**Commitment for Life Service 2019 – Traditional order of service**

**‘Life giving faith; defiant hope; generous love’**

Please feel free to cut and paste to suit your church’s style of worship

Welcome to the service

**Call to worship:**

Jesus says,’ I have come that you might have life and have it to the full’.

Come and worship God the Creator, from whom all life originates and who sustains life in all its wonderful diversity.

Come and worship God the Son, who lived his life on earth and shows us how to be fully human

Come and worship God the Spirit, who brings colour and vitality to life, in dreams and imagination and creativity.

Come and worship, God the giver of life, the source of our faith and hope and love.

As we gather for worship our prayer is that the words of our mouths and the meditations of all our hearts are acceptable to God who is our rock and our redeemer.

**Hymn 1** (see hymn suggestions)

**Prayers of Praise, thanksgiving and confession**

Gracious God, giver of life, the source of our faith and hope and love, we come to worship you, to offer our praise and thanksgiving and to confess our failings before you and to one another.

We praise you for the gift of faith. We praise you for your call to each of us to’ walk the way, live the life of Jesus today’ and we remember with thanksgiving all who have journeyed with us and before us, guiding our feet and encouraging each step of that journey. We thank you for the presence of the Spirit with us to challenge and inspire, dream dreams and share in visions, and prompt us to venture down new paths of discipleship.

We praise you for the gift of hope. We praise you that through your Word we gain an insight into the world as you in intend it, where all are valued and included in the circle of community regardless of race, gender, age or ability and where the earth itself is cherished as our common home. We thank you that in Jesus, the Word made flesh, we see the embodiment of hope for humanity and a new way to live.

We praise you for the gift of love. We praise you that in the loving relationships we have in our own lives we experience something of the deep love which you have for us, a love which is individual, unique and constant. We thank you that you draw us into the circle of divine love which binds together Father, Son and Spirit and yet reaches out to include and embrace all who seek to dwell in that love.

Merciful God, by reminding ourselves of how and why we want to give you praise and thanks, we also remind ourselves of our need to confess that we have not always lived the way we would want to live and the way which brings you joy.

We confess that there have been times when our faith has faltered, and we have failed to fully engage with the impact that faith should have on our decisions and relationships with others.

We confess that there have been times when we have given up on hope, and have become overwhelmed by the desire for power and your kingdom values have got lost in our inertia.

We confess that there have been times when we have stopped loving you and our neighbour, when self has dominated all our relationships and our need to receive has dominated are desire to give.

Forgive us, gracious God. Draw us to you once again. May each turning to you be an opportunity for a new start, an opportunity to remember that we are your children, made in your image and likeness and an opportunity to experience afresh the constant love which you have for each one of us. Help us to hear Jesus word to us, ‘Your sins are forgiven. Follow me’.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

*(The Lord’s Prayer may follow here)*

**Introduction to the service.**

Commitment for Life is the world development programme of the United Reformed Church. We encourage participating churches to take action, pray and give for people across the world but especially in our four partner countries/region of Bangladesh, Central America (Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador), Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and Zimbabwe. Commitment for Life works in partnership with Christian Aid and Global Justice on advocacy and fundraising. Now in its 27th year congregations, through Commitment for Life have raised millions of pounds.

Today, we remember again our Commitment to Life. Our worship focuses upon Commitment for Life’s new strapline, ‘Life giving faith; defiant hope; generous love’.

Let’s watch a short film, to help us begin to reflect on our theme.

***play Commitment for Life video if possible: available at*** [***https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbJHDy6GeCc&feature=youtu.be***](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbJHDy6GeCc&feature=youtu.be) ***or by contacting*** ***Suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk*** ***who can send it by WeTransfer***

 **(all age activity –** see separate file**)**

**Hymn 2** (see hymn suggestions)

**Readings:** Ezekiel 34.11-16

 Micah 6.6-8

 1 John 4.7-12

**Hymn 3** (see hymn suggestions)

**Story from Commitment for Life:** Please choose a story from Commitment for Life to share in worship. If you have a particular country/region partner you may wish to choose a story from your partner. You can find the stories at <https://urc.org.uk/commitment-for-life/stories-from-partner-countries.html> or in the July 2018/2019 magazine.

**Sermon: ‘Life giving faith; defiant hope; generous love’** (see separate file)

**Hymn 4** (see hymn suggestions)

(**Offering & Prayer of Dedication** – *Gracious God, from you we receive every good gift, and so at this time of worship we bring our gifts of money as a token of our thanks for all we have received. We ask that you bless them, that they may become channels of your grace, a means of sharing your love for the people of this community and the wider world. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.*)

**Prayers of Intercession**

God of life, we bring before you are concerns for the world and her people.

Gracious God we turn to you

**R. for you are the source of faith, hope and love.**

We pray for our partners in Commitment for Life, for all whose stories we have heard today and for the many others whose lives have been transformed through our giving, acting and praying.

We pray for our partners in Zimbabwe, in Central America, in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and in Bangladesh.

We remember the challenges which face them acutely, but of which we are all a part – climate change, sustainability, security and wellbeing.

Gracious God we turn to you

**R. for you are the source of faith, hope and love.**

We pray for the work of Christian Aid and Global Justice Now, as they work alongside and speak for the world’s poorest people.

We pray for the staff and volunteers of Commitment for Life as they seek to inspire and encourage us in our support for our partners.

We pray for our governments that they may recognise our responsibilities within the global community and keep their commitments to financially supporting international development.

Gracious God we turn to you

**R. for you are the source of faith, hope and love.**

We pray for ourselves,

Enrich our faith that we may more fully grasp the abundance of life.

Disturb us and disquiet us with defiant hope so we may act to birth your new world into being.

Encourage us to pass on the gift of love, so others may come to know the depths of your compassion.

Gracious God, we turn to you,

**R. for you are the source of faith, hope and love. Amen.**

**Hymn 5** (see hymn suggestions)

**Benediction:** As we leave this time of worship,

 Let us thank God for life-giving faith;

 Let us commit ourselves to living with defiant hope;

Let us be filled with generous love for our neighbour, whoever and wherever they may be;

 And may the blessing of God, who is life, hope and love be with us now and always.

 Amen.