christ,
to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

or

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
deep peace of the flowing air to you,
deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
deep peace of the shining stars to you,
deep peace of the gentle night to you,
moon and stars put their healing light on you,
deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you.

13. The Lord's Prayer

If the committal is to take place elsewhere, this part of the service concludes with the blessing. If the whole service takes place in the crematorium chapel the committal follows.

14. Blessing

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

Committal

When the committal follows the service of thanksgiving and release.

1. Scripture Sentences
2. Words of Committal
3. Prayers
4. Ascription of Glory
5. Blessing

Committal

When all have gathered at the graveside or crematorium the minister says:

1. Scripture Sentences

The Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

We are not our own.
Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit
and through them we glorify God.

I Corinthians 6:19,20

2. Words of Committal

N's body has been a temple of God's Spirit,
through which *he/she* has served God
and given support and comfort to those whom *he/she* loved.
We now commit *his/her* mortal body
to *the elements/to the ground*,
trusting that by the power of God
this perishable body will be clothed with the imperishable,
and death will be swallowed up in victory;
through Jesus Christ,
our risen and ascended Lord,
to whom be glory for ever.

Amen.

I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this:
Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.'
'Yes', says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labours,
for their deeds follow them.'

Revelation 14:13

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed,
we have a building from God, a house not made with hands,
eternal in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 5:1

3. Prayers

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding;
pour into our hearts such love towards you,
that we, loving you above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all we can desire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

or

O Lord, support us by your grace
through all the hours of life's day;
until the shadows lengthen,
the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over,
and the evening comes.
Then, Lord, in your mercy,
grant us safe lodging, a holy rest,
and peace at the last;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

4. Ascription of Glory

Now to the One who is able to keep us from falling,
and set us in the presence of his glory,
jubilant and above reproach,
to the only God our Saviour,
be glory and majesty,
power and authority,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
before all time, now, and for evermore.

Jude:24-25 (adapted)

5. Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour all people;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The blessing of God be with you;
the blessing of the Creator;
the blessing of the Son;
the blessing of the Spirit,
now and always.

Amen.

Services for a Funeral - Three

A service of Thanksgiving for One who has Died

to be preceded or followed by the committal

1. Opening Words
2. Scripture Sentences
3. Hymn or Song
4. Opening Prayers
5. Tributes from Family and Friends
6. Readings from Scripture (and other appropriate sources)
7. Sermon
8. Hymn or Song
9. Prayers
10. Words of Commendation
11. Hymn or Song
12. Blessing

1. Opening words

We are here today
because N has died.
We are here to remember *him/her* before God
and to give thanks for *his/her* life.
We are here to express our sorrow,
the grief which hurts because we loved *him/her*.
We are here to listen to words from the Bible
and in them to find comfort and hope.

2. Scripture Sentences

St Paul says;
as it is written,
'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
... God has prepared for those who love him'.

I Corinthians 2:9

3. Hymn or Song

4. Opening Prayers

God our Creator,
you made all the rhythms and patterns of creation,
and just as you give us birth
so you are there when death comes.
You have made us mortal beings,
of frail flesh and gentle spirit
and you give us a span of life,
a time to be born and a time to die.
Today we see the value of life
and are glad that it may be lived
within the knowledge of your eternity.

Loving God,
you comfort those who mourn.
We come before you
believing you share our love for N
and know our sense of loss at *his/her* death.

Assure us of your love
and support us with your strength,
today and in the days to come.
Even as we feel lost and sorrowful
hold us in your strong embrace.
Whenever sadness and regret fill us,
have mercy upon us and bring us your peace.
When we are cast down or low in spirit,
keep us safe in your love
awaiting the day when we will know again
the possibility of joy.

God of all creation,
Jesus, the risen one,
Spirit bringing hope and new life,
God the Holy Trinity,
we give you praise and claim your comforting love
this day and always,

Amen.

We pray in the name of Jesus
who taught us to pray together the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father....

5. Tributes from Family and Friends

Members of the family, or friends, may speak about the life of the one who has died.

6. Readings from Scripture (and other appropriate sources)

7. Sermon

8. Hymn or Song

9. Prayers

God, source of all life,
mysterious, profound, generous in love,
we give thanks because we have seen you in N.
We give thanks for *his/her* life;
for all that *he/she* was,
and for all that *he/she* gave of *himself/herself*
to *his/her* family, to friends,
to the community of faith in the Church,
to the world of work
and to the wider community.
We thank you for....

We give thanks
for what *he/she* was to each one of us.

We give thanks that *he/she* was such a person
that we are moved to grief and sorrow by *his/her* loss.
Help us, through *his/her* death,
to see more clearly the significance of life
and to grasp more firmly the hope
that we are more than our years
and that love is stronger than death.

We pray for ourselves,
disturbed by the great mystery of death,
facing the questions it raises and the loss it brings.
We pray that we will not be overwhelmed,
but may face honestly what confronts us,
so that we may sorrow freely
and turn to life again
with courage and with hope.

As we honour N
we commit ourselves to care for each other,
to bring hope to the despairing,
and joy to those who sorrow.
God, be with us here this day
and in all the days to come.
May we live as those who remember the past
and who have hope for the future.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ
our Lord and our Redeemer.

Amen.

The congregation may be asked to stand

10. Words of Commendation

O God, who gives us life
and in whose arms we die,
we entrust N
to your safe keeping
in the faith of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Receive one of your own,
one in whom you have been at work,
who carries with *him/her* our love.

Welcome *him/her* into your presence,
into the rest of everlasting peace
and into the company of all the saints.

Living God,
in the mystery of your eternity,
we are not separated from...
for your love holds us together.
While we live *he/she* will not be forgotten among us.
In your eternal love, *he/she* will never be lost.
May our memories of *him/her* enrich our lives.
May the good things of *his/her* life leave a trace on earth.
May your keeping of *him/her* glorify heaven.

Amen.

11. Hymn or Song

12. Blessing

The blessing of God be with you;
the blessing of the Creator,
the blessing of the Son,
the blessing of the Spirit,
now and always.

Amen.



Interment or Scattering of Ashes

1. Scripture Sentences
2. Prayer
3. The Lord's Prayer
4. Scripture Reading
5. Silence for Reflection
6. Interment or Scattering
7. Prayer
8. Blessing

1. Scripture Sentences

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
and into an inheritance that is imperishable,
undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

1 Peter 1:3-4

2. Prayer

Eternal God,
Creator of life and conqueror of death,
we are in your presence now
and this is a holy place.
Jesus Christ, who lived among us and died for us,
you stand beside us in every sorrow.
Holy Spirit, you are always with us,
to comfort us and to give us strength.
We come to you now,
that we may know your presence with us in this place,
and on this day.

We thank you for your promise
that in your safe keeping
the saints find peace for ever.
Though they are no longer with us here,
they are with you,
sheltered by your eternal love.

We praise you for the gifts of life,
for love and tenderness,
wisdom and affection
and all that makes life good and holy.
We praise you for N
whom we have loved
and who will be remembered among us.

We praise you for the gift of new life,
for the promise of resurrection
and your assurance that the future is in your hands.

Be with us now
as we honour one whom we loved.
Confirm in us the hope of the Gospel.
and help us to put our trust
in your mercy and love,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

3. The Lord's Prayer

4. Scripture Reading

5. Silence for Reflection

6. Interment or Scattering

We have commended N to God's eternal love,
and committed *his/her* body to be cremated.
We now inter *his/her* ashes in this ground
(scatter *his/her* ashes in this place),
in sure and certain hope
of the resurrection to eternal life
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

In the earth, we give *him/her* a final place to rest.

In our memories, we will not forget *him/her*.

In the eternal love and mercy of God, *he/she* will be at peace.

7. Prayer

Eternal God,
who unites as one
the people on earth
and the company of heaven,
may we know and rejoice
that we are within your community of saints,
both the living and the dead.

May we praise you with our lives
as the angels praise you in heaven.
Cheer us with the hope of your eternal life,
support us with the knowledge of your love
and bring us at the last to see you in glory,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

8. Blessing

The peace of God
which is beyond all understanding,
guard your hearts and your thoughts in Jesus Christ.
And the blessing of God,
Creator, Christ and Comforter, *(Father, Son and Holy Spirit)*
be with you, now and always.

Amen.

Readings for Funeral Services

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):

Job 14:1-2,5

'A mortal, born of woman, few of days and full of trouble,
comes up like a flower and withers,
flees like a shadow and does not last.

Since their days are determined,
and the number of their months is known to you,
and you have appointed the bounds that they cannot pass.'

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8,11a

For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones,
and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

God has made everything suitable for its time.

Isaiah 25:1, 6-9

O Lord, you are my God;
I will exalt you, I will praise your name;
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.
And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death forever.
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.
It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him,
so that he might save us.
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 40:6-10, 28-31

A voice says, 'Cry out!'
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.
Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
'Here is your God!'

See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 46:3-4

Listen to me, O house of Jacob,
all the remnant of the house of Israel,
who have been borne by me from your birth,
carried from the womb;
even to your old age I am he,
even when you turn grey I will carry you.
I have made, and I will bear;
I will carry and will save.

Lamentations 3:17-26

My soul is bereft of peace;
I have forgotten what happiness is;
so I say, 'Gone is my glory,
and all that I had hoped for from the LORD.'
The thought of my affliction and my homelessness
is wormwood and gall!
My soul continually thinks of it
and is bowed down within me.
But this I call to mind,

and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul,
'therefore I will hope in him.'
The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.
It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

Psalm 90

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
in all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turn us back to dust,
and say, 'Turn back, you mortals.'
For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past,
or like a watch in the night.
You sweep them away; they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning;
in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.
For we are consumed by your anger;
by your wrath we are overwhelmed.
You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
For all our days pass away under your wrath;
our years come to an end like a sigh.
The days of our life are seventy years,
or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;
even then their span is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.
Who considers the power of your anger?
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.
So teach us to count our days
that we may gain a wise heart.
Turn, O LORD! How long?
Have compassion on your servants!
Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us,
and as many years as we have seen evil.
Let your work be manifest to your servants,
and your glorious power to their children.
Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us,
and prosper for us the work of our hands—
O prosper the work of our hands!

Psalm 103:1-18

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
who satisfies you with good as long as you live
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The LORD works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.

He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.

The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger for ever.

He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.

As a father has compassion for his children,
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.

For he knows how we were made;
he remembers that we are dust.

As for mortals, their days are like grass;
they flourish like a flower of the field;
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
and its place knows it no more.

But the steadfast love of the LORD
is from everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear him,
and his righteousness to children's children,
to those who keep his covenant
and remember to do his commandments.

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.

Psalm 122

I was glad when they said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the LORD!'
Our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together.
To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
For there the thrones for judgment were set up,
the thrones of the house of David.
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
'May they prosper who love you.
Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.'
For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, 'Peace be within you.'
For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your good.

Psalm 139

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night,'
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end —I am still with you.

O that you would kill the wicked, O God,
and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me—
those who speak of you maliciously,
and lift themselves up against you for evil!
Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?
I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.
Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

New Testament

Matthew 5:1-12a

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain;
and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.
Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
'Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.'

John 11:17-27

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

John 14:2-6, 18-19, 27

'In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'

I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.'

Romans 6:3-8

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Romans 8:15b-18, 28, 31-35, 37-39

When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 51-58

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'

'Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?'

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

2 Corinthians 4:13-18

But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—'I believed, and so I spoke'—we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look

not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

Revelation 21:1-7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.'

Revelation 22:1-5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

APOCRYPHA

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-8

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.

In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,
and their departure was thought to be a disaster,
and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.

For though in the sight of others they were punished,
their hope is full of immortality.

Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,
because God tested them and found them worthy of himself;
like gold in the furnace he tried them,
and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them.

In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,
and will run like sparks through the stubble.

They will govern nations and rule over peoples,
and the Lord will reign over them forever.

Ordinations, Inductions and Commissioning Services

The nature of the tradition to which the United Reformed Church belongs, and the heritage to which it lays claim, are clearly seen when we meet in a local congregation to ordain a new minister or elder, to commission a church related community worker or a lay preacher. As men and women commit themselves to service of the one Church, through ministry within the United Reformed Church, we celebrate both the patterns of service we have inherited from the past and the new traditions we are developing. These services may be opportunities for the wider Church to hear us proclaiming the faith we hold and hopefully to see us putting it into action.

At such services it is right that there are some words and acts which we always say or do and that all is conducted with continuity and integrity. The Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church is therefore very important. For some services of ordination, induction and commissioning there are Schedules of the Basis of Union which have been agreed by the General Assembly. These contain the words of the promises which individuals are expected to make before entering on a new way of serving the church. The texts which follow include all the relevant Schedules, including any variations where there are different options. These parts of the texts *must* always be used, on every occasion, because they express the unity we share.

There is also, as is right for a church which celebrates freedom and diversity, much space for creativity, individuality and local variety. As well as those words which we have agreed always to use, there is still a great deal of material which is there as a suggestion or guide, and can readily be adapted or changed. There are also further resources on the CD Rom.

Selections of readings are offered as suggestions. There are many more possibilities and local situations with creative people will provoke new ideas and new prayers.



Ordination and Induction of Elders

The ordination and induction of elders should take place during Sunday worship in the local church where the elders are to serve. The worship should include the reading of Scripture and a sermon (or another form of proclamation of the Word) and normally the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Section 4 should only be used when new elders are to be ordained.

When all the elders have been previously ordained Section 4 should be omitted and the other elements of the service used to induct them for renewed service. Elders so inducted should have been re-elected by the church members, either after a period as non-serving elders or when offering to extend an initial period of service.

1. Introduction
2. Statement of Purpose
3. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D)
4. Affirmations
5. Ordination
6. Induction
7. Declaration of Ordination and/or Induction
8. Renewal of Commitment

1. Introduction

Through baptism, members of the Church are called to serve God in the world and to proclaim the love of Christ by the way they live.

Some are called to particular responsibilities as ministers of Word and Sacraments, and in the United Reformed Church some are called to be elders, to share with the minister in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local church.

Today, according to the decision of the church meeting, we are to ordain A (and B) to the office of elder, and to induct *her/him/them* (with C and D) to serve in this congregation.

2. Statement of Purpose

The Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the Church, the whole people of God called and committed to his service. To equip them for this ministry he gives particular gifts, and calls some of his servants to exercise them in offices duly recognised within the Church. Some are called to the ministry of Word and Sacraments; some are called to be elders.

Elders share with the minister in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local church. To each is normally entrusted a group of members. In the elders' meeting they take counsel together for the whole congregation. They are responsible for making provision for Christian worship and education, for maintaining proper standards of membership, and for promoting witness and service to the community, mission at home and abroad, and the peace, unity and welfare of the Church. It is their duty to arrange for the proper maintenance of church buildings, and to ensure the oversight of church finances. Some elders represent the local church in the wider councils of the Church, and by virtue of their membership of these councils represent the whole Church to the local church.

Elders, being elected by the church meeting, are ordained to their office and inducted to serve for such period as the church which elects them determines. Their ordination and induction is an act of the Church. It is right at this time to share in the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church, and to identify ourselves with it.

3. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church

This Statement (Basis of Union, Schedule D) is read in one of the approved forms.

4. Affirmations

All stand as the presiding minister asks those/the one to be ordained and/or inducted to affirm his/her/their faith.

Do you accept this statement and confess again your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

I do.

In dependence on God's grace do you reaffirm your trust in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord and your promise to follow him and to seek to do and to bear his will all the days of your life?

I do.

Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people?

I do.

Do you accept the office of elder of the United Reformed Church in this congregation and do you promise to perform its duties faithfully?

I do.

5. Ordination

All new elders, not previously ordained, may kneel.

Thank you, God, for the various gifts
which you give to your people,
and for the varieties of ministry in the Church.

Thank you for all women and men
of faith and integrity
who have served this local church.

Thank you, now, for A (and B).

*The minister and appointed elders lay hands on each person
to be ordained, praying thus:*

Empower *him/her* with your Holy Spirit,
give *him/her* humility and grace,
so that by *his/her* faithfulness,
he/she may show your love to your people:
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

In your name,
and trusting it to be your will,
we now ordain A
to be an elder.

6. Induction

*The minister asks the members of the church to accept the
ministry of all the elders named, both newly-ordained and
any previously ordained:*

Do you, the members of this local church,
accept and receive A (B, C and D)
to serve as *an elder/elders* among you?

We do

Will you encourage and support *him/her/them*,
and respond to *his/her/their* ministry
acknowledging that it comes to you from God?

We will

Eternal God, you have called us all
to serve you in the world
and to share your love with each other and our neighbours.
Through the decision of this local church
you have called A (B, C and D) to serve us as *an elder/elders*.
Give *him/her/them* the promised blessings of your Holy Spirit
and fill *him/her/them* with fresh vision and courage,
to lead us in the work you have called us to do.
Make *him/her/them* wise with the mind of Christ,
and give *him/her/them* the gifts *he/she/they* need(s)
to fulfil this service faithfully;
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

7. Declaration of Ordination and/or Induction

A (B, C and D), in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and according to the decision of the church meeting,
I declare you to be (*ordained and*) inducted
to serve as *an elder/elders*,
and welcome you into this office,
in confirmation of which
I give you the right hand of fellowship.

The minister and others give the right hand of fellowship.

May the God of peace sanctify you entirely,
and may your spirit, soul and body
be kept sound and blameless.
The one who calls you is faithful,
and will do this.

8. Renewal of Commitment

And now as elders and members
of this church and congregation,
let us confirm our commitment
to each other and to the gospel.
Let us pursue what makes for peace
and build each other up in love.

**We will grow together
in humility, gentleness and patience;
we will nurture each other in faith;
we will bear with one another in love;
we will make every effort
to maintain the unity of the Holy Spirit
in the bond of peace,
so that we may faithfully proclaim the gospel of Christ.**

The God of peace will make us complete in everything good.
To whom be glory for ever.

The Lord of peace will give us peace,
at all times and everywhere.

The peace of the Lord is with you.
And also with you.

Eternal God,
accept this commitment
made in your presence,
and give us grace to make it true,
so that we may not fail you in the end,
but give you glory and honour
by the way we live
and through everything we say and do,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Supper normally follows and the newly-inducted elders serve or are served together.

Some suggested Scripture readings:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):

Exodus 18:13-27, Numbers 11:16-17, 24-30, Isaiah 42:1-9,
Ezekiel 34:11-16

New Testament:

Matthew 25:14-28, Mark 10:35-45, John 21:15-17,
Acts 20:28-35, Romans 12:1-18, 1 Corinthians 12:4-13,
Ephesians 4:1-16, Philippians 2:1-11, 1 Peter 4:7-11,
1 Peter 5:1-4



Ordination and Induction of Ministers of Word and Sacraments

A meeting of the District/Area Council, the ordaining body in the United Reformed Church, shall be constituted. The Moderator of the Synod (or deputy) shall be invited to preside by the Council. The Ordination shall normally be held in the pastorate to which the minister is being inducted. If desired the Lord's Supper may be celebrated.

1. Greeting
2. Scripture Sentences
3. Hymn or Song
4. Prayers of Praise, Confession and Forgiveness
5. Statement
6. Readings from Scripture
7. Sermon
8. Hymn or Song
9. Presentation of the Candidate
10. Statement by the Ordinand
11. Narrative of the Call
12. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D)
13. Affirmations (Schedule C)
14. Promises
15. Hymn of the Holy Spirit
16. Ordination and Induction Prayer
17. Declaration of Ordination and Induction
18. Welcome
19. Giving of Gifts
20. Prayers of Intercession
21. Hymn or Song
22. Dismissal and Blessing

The Preparation

The congregation stands as the Bible is brought into the church and placed open upon the lectern, pulpit or communion table.

1. Greeting

Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:23-24

or

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come.

Revelation 1:4b

2. Scripture Sentences

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation;
for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created.

He is the head of the body, the church;

he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,

for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Colossians 1:15-16,18a-b,19a

3. Hymn or Song

4. Prayers of Praise, Confession and Forgiveness

We praise you, God, the Creator:

through your love and power all things came to be and continue in their being.

We praise you, Jesus Christ, the word made flesh:

through your death and resurrection

we are reconciled to the Father

and born into a new and living hope.

We praise you, Holy Spirit, the Giver of life:
**through wind and fire the Church was born,
and by your gifts the body of Christ is built up.**
With the whole Church on earth
and in heaven we praise you:
one God for ever.

Amen.

or

For the wonders of creation and the beauty of this earth
Creator God, we praise you.
For your gift beyond words in Jesus Christ
redeeming God, we praise you.
For the call to follow and the grace to serve
living God, we praise you.

Let us confess our sin:
for our abuse of your creation
Lord, forgive us;
for our divisions within the one body of Christ
Lord, forgive us;
for our neglect of the gifts of the Spirit
Lord, forgive us.

or

Gracious God,
you call us to be the body of Christ,
yet we often fail in our vocation.
While Christ proclaimed truth, we obscure it.
Though Christ prayed for the unity of all, we remain divided.
While Christ touched the sick and blessed the poor,
we shrink from the demands of justice.
Forgive us. Conform us to Christ.
May all that we do arise from our unity in him,
and may his Spirit renew us,
so that the world might come to believe.

Amen.

In repentance and in faith hear the promise of grace
and the assurance of pardon:

Through Christ, God was pleased to reconcile to himself
all things, whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:20

Jesus says: Your sins are forgiven.

Mark 2:5b

He also says: Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Follow me.

Thanks be to God.

John 21:15b, 16b, 19b

Amen.

A prayer for grace may be said such as:

God, the source of every perfect gift:
in Jesus Christ you have given us
your life to redeem us,
your word for our wisdom,
your grace for our guide.
Enter and possess our hearts,
to dwell with us always,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

5. Statement

The presiding minister says:

We meet today as the XY District/Area Council
of the United Reformed Church,
in the company of members of churches from....
(representatives of...)
and friends from far and wide.
We welcome you all.

either

Christians share, through their baptism,
in the ministry of Christ.
The life of faithful discipleship begins
with worship, study of the Scriptures and loving service.
God gives a variety of gifts, from the same Spirit,
and calls each of us to serve
according to our gifts and the needs of the world.
God calls some to be ministers of Word and Sacraments,
to serve the Church as the Church serves Christ.

or

Christians share, through their baptism,
in the ministry of Christ,
and all Christians are called to be ministers of God's love.
God calls some to be apostles,
some prophets, some evangelists,
some to be pastors and teachers,
to equip the Church for the work of ministry
and to build up the body of Christ.

continuing with...

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
we have come to ordain N
to the ministry of Word and Sacraments
and to induct *him/her* to exercise this ministry in
N was accepted as a candidate
by the United Reformed Church,
has been prepared for ordination by *college/course*,
and is commended for ordination by the *sending Synod*.
N has been called to exercise this ministry in....
by decision of the church meeting(s) of
(*by the appointing body of*)
with the concurrence of the XY District/Area Council.

The Ministry of the Word

6. Readings from Scripture

The following readings are appropriate:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):

Exodus 33:12-14; Deuteronomy 30:11-20; I Kings 19:1-21;
Nehemiah 8:1-12; Isaiah 6:1-8; 49:1-6; 52:7-10; 55:1-13;
61:1-4; Jeremiah 1:4-10.

New Testament:

Matthew 5:1-12; Mark 3:13-19; 6:30-44; 10:35-45;
Luke 4:14-21; 10:1-11; John 13:1-17; 15:1-17; 21:15-19.
Acts 20:17-38; Romans 10:5-15; 12:1-21; I Corinthians 12:4-13;
2 Corinthians 4:1-15; Ephesians 3:8-21; 4:1-16;
Philippians 2:1-16; I Peter 4:8-11; 5:1-4.

The following response may be used after each reading

Hear the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

7. Sermon

8. Hymn or Song

The Ordination and Induction

9. Presentation of the Candidate

The interim moderator may present the candidate to the presiding minister with these or similar words:

Moderator, I present to you N, for ordination and induction.

10. Statement by the Ordinand

The ordinand makes a brief statement about his/her call to the ministry of Word and Sacraments and to the particular ministry into which he/she will be inducted.

11. Narrative of the Call

We now hear a statement on behalf of the District/Area Council, outlining the steps which have led to this call.

We shall hear how the congregation(s) of called N to be *its/their* minister.

(We shall hear how N was appointed to exercise this ministry in the post of)

An appointed person may make a short statement on behalf of the District/Area Council and the congregation or other appointing body.

Alternatively, short statements may be made on behalf of the Council by a representative/representatives of the congregation(s) or appointing body.

12. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church

This Statement (Basis of Union, Schedule D) is read in one of the approved forms.

13. Affirmations

All stand as the presiding minister asks the ordinand to affirm his/her faith.

1. N will you confess anew your faith?

**I confess anew my faith in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**I believe that the Word of God
in the Old and New Testaments,
discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
is the supreme authority for the faith
and conduct of all God's people.**

**I believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary,
lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross,
and who was raised from the dead
and reigns for evermore,**

is the gift of God's very self to the world.

**I believe that through him God's love,
justice and mercy are revealed
and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life
are offered to all people.**

And by the grace of God

I promise to proclaim this gospel faithfully.

**I believe that the Church is the people
gathered by God's love
to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God
through Jesus Christ.**

2. What leads you to this ministry?

**So far as I know my own heart,
I believe that zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
obedience to the Holy Spirit
and a desire for the salvation of the world,
are the chief motives
which lead me to enter this ministry.**

**Relying on the strength of Christ,
I promise to live a holy life,
and to maintain the truth of the gospel,
whatever trouble or persecution may arise.**

3. Will you faithfully fulfil the duties of your charge?

The presiding minister (after appropriate consultation) may modify the wording of the following answer (or of question 7 below) to fit the kind of ministry to which the candidate has been called.

By the grace of God

**I promise to lead the church in worship,
to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments,
to exercise pastoral care and oversight,
to take my part in the councils of the Church,
and to give leadership to the Church
in mission to the world.**

As a minister of the United Reformed Church

**I promise to seek its well-being, purity, and peace,
to cherish love towards all other churches,
and to endeavour always to build up
the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.**

**I undertake to exercise my ministry
in accordance with the Statement
concerning the Nature, Faith and Order
of the United Reformed Church.**

**All these things I profess and promise
in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

or the affirmations may be made in this way:

1. N, do you confess anew your faith in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
I do.
2. Do you believe that the Word of God
in the Old and New Testaments,
discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
is the supreme authority
for the faith and conduct of all God's people?
I do.

3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross, and who was raised from the dead and reigns for evermore, is the gift of God's very self to the world?
Do you believe that through him
God's love, justice and mercy are revealed
and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life
are offered to all people?
And will you faithfully proclaim this gospel?
**By the grace of God this I believe
and this I will proclaim.**
4. Do you believe that the Church
is the people gathered by God's love
to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God
through Jesus Christ?
I do.
5. Are zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
obedience to the Holy Spirit
and a desire for the salvation of the world,
so far as you know your own heart,
the chief motives which lead you to enter this ministry?
They are.
6. Do you promise to live a holy life,
and to maintain the truth of the gospel,
whatever trouble or persecution may arise?
Relying on the strength of Christ, I do.
7. Do you promise to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully,
to lead the church in worship,
to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments,
to exercise pastoral care and oversight,
to take your part in the councils of the Church,
and to give leadership to the Church
in its mission to the world?
By the grace of God, I do.

8. Do you promise,
as a minister of the United Reformed Church,
to seek its well-being, purity and peace,
to cherish love towards all other churches
and to endeavour always to build up
the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?
By the grace of God, I do.
9. Will you undertake to exercise your ministry
in accordance with the statement concerning
the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church?
**I will, and all these things I profess and promise
in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

14. Promises

The presiding minister asks the congregation:

Do you confess again your faith in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

We do.

Do you receive N as from God,
as a minister of Word and Sacraments of
the United Reformed Church?

We do.

Will you pray for N in this ministry,
giving *him/her* due honour, support and encouragement?

We will.

*asks members of the local church(es) where the minister is
to serve:*

Members of, do you receive N as from God,
to serve among you and to lead you in your ministry?

We do.

(asks members of the appointing body:

Representatives of, do you receive N as from God,
to minister among you?

We do.)

asks members of the District/Area Council:

Members of the XY District/Area Council,
do you welcome N into membership,
and promise to support *his/her* ministry?

We do.

15. Hymn of the Holy Spirit

16. Ordination and Induction Prayer

The congregation stands while the ordinand kneels for the ordination and induction prayer, and for the laying-on of hands by those whom the District/Area Council have appointed.

God of every perfect gift,
we praise you that in every age you call your people
to show forth your acts of mercy and love.
We give you thanks that you have called your servant N
to serve you as a minister in your Church,
in succession to the apostles
and in company with all who follow in Christ's way.

Pour out the gift of your Holy Spirit
on your servant N
as in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
we ordain *him/her* to be a minister of your Church
and induct *him/her* to serve as

Gracious God, dwell with N
and strengthen the gifts you have given *him/her*
that the ministry and mission of your people may bear fruit.

Inspire *him/her* in leading worship,
in preaching and teaching and service;
may the gospel be celebrated
when *he/she* presides at the sacraments.

Bless *him/her* with love and humility to tend your flock,
to feed the hungry, heal the wounded, and find the lost.

Give *him/her* power and patience
to witness with all Christians to your way,
and to labour with all people of goodwill
for justice and mercy in society.

Watch over *him/her* in times of trial;
in weariness, disappointment, or frustration;
and keep *him/her* from complacency and spiritual pride.

Fill his/her home with your peace.
(Special petitions may be added at this point.)

Give grace to the people of *this church/these churches/
this community/ this hospital Trust/
this university/ this place of work*
that they may accept the service God offers them through N.
May they work together for the glory of your name.

And may the good work you have begun today
be brought to completion in Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you, Father,
and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever.

Amen.

17. Declaration of Ordination and Induction

The presiding minister says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and representing the XY District/Area Council
of the United Reformed Church,
I declare N to be ordained
to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments
within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church,
and to be inducted to

May the God of peace,
who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you complete in everything good
so that you may do his will,
working among us that which is pleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever.

Hebrews 13:20-21

Amen.

or

Now to him who by the power at work within us
is able to accomplish abundantly far more
than all we can ask or imagine,
to him be glory in the church
and in Christ Jesus to all generations,
for ever and ever.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Amen.

18. Welcome

The right hand of fellowship is given by the presiding minister and others duly appointed, who may include representatives of the local church(es), the District/Area Council and the General Assembly, as well as ecumenical, civic and community representatives.

19. Giving of Gifts

The newly-ordained minister may be presented with symbolic gifts, for example:

Receive this Bible,
the word of God, living and active.

Hebrews 4:12a

Receive this cup and plate,
**to hold bread and wine
for the feeding of God's people.**

Receive this water,
symbol of baptism and sign of new life.

20. Prayers of Intercession

These prayers may be spoken by different voices and may end with the Lord's Prayer.

21. Hymn or Song

22. Dismissal and Blessing

Now to him who is able to keep you from falling,
and to make you stand without blemish
in the presence of his glory with rejoicing,
to the only God our Saviour,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, power and authority,
before all time, now and for ever.

Jude:24-25

Amen.

or

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, (*Creator, Christ and Comforter*)
be with you always.

Amen.



Induction of Ministers of Word and Sacrament

A meeting of the District/Area Council, the inducting body in the United Reformed Church, shall be constituted. The Moderator of the Synod (or deputy) shall be invited by the Council to preside. The service shall normally be held in the pastorate to which the minister is being inducted. If desired the Lord's Supper may be celebrated.

1. Greeting
2. Scripture Sentences
3. Hymn or Song
4. Prayers of Praise, Confession and Forgiveness
5. Statement
6. Readings from Scripture
7. Sermon
8. Hymn or Song
9. Presentation of the Candidate
10. Statement by the minister-elect
11. Narrative of the Call
12. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D)
13. Affirmations (Schedule C)
14. Promises
15. Hymn of the Holy Spirit
16. Induction Prayer
17. Declaration of Induction
18. Welcome
19. Giving of Gifts
20. Prayers of Intercession
21. Hymn or Song
22. Dismissal and Blessing

The Preparation

The congregation stands as the Bible is brought into the church and placed open upon the lectern, pulpit or communion table.

1. Greeting

Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:23-24

or

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come.

Revelation 1:4b

2. Scripture Sentences

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; **for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created.**

He is the head of the body, the church;

he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,

for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

Colossians 1:15-16,18a-b,19a

3. Hymn or Song

4. Prayers of Praise, Confession and Forgiveness

We praise you, God, the Creator:

through your love and power all things came to be and continue in their being.

We praise you, Jesus Christ, the word made flesh:

through your death and resurrection

we are reconciled to the Father

and born into a new and living hope.

We praise you, Holy Spirit, the Giver of life:
**through wind and fire the Church was born,
and by your gifts the body of Christ is built up.**
With the whole Church on earth
and in heaven we praise you:
one God for ever.

Amen.

or

For the wonders of creation and the beauty of this earth
Creator God, we praise you.
For your gift beyond words in Jesus Christ
redeeming God, we praise you.
For the call to follow and the grace to serve
living God, we praise you.

Let us confess our sin:
for our abuse of your creation
Lord, forgive us;
for our divisions within the one body of Christ
Lord, forgive us;
for our neglect of the gifts of the Spirit
Lord, forgive us.

or

Gracious God,
you call us to be the body of Christ,
yet we often fail in our vocation.
While Christ proclaimed truth, we obscure it.
Though Christ prayed for the unity of all, we remain divided.
While Christ touched the sick and blessed the poor,
we shrink from the demands of justice.
Forgive us. Conform us to Christ.
May all that we do arise from our unity in him,
and may his Spirit renew us,
so that the world might come to believe.

Amen.

In repentance and in faith hear the promise of grace and the assurance of pardon:

Through Christ, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:20

Jesus says: Your sins are forgiven.

Mark 2:5b

He also says: Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Follow me.

Thanks be to God.

John 21:15b,16b,19b

Amen.

A prayer for grace may be said such as:

God, the source of every perfect gift:
in Jesus Christ you have given us
your life to redeem us,
your word for our wisdom,
your grace for our guide.
Enter and possess our hearts,
to dwell with us always,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

5. Statement

The presiding minister says:

We meet today as the XY District/Area Council of the United Reformed Church, in the company of members of churches from (representatives of) and friends from far and wide. We welcome you all.

either

Christians share, through their baptism,
in the ministry of Christ.
The life of faithful discipleship begins
with worship, study of the Scriptures and loving service.
God gives a variety of gifts, from the same Spirit,
and calls each of us to serve
according to our gifts and the needs of the world.
God calls some to be ministers of Word and Sacraments,
to serve the Church as the Church serves Christ.

or

Christians share, through their baptism,
in the ministry of Christ,
and all Christians are called to be ministers of God's love.
God calls some to be apostles,
some prophets, some evangelists,
some to be pastors and teachers,
to equip the Church for the work of ministry
and to build up the body of Christ.

continuing with ...

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
we have come to induct N to serve
as a minister of Word and Sacraments in
N has been called to exercise this ministry
by decision of the church meeting(s) of
(*by the appointing body of ...*,)
with the concurrence of the XY District/Area Council.

The Ministry of the Word

6. Readings from Scripture

The following readings are appropriate:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):

Exodus 33:12-14; Deuteronomy 30:11-20; I Kings 19:1-21;
Nehemiah 8:1-12; Isaiah 6:1-8; 49:1-6; 52:7-10; 55:1-13;
61:1-4; Jeremiah 1:4-10.

New Testament:

Matthew 5:1-12; Mark 3:13-19; 6:30-44; 10:35-45;
Luke 4:14-21; 10:1-11; John 13:1-17; 15:1-17; 21:15-19.
Acts 20:17-38; Romans 10:5-15; 12:1-21; I Corinthians 12:4-13;
2 Corinthians 4:1-15; Ephesians 3:8-21; 4:1-16;
Philippians 2:1-16; I Peter 4:8-11; 5:1-4.

The following response may be used after each reading

Hear the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

7. Sermon

8. Hymn or Song

The Induction

9. Presentation of the Candidate

The interim moderator may present the candidate to the presiding minister with these or similar words:

Moderator, I present to you N, for induction into...

10. Statement by the minister-elect

The minister-elect makes a brief statement about his/her call to the ministry into which he/she will be inducted.

11. Narrative of the Call

We now hear a statement on behalf of the District/Area Council, outlining the steps which led to this call.

We shall hear how the congregation(s) of called N to be *its/their* minister.

(We shall hear how N was appointed to exercise this ministry in the post of)

An appointed person may make a short statement on behalf of the District/Area Council and the congregation or other appointing body.

Alternatively, short statements may be made on behalf of the Council by a representative/representatives of the congregation(s) or appointing body.

12. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church

This Statement (Basis of Union, Schedule D) is read in one of the approved forms.

13. Affirmations

All stand as the presiding minister asks the minister-elect to affirm his/her faith.

1. Will you confess anew your faith?

**I confess anew my faith in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**I believe that the Word of God
in the Old and New Testaments,
discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
is the supreme authority for the faith
and conduct of all God's people.**

**I believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary,
lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross,
and who was raised from the dead
and reigns for evermore,**

is the gift of God's very self to the world.

**I believe that through him God's love,
justice and mercy are revealed
and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life
are offered to all people.**

And by the grace of God

I promise to proclaim this gospel faithfully.

**I believe that the Church is the people
gathered by God's love**

**to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God
through Jesus Christ.**

2. What leads you to this ministry?

So far as I know my own heart,

**I believe that zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
obedience to the Holy Spirit**

**and a desire for the salvation of the world,
are the chief motives**

which lead me to enter this ministry.

Relying on the strength of Christ,

I promise to live a holy life,

**and to maintain the truth of the gospel,
whatever trouble or persecution may arise.**

3. Will you faithfully fulfil the duties of your charge?

The presiding minister (after appropriate consultation) may modify the wording of the following answer (or of question 7 below) to fit the kind of ministry to which the candidate has been called.

By the grace of God

**I promise to lead the church in worship,
to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments,
to exercise pastoral care and oversight,
to take my part in the councils of the Church,
and to give leadership to the Church
in mission to the world.**

As a minister of the United Reformed Church

**I promise to seek its well-being, purity, and peace,
to cherish love towards all other churches,
and to endeavour always to build up
the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.**

**I undertake to exercise my ministry
in accordance with the Statement
concerning the Nature, Faith and Order
of the United Reformed Church.**

**All these things I profess and promise
in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

or the affirmations may be made in this way:

1. N, do you confess anew your faith in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
I do.
2. Do you believe that the Word of God
in the Old and New Testaments,
discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
is the supreme authority
for the faith and conduct of all God's people?
I do.

3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross, and who was raised from the dead and reigns for evermore, is the gift of God's very self to the world?
Do you believe that through him
God's love, justice and mercy are revealed
and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life
are offered to all people?
And will you faithfully proclaim this gospel?
**By the grace of God this I believe
and this I will proclaim.**
4. Do you believe that the Church
is the people gathered by God's love
to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God
through Jesus Christ?
I do.
5. Are zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
obedience to the Holy Spirit
and a desire for the salvation of the world,
so far as you know your own heart,
the chief motives which lead you to enter this ministry?
They are.
6. Do you promise to live a holy life,
and to maintain the truth of the gospel,
whatever trouble or persecution may arise?
Relying on the strength of Christ, I do.
7. Do you promise to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully,
to lead the church in worship,
to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments,
to exercise pastoral care and oversight,
to take your part in the councils of the Church,
and to give leadership to the Church
in its mission to the world?
By the grace of God, I do.

8. Do you promise,
as a minister of the United Reformed Church,
to seek its well-being, purity and peace,
to cherish love towards all other churches
and to endeavour always to build up
the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?
By the grace of God, I do.
9. Will you undertake to exercise your ministry
in accordance with the Statement concerning
the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church?
**I will, and all these things I profess and promise
in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

14. Promises

The presiding minister asks the congregation:

Do you confess again your faith in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

We do.

Do you receive N as from God,
as a minister of Word and Sacraments
of the United Reformed Church?

We do.

Will you pray for N in this ministry,
giving *him/her* due honour, support and encouragement?

We will.

*asks members of the local church(es) where the minister is
to serve:*

Members of, do you receive N as from God,
to serve among you and to lead you in your ministry?

We do.

(asks members of the appointing body:

Representatives of, do you receive N as from God,
to minister among you?

We do.)

asks members of the District/Area Council:

Members of the XY District/Area Council,
do you welcome N into membership,
and promise to support *his/her* ministry?

We do.

15. Hymn of the Holy Spirit

16. Induction Prayer

The congregation stands for the induction prayer.

God of every perfect gift,
we praise you that in every age you call your people
to show forth your acts of mercy and love.
We give you thanks that you have called your servant N
to serve you as a minister in your Church,
in succession to the apostles
and in company with all who follow in Christ's way.

Renew the gift of your Holy Spirit
on your servant N
as in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
we induct *him/her* to serve as

Gracious God, dwell with N
and strengthen the gifts you have given *him/her*
that the ministry and mission of your people may bear fruit.

Inspire *him/her* in leading worship,
in preaching and teaching and service;
may the gospel be celebrated
when *he/she* presides at the sacraments.

Bless *him/her* with love and humility to tend your flock,
to feed the hungry, heal the wounded, and find the lost.

Give *him/her* power and patience
to witness with all Christians to your way,
and to labour with all people of goodwill
for justice and mercy in society.

Watch over *him/her* in times of trial;
in weariness, disappointment, or frustration;
and keep *him/her* from complacency and spiritual pride.

Fill *his/her* home with your peace.
(Special petitions may be added at this point.)

Give grace to the people of *this church/these churches/
this community/ this hospital Trust/
this university/ this place of work*
that they may accept the service God offers them through N.
May they work together for the glory of your name.

And may the good work you have begun today
be brought to completion in Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you, Father,
and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever.

Amen.

17. Declaration of Induction

The presiding minister says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and representing the XY District/Area Council
of the United Reformed Church,
I declare N be inducted to

May the God of peace,
who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you complete in everything good
so that you may do his will,
working among us that which is pleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever.

Hebrews 13:20-21

Amen.

or

Now to him who by the power at work within us
is able to accomplish abundantly far more
than all we can ask or imagine,
to him be glory in the church
and in Christ Jesus to all generations,
for ever and ever.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Amen.

18. Welcome

The right hand of fellowship is given by the presiding minister and others duly appointed, who may include representatives of the local church(es), the District/Area Council and the General Assembly, as well as ecumenical, civic and community representatives.

19. Giving of Gifts

The minister may be presented with symbolic gifts, for example:

Receive this Bible,
the word of God, living and active.

Hebrews 4:12a

Receive this cup and plate,
**to hold bread and wine
for the feeding of God's people.**

Receive this water,
symbol of baptism and sign of new life.

20. Prayers of Intercession

These prayers may be spoken by different voices and may end with the Lord's Prayer.

21. Hymn or Song

22. Dismissal and Blessing

Now to him who is able to keep you from falling,
and to make you stand without blemish
in the presence of his glory with rejoicing,
to the only God our Saviour,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, power and authority,
before all time, now and for ever.

Jude:24-25

Amen.

or

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, (*Creator, Christ and Comforter*)
be with you always.

Amen.



Commissioning for Church Related Community Workers

A meeting of the District Council shall be constituted. The Moderator of the Synod (or a deputy) shall be invited by the Council to preside. The Commissioning shall normally be held in the church-in-community where the church related community worker is to serve. It should be adapted to local circumstances, with opportunities for participation by those who will work with the church related community worker. If desired the Lord's Supper may be celebrated after the prayers of intercession.

1. Scripture Sentences
2. Hymn or Song
3. Prayer of Approach
4. Prayer of Confession
5. Statement
6. Readings from Scripture
7. Sermon
8. Hymn or Song
9. Presentation of the Candidate
10. Statement by the Church-in-Community
11. Statement by the Candidate
12. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D)
13. Affirmations (Schedule F)
14. Promises
15. Hymn of the Holy Spirit
16. Commissioning Prayer
17. Declaration of Commissioning and Induction
18. Signing of the CRCW Covenant
19. Welcome
20. Giving of Gifts
21. Prayers of Intercession
22. Prayer of Commitment
23. Hymn or Song
24. Dismissal and Blessing

The Preparation

I. Scripture Sentences

Come, let us sing to the LORD;

**let us make a joyful noise
to the rock of our salvation!**

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

**let us make a joyful noise to him
with songs of praise.**

Psalm 95:1-2

For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures for ever,

and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 100:5

or

I will rejoice in Jerusalem and delight in my people;

**no more shall the sound of weeping be heard
or the cry of distress.**

They shall not labour in vain, or bear children for calamity.

**Before they call I will answer,
while they are yet speaking I will hear.**

Isaiah 65:19,23a,24

or

Thus says the LORD; I will return to Zion,
and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem;

**old men and old women shall again sit
in the streets of Jerusalem.**

**And the streets of the city shall be full of boys
and girls playing.**

Zechariah 8:3a,4a,5

or

I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem,

coming down out of heaven from God.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them.

Revelation 21:2a,3

2. Hymn or Song

3. Prayer of Approach

Loving God,
whose love we live to serve,
so that all the world may see the wonder of it,
take hold of us again as we worship here,
and give us the mind of Christ,
so that we may rediscover your presence
in the community around us,
and recognise your Spirit at work
in every act of human kindness,
in every plea for justice,
in every call to service
and in every challenge to our complacency.
Take hold of us again,
fill us with love for each other
and our neighbours,
and by our faithfulness,
let your justice, joy and peace
extend to more and more,
so that the thanks and praise we offer now
may increase,
to your glory and our delight,
now and for evermore.

Amen.

4. Prayer of Confession

Faithful God,
you called your Church into being
to proclaim your integrity to the world,
and to live in the truth of it.

**Forgive our faithlessness,
and make our witness true.**

Loving God,
you called your Church into being
to assure the world of your unfailing love
and to live in the power of it.

**Forgive our lovelessness,
and give us grace to love our neighbours
as you, in Christ, have loved us.**

God of justice,
you called your Church into being
to serve your cause,
and to challenge prejudice and oppression.

**Forgive our prejudice,
and our hardness of heart;
fill us with compassion
and make us merciful.**

God of peace,
you called your Church into being
to teach the world the things that make for peace.

**Forgive our enmity and bitterness,
make us truly your daughters and sons
and makers of peace,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.**

The saying is sure
and worthy of full acceptance:
**that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
Thanks be to God
who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

5. Statement

We are met today as the XY District/Area Council
of the United Reformed Church,
with the members of church-in-community,
representatives of and other friends.

All Christians are called to the duty and delight
of continuing the ministry of Christ
in the Church and for the world.

Some are called to the ministry of church related community work, challenging the community while caring and praying for it, so the Church can proclaim the love and mercy of God and can work with others for peace and justice.

N was accepted by the United Reformed Church as a candidate for this ministry has been prepared for commissioning by *college/course*, commended for commissioning by *sending Synod* and has been called to serve here by decision of *CRCW Covenant partners*.

or

N has served as a church related community worker in AB for the past years and has been called to serve here by decision of *CRCW Covenant partners*.

The Ministry of the Word

6. Readings from Scripture

The following readings are appropriate:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):
Deuteronomy 15:1-11; Psalm 15; Isaiah 58:1-12;
Jeremiah 31:7-14; Zechariah 8:1-8

New Testament:
Matthew 5:1-16; Matthew 7:7-20; Matthew 19:16-30;
Mark 4:21-32; Luke 1:46-55; Luke 6:20-31; Luke 14:7-14;
John 4:5-15,21-30,39-42; Philippians 2:1-11; Revelation 21:1-7.

7. Sermon

8. Hymn or Song

Commissioning and Induction

9. Presentation of the Candidate

An appropriate person may present the candidate to the presiding minister in these or similar words:

Moderator, I present N to you, for commissioning and induction.

10. Statement by the Church-in-Community

In the case of an ecumenical appointment this statement should include contributions from ecumenical partners.

11. Statement by the Candidate

The candidate makes a brief statement about his/her call to this particular ministry. In the case of a first commissioning this should include his/her call to the ministry of church related community work.

12. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church

This Statement (Basis of Union, Schedule D) is read in one of the approved forms.

13. Affirmations

All stand as the presiding minister asks the church related community worker to affirm his/her faith.

1. N, will you confess anew your faith?

I confess anew my faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people.

**I believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary,
lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross,
and who was raised from the dead
and reigns for evermore,
is the gift of God's very self to the world.
I believe that through him God's love,
justice and mercy are revealed
and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life
are offered to all people.
And by the grace of God
I promise to proclaim this gospel faithfully.
I believe that the Church is the people
gathered by God's love
to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God
through Jesus Christ.**

2. What leads you to this ministry?

**So far as I know my own heart,
I believe that zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
obedience to the Holy Spirit
and a desire for the salvation of the world,
are the chief motives
which lead me to enter this ministry.
Relying on the strength of Christ,
I promise to live a holy life,
and to maintain the truth of the gospel,
whatever trouble or persecution may arise.**

3. Will you faithfully fulfil the duties of your charge?

**By the grace of God, I promise to care for,
to challenge and to pray for the community,
to discern with others God's will
for the wellbeing of the community.
I promise to take my part in the councils of the Church
and to endeavour to enable the Church
to live out its calling
to proclaim the love and mercy of God
through working with others
in both Church and community
for peace and justice in the world.**

**As a church related community worker
of the United Reformed Church
I promise to seek its well-being, purity, and peace,
to cherish love towards all other churches,
and always to build up
the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I undertake to exercise my ministry
in accordance with the Statement
concerning the Nature, Faith and Order
of the United Reformed Church.
All these things I profess and promise
in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

or the affirmations may be made in this way:

1. N, do you confess anew your faith in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit?
I do.
2. Do you believe that the Word of God
in the Old and New Testaments,
discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
is the supreme authority
for the faith and conduct of all God's people?
I do.
3. Do you believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary,
lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross,
and who was raised from the dead and reigns for evermore,
is the gift of God's very self to the world?
Do you believe that through him
God's love, justice and mercy are revealed
and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life
are offered to all people?
And will you faithfully proclaim this gospel?
**By the grace of God this I believe
and this I will proclaim.**
4. Do you believe that the Church
is the people gathered by God's love
to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God
through Jesus Christ?
I do.

5. Are zeal for the glory of God,
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,
obedience to the Holy Spirit
and a desire for the salvation of the world,
so far as you know your own heart,
the chief motives which lead you to enter this ministry?
They are.

6. Do you promise to live a holy life,
and to maintain the truth of the gospel,
whatever trouble or persecution may arise?
Relying on the strength of Christ, I do.

7. Do you promise to care for, to challenge
and to pray for the community,
to discern with others God's will
for the wellbeing of the community?
Do you promise to take your part
in the councils of the Church
and to enable the Church to live out its calling
to proclaim the love and mercy of God
through working with others in both Church and community
for peace and justice in the world?
By the grace of God, I do.

8. Do you promise as a church related community worker
in the United Reformed Church
to seek its well-being, purity and peace,
to cherish love towards all other churches,
and to endeavour always to build up
the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?
By the grace of God, I do.

Will you undertake to exercise your ministry
in accordance with the Statement
concerning the Nature, Faith and Order
of the United Reformed Church?

**I will, and all these things I profess and promise
in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

14. Promises

The presiding minister asks members of the church-in-community and representatives of the District/Area Council to respond to the following questions:

Do you confess again your faith in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

We do.

Do you receive N as from God, to serve among you here and with you in the world?

We do.

Do you promise to pray for each other and for N; and do you promise to share with *him/her* in seeking and doing the will of God, to give *him/her* encouragement, consideration and support, so that you grow together in faith, hope and love?

We do.

15. Hymn of the Holy Spirit

16. Commissioning Prayer

The congregation remains standing for the commissioning prayer.

Eternal God, you have called us into the Church to proclaim the gospel and make it effective in the world; and, in your Holy Spirit, we receive all the gifts we need.

We give thanks, today, because you have given N the necessary gifts to challenge and encourage us in our work within the community where we live. As we receive *him/her* in the name of Jesus Christ, and as we commission *him/her* to your service here, strengthen and encourage *him/her* with the assurance of your Holy Spirit's constant presence, so that *he/she* may face the future, with all its responsibilities, calmly and confidently but also with excitement and joy.

Give *him/her* ever deeper understanding
of your ways with the world,
keep *him/her* compassionate and courageous
in all *his/her* dealings with other people,
so that *he/she* and they may discover
their infinite value as your daughters and sons.
Through *his/her* ministry
may all of us be more and more challenged
and inspired to respond to human need;
that our work and prayer might help all to find their voice
and the strength to build a better community,
at one with itself,
in the peace and joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

17. Declaration of Commissioning and Induction

The presiding minister says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and representing the XY District/Area Council
of the United Reformed Church,
I declare N to be commissioned and inducted
to the ministry of church related community worker
to work with church-in-community
and XY District/Area Council:

18. Signing of the CRCW Covenant

*Five copies of the church related community work covenant
are signed by the church related community worker and
representatives of the church-in-community, the CRCW
programme sub-committee, the District/Area Council and
the Synod.*

19. Welcome

The right hand of fellowship is given by the presiding minister and others duly appointed, who may include the church-in-community, the District/Area Council and the General Assembly as well as ecumenical, civic and community representatives.

20. Giving of Gifts

The church related community worker may be presented with gifts.

21. Prayers of Intercession

These may be offered by someone from the church-in-community and end with the Lord's Prayer(if not used earlier).

22. Prayer of Commitment

Help us, God, to trust you
and to find your purpose
in everything that happens to us.
Be there with us in every experience,
speak to us through other people,
and give us what it takes
to express your love for the world
in all our words and works.

Take us where you want us to go,
renewing our faith and hope,
forgiving our sin,
perfecting our praise
and filling us with confidence,
so that your name may be glorified in us
as it has been already
and will be for ever
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

23. Hymn or Song

24. Dismissal and Blessing

Go to the world again in confidence;
play your part in God's creation
and never lose heart.

Put your faith in the risen Christ,
who will match his stride to yours
until your journey's end.

And the blessing of the Eternal God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, (*Creator, Saviour and Holy Spirit*)
be with you all.

Amen.




Commissioning of Accredited Lay Preachers

A commissioning service is conducted by a District/Area Council after accreditation by the Ministries Committee on behalf of the General Assembly. The commissioning may be a special service and the District or Area Lay Preaching Commissioner may share in the leadership of it.

If the service takes place on a Sunday at the lay preacher's own church it is usually the minister of that church who presides. When it is part of an act of worship at an ordinary meeting of the Council the District President normally presides.

The service offered below may be appropriately adapted for use at a service for a lay preacher to be recognised by the District/Area Council.

The act of commissioning should follow the sermon or another form of proclamation of the Word.

- 
1. Introduction
 2. Statement
 3. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D)
 4. Affirmations
 5. Commissioning
 6. Declaration
 7. Presentation

1. Introduction

Hear this, all you peoples;
give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
both low and high,
rich and poor together.
My mouth shall speak wisdom;
the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.

Psalm 49:1-3

or

Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell you what he has done for me.
I cried aloud to him,
and he was extolled with my tongue.
Blessed be God,
because he has not rejected my prayer
or removed his steadfast love from me.

Psalm 66:16-17, 20

or

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.
Morning by morning he wakens – wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

Isaiah 50:4

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the head of the Church,
we are now to commission as a lay preacher N,
who has been recognised by the XY District Council
and accredited by the General Assembly
of the United Reformed Church.

2. Statement by the lay preacher

*The lay preacher makes a statement concerning his/her faith
and sense of calling.*

3. Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church

The Statement (Basis of Union, Schedule D) is read in one of the approved forms.

4. Affirmations

The congregation is invited to stand as the presiding minister asks the lay preacher to affirm his/her faith:

N, do you confess again your faith in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

I do.

Do you reaffirm your trust in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord, promising to follow him and seeking to do his will all the days of your life?

Trusting in God's grace, I do.

Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of all God's people?

I do.

Do you believe that you are called to preach the gospel of God's love and mercy revealed in Jesus Christ?

I do.

Do you undertake to exercise your ministry in accordance with the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith, and Order of the United Reformed Church?

I do.

The presiding minister asks the congregation:

Do you, the members of this local church
and the members of XY District/Area Council
accept N as a lay preacher
and promise *him/her*
your prayerful support and encouragement
in this ministry?

We do.

5. Commissioning

Ever gracious God,
you have brought us into your Church
and made us your witnesses,
giving us the gifts we need
to proclaim the gospel of your holy love.
We give thanks today for N,
whom you have called to be a preacher of your Word,
and in your name we commission *him/her*
to the office of lay preacher.
Inspire *him/her* with your Holy Spirit
so that *he/she* will be fired with passion
and always seek deeper understanding
of the gospel *he/she* proclaims.
Sustain *him/her* in *his/her* calling,
when it is easy and when it is difficult.
May *he/she* find eager hearers
who respond to *his/her* proclamation,
and give *him/her* their support and encouragement.

Keep *him/her* humble,
but make *him/her* aware of what *he/she* brings
to the life and well-being of the Church, as,
through *his/her* preaching,
the gospel is proclaimed.

Keep *him/her* ever hopeful
and keep *him/her* ever joyful.
Bring *him/her*
and all of us at the last
to full maturity in Christ,
in whose name we pray.

Amen.

6. Declaration

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the only head of the Church,
and in accordance with the
decision of the *X Y District/Area Council*,
and of the General Assembly,
I declare you to be commissioned
to the office of lay preacher
in the United Reformed Church.
In token of this I give you the right hand of fellowship.

7. Presentation

The certificate and also a Bible or other suitable gift may be presented.

The service concludes with the Lord's Supper or with a hymn and blessing.

The following readings are appropriate:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures:
Numbers 11:16-17, Isaiah 40:1-11, Isaiah 52:7-12,
Jeremiah 1:4-10, Jeremiah 23:16-22.

New Testament:
Matthew 9:32-38, Luke 10:1-6, John 15:1-17, Acts 11:19-26,
Romans 1:8-17, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, 1 Peter 4:8-14



Introduction to Rededication Services

There are times in the lives of individuals and congregations when an act of renewal and rededication is valuable. Some churches do this within an annual service to renew their relationship with ecumenical partners. In joint United Reformed-Methodist congregations the Covenant Service in January or September gives an opportunity to start again. Many congregations have a special Sunday each year, which may or may not be called their Anniversary, when they mark a new beginning in their life and re-commit themselves to the work of ministry.

In 1997 the General Assembly acknowledged the importance of these congregational acts by agreeing to ask that local churches should observe the first Sunday in October each year, or another convenient date, as Rededication Sunday.

Two different orders for such a service follow. One is based on the Five Marks of Mission. The other draws on existing material which has been produced for anniversary and rededication Sundays, and focuses on the theme of unity. Neither of them needs be followed slavishly. They simply offer two models for incorporating these ideas into worship.


Themes of remembering, renewal and rededication have different significance for different local congregations, and are influenced by the hopes and fears which people have for the future of their fellowship. Within the safety and challenge of worship, they can be encouraged to let go of burdens from the past and renew their energy for the unseen future which God holds out to them.

First, there is an order for congregational renewal of baptismal promises which is based on the Baptismal Service in part one of 'Worship: from the United Reformed Church'. This offers a chance for all present to renew the promises they made at baptism, or the promises which previously were made for them by their parents, when they were young children.



Renewal of Baptismal Promises by the Congregation

*This act will normally take place after the sermon.
The congregation may be invited to gather around the
baptistry or font, or to turn to face it. The act of renewal
may be followed by a celebration of the Lord's Supper.*

- 
1. Introduction
 2. Scripture Sentences
 3. Profession of Faith
 4. Thanksgiving for Baptism
 5. The Peace

1. Introduction

As a community of God's people,
let us remember that we have been baptized
and reaffirm our commitment to follow Christ.
In baptism, God has set us as a seal upon his heart.
In baptism, God has brought us into union with Christ,
made us one with all his people in heaven and on earth
and assured us of everlasting life.

2. Scripture Sentences

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with jewels.

Isaiah 61:10

You did not choose me but I chose you.
And I appointed you to go and bear fruit,
fruit that will last,
so that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.
I am giving you these commands
so that you may love one another.

John 15:16-17

For just as the body is one and has many members,
and all members of the body, though many, are one body,
so it is with Christ.
For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -
Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -
and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

3. Profession of Faith

Let us now proclaim the faith of the Church
in which we were baptized.

The people proclaim their faith. The Apostles' or Nicene Creed (R&S 759, 760) or Statement of Faith of the United Reformed Church (Basis of Union, para. 17 or para. 18) may be used, or a hymn of faith may be sung.

By grace, let us respond to grace.

**Believing and trusting in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
I repent of my sins,
turn away from evil,
and turn to Christ.
Christ alone is my Saviour and Lord.**

From the beginning,
believers have continued
in the worship and fellowship of the Church.
With God's help,
let us commit ourselves anew to this life;

**I accept the gift and cost
of following Christ
in my daily life and work;
and with the whole Church,
I will proclaim by word and action
the good news of God in Christ.**

4. Thanksgiving for Baptism

Strong deliverer, holy One,
for you alone our souls wait in silence,
from you comes our salvation.
Your Spirit first brooded over the waters of chaos,
bringing life to a formless waste.
After waters flooded the earth,
you made a covenant with your people
and gave us the rainbow to be a sign of hope.
Through the waters of the sea,
you led your people out of bondage
from slavery to freedom.

You sent your son Jesus
who was baptized in the Jordan
and received your Spirit.
As we share in the baptism of his death and resurrection
you set us free from bondage to sin
and open the way to eternal life.
For many waters cannot quench love.

**The waters closed in over me,
the deep surrounded me.
Out of the darkness I called to you
and you answered me.
You brought up my life from the depths.
You are the Lord my God.**

We praise you for your Holy Spirit,
the Spirit of joy,
who teaches us and leads us into all truth.
You gather us in the Church through Christ,
a people of your choosing,
called to live justly and in peace.
And so to you be all praise, honour and glory,
through Jesus Christ our saviour,
who with you and the Holy Spirit,
lives and reigns for ever.

Amen.

5. The Peace

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

*The people are invited to offer one another a sign of
Christ's peace.*

A Service for Rededication Sunday

Based on the Five Marks of Mission

The Five Marks of Mission originated at the 1988 Lambeth Conference and were endorsed by the Forum of Churches Together in England in 1997. They are to proclaim the good news of the kingdom (tell), to teach baptise and nurture new believers (teach), to respond to human need by loving service (tend), to seek to transform unjust structures of society (transform) and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation (treasure).

Objects symbolising the five marks may be brought forward, perhaps during the prayer of confession or the renewal of commitment. The service may conclude with the Lord's Supper.

1. Call to Worship
2. Hymn or Song
3. Prayer of Approach
4. Prayer of Confession
5. Assurance of Pardon
6. Theme introduction
7. Reading from Scripture
8. Hymn or Song
9. Reading(s) from Scripture
10. Hymn or Song

11. Prayer for the Day
12. Sermon or other proclamation of the Word
13. Hymn or Song
14. Prayers of Intercession
15. Hymn or Song
16. Renewal of Commitment to Mission
17. Blessing

1. Call to worship

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;
the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple;
the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring for ever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

Psalm 19:7-9

2. Hymn or Song

3. Prayer of approach

Powerful, ever present God,
you make yourself known to us
through the mystery and energy of your creation.
Help us to worship you in spirit and in truth.

You reveal your purposes
in the ministry and mission of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose to life again.
Help us to trust in him as our Lord and saviour.

You send your Holy Spirit
to help us glimpse your kingdom
and give us hope to strive for it.
Enable us to work with you
for your rule of justice and peace.

Amen.

4. Prayer of Confession

God of mercy,
we confess we have failed to answer your call to mission.

You invite us to tell others the good news;
yet too often we have been silent and fearful.
For our unwillingness to share your gospel
forgive us, we pray,
and help us to start again.

You call us to teach others
and to keep growing in faith ourselves;
yet we have settled for easy answers
and avoided challenging issues.
For our resistance to your teaching
forgive us, we pray,
and help us to start again.

You show us in Jesus
what it means to care for others;
yet we would sooner sit on our hands
than offer them in your service.
For our slowness to follow the example of Jesus
forgive us, we pray,
and help us to start again.

You give us this world
and all living things as gifts to treasure;
yet we have damaged and despoiled them
by ignorance, impatience and greed.
For our failure to take care of the planet entrusted to us
forgive us, we pray,
and help us to start again.

You challenge your people
by your prophets, old and new,
to confront the injustice in their lives and communities;
yet we feel uncomfortable
when our double standards are brought home to us.
For our failure to work for peace with justice
forgive us, we pray,
and help us to start again.

Amen.

5. Assurance of Pardon

The God of new beginnings
releases us from past wrongs,
refreshes our energy in the present
and renews us for the future.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

6. Theme introduction

7. Reading from Scripture

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):
Isaiah 65:17-25 or another appropriate passage.

8. Hymn or Song

9. Reading from Scripture

New Testament:
Matthew 28:16-20, Romans 10:5-15 or another appropriate passage.

10. Hymn or Song

11. Prayer for the Day

O God, who calls us in Jesus not to be afraid,
but to tell others the good news,
confirm us in our love for you
and in our dedication to your service
that we may be filled with new energy
for the task of mission which you give us,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

12. Sermon or other proclamation of the Word

13. Hymn or Song

14. Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God, present in all creation,
we pray for your world and your Church.

Awaken us to the pain of those in poverty,
the distress of those in nations burdened by debt,
the sick, the sorrowing, victims of violence and war.
May we discover our common humanity with them
and learn the art of finding Jesus in each sister and brother.

Where your people have lost their way
and fallen into decline or complacency,
give them eyes to see
and ears to hear your summons to mission.
Where your Church is vibrant and growing,
give your people confidence to share with others
the lessons they are learning.

Give us courage and humour for what lies ahead.
Fill us with wisdom to face the world
and childlike trust in the power and goodness
of your ultimate purposes for all you have made.
In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

15. Hymn or Song

16. Renewal of Commitment to Mission

The congregation may be invited to stand.

We will delay our mission no longer.
We will live in ways that show those around us
the good news of God's love in Jesus.

We will demonstrate by our actions
as well as by our words how much God longs
for the healing and wholeness of the world.

We will build one another up in love,
so that those who encounter our common life
will find in our sharing a foretaste of God's kingdom on earth.

Amen.

17. Dismissal and Blessing

We entrust to God
our companions on the road,
this place from which we journey,
and the neighbours who will share our work of mission.

And may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, (*Creator, Christ and Spirit*)
rest upon us now and always.

Amen.

Service of Rededication

On the theme of Unity

1. Call to Worship
2. Hymn or Song
3. Introduction
4. Prayers of Approach
5. Confession
6. Assurance of Pardon
7. Prayer of the Day
8. Hymn or Song
9. Readings from Scripture
10. Sermon or other proclamation of the Word
11. Hymn or Song
12. Thanksgiving and Rededication
13. Confession of Faith
14. Prayers for the Church and the World

1. Call to Worship

Let us worship God.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Lord you have been our dwelling place
in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90:1-2

or

Praise to God for the gifts of the past;
**for the witness of the people of God
who went before us.**

Praise to God for the gifts of the present:
**we meet Christ and serve him
in friend and stranger.**

Praise to God for the gifts of the future:
**in darkness and in light
the Spirit will lead us.**

2. Hymn or Song

3. Introduction

God calls us to be one,
to share the unity
that binds the Trinity together in love.
We have come to rededicate ourselves
to seek that unity with all of God's people,
so that God may be glorified
and the whole creation sing praises.

4. Prayers of Approach

Loving and faithful God,
we come into your presence rejoicing.
We come to sing your songs of praise;
we come to hear your words of power;
we come to share your all-embracing love.

Be present among us
as we seek to remember our past
and rededicate ourselves to your future.
Called to be your people,
we pray in the name of your Son,
our saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

or

Eternal God,
you give us light to guide us
on our journey through life.
You give us life to fill us
so that we may know
we are truly your children.

We know you in Jesus Christ
who is for us the way,
the truth and the life.

Help us never to depart from this way
but to walk it with patience and humility.
May we always seek the truth,
with honesty and openness,
knowing that it will set us free.
So Christ's life will be in us
and we may come to fullness of life.

Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

5. Confession

As followers of Jesus we have failed time and again,
and so we make confession of our brokenness
and seek God's forgiveness.

Silence

We have built up walls to divide the body of Christ
and ignored its unity.

We have sinned, God forgive us.

We have dwelt upon what separates us,
and not sought what makes us one in the body of Christ.

We have sinned, God forgive us.

We have belittled each others' gifts and traditions.

We have sinned, God forgive us.

We have not loved you, Lord,
as we find you in our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We have sinned, God forgive us.

or

Let us confess our sins to God.

Gracious God,
you call us to offer ourselves to you
in adoration and worship,
but we have held back in selfishness and pride.

You call us to renewal through your Holy Spirit,
**but we have grown dull and tired,
clinging to comfortable old ways.**

You call us to declare the saving power of your Son,
**but we have muffled your message
with our doubts and indifference.**

You call us to share Christ's ministry of love,
but we have turned aside from those in need.

You call us to witness to Christ's rule over the nations,
but we have not allowed Christ to rule in our lives.

**Forgive us and help us to respond anew
to your call to worship and service.**

6. Assurance of Pardon

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
that everyone who has faith in him may not perish
but have eternal life.

To all who repent and believe,
I declare in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:
God grants you the forgiveness of your sins.

Thanks be to God.

or

There is rejoicing in heaven
when we turn from our sins.
Rejoice, people of God;
in Christ, your sins are forgiven!

Thanks be to God.

7. Prayer of the Day

Almighty God,
you promised through your Son
that you would remain with your Church forever.
We praise and thank you for those
who brought to birth the United Reformed Church,
in answer to your gospel call.
Increase in us the spirit of faith and love
that we may be worthy of our heritage,
and that our fellowship may be an example to all;
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

or

Gracious God,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth takes its name,
we give you thanks and praise
for all we have learned of the breadth,
length, height and depth of Christ's love,
through the life of the United Reformed Church.

We pray for the inward strength
and power of your Holy Spirit
that we may be set free
to leave the security of the familiar
and discover you calling us
from unknown lands
where we can be more truly
the people you have made us to be.

We give glory to you
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
praying that his power
will continue to work in us and through us,
and believing that he can achieve
more than we can ever ask or conceive.

Yours are the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever.

Amen.

8. Hymn or Song

9. Readings from Scripture

Some suggested readings:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):
Psalm 133, Isaiah 11:1-9, Jeremiah 31:31-34

New Testament:
John 15:1-10, John 17:20-26, 1 Peter 2:4-10,
Romans 12:1-2

10. Sermon or other proclamation of the Word

11. Hymn or Song

12. Thanksgiving and Rededication

For the worship offered in prayer and praise,
for the preaching of the Word,
for the celebration of the Sacraments,
through this church.

All praise and thanks to God.

For the faith of all believers in Christ,
for the carrying of the gospel into all the world,
for the furtherance of the unity of all God's people
enabled by this church.

All praise and thanks to God.

For the support and nurture of God's people,
for the care of young and old,
for the calling of all to a life of service,
through this church.

All praise and thanks to God.

For the proclamation of God's truth,
for the care of the downtrodden,
for the giving of hope and courage
enabled by this church.

All praise and thanks to God.

For the opposing of all that is evil,
for the promoting of human worth,
for action for peace and justice,
through this church.

All praise and thanks to God.

For all who by word and deed
have brought this church into being,
for their living example to us,
for their faith and their hopes and dreams
built upon Jesus Christ the cornerstone.

All praise and thanks to God.

or

We give you thanks and praise, O God,
that you have led us as a shepherd,
guiding your flock towards the river of life
which flows through the holy city.

We give you thanks and praise, O God,
for the future you have prepared for us
and the mission you share with us
until all things are gathered into one in Christ
and there is no hurt, no harm, on all your holy mountain.

Until that day
may we proclaim the gospel with courage and integrity,
point to the kingdom with excitement and commitment,
and let our self-seeking plans die
so that resurrection may burst forth
surprising us with joy.

Encourage us in the tasks which are before us,
give us your consolation in our failures,
and never let us become complacent.
Confirm us in your Holy Spirit
that, in our life together, we may find peace.
Grant us the strength to live in the world for your reign
and hope in the fulfilment of the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Covenant God, in your presence,
within the living community of the gathered saints,
in the company of the communion of those
who journeyed alongside you before us

we reaffirm our delight in sharing our lives with you.

You have been our God and we have been your people.

We renew our commitment to serve and follow you.

You are our God and we are your people.

We rededicate ourselves to care for the world
around us in your name.

You shall be our God and we shall be your people.

Preserve us from seeking acclaim and success
in the eyes of the world,
guard us from needing to be needed
before we see your love for us,
protect us from faith that asks no questions and risks nothing.
Where you lead may we follow, today and every day.

Amen.

13. Confession of Faith

An appropriate statement of faith may be said

14. Prayers for the Church and the World

The service may continue with the Lord's Supper.



Statement of Faith – adopted in 1972

We believe in the one living and true God,
creator, preserver and ruler of all things
in heaven and earth,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Him alone we worship,
and in him we put our trust.

We believe that God, in his infinite love for men,
gave his eternal Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who became man,
lived on earth in perfect love and obedience,
died upon the cross for our sins,
rose again from the dead
and lives for evermore, saviour, judge and king.

We believe that, by the Holy Spirit,
this glorious Gospel is made effective
so that through faith we receive the forgiveness of sins,
newness of life as children of God
and strength in this present world to do his will.

We believe in the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church,
in heaven and on earth,
wherein by the same Spirit,
the whole company of believers is made one Body of Christ,
to worship God and serve him and all men
in his kingdom of righteousness and love.

We rejoice in the gift of eternal life,
and believe that, in the fullness of time,
God will renew and gather in one all things in Christ,
to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.



Alternative Statement of Faith – adopted in 1997

We believe
in the one and only God,
Eternal Trinity,
from whom, through whom and for whom
all created things exist.
God alone we worship;
in God we put our trust.

We worship God,
source and sustainer of creation,
whom Jesus called Father,
whose sons and daughters we are.

We worship God
revealed in Jesus Christ,
the eternal Word of God made flesh;
who lived our human life,
died for sinners on the cross;
who was raised from the dead,
and proclaimed by the apostles, Son of God;
who lives eternally,
as saviour and sovereign,
coming in judgement and mercy,
to bring us to eternal life.

We worship God,
ever present in the Holy Spirit;
who brings this Gospel to fruition,
assures us of forgiveness,
strengthens us to do God's will,
and makes us sisters and brothers of Jesus,
sons and daughters of God.

We believe
in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church,
united in heaven and on earth:
on earth, the Body of Christ,
empowered by the Spirit
to glorify God and to serve humanity;
in heaven, eternally one with the power,
the wisdom and the love of God in Trinity.

We believe that,
in the fullness of time,
God will renew and gather in one
all things in heaven and on earth through Christ,
and be perfectly honoured and adored.

We rejoice in God
who has given us being,
who shares our humanity
to bring us to glory,
our source of prayer and power of praise;
to whom be glory, praise and adoration,
now and evermore.

A Treasury of Prayers

Eastern Church Liturgy, Third Century

We give thee hearty thanks for the rest of the past night,
for the gift of a new day,
with its opportunities for pleasing thee.
Grant that we may so pass its hours
in the freedom of thy service,
that at eventide we may again give thanks unto thee;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430)

O thou who art the light of the minds that know thee,
the life of the souls that love thee,
and the strength of the hearts that serve thee;
help us so to know thee that we may truly love thee;
so to love thee that we may fully serve thee,
whom to serve is perfect freedom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Liturgy of Malabar, Fifth Century

Grant, O Lord, that the ears which have heard
the voice of thy songs
may be closed to the voice of clamour and dispute;
that the eyes which have seen thy great love
may also behold thy blessed hope;
that the tongues which have sung thy praise
may speak the truth;
that the feet which have walked thy courts
may walk in the region of light;
and that the bodies which have partaken of thy living Body
may be restored in newness of life.
Glory be to thee for thine unspeakable gift.

Amen.

Columba (c.521-597)

Be thou a bright flame before me,
be thou a guiding star above me,
be thou a smooth path below me,
be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
today, tonight and for ever.

Amen.

Mozarabic Sacramentary, Seventh Century

Grant us, O Lord, to pass this day in gladness and peace,
without stumbling and without stain;
that reaching the eventide victorious over all temptation,
we may praise thee, the eternal God,
who art blessed, and dost govern all things,
world without end.

Amen.

Gregorian Sacramentary

May God Almighty direct our days in his peace,
and grant us the gifts of his blessing;
may he deliver us in all our troubles,
and establish our minds in the tranquillity of his peace;
may he so guide us through things temporal
that we finally lose not the things eternal.

Amen.

Gelasian Sacramentary

Almighty and everlasting God,
the Comfort of the sad, the Strength of sufferers,
let the prayers of those that cry out of any tribulation
come unto thee;
that all may rejoice to find that thy mercy
is present with them in their afflictions;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Alcuin (735-804)

Eternal Light, shine into our hearts,
Eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil,
Eternal Power, be our support,
Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance,
Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us;
that with all our heart and mind
and soul and strength we may seek thy face
and be brought by thine infinite mercy
to thy holy presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Sarum Breviary, Eleventh Century

O God, who through the grace of thy Holy Spirit,
dost pour the gift of love into the hearts of thy faithful people;
grant unto us health, both of mind and body,
that we may love thee with our whole strength,
and with entire satisfaction may perform those things
which are pleasing unto thee;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

Merciful God, to thee we commend ourselves
and all those who need thy help and correction.
Where there is hatred, give love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is sadness, joy;
where there is darkness, light.
Grant that we may not seek so much
to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for in giving, we receive,
in pardoning we are pardoned,
and dying we are born into eternal life.

Amen.

Richard of Chichester (c.1197-1253)

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits thou hast won for me,
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly;
for ever and ever.

Amen.

Mechthild of Magdeburg (c.1210-c.1280)

O sweet and loving God,
when I stay asleep too long,
oblivious to all your many blessings,
then, please, wake me up,
and sing to me your joyful song.
It is a song without noise or notes.
It is a song of love beyond words,
of faith beyond the power of human telling.
I can hear it in my soul,
when you awaken me to your presence.

Amen.

Julian of Norwich (1342-c.1416)

God of your goodness, give me yourself,
for you are sufficient for me...
If I were to ask anything less
I should always be in want,
for in you alone do I have all.

Amen.

Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556)

Teach us, good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest;
to give, and not count the cost;
to fight, and not to heed the wounds;
to toil, and not to seek for rest;
to labour, and not to ask for any reward,
save that of knowing that we do thy will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

John Calvin (1509-1564)

Most gracious God, our heavenly Father,
in whom alone dwelleth all fullness of light and wisdom:
illuminate our minds, we beseech thee, by thy Holy Spirit,
in the true understanding of thy Word.
Give us grace that we may receive it
with reverence and humility unfeigned.
May it lead us to put our whole trust in thee alone;
and so to serve and honour thee,
that we may glorify thy holy name,
and edify our neighbours by a good example.
And since it hath pleased thee
to number us among thy people,
O help us to pay thee the love and homage that we owe,
as children to our Father, and as servants to our Lord.
We ask this for the sake of our Master and Saviour.

Amen.

Teresa of Avila (1515-82)

Christ has no body now on earth but yours;
yours are the only hands with which he can do his work,
yours are the only feet with which he can go about the world,
yours are the only eyes through which his compassion
can shine forth upon a troubled world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Amen.

after John Donne (c.1571-1631)

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening
into the house and gate of heaven,
to enter into that gate and dwell in that house,
where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling,
but one equal light;
no voice nor silence, but one equal music;
no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession;
no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity;
in the habitation of thy glory and dominion,
world without end.

Amen.

Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)

Strengthen us O God, to relieve the oppressed,
to hear the groans of poor prisoners,
to reform the abuses of all professions;
that many be made not poor to make a few rich;
for Jesus Christ's sake.

Amen.

Richard Baxter (1615-1691)

Keep us, O Lord, while we tarry on this earth,
in a serious seeking after thee,
and in an affectionate walking with thee,
every day of our lives;
that when thou comest,
we may be found not hiding our talent,
nor yet asleep with our lamp unfurnished,
but waiting and longing for our Lord,
our glorious King, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

O Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us:
let thy peace rule in our hearts;
and may it be our strength and song,
in the house of our pilgrimage.

We commit ourselves to thy care and keeping this day;
let thy grace be mighty in us, and sufficient for us,
and let it work in us both to will and to do
of thine own good pleasure,
and grant us strength for all the duties of the day.
Keep us from sin; give us the rule over our own spirits,
and keep us from speaking unadvisedly with our lips.
May we live together in peace and holy love,
and do thou command thy blessing upon us,
even life for evermore.

Prepare us for all the events of the day;
for we know not what a day may bring forth.
Give us grace to deny ourselves;
to take up our cross daily,
and to follow in the steps of our Lord and Master.

Amen.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Bless me, O Lord,
and let my food strengthen me to serve thee,
for Christ's sake.

Amen.

John Angell James (1785-1859)

O Holy Spirit, the Comforter,
come and dwell in our souls;
make our bodies thy temple.
Fill our minds with thy light,
and our hearts with thy love,
that over our whole character thy power may be seen
in the beauties of holiness.

May we live as something sacred to thee
as well as perfected by thee.
Come in all thy sevenfold energy,
and replenish us with thy illuminating,
comforting, sanctifying influence.
Baptize us with celestial fire,
and give us in thine abundant grace
the earnest of glory everlasting.

Amen.

Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

O Lord, in whom is our hope,
remove far from us, we pray thee,
empty hopes and presumptuous confidence.
Make our hearts so right with thy most holy and loving heart,
that hoping in thee we may do good;
until that day when faith and hope
shall be abolished by sight and possession,
and love shall be all in all.

Amen.

Cardinal Newman (1801-1890)

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over and our work is done;
then, Lord, in your mercy, grant us safe lodging,
a holy rest and peace at the last;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

or

Lord, support us by your grace
through all the hours of life's day:
until the shadows lengthen, the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over, and the evening comes.
Then Lord, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

G E Darlaston (1876-1931)

God, our Father, we thank thee for thy welcoming spirit
that meets us as we assemble ourselves together for worship.
We thank thee for thy greeting of peace
and for the sacred joy that awaits us as our minds are drawn
into the stream of common thought and holy purpose.
Help each one of us to give himself to the leading of thy Spirit,
not holding back in any reluctance
or self-complacency or indifference,
but with out-stretched minds and aspiring souls
to come together to thy holy hill.
Each one has some gift of heart and thought to bring,
each some failing or sin to confess,
each has some praise and prayer,
and we would lift many voices as one voice,
and many petitions as one petition,
to the throne of thy grace.
Lead us into the fellowship of holy worship,
and weave the varied strains of many hearts
into one symphony of praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

William Temple (1881-1944)

O Lord Jesu Christ, who didst pray
for thy disciples that they might be one,
even as thou art one with the Father:
draw us to thyself, that in common love
and obedience to thee we may be united to one another,
in the fellowship of the one Spirit,
that the world may believe that thou art Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Prayer of General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we, your unworthy servants,
give you most humble and hearty thanks
for all your goodness and loving kindness
to us and to all people.

We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world
by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace,
for the hope of glory.

Give us, we pray,
such a sense of all your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts,
we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you in holiness
and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honour and glory,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

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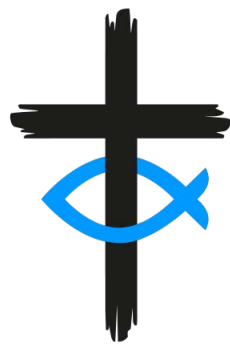
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Worship: *from*



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

**A Service of
Thanksgiving and
Remembrance for Children**

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A Celebration of Life

A Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for our children who died at any age whom we love and commend to God

Welcome to United Reformed Church
(or whatever wording is applicable)

As you entered you were given a commemorative card and a candle. You are invited to write your child's name on the card. During the Act of Remembrance you will be invited to bring them both to the front where the candle will be lit.

We meet today to give thanks to Almighty God for the precious gift of life. We especially remember our children who have died and whom we love dearly.

In recalling and celebrating their lives we remember too the promise and hope which God has given us in Jesus who lived and died and loves again. For it is in the context of his life and his promises that we may escape from absolute grief and despair. Enabled by his promise we can be freed to anticipate, with joy, a shared future, bright beyond anything we have experienced or can understand, yet possible through the Grace of Almighty God, our loving Father.

Let us stand to worship God as we join in singing

Hymn 41 For the Beauty of the Earth

Prayer of Approach

The Lord's Prayer

First reading

Address

Hymn 653 We Cannot Measure How You Feel

Second Reading

Act of Remembrance

Hold fast to this moment; this time and space is for you.
God waits in love, listens to what is in your heart and longs
to take away the pain.

(all those wishing to participate please come forward)

Music: Precious Child

Now we remember and hold before God, our children whose
names are written on these cards.
In their names, too we light these candles, symbols of love,
faith and hope. May they burn brightly and lift our hearts
and prayers to God.

Let us Pray

Jesus said 'Where your treasure is there shall your hearts
be also.'

Minister: Heavenly Father, these words would be dry
as dust in our mouths if we did not trust in
your promises.

All: *Lord to whom shall we go? Yours are the
words of eternal life.*

Minister: You have said that our names and the names
of our children are written on your hands.
We are precious in your sight.

All: *Forgive our lack of faith, help our unbelief,
so that we may rest content knowing that
they are safe in your keeping.*

Minister: Encourage and strengthen us by your Holy
Spirit. Help us to understand that it is a veil
as thin as gossamer that separates us from

them and that we are all cradled in your tender, loving care.

All: *Our treasure is safe with you and there also may our hearts find peace.*

Minister: We pray now for others around the world who mourn the loss of their children. May they find the blessing we seek.

All: *In the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

Amen

Hymn 531 Lord of All Hopefulness, Lord of All Joy

Closing Responses

Minister: Deep peace of the running wave to you

All: *Deep peace of the flowing air to you*

Minister: Deep peace of the quiet earth to you

All: *Deep peace of the shining stars to you*

Minister: Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

Amen

Blessing

Music 'Gone too Soon'

Margaret Herbert and Compassionate Friends,
St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Sheffield

A Service for Infant Baptism

Rejoice

People *for God is among us.*

Give thanks

People *for in Christ we are a new people.*

Celebrate

People *for the Spirit has set us free.*

Be one

People *for there are no more distinctions between
Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and
female and all are one in Christ Jesus.*

Statement of Purpose

We have gathered today for the baptism of C.... .

People brought their children to Jesus, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw it he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the children come to me; do not stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.'

Hymn

Prayer

Gracious God, who makes all things new, you have claimed us as your people and owned us as your family. Help us now to know your presence in all that we do together this evening. Source of all life, as we give thanks for this new life in our midst and celebrate the wonder that is a baby, help us to know that you are celebrating and smiling with us. Christ Jesus, born a vulnerable infant in a stable, help us tonight to see you afresh in C and in each other. Holy Spirit, with your empowering energy, transform our symbols, our actions and our words and make them yours. Trinity of love, inspire us and make us one with you and with each other.

Amen

Statement Concerning Baptism

By the time of Jesus' ministry the rite of baptism was attracting many Jews. His baptismal rite followed repentance for past sins, and was an external cleansing of the body after an internal clean out of sin from a person's past life. It marked a turning toward God, a new beginning and a new life. Jesus presented himself for baptism at the beginning of his ministry, and the gospel story describes God's Spirit descending on Jesus and a voice from heaven proclaiming him to be 'the beloved'. After his resurrection, Jesus charged his disciples to make disciples of all nations, to baptise men and women everywhere and teach them all that he had commanded. For the early church, being immersed in water and coming up again became a symbolic re-enactment of Christ's death and resurrection. Our sprinkling of water today has the same significance. Baptism is a token of God's love. Baptism stands for the new kind of living God has given us through Jesus. Baptism marks our entering into the care and teaching of Christ's Church. Through baptism the Holy Spirit unites us with Christ.

Hymn

Vows for Parents

Minister N and N, you have brought your child for baptism,
do you confess again your faith in one God –
who is the depth and ground of our being
who is the liberating and reconciling Christ
who is the Spirit of truth and life?

Parents **We do.**

Minister Jesus said, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”.

N and N, do you promise
to share with C the good news of the Kingdom
to nurture her/him with your Christian faith
to demonstrate for her/him a loving response
to human need
to show her/him justice and a will to transform injustice
to lead her/him to love and safeguard the earth and all creation?

Parents **We do.**

Minister Jesus said to Jerusalem, “How I have longed to gather your children as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings”.

N and N, by the grace of God
do you promise –
to introduce C to the love of Christ by the example of your love,
to help her/him to grow in the faith of the church,
and with her/him honestly to explore that faith.

Parents **We do.**

Vows for Godparents

Minister Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life”.

M and M, you have been appointed godparents to C,

will you befriend and support C in her/his life’s journey?

Will you encourage and counsel her/him in his search for truth?

Will you keep a special place for her/him in your lives as (s)he builds her/his own?

Godparents We will.

Minister Jesus said, “Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall never enter it”.

M and M, will you help C in her/his growing up to care about justice,

to value peace,

to honour reconciliation

and to open her/his heart to all the possibilities of love?

Godparents We will.

Minister Jesus said, “I have come so that you may have life, and have it in all its fullness”.

M and M, will you play your part in C ‘s life, helping her/him to discern what has worth and depth and beauty?

Will you foster in her/him warmth, humour, love of family, sensitivity to the world, and compassion for its people?

Godparents We will.

Vows for Congregation

Minister In the letter to Titus we read:– ‘It was for no reason except his own compassion that God saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our Saviour’.

We, as a Congregation gathered here this day, also have our part to play in N’s Christian upbringing, and so I ask you to stand now as a sign of your commitment to.

And I ask you –

As a community of faith, witnessing and celebrating this sacrament, do you promise your love, support and care for C in your future with her/him?

People **We do**

Minister And do you promise to share with her/him what you yourselves have received, the gift of God’s love revealed in Christ, a desire to grow in the way of Christ in all your life, and to serve him in the world?

People **We do**

Baptism

C, I baptise you in the name the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Sung Blessing

The Lord bless you, and keep you:–
The Lord make his face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
And give you peace.

Declaration

I declare that C has been received into the church by baptism. Jesus said, “Whoever receives one such child in my name, receives me”.

Hymn

A Word for the Occasion

[The following is an exemplar of what might be said.]

This occasion demands a Word, but sermonising seems kind of heavy. Others might offer wise counsel on parenting at this time, but I have no expertise to offer in this field. So I’m not preaching to the congregation or lecturing on parenting, instead, this is an open letter to Ryan.

Dear Ryan,

Tonight you were baptised. What have we done to you, son? In one sense we haven’t done much at all. Some might say we’ve made you a Christian, others might say we’ve washed away your ‘original sin’ and others think its about giving you a name. It’s nothing like as simple.

When my younger son was about twelve, he came back from a Scripture Union Camp and said, “Dad, they were trying to make me a Christian, but I wasn’t having any of that”. He was quite right. Other people don’t make you a Christian. That’s your choice. Your options are all still open and the choices are still all yours. You will decide who you will be.

We haven’t washed away all your ‘original sin’ either. When you’re a baby it’s quite useful still to have your original sin – it’s called self-centredness. It makes you holler your needs to the world. It’s an invaluable tool in the training of your parents to feed you, change you, comfort you – and they need to know when they’ve earned your displeasure. It’s not so acceptable when you cease to be a baby. It can spoil relationships and you’ll need to work your way through it yourself, but you’ll know you’re getting somewhere when you can hear the world hollering its needs to you, and you care.

We didn't give you your name tonight either. Your parents chose your name for you before you were born and they invested it with their hopes for you and their love. You will give that name character and personality and substance over many years, and in doing so, you will make it your own. We made a thing about your name tonight – your Christian name – because it's a way of saying you count, you matter, and you are a person. Folk have gathered from strange corners of the universe like England, Greenock, the U.S and East Kilbride not to give you your name, but to acknowledge, "Ryan Allen, you are important to us all.

So if we haven't made you a Christian, or washed away your sins or given you a name, what have we done? We've welcomed you into the Church, which often is not inspiring, but which still counts as a lot more than the best source of home-baking in the world. It's a band of folk with branches all over, who believe in justice and peace and love. People who are ordinary and know it, but who believe that there is a God of love who is the source of life, who does extraordinary things through ordinary folk. People who have discovered the teaching and example of Jesus and believe that he demonstrated the love of God in his life and death, and who believe he opened up a new kind of life for the whole of creation.

So you'll be mixing with some weird folk, but there's no extra charge for that.

This may be a sensitive subject for you just now, Ryan, but some have referred to baptism as a re-birth. At the moment you probably remember your first birth as not a bundle of laughs, and when that memory fades you can always ask your Mum. But let it be a warning as well. Life is not always sweet and painless, and some would say that if you choose to become a follower of Christ it can sensitise you even more to the suffering of the world. We hope that this baptism thing we have done tonight will not be too great a burden to you. We hope it will help you to encounter the God who has a soft spot for the poor, the gentle, the mourners, the hungry, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers.

Life is not fair and society is not just and humankind has a remarkable capacity for cruelty. This church thing, however, believes in a God who is with the suffering, a God who did glorious things as a vulnerable infant, a God who transforms suffering itself and who turned death on a cross into a victory. We have said you are accepted in Christ's church. We have opened the door and hung out the 'Welcome' sign. In your time you will make your choices.

In the meantime, Ryan, take a word of advice from someone who practices it. Don't be in too much of a hurry to grow up. Pace yourself. I believe God wants you to take time to smell the flowers, to walk the hills and swim in the sea. I believe God wants you to explore your cultural birthright, to boogie and ceilidh and grow poetry in your soul, to support Motherwell FC, and in time to savour malt whiskies.

Sláinte Mhath!

Your adoptive Uncle

Prayer

God of grace and life, we thank you for C and all that (s)he means for us. For the joy and happiness (s)he has brought to her/his paents, grandparents, her/his (sisters and brothers) and to her/his wider family. Be with her/him in good times and in hard ones. Help her/him in life to find fulfilment and joy. Help us to keep the vows we have made tonight and to be true to our baptism.

Through Jesus Christ.

Amen

Hymn

Benediction

Go in peace. Celebrate this new life in the body of Christ and may grace, light and peace, from God, the three-in-one, be with us all.

Amen

Alan Paterson

Sacraments

Lord you once gathered
With the twelve apostles
In an upper room
To share a special meal.
It's still remembered
By Christians world-wide.

We gathered on the twelfth floor
Friends and family
To share a unique moment
With a special person,
Daughter
Grand-daughter
God-daughter
Sister
Cousin
Niece

Small and vulnerable
Enfolded with love
Welcomed into the world
Now received into God's family.

Signed with the cross
Symbol and token
Of Our Lord's eternal victory.

Y Mochyn Daear

Creative Decisions

Gifts and Skills

(Ecclesiasticus 38: 24 –end)

Gracious God,
we thank you
for the great diversity of gifts and skills
with which you have endowed the human race:
gifts of body and mind,
gifts of creativity, of perseverance,
of wisdom and compassion,
that together make up the fabric of this world.

Help us to encourage one another
to fulfil the potential you bestow on us;
to be more fully what you have created us to be,
and to offer ourselves in service
to the communities into which you have called us.

And may we,
who have been given leisure to be here today,
be blessed by each other's company
and by your Holy Spirit at work amongst us.
In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

Wendy Baskett

A Prayer for a Meeting

*Gracious and loving God,
you have called us into your Church
to worship, to witness, to minister in a variety of ways;
and we want to respond to that call
and fulfil your will for us.*

*We pray for our meeting here this evening
(or name any other part of day).
Help us to hear your voice*

*and feel your Spirit
as we talk together and seek to discern
in way in which you are leading us.*

*Take from us any anxiety or fear
and give us your deep peace,
in the confidence
that your purpose for each of us
and for your Church
is one for good;
and in the confidence that we are, together,
brothers and sisters in Christ,
in whose name we pray.*

Amen

Wendy Baskett

Lead Us in Your Ways of Truth

Loving God,
in the midst of turmoil
and in the times of calm
you are with us;

when our hearts are troubled
and when our lives are at peace,
you are with us;

whether we forget you
or turn to you
you are with us;

so we worship you.

We praise you for your faithfulness
and loving kindness
which so often we do not deserve
yet on which we so much depend.

Be with us now
and help is in the task
that lies ahead of us.

Lead us in your ways of truth,
gentleness, wisdom and love.
We ask it in the name of Jesus.

Amen

Wendy Baskett

Easy Choices or Difficult Decisions

Gracious God,
as we meet together
we pause to acknowledge
your presence with us
and our need of you.

You are with us
in the joys and the muddles of our lives,
in the easy choices and the difficult decisions,
and we praise you.

Guide us in our thinking and speaking
that we may hear what you are saying to us
and find unity in a common purpose,
as we strive to be faithful
in the work entrusted to us
as disciples of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Wendy Baskett

Work or Leisure

O God,
be present to us
in the work and leisure of this day
that we may reach the day's end
having been hearers and bearers
of good news;
in the name of Jesus.

Amen

Wendy Baskett

Grieving Remembrance Thanksgiving

Prayers for a Funeral (1)

Opening Prayer

Gracious and loving God, you are the giver of life.
We come from you, and in death we return to you.
Be with us now.

We bring to you our grief and loss, because ..A.. was part
of our lives, we loved her/him and now it hurts.

We bring to you our thanks for all that ..A.. meant to us,
all that (s)he shared with us and all that (s)he gave us of
herself/himself.

[as appropriate]

We bring to you our relief, that for ..A.. there is nothing
left to fear, no more suffering, no more frailty, no more
confusion, and (s)he is with you and at peace.

Come into the turmoil of our emotions, renew our faith and
grant us the peace that only you can give.

Amen

Prayer of Thanksgiving for a Life

God of life and light and hope, with your whole Church in
heaven and on earth we bring to you our thanks, we offer
to you our praise, for all that you have done for humankind
through Jesus who is the Christ.

You gave him to live and die for us. You showed your plan for the world and proved that your love has no limit, and on that first Easter when you raised Jesus from the dead you promised that all humankind might share his resurrection life

For the hope of our faith, for the good news of your kingdom, and for all those whom you have welcomed into your loving presence, we thank you, gracious God.

But especially now, we thank you for the life of ..A.. whom we loved.

We thank you for all the ways in which ..A.. became special and precious to each of us who knew her/him;
for the values and standards (s)he set herself/himself and lived by;
for her/his sense of what was good and right and decent;
for her/his warmth and humour and sense of family;
for every life that (s)he enriched and all that (s)he invested of herself/himself in our lives;

for the faith by which (s)he lived and in which (s)he died.

We thank you for the glorious treasury of memories that are ours to keep, to hold on to and to enjoy –
the moments that were deep, special and personal,
the times that rang with laughter and fun,
and for the ordinary days of discovering each other a little more, when affection and love, trust and respect, grew and were deepened.

We thank you for the courage shown, and for a life fulfilled, and for all that ..A.. reflected of your goodness and love.

And now we are glad that ..A.. has found peace and will neither suffer nor mourn again. (S)he has laid her/his burden down before you and is with you, safe, happy, whole, and welcomed by those for whom (s)he once mourned.

Help us to hold on to what we should and to let go what we must.

Help us not to cling to the past constantly brooding for what might have been, but rather to take forward what (s)he gave us for the rest of our lives' journey.

Help us to trust and to know that ..A.. will never be far from us till that day when we all stand together in your presence.

Through Jesus who is the Christ.

Amen

Closing Prayer and Benediction

Loving God, grant to us all now the grace to turn back to our lives and our tasks with calm hearts, minds at peace, and a renewed faith.

Help us to be worthy of the (wo)man whose death we mourn today, but whose life will always be dear to us. May we go on from today to be the same people ..A.. helped us to become, the people (s)he was proud to call her/his family and her/his friends – living out our lives as (s)he wants us to live, and celebrating in them all that (s)he gave us. And may strength and courage and hope be with us all in the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always.

Amen

Alan Paterson

Prayers for A Funeral (2)

Introductory Prayer

Compassionate God, you have loved ..A.., and we have loved him/her too.

We come to you because the love we feel is hurting and distressing. We feel lost and helpless, sometimes lonely. We miss ..A.. . Help us to believe that your love is greater and more farseeing than ours. Help us to find confidence in your love and peace in your compassion so that our fears are calmed and our loneliness is eased. May today and tomorrow be filled with your comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer after the Eulogy

Gracious Father God, your love never ends and is always willing to comfort us. On this occasion grief can threaten us and over-shadow our hope and optimism.

Help us to remember with gratitude ..A.. . May his/her

influence remain with us because he/she was dear to us. May your compassion lead us from the grief of separation to the hope of resurrection.

We thank you for the life which has passed; we give thanks because we have seen the leading of God in ...A... who has died.

We give thanks because of the virtues, love and activity which made him/her what she was. We thank you for his/her life with all its achievements and for the love given and received by him/her among his/her family and friends.

We are content that whatever suffering and pain, sadness and sorrow there was in his/her life has now passed and ended and that he/she has entered into a life which is eternal.

We are grateful that he/she was such a person that our grief and sorrow is real and pray for your comfort in healing the absence of his/her laughter and joy of life.

We pray that you will bring comfort to those who grieve.

We pray particularly for parents, children, relations and friends of ...A... Give them courage to adapt to living. May grief and distress not overwhelm them so that in time the wounds left by this death may be healed. Give us insight to believe that physical death is the gateway to a more complete and fulfilling life.

So give us your peace and light, comfort and compassion in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Graham Robson

A Service for the Interment of Ashes

Introductory Words

We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we cannot take anything out of the world.

After labour comes rest; after struggle, peace; after life's fitful fever, this last sleep.

Don't worry, said Jesus; I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and now I am alive for eternity, and I have the keys to eternal life.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and so it will be for those who died as Christians; God will bring them to life with Jesus. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. So there is consolation in the love and activity of God.

The spirit of ...A... has departed and she/he now rests with those who have gone before. What she/he has been and what she/he has given now rests with the God whom she/he worshipped and to whom she/he gave her/his life through Jesus, the Christ.

We thank God for who and what she/he was; for the love and concern she/he showed and was experienced by her/him and given by her/him. May her/his rest be in the peace and love of God, and our memory of her/him be blessed and loving, gracious and accepting. She/he has lived her/his life, and has departed to be with those who went before.

May we continue to be content to release her/him to you, and to be assured that in your keeping she/he is safe, happy and complete.

Prayers

Let us pray

God of mercy, and God of all comfort; look in love and compassion on us. Enable us to find in you refuge and strength, and close friend in times of trouble and stress, and to know, though it is beyond immediate knowledge, your strength which upbuilds and surrounds us in times of bereavement. Grant us faith and hope, and peace and comfort through Jesus the Christ who gave himself for us that the life we live may be filled with peace and hope.

Accept to yourself the life of ...A..., with its achievements and failures, its ups and downs; its funny times and serious

times, and deal with her/him graciously as we say goodbye to her/him and use our own lives to bring goodness and truth to those whom we know. These things we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Put Ashes into Ground

We have entrusted ...A... to God's eternal keeping. Now we commit her/his ashes to their resting place; in the sure and certain hope of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who dies, was buried and rose again for us. To him be glory for ever.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. His servants shall worship him and attend him and they will acknowledge his name.

Throw Flowers Over the Casket

In memory, and in gratitude for the life of ...A... we offer our flowers, confident of the certain hope that she/he is with her/his loved ones and cared for by God, and that we who are left will think of her/him with kindness and love.

We commend ourselves to you, praying that what we have done today will give us a deeper understanding of the issues of this life and an appreciation of its appointed end. Keep us in fellowship with the Church Triumphant; enrich us with light and truth, and enable us to find peace in the present and hope in the future since truth and light are both alike to you.

May the God of peace, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, love us and all his people, now and always,

Amen

Graham Robson

A Funeral Service in a Church Followed by Committal Prayers at a Cemetery or Crematorium and a Rite for the Burial of Ashes

- *The alternative prayers of approach make provision both for the violent grief of those who are bereaved by accidental death and also for a more collected sense of grief.*
- *The funeral of a young person may be attended by large numbers of people who are unfamiliar with church ritual and may bring their own symbols with them; these should be acknowledged where possible.*
- *Appropriate liturgical provision may also be made for the inclusion of music that speaks meaningfully of lament and hope.*

Introduction

Opening sentences

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble (*Psalm 46:1*)

Jesus said, Come to me all you that are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
And I will give you rest. (*Matthew 11:28*)

Hymn

Prayer:

(a)

God, O God,
we turn to you in anguish,
our hearts are screaming,
our minds are weeping
our spirits are numb.
We remember with sorrow
how we failed one another.
In the bitterness of regret, we turn to you.

b)

Living God,
God of our strength
we come to you in sadness
at this time of parting.
We are restless and cast down.
Eternal Love, you know our guilt,
you taste our pain,
your outstretched arms enfold us.
God of mercy,
hear our cry,
breathe on us, raise us up,
speak to us
and strengthen us in hope
in the power of the holy Spirit,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Readings from the Bible**Address****Hymn, Song or Music for Reflection****Prayer**

God our Father, we thank you
that you have made each of one of us
in your image and likeness.

Especially today we thank you for A,
for the life we shared with *him*,
for the good times and the bad
for the love *he* gave
and the love *he* received.

Faced with the mystery of life,
we affirm that love is unconfined.
Faced with the mystery of death,
we affirm that love is stronger than the grave.

Gentle God, for your pity's sake,
deal tenderly with those who mourn,
Especially A, A, and their families and friends.
In the pain of grief,
may they find comfort in you.
In their helplessness
may they find help in you;
In their loneliness,
may they find companionship in you.
May they find in us your comfort, your help
and your companionship.

God of undying life,
we thank you
that in Christ Jesus your Son,
you have given us life
which even death cannot destroy.
Form in us his likeness
and deepen his life in us
until our work on earth is done;
then time shall be no more
and night shall no more hide us
from each other's sight.
These things we ask
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who taught his disciples to say:

Our Father ...

Where the coffin is open, the congregation may now be invited to come and take their leave of the body; music is played. The coffin is closed during the singing of the next hymn.

Hymn

Prayer of Release

We now release A into the hands of God, our Maker and our Redeemer.

Let us pray

Holy God,
in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning,
you have illumined our human life
by the radiance of your presence
in Jesus Christ.
Sun of our souls, you pierce the mystery of death
with the light of eternity,
and great is your faithfulness.

We now release A to your merciful care;
we entrust him to your undying love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rest eternal grant unto *him*, O Lord,
Let light perpetual shine upon *him*.

Amen

Blessing

May the LORD bless you and keep you;
may the LORD make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you.
May the LORD look kindly on you,
and give you peace.

Amen

Fleur Houston

Prayers at Cemetery or Crematorium

Sentences

Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive for ever and ever.
(*Rev 1:17-18*)

I am convinced
that neither death nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord. (*Romans 8:38-39*)

Committal

(*at the grave*)

From the dust we have come,
to the dust we return.
The earthly life of A has come to an end.
We have released *him* into God's merciful keeping;
we now commit *his* body to the earth.
dust to dust, ashes to ashes,
trusting in the power of God
who raised our saviour Jesus Christ
in triumph from the dead
that we might live in glory everlasting.

Amen

(*at the crematorium*)

All fire and heat, bless the LORD,
praise him and magnify him for ever,
The earthly life of A has come to an end,
we have released *him* into God's merciful keeping.

We now assign *his* body to the flames.
Formed of the earth, to dust it shall return
Breathe on us, breath of God;
in the refining fire of your holy Spirit,
may we be brought with *A* to everlasting life.

Amen

Nunc Dimittis

Now, Lord you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

Blessing

May the peace of God,
which is beyond all understanding,
keep your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.
And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you, now and for evermore.

Amen

Note: At the cemetery after the blessing, mourners may, by prior arrangement, fill in the grave as others sing hymns/songs of faith and assurance. Flowers may then be removed from their wrappings and 'planted' on the mound.

Fleur Houston

Burial of the Ashes after Cremation

Greeting

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be always with you

We have come together to bury A's ashes. As we do so, we remember our own mortality, affirming our faith that whether we live or die, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Prayer

God of the living and the dead,
strengthen us with peace
and steady us with hope;
speak to us the word of life
through Jesus Christ your son
who once was dead and now lives
forever.

Amen

Readings from the Bible

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.
As a father has compassion for his children,
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.
For he knows how we were made,
he remembers that we are dust.
As for mortals, their days are like grass;
they flourish like a flower of the field;
for the wind passes over it,
and it is gone.
But the steadfast love of the LORD
is from everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear him. (*Psalm 103:1,13-17a*)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house, there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself so that where I am there you may be also. (*John 14:1-13*)

Prayer (*during or after which the ashes are buried*)

Lord of life

You have promised that none of those you have redeemed will ever be lost.

Strengthen us now as we return A's ashes to the earth in the knowledge that all life finds fulfilment in you and death has no domination over us.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Sentences

I will not fail you or forsake you
says the LORD (*Joshua 1:5*)

Jesus said: And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (*Matthew 28:20*)

Blessing

*Now may the peace of God
which surpasses all understanding,
keep guard in your hearts and minds
so that you may be found
secure in Christ at the last.
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with you all
today and for evermore.*

Amen

Go in peace and the God of all peace go with you.

Fleur Houston

Words and Prayers for a Child's Funeral

Opening Words

We gather here, needing God's healing love,
and searching for his reassuring strength.

We gather to share our grief, to comfort and support one
another in our common loss.

We gather to share our hurt and our sense of outrage that
...A's... life has been unjustly cut off, and we have been
robbed of that promising young life.

We gather to commend to God, ...A and A...,
and to look for his comfort in our loss

Opening Prayer

Eternal God, you have loved us from the beginning.
In a vulnerable infant born in a stable you began the
demonstration of your eternal love, and with an empty
tomb you sealed your promise of eternal life.

In the ache that seems endless and the longing that we cannot let go, speak to us in the depth of our being, and help us to know that the God who made us in his own image never lets us go, never tires and never abandons his children.

In our grief for ...A..., as we hear again the words of our faith, let your peace that passes understanding and your love that is deeper than words touch our hearts. Transform our grief with the certainty that Christ walks beside us through this life and beyond.

Amen

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of grace and light and healing,

God of our depth and our elation,

God of today's sorrow and of eternal joy,

We bring to you the turmoil of our emotions.

We bring to you our sense of injustice and understand that you too are outraged by this injustice.

We bring to you our indignation and recognise that it is you who inspires our indignation.

We bring the ache of our bereavement to the God whose only child died on a cross.

We bring our fear and despair for a stark and bleak future without ...A... .

We bring our thanks for her/his life – and for all the lives (s)he touched and enriched – for the daughter/son, the granddaughter/grandson, the great granddaughter/grandson, the niece/nephew, the cousin, the friend, the pupil, the Brownie/Cub.

We thank you for the pictures (s)he painted and the ones (s)he was going to paint, for the music (s)he played and the music (s)he would have played, for the languages (s)he was keen to learn.

We give thanks for the swimming and the sports (s)he had found – for the open heart and the open mind, committed to the present and fascinated by the future, for her/his feet on the ground and her/his eye on fresh horizons. We remember her/his zest for life, in a hurry to grow up, but with time for friendship, fun and family.

Help us to know that what we shared with ...A... is ours

to keep, and let her/his questions, her/his jokes, her/his enthusiasm and her/his grin fill the empty future that frightens us. Our hopes are thwarted, our plans for ...A... have been destroyed and the colour and the music have gone from our lives. We miss that boundless energy and her/his limitless fresh enthusiasm.

On that first Easter, you helped Jesus' friends to discover that he was alive to inspire and encourage them; help us today to know that ...A... is alive with the God who has always loved her/him and always will. Help us gathered here this morning to find comfort in this place where ...A... loved worshipping.

We pray for all those who are not able to be with us today, but who desperately want to be. We ask you to help them. Assure them all, and us, that ...A... is with her/his God, safe, happy and whole. Help us to face the future in the certainty that ...A... will never again know fear or worry, and the only pain left is ours at parting.

Help us to grieve for her/him honestly as we should, but spare us from the bitterness that corrodes and destroys. Help us not to turn her/him in our memories into a plaster saint, but let us take into our future her/his giggles, her/his shrieks her/his nonsense, her/his chatter, along with her/his laughter, her/his music and her/his bright open mind. Help us to recognise that our grief is part of loving, but that we will still be able to find warmth in her/his memory when the pain has eased.

Let your love enfold us today, dear God, as it also enfolds ...A... . Let the love which raised Christ from the dead, sustain us all till that day when together with A, we all worship you in the glory of your eternal kingdom.

Amen

Dismissal and Blessing

Go in peace. Take into your future the joy that ...A... gave you. Be glad that you were part of her/his happiness. Know that death has not separated her/him from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord:

And may grace, and mercy and peace, from Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all evermore.

Amen

Alan Paterson

A Prayer for Children Who Have Died

Ever-loving Father we pray that you will receive the soul of this child ...A... . You will care for her/him and he/she will find life in you which is no longer possible here. We are devastated by this death, where we would expect so much to be achieved and where the innocence and joy of childhood has been cut short so tragically. We ask that in the midst of this grief you will surround us with your compassion and love and that you will instil in us the thought that your love is greater than ours and that this tragedy will not make us despair or that our grief will be unending. May our memories of ...A...be gracious and loving, our remembrances compassionate and creative. Accept this child into your care, and help us to cope, find love and hope, and may our lives not be blighted by this death, but find new ways of love and care – for his/her sake and through Jesus Christ, our loving and caring Saviour.

Graham Robson

A Prayer in a Service for a Stillborn Child

God of healing and God of hope,
God who made us to know depth and elation,
We turn to you for help
because A's birth has become her/his death.
God of our sorrow and our joy,
we bring to you the frustration, the pain,
the confusion and the disappointment
that have stirred turmoil in our hearts and minds.
We bring our grief to the God who knows grief well.
We bring our fear for a future, now bleak and overshadowed
by the loss of a life that we should have been part of.

We did not know A, but we anticipated her/his presence.
We knew (s)he was there – on the way
and we celebrated her/his coming.

We were glad and we were hoping,
making plans and looking forward.
And now the hopes have become sorrows,
our plans for a welcome have become a goodbye,
and instead of sharing in a new life
we have found an aching emptiness.

Be with us.

Help us to remember this time honestly,
to let it deepen our characters and our understanding.
Help us still to be the people we intended being for
Assure us today that A is safe and whole
in the love and care of the God whose image (s)he bears.

Our lives can never be quite the same again.
We have no wish to forget her/him,
nor do we want to cling to the past,
brooding constantly for what might have been.
So lead us through this time into your future, God of life.
Hold out your hand when we are lost,
embrace us when we are desolate,
and support us when we are staggering.
Show us what we should take forward from this time
into the rest of our living.

As colours come back to our world
And we hear again the song of creation,
let A be in the music and in the brightness.

Let hope surprise us again.

Help us in today's darkness and tomorrow's light

To know that neither death nor life
Nor things present nor things to come,

Nor powers, nor height nor depths,

Nor anything else in all creation,

Will be able to separate us from the love

You demonstrated to the world in Jesus who is the Christ.

Amen

Alan Paterson

Burial of the Organs of a Baby removed during Post-mortem

Greeting by the Grave-side

We meet in the faith of God who created us, Christ who redeemed us, the Holy Spirit who brings us life. We meet in the faith that, though A has died, *her* life is not destroyed by death. She now lies cradled in God's love, whose warmth gives life to the dead.

As we return her remaining organs to the earth, let us comfort one another with the assurance that one day we will be reunited with her in joy and blessing beyond our imaging.

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day
(John 6:39)

Prayer

Loving God, giver of life,
all that we have and hold
is on trust from you.
What you have given to us we return to you.
Give us grace to let go
of those things we can cling to no longer
that we may know ourselves to be held by you
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who taught us to say when we pray:

Our Father ...

Prayer of Committal

(during or after which, the casket is buried)

We now return to the earth
the remaining organs of this little child.

God of compassion,
We pray for this family in their pain and grief.
Give them courage and strength in the days ahead.
Touch then tenderly with your love
that they may know your peace,
and have hope in their hearts
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.
(Numbers 6:24-26)

Amen

So let us go in peace

Fleur Houston

A Funeral Prayer for a Person who has Committed Suicide

(exploring our sense of guilt and anger)

Loving God, our words are not enough. We remember before you today our friend A whose hurt we were not able to ease. We feel as if we let her/him down, because the hurt was too great, life too frightening, worries too great and our efforts failed. Help us to let go, to forgive ourselves and others, just as you have always forgiven your children. We celebrate the life which A lived. We remember her/his successes and the sound of her/his laughter and give thanks for the moments of joy we shared. Thank you for the times we shared which we shall always treasure. Unfulfilled potential is not your will, and we feel anger that we have to deal with so many unanswered questions and unfulfilled hopes. Help us to remember what it is that is good in life and to celebrate it with all our being. We believe that A is now with you, released from this life and the pain we could not take away. For her/his sake help us to live in the power of your love, and when we do not have the answers to our questions, to accept the silence with anticipation and the assurance of your love.

Elizabeth Kemp

Look Down from the Cross

(a prayer following a suicide)

Look down from the cross, Lord
In the darkest of hours;
As the shock of what's happened
Hits as hard as the nails.
As the fear of desertion
Leaves us empty, betrayed.
Look down from the cross, Lord
Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord
In the bleakest of days;
As the loss we are suffering
Tears a hole in our ways.
As our fear for the future
Leaves us angry and dazed.
Look down from the cross, Lord
Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord
And see us here, now;
As we try to forgive
When we feel so dismayed.
As our lives must move on
With our hearts torn in two.
Look down from the cross, Lord
Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord
At our future lives;
As time passes slowly
And nights last for days.
As you suffer with us
And carry us on.
Look down from the cross, Lord
Be with us we pray.

Melanie Frew

O Lord Through All Our Days

O Lord, through all our days
you held us in your care,
and though we wandered from your ways,
surprised, we found you there;
wherever we have been,
though strange the paths we trod,
there's nothing that could come between
your children and their God.

If such a love as this
has followed us from birth,
has blessed our lives and guided us
through all our time on earth,
then surely you will keep
our spirits in your care,
and bring us safely through death's sleep
to know and find you there.

And this we dare believe
through Jesus Christ your Son,
who promised that he would receive
us there, where he has gone;
he died and rose again:
and all he came to give
we know has not been given in vain;
he lives, and we shall live.

Tune: Diademata

Basil Bridge

Elders and Pastoral Care

A Prayer for the Vestry

Amazing God who is within and beyond all things; who is transcendent but is also immanent how can we make an exclusive claim on you? How can we possess you and not let you reach others in different forms at different times?

Therefore, may our worship today, not claim, only, your presence amidst us. But also, acknowledge your presence amidst others. May your Spirit come and rule the words and thoughts of all of us who gather here.

David Jonathan, North India

A Simple Prayer

Creator God, Father and Mother!
Who are these people you have created who look so different?
Who refuse to integrate and accept but readily agree to segregate and reject?
If they are your creation why are they so threatening?
Is my fear a mere prejudice or a natural reaction to reality?

But what is reality?
The one they say in the news or the one they deny in Council.

As I gather courage to adore you,
In all your creation of fellow beings ...
In the Churches
In the Temples
In the Mosques
In the Synagogues
In the Street
In the Pubs

I lay beside you all my ambiguity, apprehension, suspicion and fear.

Amen

David Jonathan, North India

Just an Ordinary Day

Today is just an ordinary day, Lord,
nothing special is happening,
nothing startling has happened during the week,
and nothing unusual is planned for next week.
Today is just an ordinary day.

But today is Sunday,
and the congregation has come to worship you, Lord –
please help!

Pause

Thank you that you are the same yesterday, today and forever.
Thank you that you are the same now
as when you called (name) to preach your Word.
Please remind her/him of that call now.

Pause

Help (name) to share the enthusiasm and wonder of that
moment
with all who come to worship you today.
And may the worship we offer you be special –
even on this ordinary day.

Amen

Ruth Sermon

*In the following two prayers by Wendy White 'we' and 'us'
can be substituted, where appropriate, for 'I'*

Pour Out your Spirit

I want to do something
Reach out and make it alright
Calm, reassure, listen, solve
all the problems I hear.

I am very capable
Trained to deal with anything
Find nice sensible solutions
Keep everybody happy.

I return to the illusion
That I can do everything
If only I try hard enough
and pay attention.

I fall at your feet – again,
Broken, frustrated, humble
Knowing that I don't know
Empty, helpless.

You – hold out Your arms – again,
Pick me up, hold me,
Pour out Your Spirit
Creator, healer.

Wendy White

Because I Am Frightened

Because I am frightened you will not come again,
Because I am frightened that you will,
Because I know and don't know
and in knowledge lose all understanding
Lord have mercy.

Because I am frightened that this is illusion,
Because I am frightened when I know it is real,
Because I both trust and doubt you
and am wary of loving this much
Lord have mercy.

Because You have come this far for me,
Because I still run from you,
Because I turn, trembling, at Your love
aching to believe

Lord have mercy.

Wendy White

Prayers when We Feel Distant from God

Creator of light and darkness

you hold us.

When we wander in dark places

you speak to us.

When we can find no words to speak to you

you do not forget us.

When life seems too bleak for hope

you give us strength to continue.

When we do not hear you, when we cannot speak to you and
we feel most alone

you touch us in the darkness, offering to travel with us.

Elizabeth Kemp

Care of Aliens

*(the prayer of an Elder with responsibility for children and
young people)*

What aliens are these?

Loud, confident, brash

Interfacing with computers

All seeing and all knowing.

What aliens are these?

Dressed in bizarre clothing

Listening to strange rhythms

And a language all of their own.

What aliens are these?

How can I communicate with them?

How can I get to know them?

Why should they listen to me?

What aliens are these?
The babies you bless
The little children you love
The young people questioning and testing you

What aliens are these?
I was one, too
I will remember what it was like
And be as a child to stand alongside those you love.

Melanie Frew

A Prayer for Young People in Vulnerable Situations

Father of all,

We thank you that when we were still far off
You saw us and were filled with compassion.
In Christ Jesus your Son,
A new humanity was clothed with your love.

We pray for all young people on this estate
(*or similar words to fit with local communities*)
Even if their father and mother forsake them,
may they know that they are loved by you.
Give them strength to turn away
from things that are harmful
and courage to start again in a new way of life.

Grant us perseverance to walk with them,
discernment in maintaining boundaries,
wisdom to resist manipulation.
Grant us the humility to know
that on our own we can do nothing
and faith
to trust always in you.

Renew your broken people in the power of your Holy Spirit.
So the dead come to life, the lost are found
And the whole earth will sing your praise.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

Amen

For Those Affected by Drug Abuse

**Blessed be God who delivers us from death,
despair turns to hope in your great goodness.**

Lord, we pray for those who are afraid
of ever-increasing addiction to drugs;
whose families live with stigma;
who steal and mug and lie
to feed their habit;
who lose all track of life
and human dignity;
who feel trapped.

In your mercy, Lord, heal us
in your tender love remake us.

Lord, we pray for those who are afraid
of being robbed;
who are suspicious of their neighbours;
who hate the noise and smells
of people desperate for drugs;
who envy dealers with expensive cars and clothes;
who dread their children finding sharps
in parks or gardens;
who feel angry.

In your mercy, Lord, heal us
in your tender love remake us.

Lord, we pray for those who work
with users and their families;
those who seek to guard communities
from anti-social and criminal behaviour;
those who teach young people
to resist substance abuse.

**Blessed be God who delivers us from death,
despair turns to hope in your great goodness.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Fleur Houston

The Ministry of Flowers (1)

God, our beloved,
we breathe your fragrance
and we are drawn to your radiant beauty.
You make flowers appear upon the earth,
the time of singing has come.

What flowers we have, what scent,
what delicacy of tone and shape!
In loveliness, they raise our hearts you.

And so with joy and gladness
we thank you for the skill and patience
of those who beautify our worship
as ministers of flowers.

Spring and flowers fear the frost
but you bloom for ever.
In you we live, we breathe, we love,
you are our all, our praise
and all our good.

Amen

Fleur Houston

The Ministry of Flowers (2)

As we come to worship we can not help
but see the flowers which adorn this place
and our thoughts are drawn to you and your creation.
For they reveal the multitude of
colours and textures in your creation.

They speak to us of the intricate detail
and great magnitude of your creation,
from the smallest microbe to the largest mammal.

So as we look upon their beauty,
we give you thanks for those
who week by week ensure that there are flowers
to remind us of your creative power.

We thank you for the skill and creative talents
of those who week by week create such wonderful displays.

Lord God we also ask,
that as these flowers are sent to
those with something to celebrate or who are in need,
that they may speak of our love for them,
and dear God of your loving creative power.

Amen

David Coote

The Ministry of Flowers (3)

The lily reaching to heaven, architectural, pure
More perfect than Solomon's finest garb
We thank you for the flowers of the field.

Our churches of plain bricks and mortar
In cities bereft of beauty
We thank you for the flowers of hope.

For those that bring us your roses
Cut and gathered with care
We thank you for the flowers of love.

Melanie Frew

The Ministry of Music

Living God,
Composer of the universe,
In tumult you began your work,
Your symphony took shape;
Earth, sea and air and life in all its forms;
Each movement had its place.

And we were free to play, to sing,
to improvise its themes.
But we forgot the score.

And so in time, you sent your Son
to teach and to inspire a music
of contrapuntal harmony
fusing your melody with ours.
And in our worship we remember him.

Today we give thanks
for ministers of music,
organise, pianist, choir, band, orchestra, music group,
praising you for the skill and creativity
with which they enrich our worship,
looking ever to that glorious day
when all the voices of our world
resound as one
and in a rising crescendo of love and praise
all will be Amen and Alleluia.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Fleur Houston

Baking Cakes – Again!

Do I *have* to, Lord?
Not *ANOTHER* cake!
Yes, I know I like baking –
and I find it therapeutic,
and it's very satisfying to see people enjoying my handiwork.
But I don't feel like it today –
and I haven't time,
and I'm on a diet,
and ...

Where does cake baking come in the Bible, Lord?
I never heard Jesus or Paul talk about it.
I never knew it was part of the Christian life –
it isn't in the membership promises,
or the eldership service,
so why are we expected to produce cakes so faithfully?

Pause

I'm sorry, Lord, I'm giving in to ungenerous thoughts.
Please help me,
I do want to be generous.
I want to see people come together in your name as they eat –
in imitation of the meal you had with your disciples.

It may not be bread and wine,
and I may not be ordained,
but I am part of the priesthood of all believers.
Please use my offering
to bless your people.

Amen

Ruth Sermon

Prayers before Visiting Pastoral Care/ Difficult Situations

Compassionate Christ, you always had time, even for your enemies. Grant me the gift of seeing those who are difficult, those who make me feel uncomfortable and those who disturb me, through your eyes; that I may listen to them with love and commend them to you.

Help me to understand that silent presence is often a more powerful gift than many words.

And if, in spite of my efforts, my ministry is rejected – give me the wisdom to let go of contentious problems and leave them with you.

Elizabeth Kemp

Hospital Visiting

Lord Jesus, you spent so much of your time with those who were in pain, concerned about the future and feeling worried about their loved-ones. Be with _____ at this time. Whatever the future brings, may she/he know your constant love and not feel alone. Thank you for family, loved-ones and friends, for their concern and prayers. Thank you health care workers and all those who daily attend to patients' comfort and well-being; thank you for their skill, patience and care, may they never feel undervalued or taken for granted.

Whatever the future brings, may we be enabled to face it with peace and in the assurance of your love.

Elizabeth Kemp

The Whole Armour of God for Christian Aid Collectors

Take up the whole armour of God, so that you may knock at each door.

Stand, therefore and fasten the money bag around your waist, and put on the badge of identification.

As for your feet, put on whatever will make you comfortable on the tarmac, gravel and slabs.

With all these, take the information leaflet, with which you will be able to answer all questions.

Take the umbrella to save you from rain (*or sun block to save you from burning*) and the message of charity, which is the word of God.

Pray at all times.

Grace be with you all as you go out to collect this Christian Aid Week.

(With apologies to Ephesians 6:13-17)

Melanie Frew

For Those in Our Care

Help us to stand with those in our care,
To make the coffee and hold the hand
To offer the handkerchief and provide the shoulder
To listen, to love, to laugh, to let be.
Help us to stand with those in our care.

Help us to comfort those who are ill,
To do the shopping and take the post
To bring some flowers and wear a smile
To plump the pillow and pour the water.
Help us to comfort those who are ill.

Help us to understand the needs of others,
The time to talk, the time for silence
The time to pray, the time to cry
The time to hug, the time to leave.
Help us to understand the needs of others.

Help us to ask for your help, Lord,
To find the time and to use it well
To ask for advice and to seek support
To stay strong, to be sensitive, to care, to be a friend.
Help us to ask for your help, Lord.

Melanie Frew

Make Room

They pick him up on his stretcher.
Carry him in the sun.
Straining as they carry him up on to the roof.
Family members caring for a disabled family member.
Disabled people longing for independence.
Neighbours who allow someone to stay in their home
because they shop and pop round.

They cannot get in.
There are too many people.
No way through.
Churches designed to keep you, Jesus, for themselves,
to keep strangers out.
Churches that are clubs of the like minded.
Making those needy feel humiliated
and thinking somehow of God as a pet.

Your sins are forgiven.
Many cannot hear these words.
People burdened by guilt.

Get up and walk.

Those who find movement too demanding want to stay
where they are.

Lord Jesus may you be at home with us
and may we make room in our structures
and personalities for you.

Lesley Charlton

Outside

The kid in my class – **outside** – because he says stupid things, has dull clothes.

Outside because she works too hard and shows off.

Outside because they move around; travelling people, refugee people, people who are trafficked.

Outside because they behave oddly; socially challenged people, not able to cope with the complexity of all the information.

Outside because they do not want to be inside; those who do not need us, do not want the message we bring, know all the answers.

Outside because they are in hospital, residential home/school; those who are forced to wear the label “patient”.

Lord enfold us all in your love and at the end welcome us home.

Lesley Charlton

Lord of the Upside Down

Lord of the upside down
your ways are not our ways.
In our world the middle aged have the power
yet you come with a child as an example of the kingdom.

For children exploited and neglected.
For those not heard.

For the elderly whose power was once.
Move in those coming to terms with the changes old age brings.

We look for a leader to provide quick, stock answers.
You expect that we will work together beyond barriers of
religion and race.

We value doers, the proactive, the achievers.
You show us the value of being,
of praying,
of silence,
of rest.
Prophetic people whose lives point in new directions.

We value strength,
military might.
You hang on a cross.
There are those countries at war
(name situations currently in the news)
Places beginning to build the peace
(name situations currently in the news)
Relationships with one another:
listeners to the quiet voice;
a gentle approach as well as strident noise,

Lord we wrestle with these issues every day.
Cheapest or fairly traded
quickest or best
me or us

In Jesus' Name

Lesley Charlton

Season of Mists and Holiday Returns

The time to celebrate the fruitfulness of the earth and to
abhor the weight of the lives we have built for ourselves.

This is the time when the leaves fall
and the leavers are now joiners
at university and big school.

This is the time to get back to the ordinary

This is the time to resume meetings;
the clubs and activities.

Be our light as it gets darker
be a present guide in our fogs
be a hand to hold in our lostness
be peace to those at war for they crave the ordinary that
we disparage.

In Jesus name we pray

Lesley Charlton

Elders and Moments of Worship

Prayers on the Occasion of an Elders' Dedication Ceremony

Leader: Lord, we thank you for this wonderful world that you have created for us. We thank you for our lives at this particular time.

We thank you for making us the way that we are. We thank you for the lives of other people whom we love or who we find difficult to love and who challenge the depth and relevance of our faith in you.

Response 1: *God, our parent in heaven, grant us your sight so that we may see you not only where we gather but also in the most vulnerable and unexpected situations of life around us.*

Leader: Lord, we thank you for this special day and special people who have offered themselves in service for you not only by serving the church family but also by reaching to the family outside. Lord, we seek your abundant mercies upon (names of the elders could be said here) so that they may seek to do things that are pleasing for you, We, as a congregation, commit all our support and respect to these chosen ones.

Response 2: *God, our parent in heaven, grant us your abilities to accept what others do and may we contribute positively to life in general, within and without the church.*

David Jonathan
North India

A Prayer for the Week

Living Lord, Our Risen Christ,
when we meet, talk, cry or laugh with people
as we travel along this week,
we pray that there will be opportunities
to see You at work in the world,
through women and men
as they go about their daily lives.
Encourage us,
to go about our lives
sowing seeds of Peace
In our communities.

Amen

Geoffrey Duncan

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Confession

This is the day that our Lord God has made –
a day for new hope.

Thank you, Lord for the fact that we are here;
for our joys and our sorrows,
our laughter and our tears,
our work and our leisure time.

Thank you Lord for our lives
– so precious –
and may we remember that other peoples' lives are precious
too,
as we live in our local communities set within the global
framework;
and for the increasing need for understanding about living
with many different people;
for our families and our friends;
for our holidays and refreshment.
We give this day and all our days to you Lord for service
with people

Please forgive us for the wrong things that we have done in recent days. For the unkind words that may have hurt someone and for unpleasant thoughts about our friends and neighbours.

We know Jesus that you will forgive us. Please help us not to do these wrong things but instead help us to help people whoever they are – to be kind and thoughtful – and get on with everyone.

Geoffrey Duncan

Full of Grace and Truth

(based on John 1:14)

God of truth,
who lives in us,
help us to be people of truth;
to resist copping out when questions get difficult,
looking for easy answers to life's complexities,
or meeting openness with narrow mindedness.
Rather, shine in us,
that full of grace and truth,
we may show life's fullness
as your daughters and sons.

Janet Lees

Transforming Us

(based on Jeremiah 20:7-13)

Liberator God, we sing to you
for you are just and do which is right.
Life and breath, freedom and love
are your gifts to us.
Yet, with every breath,
our humanity catches up with us
and faith comes hard.
Violence and destruction are around us
and even within us;
we become afraid to speak your name
and claim your love.

[silence]

Even so, your fire still burns in us
as you are so ready to forgive,
both our personal shortcomings
and our communal failures.

We are thankful that you see right to the hearts and minds,
that peace and justice are your standards
and that love is your everlasting gift.

We declare that this is the new life we have received.

Janet Lees

Treasuring Us

Holy God,
who chooses and treasures us,
you love us.
You keep faith with us
even when we do not keep faith with you;
breaking our promises to and for each other,
giving the poor few chances,
afraid to confront injustice.
You know our struggles
and our frustrations.

[pause]

We are amazed
that you have set your heart on us,
choose us, treasure us
and forgive us.
We thank you, generous One.

Janet Lees

Expand Our Vision

(based on Rejoice and Sing 498 God Be in My Head)

God, be ahead of understanding;
expanding our vision of the world and the church
as we pray and work together.
God, be beyond seeing;
challenging us to probe the ready answers
as we look deeper into our local situation.
God, be more than words;
echoing in both sound and silence
as we tune into the small voices so easily ignored.
God, be the fundamental beat of life;
steadying us for clear thinking
in the ups and downs of our experience.
God, be beyond life itself;
so that whatever marks the beginning or end
we may know we are always in your company.

Janet Lees

Lord of Life and Love

Lord of Life and Love, give us fresh insights for the ways in which we use resources with our people skills and our finances. Help us to appreciate the need to re-evaluate our skills and our purchasing power and ensure that we are supporting people in need, without strings attached, in local and global communities.

Enable us to work together for justice in our neighbourhood, the nation and the world.

Lord of Life and Love, give us the spiritual strength to participate in activities which will bring about better living conditions for people in developing nations. Lead us to a renewed understanding of what it means for women and men to be empowered; for our neighbours and our global friends, who live in poverty in the marginalised communities, to reach their potential in education, skills and income generation.

Enable us to understand and appreciate the resilient nature of marginalised women and men; to know that all life is valued and to rejoice with them as they continue to become increasingly resourceful people.

Lord of Life and Love, open our minds to existing and new ways of caring for people and sustaining Earth. Lead us to discover with people, in partnership, fresh, energetic methods of communicating improved ways of Living in remote, barren villages or industrialised, polluted cities.

Enable us to turn around our life-styles; to become less demanding in our wants and desires so that we are able to experience new ways of Living. Awaken our consciences to become pro-active with people wherever they are in your world.

Lord of Life and Peace, help us to discover, now – today – the many faces of Justice and Peace waiting to be pursued. Help us to know how we can be alongside people ...
(Please name here areas of the world where there is violence, terrorism and war ...)
Keep us well-balanced as we take positive action to support suffering women, men and children wherever they are.

Enable us to be more informed; increase our understanding; lead us to greater wisdom and compassion. Prompt and prod us to be spiritually more open for gospel-action and to see the face of Christ in the stranger. Lord of Life, Love and Peace hear our prayers and act upon them as you will.

Amen

Geoffrey Duncan

Spirit of God

As you prompt us
Open our eyes to see the needs in your world,
Open our ears to hear the cries
of the poor
of the suffering
the marginalised
give us the courage and the tenacity to take our spoken
prayers into serious action.
Move us from our security
To take risks just like Jesus
And as you want us to do now
To walk with humankind
Knowing that you, Spirit of God, will support us
As we meet you please
Re-assure
Re-new
And re-commit us to a life of service
With so strings attached
Where we will stand for justice and peace
Spirit of God, on this (Pentecost) * Day may things change
because of us.

Amen

** Please be flexible with the use of the Day as this prayer can be used on many other occasions.*

Geoffrey Duncan

A Psalm

(for the leader and all the people)

Bless the Lord, my soul;
Lord, my God, you are very great.
We sing to you in dances.

You are the love which moves the sun and stars,
you are the source, centre and spring
of all that lives and loves;
this have you done for your true love.

You call us to the dance
with simple steps and ever-changing patterns,
where all have space and freedom.

We call to you with inarticulate groans
and thwarted yearnings;
following Christ our partner
with clumsy, shambling gait,
dragging our feet.

And in your grace, you turn and come to us,
rejoicing in the dance;
acknowledging our smallest steps,
you take us by the arm
and lead us
in more and more glorious
configurations.

Lord, my God, you are very great,
wonderful you are, and wonderful your works.

Bless the Lord, my soul.

Fleur Houston

Hymn to Jesus

Jesus, Lord most kind companion
We would bless your holy Name
Praise your ministry of healing
And your love that's still the same.

Jesus, Lord for ever caring
We would praise your patient ways
Human sorrows always sharing
giving aid in darkest days.

Jesus, Lord for ever faithful
Keep us in your heavenly way
always learning from your teaching,
seeking pardon every day.

Jesus, Lord help us to see you
in the troubled, wounded ones.
Let us pray for all despairing,
both your daughters and your sons.

Rosemary Watts

Come to Us Now Lord

Come to us now Lord, surrounded by so many things,
keep our focus on you, the righteous King of Kings.
Help us to work and pray for social justice every day,
for your gifts of faith and courage as we follow in your way.
'Thy kingdom come' – you taught us, Lord to pray.
Jesus abide in us, and in the hearts of all humanity.

Rosemary Watts

God of Beginnings and Endings

God of beginnings and endings
Help us to remain focussed on you.
God of hope and love
May we in silence hear your voice.
God of joy and peace
Open our hearts and minds
To encounter you in the
Great variety of human experience.

Keith Brown

Benedicite

Written for Blackbird Leys but could be used in other situations

O give thanks to our God who is good,
whose goodness endures for ever.

You sunrise and sunset, night and day,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Cherry and chestnut trees, starlings and rooks,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Roses and lavender, butterflies and voles,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

All you whippets and punters, footballers and fans,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

All tower blocks and flats, houses and caravans,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Churches and Leisure Centre, shops, schools and pubs,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

All you men and women, black and white, young and old,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

All you saints and martyrs of this estate,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

O give thanks to our God who is good
Whose goodness endures for ever.

Fleur Houston

Mothering Sunday

Mother God, giver of life, creator of new worlds, you nurture universes within your enfolding presence. As a child in the womb is unaware of the mother who carries it, so are we unaware of your Spirit holding us in life, nourishing and supporting us. We listen to the muffled sounds of the world rushing by, and rarely notice the beating of your heart in the midst of it. For your all-encompassing, life-giving presence we praise you.

Mother God, eternal home-builder, bread-winner, labourer of love, you never cease toiling for the health and welfare of your beloved creation. For your life poured out for us, we praise you. Mother God, passionate with love for your world, in Jesus we see you bear the agony and disappointment of our failure as if it were your own, you graciously tolerate our arrogant certainties that we know best, you put your very life on the line for your vulnerable children. For your life, sacrificed for us, we praise you.

Like argumentative children, we have not acknowledged our unity in you, and our responsibility for the peace and harmony of your world-wide family. We blame each other for the wrongs of the world and self-righteously wash our hands of guilt. We allow others to bear the punishment for our failure, as if the death of Jesus has taught us nothing. We are sorry for the failures of the past that have tolerated, even encouraged, bullying in communities, in families, in international affairs. We are sorry for the violence being inflicted in our name.

Come between us, gentle Spirit. Calm our anger and desire to blame everyone except ourselves. Encourage us to look with love into the hearts and desires of others. Bring out the best in war currently being waged by our State. Phrase becomes redundant otherwise.

(paragraph 1, with acknowledgement to Margaret Hebblethwaite)

Dick Wolff

In the Beginning you Were ...

Creator, in the beginning You were,
and your love could not be contained.
From the overflowing of Your love you sang us into being
that we might share love and wonder, and join Your song.

In the exuberance of Your Love You created a world of diversity
and beauty beyond our imagining,
and with Your hands made each of us unique,
so special that each difference may be a cause for rejoicing:
for learning, sharing, loving,
for rhythms and harmonies with You, and with each other.

We praise You, creator, together with words and with music,
and in the silence
with our hearts.

But Creator, what have we done?
We have taken our trust away from You,
labelled, owned and destroyed the gifts of Your natural world.
We have taken the diversity of one another
as reason to reject: by colour, by language, by talent, by
belief, by difference.
We have taken even the greatest gift of Your love in flesh
among us
And believed our science and structures were better and
more reliable.
We have even, glimpsing Your Spirit, tried to hoard love
to ourselves.

Forgive us Creator, for all the times we have tried to limit
Your love
and chosen not to recognise You in our neighbour,
twisting ourselves, and each other, out of shape in our fear.

Help us to lose this foolish pride before You, and learn the
humility to accept Your offer to partner in this amazing
creation, in all its diversity, beauty and pain.
We thank You that, whenever we try to erect our definitions
around You,

the power of Your Spirit breaks through, assuring us of forgiveness when we come to You, creating us anew as loved and forgiven people.

Wendy White

Holy Spirit of God

Holy God, you cannot exist, for you are before any existence was. How can you be the *centre* of our life's pilgrimage, home of our hearts? – for you are in *no* place and *no* time ... *all* places and *all* times. The compass needle of our hearts swings wildly in all directions: we are lost without you, and lost within you.

Forgive the arrogance of the religious heart that claims to know you.

Jesus of Nazareth, only uncreated child of God, we turn to you for you are nonetheless one of us, and you have loved us. You are human like us, walking the roads of Galilee and Jerusalem, 2000 years ago. Our hearts' compass needle swings about in the mystery of God, and then points steadfastly to you. We take our bearings from you, we seek to walk your 'Way' ... we crucify you.

Forgive the arrogance of the religious heart that tries to recruit you to its own cause, and use your name as its Big Excuse.

Holy Spirit of God, comforter and disturber, life-giver, opener of doors: no sooner do we know you have touched us than you are gone. You it is who steer the compass of our hearts towards the real Jesus, the *living* Lord. You it is who put the ultimate choice before us – life or death? You it is who makes the choice *easy*, even when choosing life *means* death.

Forgive the closed minds and stubborn wills of the religious heart that turns your exuberant loving freedom into doctrine, Scripture, law and habit.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I dare to declare to you :
though we *have* chosen, and will choose *again*, deadness,
lifelessness, lovelessness and our own comfort – Christ
has, in his own body, broken the bonds that hold us in this
slavery. It is not inevitable. The door to life in the Spirit
remains open. Let us walk through it together, humbly
rejoicing in the name of Jesus.

Holy God, as we recite the prayer Jesus gave us, may your
Spirit awaken the words in us:

The Lord's Prayer

Dick Wolff

Lord, We are a Worried People

Lord, we are a worried people.
From the time we wake each morning we worry about:
the weather, the state of the roads, whether we have
sufficient clothing and is it fashionable.

We worry about the day ahead, our job prospects, our
health, our loved ones and our pets.
We turn on the news and we are told to worry even more:
about the state of our food,
the state of our hospitals,
the stock market,
our strange neighbours.

In a land of plenty we are told to worry about:
pensions and savings,
employment levels
illegal immigration.

Occasionally we are invited to worry outside of our self-
centred universe and we worry about:
war
flood,
famine.

Lord, we are worn out with worrying.

We ask You today to restore our sense of perspective.
We need reminding to celebrate, and to praise You.
God, You created the universe before we were,
and created all we see.
You became part of creation, became an ordinary chap,
who chose the way of the cross,
chose to be subject to our will,
so that we could see, for all time, by Your resurrection,
that in the end is life,
rich abundant life,
for all, for ever.

Forgive us when we worry, remind us of Your love.
Teach us to recognise the genuine concerns and take action.
Show us how to stop wasting time, instead to praise You,
turning to our neighbour and sharing Your good news,
and sharing their joys and sorrows.
Help us to recognise Your kingdom now,
not to ignore the poverty and pain around us,
but to work with You to bring Your light, Your help
into the darkness.
To stand beside.
To listen.
Forgive us when we try to do this alone and fall back
dispirited,
Forgive us when we take ourselves too seriously while
ignoring our neighbours.

Wendy White

God, You Take Our Breath Away

Creator,
You who made everything,
can You really hear us?

Love,
definition of love,
do You really care that much about each one of us?
God,
God who we cannot comprehend,
You take our breath away
as we struggle to hold a vastness, at which our minds recoil,
with a love for each one of us,
created and known as individuals.

God, we have no words,
We cannot define You except that You exceed all definitions.
Higher, vaster, richer than all our imaginings.
Our praise becomes silence as we contemplate You.

But You, seeking to love and how us love,
(not wanting empty praise or gratitude
but to bring us into relationship with Yourself)
have poured Yourself out to Your creation and become man,
one with us to show us what love can do.
To help us glimpse across our feeble boundaries –
so much more!

You have stood beside us...and let us nail You to the cross,
because that too was needed to show us the strength and
power of Your love.

Lord, as we struggle to hold the seeming impossible,
help us to hold onto the truth of Your resurrection and
praise You.
Knowing resurrection is not the past
but resurrection and new creation, for each one of us, now,
as part of Your love.

Wendy White

Creator, We Praise and Adore You

Creator, we praise and adore You ...

and the words become empty because we have repeated so often what is far beyond our grasp.

When we look up you are there – in the vastness of unfolding space we glimpse your immensity.

When we look down you are there – in the beauty and complexity of detail, the molecular dance beyond our vision.

When we look around us you are there, in the play of dark and light, sound and silence, in water, air, land.

We cannot begin to encompass all you are, but, made in your image, we catch glimpses in one another of the complexity and richness of relationships, in love, in laughter, in friendship, in the myriad communities we are part of.

But, most of all, when in your desire for us to truly know, to share, your nature, which is love, you became man and walked with us, we see love worked out in humankind. Even to what we perceive as the end. And then you turned the shabby death of a criminal into new life when you showed us resurrection. Turning, with the gift of your Spirit, an uncertain band of travellers and hangers-on into messengers of love for all people for all time.

Creator, how often have we repeated this story but not made it our own? You turn awesomeness of love into something we could recognise, and gave us your Spirit so that we too could know we are part of Your love and share it with others. Yet too often we have been content with our decent little lives and chosen to ignore the promptings of Your Spirit which would show us a world made new.

Forgive us when we have put ourselves first at the expense of others, when at work we have clung to our salary, our way and ignored the cries of the unemployed, the untrained, the rejected. Forgive us when our standard of living ignores the cries of the third world for fair wages, for health care, education, food, water.

Forgive us when our time is so hoarded to ourselves we have ignored the stranger, the sick, our neighbour, our family and rationed the giving of ourselves to others and to you.

Forgive us the fear of loving. Forgive us when we ignore your Spirit, the great disturber, help us to trust that your love is infinite and grows by giving.

Wendy White

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 your 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 born 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.

Medical Education and Research

A Service of Thanksgiving in Memory of a Person Who Has Given Their Body for Medical Education and Research

Introduction

Opening Sentence

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
No torment will ever touch them (*Wisdom 3:1*)

Hymn of Praise

Prayer

Most merciful God, whose wisdom
is greater than anything we can ever understand,
we come before you as we are,
offering you our pain, our doubts,
our feelings of guilt, and our anger.
Trusting in your mercy and your grace,
we ask that you will forgive what needs to be forgiven
and heal what needs to be healed
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through the power of your Spirit,
may the words of Scripture
bring strength where there is weakness,
light where there is darkness,
faith where there is doubt
and life where there is death,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Readings from the Bible

Address

Hymn of Assurance

Prayer

Eternal God, our strength and our redeemer,
Giver of life and conqueror of death

(a)

We thank you for N,
for *her* sense of adventure, *her* insatiable curiosity,
her sunny lively personality,
her sheer joy in being alive.

We thank you
that *she* who served humanity so lovingly
should continue to do so after *her* death
and benefit generations yet to come.
In life, in death, *she* gave glory to you.

(b)

We remember before you N,
she was sociable and good company;
we know that *she* was no plaster saint;
she wanted to live life *her* way,
often at the expense of other people;
she was sorry all the time for what went wrong.
Her final act was to do a good turn
for other people,
and for that we honour *her*.

We give thanks for all *she* meant to *her* family and to
the community in which *she* lived. We acknowledge
with gratitude the service *she* has given to medicine and
to humanity and we commend *her* to your loving care,
confident that *she* is at peace.

God of compassion, we pray for those who mourn;
especially N, N and all members of their families;
that they may grieve indeed
but not as those without hope.
Surround them with your love and grace
and let them have good friends
to share their burdens and ease their pain;
through our saviour Jesus Christ,
who taught his disciples to say:

Our Father ...

Final Hymn

Nunc Dimittis

(all remain standing and join in saying the words in bold type)

**Save us, Lord, while we are awake,
protect us while we sleep,
that we may keep watch with Christ,
and rest with him in peace.**

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you prepared in the sight of every people;

A light to reveal you to the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel.

**Save us, Lord, while we are awake,
protect us while we sleep,
that we may keep watch with Christ,
and rest with him in peace.**

(as in Rejoice and Sing 742)

May the God of all hope strengthen and sustain you,
and may the God of life be always with you.
May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May his face shine upon you,
and be gracious to you.
May he look upon you with kindness,
and give you his peace.

Amen

Fleur Houston

Prayers at Times of Ordination and Induction

An Induction Prayer

(recognising the Five Marks of Mission)

Eternal God, we bring to you our thanks,
we offer to you our praise
for the demonstration of your eternal love made to the world
in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus who is the Christ
for the vulnerable infant, the suffering servant, the crucified
Christ
for the risen, living, glorified Christ accompanying his people
through this life and beyond.

We thank you for the generations of the faithful who have
gone before us, who enjoyed the gifts of your Spirit and with
whom you unite us in your great church that is in heaven and
on earth.

Today we thank you for the service thatN has
given to your church in different ways and in different places,
and we pray that his/her sense of calling may be renewed as
s/he comes to this work in

We thank you for the talents and skills s/he has exercised and
which s/he now brings to this charge, for her/his integrity and
faith

We thank you for all that s/he has learned in ministry, all that
s/he has given and all that s/he has shared in

We thank you for the pilgrimage of her/his past and the
mission that is the future.

We thank you for N. 's family, and pray forN
. and N. . . . andN , that in their own
right they may know that they are welcomed by a community,
embraced by a fellowship and loved for themselves.

In this ministry, may . . .N. give and be given to,
hear and be heard,
Love and be loved, support and be supported.
Grant your grace to both minister and congregation
to forge together a partnership of trust and respect.

May they *proclaim the good news of the kingdom*
Through their life and worship together,

May they *teach, baptise and nurture new believers*
Through their faith and fellowship,

May they *respond to human need by loving service*
Through the stewarding of energies, funds and resources.

May they *seek to transform unjust structures of society*
Through their compassion and courage.

May they *strive to safeguard the integrity of creation,*
To sustain and renew the life of the earth

Through their vigilance and vision.
We pray for your presence in the dreams they dare to dream,
In the hopes they begin to build and the future they begin
to plan.

God, who transformed the cross into a victory and built your
church on the weak and the powerless
Keep them faithful to their calling
Equip them for your service
Guide them on their pilgrimage
And welcome them into your future.

Amen

Alan Paterson

Ordination of Elders Pastoral Care Responsibilities

Loving, strengthening God,
through your church you call people
into positions of leadership
and to care for you people.
Such a task loving God
can be filled with joy one moment
and frustration the next.
So today we pray for those
you have call to be Elders in this church
thinking especially of the task of Pastoral Care
of your people here.
Give to those you have called the strength and the wisdom
to care for your people.
Lord it is not always doing it themselves,
but about being part of a team
sharing with the whole congregation
making sure that this your church,
cares for its people
physically, mentally and spiritually,
ensuring that it is not only the few who are cared for but all.
Loving God may those you have called,
find their faith and trust in you
strengthened and their vision
of your Kingdom enlarged.

Amen

David Coote

O Shepherd-God

O Shepherd-God, your people knew
your presence on their way –
its sign, a fire to guard by night,
a cloud to guide by day;
their goal, a distant promised land,
a home where they'd belong.,
a place of peace, of hopes fulfilled,
their song, your freedom-song.

In later years your people learned
to trust a shepherd-king;
to value in their prophets, too,
the wisdom shepherds bring;
and Jesus, the good shepherd, called
on burdened souls to come;
he sought the wayward, healed the sick,
and led his followers home.

So many in our world today
have nowhere they belong,
like sheep without a shepherd, lost,
like singers with no song;
their minds and spirits sorely lack
a hope that satisfies,
that wholesome Bread, the Word of Life,
the peace true faith supplies.

Lord Christ, we're called to feed your lambs,
restore the sheep that stray,
to learn the wisdom shepherds need
for this, your work today;
your cross, the sign of selfless love,
will light the way ahead;
we'll serve with joy the God who raised
our Shepherd from the dead.

Tune: Ladywell
Basil Bridge

To Celebrate Marriage

Opening Words for A Wedding Ceremony

We have come together today to witness the marriage of N to N, to celebrate their happiness and to assure them of our love and support.

In marriage,
we bless God
who gave us our humanity,
who created us, men and women,
in felicity and joy.

Blessed be God
who brings us together
that our desires
may find ripe fulfilment;

Blessed be God
who makes us one
that in our mutual love
we may cherish one another.

In marriage,
we bless God
for his faithfulness
and celebrate God's constancy
in free commitment to a shared life
and mutual exchange of promises;

In marriage,
we bless God
for his gift of grace in Jesus Christ,
that in our frail consistency,
relations are refashioned
by his self-giving love;
In marriage,
we bless God
who gives us a future and a hope;
who gives us children,
sets us in community
and calls us in society
to new beginnings.

Blessed be God for the precious gift of love.

Fleur Houston

A Blessing for a Wedding

Blessed are you, God our Maker;
You create joy and gladness,
pleasure and delight;
you make this man and this woman
companions in love.

Bestow your blessing on N and N,
that they may know your presence with them
in times of joy and in times of sadness.
May their home be filled
with laughter and tenderness.
May they be tender with one another's dreams
and remain faithful and true to one another
for the rest of their lives.

So may this marriage be a sign of blessing
in the world around.

Fleur Houton

At a Wedding

You are trusted forever with the intimacies of one another.

You won't hold grudges.

You will love the other even when unlikeable.

You will see the small child within.

You will look for the divine potential inside.

How sacred, to be held in the night,
by someone who thanks God for you,
by someone you feel blessed to hold.

Your marriage is an opportunity,
to grow in love and friendship,
to entrust all your faith and loyalties,
and with this understanding you shall flourish,
together,
forever.

Donna Lee

A Marriage Service

Greeting

Grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all.

Statement

Friends, we have come together today in God's presence
and as his congregation – and becauseN..... and
.....N..... want us here. They have discovered a love for
each other which has depth and worth and beauty, and
today in God's presence, and surrounded by us who are dear
to them, they come to make a lifelong commitment to that
love they know for each other. When two people share
a special love, which is rooted firmly in trust and respect,
there is a unique opportunity to grow and find fulfilment

together and personally. We call that loving committed relationship “marriage”, and we treasure it as a great gift from God. Today we have gathered to supportN’s and.....N’s love for each other with our love for them both – and to celebrate and share in their happiness.

Hymn

Prayer

Caring God, whose name is Love, we have assembled in your presence to celebrate the love which has grown between ...N..... andN..... We thank you for the happiness they are discovering with each other, and for the delight that there happiness brings to us who care about them as family and friends.

We thank you for the love which has shaped each of us, and for the people who have opened themselves to us, who have affirmed our worth and made possible our fulfilment. We thank you for our capacity to love which makes us your children. Above all we thank you for that great demonstration of your loving word made flesh in a vulnerable infant, a suffering servant, a crucified Christ. Forgiving, accepting God who liberates us from the shackles of our own selfishness and shows us Christ in others, renew us for loving and serving and caring, and help us to know Christ afresh in all we share in today.

Amen

Affirmations

For the couple:

.....N..... andN....., I ask you now to affirm your willingness to become partners together in the covenant of marriage. Will you accept each other as partners in marriage, each of you committing yourself to a lifelong covenant of faithful love – accepting and sharing the tasks and troubles, and joys and triumphs of your life together?

Response – I will – I will

For the children of a previous relationship:

State the names,

the promises made today by your mother/father and
N..... affect your lives as well, and so I ask you – Will you help them, love them and give them your trust? Will you welcomeN..... as a member of your family, and accept your place in his/her family?

Response – I will

For the congregation:

Family members and friends, gathered to share today's joy, I invite you now to pledge your loving support for ...N..... andN..... in the covenant commitment they are about to enter, by standing now and saying together – “We do”.

PRAYER

Loving God who makes all things new, may your Spirit transform us now. ForN..... andN....., may our presence and love be a manifestation of your presence with them and your love for them as they enter their marriage. Give them renewed confidence and help them to know that you, with us, are celebrating their happiness today – through Jesus Christ.

Amen

VOWS *(the couple face each other holding right hands)*

.....N....., please make your vow toN.....

.....N....., please make your vow toN.....

(vows may be printed on cards so that the couple can read them with expression but without prompt or pressure. The following vows have been used but celebrants must ensure that the vows chosen comply with the marriage laws pertaining in their part of the United Kingdom.)

1

In the presence of God and this congregation, I, N , receive you, N , as my wife in marriage. I will respect you, honour you, and look for your fulfilment. I promise you my lifelong love and loyalty, and commit myself to you now in trust and partnership.

In the presence of God and this congregation, I, N , receive you, N , as my husband in marriage. I will respect you, honour you, and look for your fulfilment. I promise you my lifelong love and loyalty, and commit myself to you now in trust and partnership.

2

I, N , accept you, N , to be my wife. I promise to share my love with you, openly, honestly and kindly, and to accept you as you are. I promise to honour and tenderly care for you – to cherish and encourage your fulfilment through our life together. I shall listen and speak the truth with you. I shall always be your friend, to love you and be in love with you, as long as we both shall live.

I, N , accept you, N , to be my husband. I promise to share my love openly, honestly and kindly and to accept you as you are. I promise to honour and tenderly care for you – to cherish and encourage your fulfilment through our life together. I shall listen and speak the truth with you. I shall always be your friend, to love you and be in love with you, as long as we both shall live.

3

I, N , receive you, N , as my wife in Christian marriage; and in the presence of God, and before this congregation, I promise to be a loving, faithful, and dutiful husband to you, as long as we both shall live.

I, N , receive you, N , as my husband in Christian marriage; and in the presence of god, and before this congregation, I promise to be a loving, faithful, and dutiful wife to you, as long as we both shall live.

Exchange of Rings

As tokens of the covenant into which you have just entered these rings are given and received. They are symbols of encircling love and unending faithfulness.

Declaration of Marriage

.....N..... andN..... have made sacred promises to each other; and have symbolised their union by joining hands and by exchanging rings. I pronounce them to be husband and wife, in the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Blessing

May God shield you on every steep,
may Christ keep you on every path,
may the Spirit strengthen you in every pass.
The love and affection of heaven be yours,
the love and affection of the saints be yours,
the love and affection of the angels be yours—
mildly and generously,
each night you lie down
each morning you rise.

Amen

Reading(s)

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, you have created humankind in your image, teaching us to love. In mutual commitment and partnership, you work to let a unique love grow and bear fruit. We praise you for all the love in our lives and for all that you make possible in marriage. We thank you for the life that you have given to ...N..... andN....., and pray for them now joined as husband and wife. Give them strength and patience and humour together.

Guide them through life's pain and fear, and in success and achievement may their love only mature. May the individuality of their characters enrich each day the marriage they have begun to build. May their honesty and consideration for each other never flag and may they always be able to open their hearts and home to friends and strangers. Through hope or disappointment, through tears or in laughter may their life be enriched and their love grow. Keep them and us faithful to you throughout this life, and then welcome us anew in your eternal kingdom.

Amen

Hymn

Benediction

Go in peace, and may grace, light and hope be with you all in the blessing of God – Father, Son and Spirit – now and always.

Amen

Alan Paterson

A Blessing at a Wedding

Let the promises of today make you strong
Let the joy of today fill your lives
Let the hope of today give you courage
Let the memory of today live in your hearts.
Go hand in hand into the world, staying true to your dreams,
with love overflowing
And the blessing of Father, Son and Spirit is with you always.

Melanie Frew

A Blessing for A Marriage

Living God, Creator of Humankind,
Bless N and N as they go on their way together
in love and unity of purpose.

Loving Christ, Creator of Compassion,
Bless N and N as they develop their skills
to that their love will bring wholeness to people.

Refreshing, Resilient Spirit, Creator of Vitality,
Bless and encourage them to engage in lively activity
and to seek justice throughout their lives,
to turn disappointments into challenges,
to transform darkness into light,
to root their ideals in the ground that they walk.
Go in Grace
with Confidence
and know Peace.

Amen

Geoffrey Duncan

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