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# **Book of Worship**

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## **United Church of Christ**

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United Church of Christ  
Cleveland, Ohio

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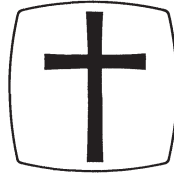
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# Preface

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It is with great delight and enthusiasm that the Office for Church Life and Leadership offers this *Book of Worship* to the United Church of Christ. Because the church is formed and reformed by its worship life, we trust that this resource will be a means of and a contributor toward renewal and enrichment for the church.

In July 1977 the General Synod adopted a resolution which directed the Executive Council “to request the Office for Church Life and Leadership to develop, if feasible, a book of worship for the United Church of Christ using inclusive language.” A sampling of the United Church of Christ in early 1978 affirmed the importance of a book of worship. This book is the result of the work which began with that vote of the General Synod and the urging of people within the United Church of Christ.

From 1979 through 1981 a group created a draft of a book of worship. Staff members Ralph C. Quellhorst, Dorothy L. Robinson, and Robert D. Witham worked with Thomas E. Dipko, Lynne S. Fitch, Jerry P. Hankins, Peter V. Hayn, R. Howard Paine, William C. Royster, Catherine E. Thiedt, Frederick S. West, Bertrice Y. Wood, and Barbara Brown Zikmund. Their tireless and insightful endeavors provided the foundation for ensuing work. We are indebted to them for sharing their gifts with the church, and we thank them for their work. Their gifts were many and diverse, yet flowed from one spirit as they worked individually and together.

We acknowledge and thank the numerous people who responded willingly to our requests. A special word of thanks goes to Sarah R. Bentley, Ruth C. Duck, Louis H. Gunnemann, Lyman G. Potter, Virtie Stroup, Mark H. Wayne, Frederick S. West, and Paul H. Westermeyer.

A book of worship needs the scholarship of those who know the history and tradition of the church and its worship

life and the language of the poet and pastor. The United Church of Christ has been blessed by the rare combination of these gifts in the person of Thomas E. Dipko, who invested himself in both the design and the language of the liturgies. These services, while built on the rich traditions of the church and the work of the draft group, are fresh and original. Their beauty and majesty owe much to Thomas Dipko and his loving commitment to the centrality of worship in the church. We are deeply in his debt.

Since 1982, when a series of booklets of the proposed services was printed, ecumenical partners and innumerable pastors and lay leaders of the United Church of Christ have provided guidance to the Office for Church Life and Leadership. Their comment and critique substantially influenced this final version. Many people submitted material for consideration for inclusion in the book as the resource section reflects. We thank those who shared their labors in all ways, including ecumenical friends who were generous and helpful as we prepared a book rooted in historic documents.

While many persons participated in the development of this *Book of Worship*, the assignment was given to the Office for Church Life and Leadership. We have directed its development and are responsible for its contents. A word of thanks goes to the directorate and staff of the Office for Church Life and Leadership for their participation in this labor of faith. We are affectionately indebted to two staff colleagues in the Office for Church Life and Leadership, Dorothy Robinson and Robert Witham, for managing and coordinating this project with care and sensitivity.

We offer the book in the hope that those who call on it as a resource for worship and those who lead worship from it may discover that it is instrumental in bringing them closer to the Holy One in whom we live and move and have our being.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be to God.

Reuben A. Sheares, II  
Executive Director  
Office for Church Life and Leadership

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# Use of This Book

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This *Book of Worship* is intended to be a resource for the public worship of God in local churches of the United Church of Christ. It is offered to all who plan and lead that worship to the end that the spirit and form of worship in the church may be enhanced and the potential for the local church as the center for the Spirit's life may be realized.

Words, signs, and movement have been carefully molded to help create worship that has integrity and power. The introductions and instructions are integral parts of the book which seek to inform and instruct for the most effective use of the resource. In using the book, you will need to choose among the options offered those most appropriate for the worship life in your local church. You may want to adjust and adapt the material to fit the tradition and experience of your church.

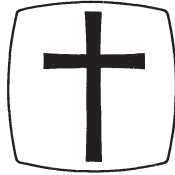
This *Book of Worship* attempts to express the diversity of the United Church of Christ while at the same time lifting up the common liturgical threads which flow through the church, linking the tapestry of the past and weaving the fabric of the future. Informed and imaginative use of this resource can open the rich liturgical history of the church and enhance the particular traditions of the local church. In doing this, it is hoped that the *Book of Worship* will be a means of praise and thanksgiving of the living God by God's people in this time.

The format is designed to help make the book's use easier. Note that:

- ✱ Introductions preceding the orders provide a context and rationale for the liturgical text.
- ✱ Outlines preceding each order list parts of the service that are headlined in the text.
- ✱ When appropriate, instructions are given for incorporating other orders into the orders for the Service of Word and

Sacrament or the Service of the Word from this *Book of Worship*.

- ✦ Except where clearly marked *pastor*, a lay or a clergy representative of the congregation may be the leader.
- ✦ Instructions for leaders are printed in red italic type.
- ✦ Words to be read by a leader, including those read in unison with the congregation, are in bold type.
- ✦ Options are clearly indicated by letters in boxes. It is not necessary to follow one option throughout a service; new choices may be made for each part of the service.
- ✦ In addition to the options marked by letters, the option always exists that the leader may choose other words.
- ✦ Guidance is given for offering prayers in the words of the worship leader.
- ✦ Musical settings for service music are included in the Resource Section, beginning on page 449. Two composers have prepared new music for which both accompaniment and melody lines are provided. Page references in the services are to the accompaniment.
- ✦ Footnote numbers in the services generally denote material of other copyright holders. Information about sources and copyrights is provided in Notes, beginning on page 555.



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# Introduction

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## CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

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What is Christian worship? The answers to that question reflect the rich diversity of Christ's church and account for more than a few of its divisions. There is no definition that exhausts the scope of the question. Every answer raises more questions and cautions humility in the presence of all that is holy. Where definitions are elusive, descriptions become an alternative.

Christian worship cannot be understood apart from the Jewish worship that first cradled and nurtured it. Like worship in Judaism, Christian worship is the glad response of total individuals—through “heart, soul, strength, and mind”—to the saving acts of God in history.<sup>1</sup> It is the communal and personal celebration in the universal church of God's love for creation and for every human being. This divine love is revealed in God's gracious covenant with the people of Israel and in God's coming into the world in Jesus Christ.

Christian worship is more than a passive response to God's revelation. It is in itself a Pentecostal proclamation. It both announces the good news of God's love for all the world and invites all people to share God's saving embrace. This active response would not be possible without the presence

of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who endows the community of faith and individual Christians with the gifts that are necessary for God's service. All that Christians are and do, corporately and individually, is worship, liturgy, the work of praise and thanksgiving.<sup>2</sup> The words and acts commonly called *worship* cannot rightly be separated from Christians' faithful response to God in words and acts of love and justice for all people.<sup>3</sup> That is the transparent meaning of Jesus' liberating command: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."<sup>4</sup>

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## BIBLICAL HERITAGE

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Christian worship, because it is the active response to God's loving initiative, is rooted in the biblical witness to God's saving deeds in history.<sup>5</sup> From the saga of Adam and Eve to John's mystical vision of a new heaven and a new earth, the Bible tells the story of God's redeeming love. Holy scripture provides the trustworthy and normative record of the history of salvation. Its luminous pages inspire, inform, and instruct the church's worship through all the centuries.

It is clear in the New Testament that Jesus Christ cherished and shared in the three fountains of Jewish spiritual nurture that flowed from the Old Testament and shaped the worship of the early church: the temple, the synagogue, and the Jewish home. Each provided distinctive but complementary contributions to the full worship life of faithful Jews.<sup>6</sup> Although Jesus occasionally criticized the abuse of customs and ceremonies practiced in these places, Jesus honored them with his presence, prayer, and preaching.<sup>7</sup> At the Last Supper, Jesus' very choice of words indicated that he knew and willingly used the prayers and blessings familiar to the people of his time.<sup>8</sup>

After the resurrection, Christians, at first, continued to participate in the worship at the temple and the synagogue and to observe the set hours of daily prayer, certain fasts, and other acts of domestic Jewish piety. When resistance to the Christian movement made association with the temple and

the synagogue untenable, Christians opened their own homes as places for the church to gather.

Within the New Testament itself, there is evidence of the gradual coming together of customs and ceremonies formerly celebrated separately in the temple, synagogue, and Jewish home. Christians assembled in homes on Sunday, the weekly commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There they participated in worship, incorporating both a scripture service and a meal that included bread and wine.

Worship in word and sacrament, celebrated weekly on the little Easter that Sunday quickly became, emerged in a primitive pattern that has shaped Christian liturgy to the present day.<sup>9</sup> This *Book of Worship* seeks to be faithful to this heritage and crowns every service of the church with the abundant witness of scripture.

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## ECUMENICAL HISTORY

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Ecumenism is the vocation of separated Christians to celebrate their unity in Jesus Christ and to make that unity more visible as the Holy Spirit guides the church into all truth. It is a vocation as old as the church itself. Within the New Testament, Christians of differing points of view struggled to live in harmony in the one Body of Christ. The Council of Jerusalem is evidence enough that Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians labored patiently to affirm diversity that did not compromise the identity and unity of the church as one people of God.<sup>10</sup>

Current understanding of the worship of the New Testament church is assisted by insights made available from the literature of the church of the first four centuries. The discovery in modern times of much of this literature, particularly the *Didache*, the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, and the journal of Egeria, provides texts more ancient than those available to the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century.<sup>11</sup> This informative literature, when studied in relation to the New Testament, leads to fuller appreciation of the trials and treasures of Christian worship

in the formative centuries of the church, better understanding of the liturgical development of the medieval period, and the discernment of the broad shape that gives Christian worship its enduring identity.<sup>12</sup>

Ironically, many insights into the worship that united the early church have developed as a consequence of disputes that threatened Christian unity. Were it not for the impassioned concern of Hippolytus to interpret his beliefs to those who disagreed with him, there would be no detailed description of Christian worship in A.D. 215.<sup>13</sup>

In a similar way, modern Christians are the beneficiaries of other information because one part of the church tried on occasion to force its form of worship on some minority, only to discover that uninvited ecumenical contact of this kind rarely left the majority unchanged!<sup>14</sup> The sixteenth century Reformation provides a wealth of evidence that the various Protestant reformers and their Roman Catholic colleagues did not permit fragmentation of the church to isolate them from one another. The extent to which they maintained ecumenical dialogue as they led their respective movements puts their zealous followers of later generations to shame. Nowhere does their devotion to ecumenical faithfulness show itself more profoundly than in their common concern for the right worship of God.<sup>15</sup> The confessional liturgies developed during this time are full of ecumenical affinities.

More recently, a liturgical renewal movement has arisen that is so thoroughly ecumenical that the strands of its history are difficult to trace.<sup>16</sup> Protestants rejoice to find in Roman Catholicism a renewed emphasis on the place of preaching and full congregational participation in worship. Roman Catholics celebrate the renewed interest of Protestants in the sacrament of Holy Communion and in the power of liturgical symbols.

This renewed appreciation for the unitive wholeness of word and sacrament promises to correct what Karl Barth defined as *torso* worship. After criticizing Roman Catholics for sacramental worship that lacks responsible preaching

and Protestants for sermon services that lack the sacraments, he remarked, “Both types of service are impossible.”<sup>17</sup> He cautioned that in Sunday worship the preaching and hearing of the sermon are compromised when the opportunity to participate in Holy Communion is denied. In a similar way, faithful sharing in the sacrament is compromised when the preaching of the word is omitted or diminished in its importance.

Although John Calvin spoke eloquently of the place of the sermon, as did Luther and other reformers of the sixteenth century, he resisted every attempt to drive a wedge between word and sacrament. He boldly asserted that the sermon is itself sacramental in the sense that it is the verbal articulation of the same Word met in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Nonetheless, one does not displace the other. An order for word *and* sacrament remains normative for Sunday worship.

This conviction has been reaffirmed recently by Christians of diverse traditions who see word and sacrament as a unitive whole. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* states: “Since the *anamnesis* [recalling, remembering] of Christ is the very content of the preached word as it is of the eucharistic meal, each reinforces the other. The celebration of the eucharist properly includes the proclamation of the word.”<sup>18</sup>

In addition to this convergence, from the rich worship life of the Eastern Orthodox churches, Protestants and Roman Catholics are learning how to stand in awe of the mystery of God and how to resist the scholasticism that reduces an individual to intellect alone. Everywhere, Christians moved by the Holy Spirit remind the churches of the charismatic treasury of gifts among the people of God.

In 1963 the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches reported that “there is in the New Testament a greater variety of forms and expressions of worship than in the majority of divided churches and traditions today.”<sup>19</sup> Since that time, the churches, often acting ecumenically, have experienced growth in their liturgical life that reflects the closeness of their ecumenical relationships. They have discovered the richness of an enlarged

diversity within themselves that makes each of them more truly universal and sets aside many of the confining stereotypes of the past. There are responsible voices currently saying for the first time that “the liturgies now in use in the separated churches are no longer a cause of division. Such causes lie elsewhere.”<sup>20</sup>

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## THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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The youthfulness of a church born in 1957 might suggest to some that it has not yet had adequate opportunity to accumulate what purists call *history*. It has! Behind its recent past stand the distinguished histories of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches. Through these churches, roots are deep in the reform movements of the American frontier and the Swiss, German, and English Reformations and also penetrate beyond the sixteenth century to the Latin church of the West and to the early church that once knew a remarkable degree of unity throughout the Roman Empire. In matters of worship, and all other matters, the United Church of Christ is the inheritor of this history with all its splendor and shame and is responsible for appropriating now the great lessons this history is able to teach.

Religious history in the United States of America affirms that the United Church of Christ is a church of European origins. It is also a church of Black, American Indian, Hispanic, Oriental, and other people who share one diverse household of faith that makes the United Church of Christ a humble microcosm of the church throughout the world. It is also a church of women and men, ordained people and lay people, single people and married people, children and youth and adults, rich and poor, people with few disabling conditions and those with more. The United Church of Christ is local churches, associations, conferences, instrumentalities, and the General Synod.

At the same time, the United Church of Christ claims its place in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church of

Jesus Christ which is the home of all Christians. It strives to participate responsibly in the ecumenical movement.

The United Church of Christ is not only these things. It is also becoming. The clock and the calendar announce that the United Church of Christ is making history. Part of that unfolding history is represented in this *Book of Worship*, requested by the Eleventh General Synod in 1977 for use in the United Church of Christ. This endeavor has looked thankfully to the traditions of the churches that presently constitute the United Church of Christ. In the preparation of the *Book of Worship*, earlier service books of these churches, along with documents that represent the Puritan and free church traditions, were carefully studied.

Like the venerable publications used in its preparation and in words borrowed from three of them, this *Book of Worship* seeks to “conserve the best in the tradition of worship” found in the denomination’s past and to “draw upon the treasures of the historic and universal church.”<sup>21</sup> It is “offered as a guide and help in public worship”<sup>22</sup> in order “to preserve unity of spirit within diversity of forms”<sup>23</sup> in the proclamation of the word of God and the celebration of the sacraments. Its only authority is its intrinsic worth as an imperfect human resource for those who seek to worship God in the beauty and duty of holiness.

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## THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF WORSHIP

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The church is called in every generation to celebrate the full message of salvation in the context of the particular time and place given it by God. Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, today, and for ever,”<sup>24</sup> but the language, customs, and historical situation of the people of God are continually changing. The *Book of Worship* reflects the intention of the United Church of Christ to respond faithfully to God’s saving initiative in ways that speak to the spiritual hunger of all people in this time and place. Several contemporary emphases that stem from this intention inform the services contained in the *Book of Worship* and deserve brief attention.

The Eleventh General Synod explicitly instructed that a *Book of Worship* be characterized by language that is truly inclusive with respect to God and to human beings. Although the generic use of masculine terms may have been acceptable in the past, it excludes and offends many sensitive people of faith today. Further, the use of only masculine nouns and pronouns for God and of masculine generic terms for humankind has hidden the rich feminine imagery for God and God's people in scripture. The rediscovery of the complementarity of female and male metaphors in the Bible and the literature of the early church forbids Christians to settle for literary poverty in the midst of literary riches.<sup>25</sup>

In response to this rediscovery, care has been taken to avoid exclusively male terms for God. For example, the word *God* is frequently used where the masculine word *Lord* predominated in the past. *Lord* is retained as an important title to identify Jesus Christ, but not the only title. In general, masculine language is not used in reference to Jesus Christ except where there is some necessity to identify Jesus by gender. In a similar way, diverse masculine and feminine images are used for the people of God. The witness of women of faith in the biblical story is treated with the same dignity accorded the witness of men of faith.

Inclusive language is far more than a matter of male and female imagery. Behind the aesthetic dimension of human words towers the prophetic issue of social justice. It is obvious to people of goodwill that words have the power to exploit and disfranchise as well as to affirm and liberate those to whom they refer.<sup>26</sup> Language that is truly inclusive affirms not only human sexuality but also racial and ethnic background and diverse stages of maturity from infancy to old age. It shows respect for people with handicapping conditions, people who do not live in the traditional nuclear family, people who suffer addictions, and others who intentionally identify themselves by some particular need or characteristic. If people do not find themselves in the language of worship or find themselves there in derogatory images, it should not be surprising if they absent themselves from the worshipping community.<sup>27</sup>

This *Book of Worship* seeks to underscore the inseparable connection between liturgy and ethics not only by means of inclusive language but also by maintaining a biblical tension between Christian nurture and Christian witness. The services show that liturgy is a recalling of God's acts in history for the world and its salvation and at the same time a communal and personal answering of God's call to service in the world.

The issue of inclusive language and other concerns for social justice point toward even larger areas of wholeness. In practically all churches that are experiencing liturgical renewal, there is a deep regard for denominational traditions that have been cherished, as well as an ecumenical longing to explore parts of the gospel that have received inadequate attention within a particular denomination.<sup>28</sup> This *Book of Worship*, for example, reflects with a new clarity not only the cross of Jesus Christ that dominates much of Reformation theology but also the fullness of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. The services, especially the services of word and sacrament, invite participants to remember the whole story of the history of salvation and to celebrate that story as the church that stands on the Easter side of the cross and tomb.

Out of respect for the total person, the services address human senses as well as rational minds. They offer opportunities for music and other arts, various postures and movements, silence, and the full active participation of the congregation in acts and words that are readily shared. The services also recognize that people have differing abilities to use these senses and acknowledge that physical limitations are to be considered as worship is planned. There is a reverence before God's mystery and majesty and a reticence to use power language, military imagery, or the jargon of triumphalism either for God or the church.

This reverence for God calls forth reverence for the image of God in all human beings including children. Today the question of how children relate to worship is being pursued with renewed interest. The central place given to children in the preaching of Jesus and the caution that unless people

become like little children they cannot enter the realm of God call into question some prohibitions concerning children at worship.<sup>29</sup>

The role of children in Holy Communion is especially debated. Until recently the principal objection to their participation in the sacrament was their inability to “discern the body of Christ” in the meal (1 Corinthians 11:29). Recent biblical scholarship challenges this interpretation of scripture. It recognizes in Paul’s words not a concern for a cognitive understanding of *sacramental* presence but a concern for an *experience* of the body of Christ present in the *community* of faith that Christ gathers as the church.<sup>30</sup>

With this communal understanding, in which discernment is primarily a recognition of *belonging* and not merely a matter of intellectual comprehension, adult Christians are urged to ask “whether, by excluding children from the Lord’s Supper, we are not equally guilty [with the offending Corinthians] of failing to ‘discern the body’ and, therefore, of endangering the reality of the supper.”<sup>31</sup>

In *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, the churches are asked to study the place of children in worship with specific reference to Holy Communion.<sup>32</sup> Churches are urged by Christian educators and others to include children in all aspects of church life as fully as possible. How churches respond to children “is of importance, not simply as a liturgical concern but as an ethical concern,” because God calls the church to “receive them as gifts.”<sup>33</sup>

There is a renewed awareness in the *Book of Worship* of the church as the church of Pentecost, the church of the Holy Spirit, living between the time of Christ’s coming at Bethlehem and Christ’s coming again at the close of history. The full texts of the prayers for Holy Communion and baptism include reminders that the great cloud of witnesses and the church of today form the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. At the center of all the human words stands the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, the firstborn of all creation, who says to the servant church anew, “If I be lifted up, I will draw all unto me.”<sup>34</sup>

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## THE LEADERSHIP OF WORSHIP

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The line between leading the people of God in worship and displacing them in worship is a precariously thin one. It is significant that in the New Testament, as in Judaism, the leadership of worship was a shared responsibility. In the church of the first four centuries, this collegial model of leadership prevailed. It was common for several people to concelebrate word and sacrament in services full of congregational participation.

Then leadership fell into the hands of an officiant acting alone. “Services came to be celebrated for the people rather than by them,” and the worship of God “became a spectator sport.”<sup>35</sup> In churches in the East and West alike, liturgical action became remote from the laity, who often paid for rites they did not bother to attend.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century only partially restored the active role of the congregation. In the twentieth century there has been a remarkable resurgence of congregational involvement in the planning and leading of worship. There are hopeful signs that Christian worship today is approaching the level of participation evident in the early church.

This *Book of Worship* is offered to all who plan, lead, and participate in the worship of God. It is especially important in the United Church of Christ, where the freedom of local churches to order their own worship life is steadfastly maintained, that great care be taken to exercise that freedom with the commensurate responsibility that it requires. It is also a matter of honesty to recognize that the distinction between *liturgical* worship and *free* worship is often more imagined than real. It has rightly been observed that fixed orders can breathe with variety, that informal ones are characterized by discernible patterns, and that both “are equally ritual because it is impossible to vary them every time they are used.”<sup>36</sup> John Calvin, a pioneer in liturgical reform, cautioned even as he reshaped the worship of his time that “we ought not to resort to innovation rashly or

frequently, or for trivial causes.”<sup>37</sup> His counsel is of special relevance during the liturgical revolution of this generation.

What is the relationship between a service book of any kind and freedom, spontaneity, and informality in the worship life of the church? In the United Church of Christ the relationship is determined by each local church. Even local churches of the United Church of Christ that share the heritage of using a book of worship covet nonetheless the right to do so in ways appropriate to their local customs and felt needs.

Contrary to popular stereotypes, those local churches that trace their roots to the Puritan and free church traditions have consistently reserved the right not only to refrain from using prayer books but also to *use* them. Henry Martyn Dexter, writing about Congregational worship from the colonial days to 1880, made this assessment of how *free* the free church tradition can be:

Any Congregational church, whose taste and sense of expediency may so incline it, is at perfect liberty to order its worship by the liturgy of the Church of England, or the Protestant or Reformed Episcopal Church of the United States, or by a liturgy of its own. So long as it does nothing which shall give reasonable ground of offense to the other churches with which it is in fellowship, it may order its prayers, its praise, and all the methods of its worship, to its own entire content; and its pastor, remaining true to our fundamentals of doctrine and polity, though enrobed and endowed . . . with “chasuble, albe, amice, stole, maniple and zone, with two blessed towels, and all their appendages,” would remain, in good faith and entirely, a Congregational minister still.<sup>38</sup>

Clearly, free church does not translate simplistically into a church free *from* all forms. Rather, it denotes a church that includes within the parameters of its freedom the uninhibited liberty to use whatever forms prove to be consistent with its understanding and practice of the gospel.

Where the *Book of Worship* is received in this spirit, it will not compromise the freedom, spontaneity, or informality of the worship life of any local church. It may, in fact, broaden the diversity and deepen the experience of those very characteristics. One thing that it will not do, when used properly, is relieve the local church of the responsibility of providing careful planning and prepared leadership for its worship life. History is replete with examples of empty and corrupt worship that afflicted the people of God precisely because a responsibility that belonged to the whole people of God was abandoned into the hands of the few who eagerly assumed it. The *Book of Worship* is an invitation to every local church to commit itself anew to the hard work of the people of God—the *lietourgia* (worship)—that is the vocation of every Christian and of every local church.

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## PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

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Ordained ministers of the United Church of Christ, by virtue of their ordination vows, the traditions of the church, and the constitutions and bylaws of local churches, are entrusted with primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the gospel, administering the sacraments and rites of the church, and exercising pastoral care and leadership. Their role in leading worship has been compared with that of a first chair musician or a concertmaster rather than with that of a conductor. It is clearly the function of ordained ministers to work in close collaboration with lay people in planning and leading worship. This role presumes that adequate preparation is provided and that ordained ministers seek constantly to grow in their understanding of the theology and practice of worship.

As ordained ministers seek to fulfill their partnership with lay people in worship, it is imperative that adequate time be allowed for study, creative planning, and the rehearsal of services that may require it. Attention will be given not only to the words of worship but also to symbolism, choreography, and dramatic integrity. Shared leadership in the conduct of services will permit different people to fulfill

specific roles without leaving the assembly confused about who is presiding.

Ordained ministers and lay people who share the leadership of worship have a particular responsibility to consult and cooperate with church musicians. If the ecumenical lectionary or another schedule of readings, the church year, and special emphases of any other kind are to inform worship in an integrated manner, church musicians will need opportunity for the selection and rehearsal of appropriate music.

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## LAY LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

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Lay leaders of worship, in the exercise of the priesthood of all believers, bear a responsibility to prepare for their ministry. They need to be people of prayer, informed concerning the worship heritage of the church, and willing to participate in available training for the roles they assume. Their ministry may include roles of leadership—leading various parts of the service, reading scripture, preaching the sermon. Their roles may be supportive—ushers, acolytes, servers of Holy Communion, choir members, greeters, floral artists, or other roles approved by the local church.

The entire worshipping congregation is called to exercise its priesthood through dynamic participation in all aspects of the church's liturgical life. Christians do not go to church; they gather as the church. There is mutual responsibility of chancel and pew for the proclamation of the word and the celebration of the sacraments.

This full involvement of the whole people of God in worship is affirmed not only by churches of the Protestant Reformation but also by the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches as well. In answer to those who say, "I don't get anything out of going to church," an Orthodox theologian replies, "If you really expect to 'get something' out of church attendance, you must give. It is not enough just to sit in church. You must take an active part in its worship."<sup>39</sup> The Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church urged that all the faithful "be led to that

full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.”<sup>40</sup> Concerning the focus of the current liturgical renewal taking place in that church, the Council added, “This full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered above all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.”<sup>41</sup>

What does this active participation require? Clearly it involves more than being present at a place of worship at a stated hour. That approach to worship presumes that worshipers are the audience and that God, or God’s servants in the chancel, are the performers. The action, in fact, is the other way around. The worshipping congregation, including those who lead it, are the ones who offer worship, and God is the one to whom it is offered. This awareness places significant responsibility upon all the people of God to live daily lives rooted and grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ and to seek the presence of the Holy Spirit in prayer, study, planning, and preparation, culminating in acts of worship filled with the grace and power of Pentecost. When reflection and action are joined in this way, Luther’s emphasis on the *consolations* of grace and Calvin’s emphasis on the *demands* of grace find mutual correction and wholeness.<sup>42</sup> Responsibility is also placed on churches to break down barriers that prevent all people from worshipping together.

No other obstacle to congregational participation in worship looms larger than human resistance to change. It is instructive that even churches accustomed to authorized prayer books affirm “the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free” and admonish succeeding generations to change the forms of worship “according to the various exigencies of times and occasions.”<sup>43</sup>

No book of worship or mimeographed service or spontaneously announced order of worship can assure that people will worship God in spirit and truth. In order for any of these forms to become more than disconnected dry bones of devotion, it is necessary that every Christian, inspired by

the Holy Spirit, actively take his or her place in the body of Christ, the living and breathing community of faith that is “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.”<sup>44</sup>

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## MUSIC AND OTHER ARTS

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“The Christian liturgy was born singing and has never ceased to sing.”<sup>45</sup> Music is a treasure of the people of God that has held a place of singular honor from Old Testament times to the present as a principal means by which praise and adoration are offered to God in communal worship. The psalter and other hymns of Israel testify to the power of vocal and instrumental music as artistic forms nobly suited to the celebration of God’s saving deeds. In the New Testament, from the song of Mary to the hymn of the angels at Jesus’ birth to Paul’s great hymns about Christ to the trumpets and victorious doxology of the heavenly host in the book of Revelation, God’s love for humanity is proclaimed in music that continues to fill the spheres.

The literature of the church of the first four centuries echoes the Bible’s “joyful noise” and provides magnificent hymns. Augustine, a champion of sacred music, believed that those who sing pray twice. The Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century, although they held different views on the use of organs and other musical instruments, affirmed the singing of psalms as one means by which the priesthood of all believers may be expressed.<sup>46</sup> The Roman Catholic Church shares this view and has declared boldly that “the music tradition of the universal church is a treasure of immeasurable value, greater even than that of any other art.”<sup>47</sup>

This *Book of Worship* honors the place of music in the continuing pilgrimage of the people of God and invites musicians to employ their art fully in the worship life of the church. Opportunity is given for the singing of hymns, psalms, anthems, or other parts of the liturgy. Provision is made for instrumental music, including the sounds of instruments other than the organ. Choirs, whether large or

small in number, have a special responsibility to enrich the services with anthems and to lead the people in congregational singing. Musicians who are diligent stewards of their art are knowledgeable concerning diverse ways of presenting hymns and psalms. They are able to open to the worshipping community the vast treasury of the church's sacred music.

It is the "task of the musician to bear the word faithfully," through music; it is the task of the worshipping congregation to offer musicians cooperation and support.<sup>48</sup> This requires an openness to learn new hymns and a willingness to grow in the breadth of understanding and appreciation of diverse styles of music. It calls for patience with congregational rehearsals and the commitment to serve on music committees, sing in choirs, and provide for the cost of the ministry of music.

Through full partnership in this ministry, the worshipping congregation is able to become an anthem of praise to God in words, acts, and sounds that unite the church in heaven and on earth.

Other forms of art also have their rightful place in the worship of God. The Old Testament honors silversmiths, cabinetmakers, architects, and other artisans who offered their skills to the glory of God. The New Testament affirms the diversity of human gifts and calls upon all Christians to use their talents for the common good in service rendered to God. The early church, worshipping in homes and later in simple buildings called the "Lord's" house, created symbols to announce the Christian message visually. Some frescoes and other works of art that were ancient symbols have survived to the present day.

Another element common to early Christian worship was the use of gesture and movement. Their Jewish heritage had steeped the first Christians in an appreciation of the body as an instrument of praise and supplication. Prayers were full-some gestures, with participants' arms lifted high in outreach to God. Celebrations of salvific events were seldom complete without a processional dance, whether solemn or exuberant in spirit. Prophets and rulers sought inspiration

and expressed faithful dependence on God in movement and dance.<sup>49</sup> Psalms, and later Christian hymns, were often accompanied by the movement of the entire congregation in simple line or circle formations.<sup>50</sup>

As such expressions were lost or overtly secularized, liturgical use of movement was minimized, especially after the Reformation. The twentieth century church, particularly in the United States, has seen a renewal of interest in sacred dance.<sup>51</sup> Dancers and those who do not dance alike are engaged in this recovery of the biblical and early Christian sense of worship through movement, a type of discourse especially appropriate to express the rich diversity of spirit of the church year.<sup>52</sup>

A confession, an offertory, or a blessing in dance will be a new experience for some, so judicious planning and thoughtful preparation are needed when introducing movement into worship. When movement, such as a procession, is planned for the whole congregation, consideration must be given to the physical abilities of the people.

In creative partnership with the best of music and other arts, this form of praise is well adapted to both small and large churches. Through movement, many may come to appreciate the symbolic nature of truly embodied faith, fitting testimony to the presence of the Incarnate One.

The arts are not immune to abuse. Frequently the church has had to deal with the issue of artistic forms that obscure the gospel rather than proclaim it. This sometimes occurs with the space used for worship. Forms of worship change, but buildings yield to change reluctantly and usually only at considerable expense. Church architecture is a sermon in walls, floors, and ceilings. If its form no longer relevantly announces the good news of God's love that is celebrated in Christian worship, it is the responsibility of the people of God, with the assistance of able architects, to reform the space and rearrange or replace the furniture. Where this is not done, buildings erected to be servants of right worship become rulers that prohibit liturgical renewal or barriers to worshippers because of inaccessibility.

The proper use of the arts is one way the church celebrates creation as God's gift and echoes God's pronouncement that all that has been made is "good." To hearts of faith, the entire creation points to God. The arts are called to do the same. The signs through which the liturgical arts are expressed, including the literary signs of words printed in worship books, "are not there to reflect our own light. Neither are they themselves a source of light. They refract into our bodily and worldly existence a light that comes from elsewhere. They are not there to be seen but to see by. They are to open our eyes to other things."<sup>53</sup> The test of the liturgical arts is whether they merely point to themselves or whether they point to God and thereby summon worshipers to unite with their neighbors on the pilgrimage toward the holy city, the New Jerusalem not made by human hands, eternal in the heavens, whose builder and maker is God.

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### RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHURCH YEAR AND THE LECTIONARY

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Christians, from the New Testament age to the present, regard time not only as a product of nature but also as a parable of God's saving action in human history. The people of Israel, in an earlier age, transformed the festivals of Canaan's agricultural cycle into a sermon-in-time that proclaimed the Exodus and other saving events. In a similar way, the church transformed Jewish festivals and secular holidays into a calendar of salvation history.

The expectation of the early return of Jesus Christ conditioned the New Testament church on the side of restraint and simplicity in the development of its worship life.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the New Testament itself contains the first evidence of the evolution of a calendar of holy days and of a schedule of readings for special occasions. Easter and Sunday, respectively, became the annual and weekly signposts in time of the resurrection of the crucified Christ. There is reason to believe that the Gospel of Mark is organized for the purpose of relating its contents to a pattern of readings for a primitive version of the church year.<sup>55</sup> The

very concept of such a schedule of readings, or a lectionary, was already an intrinsic part of the synagogue worship of Jesus' day.<sup>56</sup>

The relationship between the church year and the lectionary is more than coincidental.<sup>57</sup> When either is neglected, the other suffers as well.<sup>58</sup> The two are bound closely in their historical development. Although there was great diversity among the churches during the formative period of this development, there were also common factors. Consequently, by the end of the fourth century A.D., it is clear that various primitive lectionaries were in use, and that "before the Roman Empire had passed away, the majestic structure of the church year was established, representing the conquest for Christ of the invisible world of time."<sup>59</sup>

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## THE CHURCH YEAR

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The brief descriptions of the seasons and days of the church year are ordered here by current use rather than by their historical development.

Advent is the season of anticipation and preparation that precedes Christmas in the churches in the West. It was first identified in the fourth century by Hilary of Poitiers who indicated that it was observed for a three-week period in Gaul.<sup>60</sup> In some instances the season was related not to Christmas but to the older Eastern feast of Christ's birth, Epiphany.<sup>61</sup> In the Middle Ages, the Western church gradually reduced the period from an eighth-century pattern of six weeks to four weeks.

Now the first Sunday in Advent is the fourth Sunday before December 25. The focus of the season includes not only preparation for the anniversary of Christ's birth but also the anticipation of Christ's return at the close of history. The early festal nature of the season has been rediscovered in this generation.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, the penitential emphasis no longer dominates. The seasonal color, purple, announces Christ's royalty. In some traditions blue is used, jointly symbolizing royalty and hope.

Christmas, the festival day of the birth of Jesus Christ, falls on December 25 in the church in the West. This date in the ancient Roman calendar was observed as a winter solstice holiday associated with non-Christian rituals of light. By the year A.D. 354, the church in the West had transformed the day into the annual festival of the one born to be the Light of the World.<sup>63</sup> White, the color of the season, is appropriately used from Christmas Eve through at least the first Sunday in Epiphany. The season is one of joyful celebration.

Epiphany, which means manifestation or disclosure, is observed on January 6. Its origins are rooted in the winter solstice holiday of the eastern regions of the Roman Empire. In Jerusalem, the day was transformed by the church into a festival of the incarnation.<sup>64</sup> Egeria, a Spanish woman of the fourth century, provided an eyewitness account of the celebration of Epiphany in Bethlehem.<sup>65</sup> Although other Christians in the eastern provinces celebrated both Jesus' birth and baptism on this day, in the region of Jerusalem only the incarnation was observed.

At a very early time in the East, the visit of Jesus to the marriage feast of Cana became part of the Epiphany celebration.<sup>66</sup> In later developments in the West, the visit of the Magi became the predominant theme of the day. Today, these several strands continue to influence Epiphany, with the baptism of Jesus being observed on the first Sunday of the Epiphany season. Although the color of the day of Epiphany and the first Sunday of the season of Epiphany is white, different practices exist for the remainder of the season. Some churches, emphasizing the person of Christ, continue with white. Others, emphasizing the manifestation of Christ to the whole world, change to green from the second Sunday until the close of the season. Green is the color of the church in mission and symbolizes its life and growth. In some traditions, the last Sunday of the season is observed as the Festival of the Transfiguration, with white as the liturgical color.

Lent is a penitential season of self-examination, prayer, and fasting that precedes the observance of the Triduum (Maundy Thursday evening, Good Friday, and the Vigil of Easter

which begins on Saturday night). In Western churches, the season opens on Ash Wednesday and consists of forty days excluding Sundays. The term *Lent* is derived from roots that mean *to lengthen*. The Lenten season points to the spring of the year and to the increasing daylight hours which spring brings.

Lent is first clearly documented in Canon Five of the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325).<sup>67</sup> However, the practice of a pre-Easter period of discipline is much older. A century earlier, Hippolytus of Rome mentioned a two-and-one-half-week fast prior to Easter. In some places this season was the intensified period of preparation for those who were to be baptized on the eve of Easter.

The color for the season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday and including Sundays, is purple. Some traditions, however, recommend black for Ash Wednesday.

The earliest extant reference to Ash Wednesday is in the Gelasian Sacramentary of the seventh century. It is customary in some traditions to mark the forehead of Christians with ashes on this day. The use of ashes is based on several scriptural texts, including Genesis 3:19 and 18:27, Jeremiah 6:26, and Jonah 3:6.

Holy Week, beginning with Palm/Passion Sunday, marks the final week of Lent. Egeria described a procession to Bethany “six days before the Passover,” on which occasion the story of the raising of Lazarus was read in anticipation of Christ’s passion.<sup>68</sup> She placed the event on the Saturday before Palm Sunday. In the medieval period, churches in the West began to observe Passion Sunday on the Sunday before Palm Sunday.<sup>69</sup> In recent calendar revisions, most churches have combined the Passion and Palm Sunday themes. They have reduced the Palm Sunday observance of Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem to an opening or entrance rite and have made the sixth Sunday in Lent predominantly an anticipation of Christ’s passion. In some traditions the color recommended for Palm/Passion Sunday and the weekdays before Maundy Thursday is red. The color is reminiscent of martyrdom.

Maundy Thursday commemorates the institution of Holy Communion and the giving of the new commandment (*mandatum*) that people should love one another even as Christ loves them (John 13:34-35). It also is an appropriate occasion for the rite of washing the feet. In most traditions the color for the day is white in keeping with the glad receiving of the gift of Holy Communion. In those churches where red is introduced on Palm/Passion Sunday, it may remain in use on Maundy Thursday. It is the custom of many churches at the conclusion of the last service on Maundy Thursday to strip the chancel of all paraments and altar hangings in preparation for Good Friday.

Good Friday and Easter, in the earliest celebrations of the church, were combined in a unified rite. Peter Cobb has stated: "Originally, when the Feast of Feasts emerges into the light of history in the second century, it is a unitive commemoration of the death and resurrection of the Lord, a nocturnal celebration of a single night, constituting the Christian Passover."<sup>70</sup> However, very early, as Egeria attested, special services were held on Good Friday. She described a fourth century vigil at the site of the cross that began at noon and ended at 3:00 P.M.<sup>71</sup> This separation of the events of Good Friday from those of Easter Sunday, especially in the West, contributed to an emphasis on the death of Christ in the celebration of Holy Communion "to the exclusion of the resurrection and ascension."<sup>72</sup>

Easter, in the most ancient celebrations of the church, was a vigil service that began on Saturday night of Holy Week and extended into the dawn of Easter day. The Eastern church has preserved this order without interruption to the present time. In the West, the Easter Vigil is now being reintroduced in many churches. This nocturnal service announces with great power that "certainly the cross and resurrection, seen as a unity, did constitute the new Exodus."<sup>73</sup> White is the color for all the services of Easter Day and the Easter season, including the vigil. The services are the most joyful of all the celebrations of the church year. In many churches this Resurrection Day remains the principal festival on which Christian baptism is celebrated.

Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Easter, closes the Easter season. During this entire period of fifty days, the oldest of the seasons in the church, Egeria reported that “not a single person fasts.”<sup>74</sup> Pentecost, borrowed from the Jewish calendar of feasts but transformed by the experience of the church described in Acts 2, originally combined the themes of Christ’s ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit. In the fourth century the two events were separated, and the ascension was placed on the fortieth day after Easter, a Thursday ten days before Pentecost.<sup>75</sup> The color for the day of Pentecost is red in vivid commemoration of the tongues of fire described in Acts 2.

In some churches the Sunday following Pentecost is observed as Trinity Sunday. However, this festival in observance of a doctrine about God rather than of an event in history lacks ancient precedent. Where it is celebrated, white is the usual color.

The Sundays following the day of Pentecost are usually identified by their numerical sequence: the first Sunday after Pentecost, etc. The seasonal color is green. This is the long season of the church in mission.<sup>76</sup> In some traditions the last Sunday in the season, the Sunday before Advent begins, is observed as the Festival of Christ the Sovereign. The color, white, associated with all the festivals of Christ’s life, is used when this occurs.

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## THE LECTONARY

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The use of lectionaries or schedules of readings for particular days is one way the church has labored to guarantee that the story of the Christian faith is grounded in divine revelation and in history. Egeria wrote that on the weekly commemoration of Easter, “the bishop reads the Gospel of the Lord’s resurrection at first cockcrow, as he does on every Sunday throughout the year.”<sup>77</sup> It is not surprising, especially in the land of Christ’s ministry, that special readings became attached to particular days, events, and places that eventually shaped the core of the church year.

The oldest extant manuscript of a lectionary currently available is one developed in Edessa in A.D. 475.<sup>78</sup> Considerable freedom was left to church leaders to choose readings spontaneously. However, as early as Augustine's time, there is evidence that the people frowned upon any departure from the scheduled readings for major holy days.<sup>79</sup> The earliest fully developed lectionary now known is that of Alcuin of York. It dates to A.D. 790 and includes readings for the major festival days, the Sundays within the seasons, and for twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost.<sup>80</sup>

In the sixteenth century, most Protestant reformers at first retained the old Roman lectionary. However, a preference soon developed for the continuous reading of the Bible in sequence, leading to the widespread custom in reformed churches of leaving the choice of readings to the clergy. By 1758, a lay person in the Church of Scotland criticized the clergy for choosing the readings arbitrarily, so as to "mangle them" and "make them say" what the preacher desired.<sup>81</sup> In the past two hundred years, diverse lectionaries have been developed by the churches of the Reformation. In some instances the old Roman lectionary was revived and revised.

In the twentieth century, a resurgence of biblical scholarship moved the churches to reexamine the question of a lectionary. The Roman Catholic Church, in response to the reforms mandated by the Second Vatican Council, published a new three-year lectionary in 1969. This lectionary contained three readings and a psalm for each major Christian festival and for all Sundays of the year. The reintroduction of an Old Testament reading, along with the Epistle and Gospel selections, corrected a deficiency that dates to the fifth century.

This contemporary lectionary, acclaimed and significantly revised by representatives of the churches participating in the Consultation on Common Texts, holds great promise for gaining widespread acceptance in North America and throughout the English-speaking world. This *Common Lectionary* contains a valuable introduction in which its history, structure, and function are carefully explained.<sup>82</sup>

The *Common Lectionary* is commended to all local churches of the United Church of Christ for study and use. Its schedule of readings is published annually in the *United Church of Christ Desk Calendar and Plan Book*.

Why use a lectionary in a denomination that cherishes the freedom of its local churches to order their worship according to their own norms? One reason is that given by the Second Vatican Council and affirmed by uncounted voices throughout the ecumenical church: "The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's Word. In this way a more representative portion of the holy scriptures will be read to the people over a set cycle of years."<sup>83</sup>

In local churches in which the *Common Lectionary* is used, worshipers are assured of hearing in the period of three years most of the Old Testament and practically all the New Testament.

The readings are ordered, in part, by the selection of Old Testament readings that are thematically related to the Gospel for the day, with a semicontinuous reading of the assigned Epistle. In some seasons a more continuous reading of the Old Testament is provided. The Psalms, once the honored hymn book of Reformation churches, are reintroduced and coordinated thematically with the Old Testament reading. Where non-canonical readings are indicated, alternate selections from the canonical scriptures are included.

Among the benefits of the *Common Lectionary*, few are more coveted than the sharing of the same Bible readings on any given occasion by Christians who worship in different communions but are called to live their faith in a common world. The use of the lectionary makes it possible for laity as well as clergy, ecumenically if they wish, to study the readings with others prior to hearing them offered in worship. It holds the promise of allowing the full message of the Bible to address the attentive heart that is open not only to favored texts but also to the entire word of God.

The church year and the lectionary deserve thoughtful use, not because they are law. They witness to the Word made

flesh and enable the church to proclaim faithfully the story it has been told, the story that it lives, and the story that it is privileged to tell to the end of time.

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## LINKING THE CHURCH

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Faithfulness to God's call in Jesus Christ requires that Christians respond in timely ways to the One who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. This *Book of Worship*, like all books of worship, is transitional literature. It seeks to provide a small span in the bridge that will traverse and link the worshiping church of the twentieth century with the church of the past and the church of the twenty-first century. To the extent that it serves faithfully in this endeavor, it deserves careful study, prayerful reflection, and imaginative use.





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## Services of Word and Sacrament

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# Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament I

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## INTRODUCTION

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This order is shaped by traditional forms characteristic of orders of worship found in the Western church. It reflects the unitive structure of the primitive Services of Word and Sacrament known to us by the witness of Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, Egeria, and others. It is also informed by insights of the Protestant Reformation and the most recent ecumenical consensus concerning worship, including the recommendations of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* from the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

This order reflects the human response found in the sixth chapter of Isaiah. Here the prophet first answers God's mysterious presence with adoration and then experiences contrition, confession, and absolution. Instruction from God and a call to God's service follow. Isaiah's "yes" to God is celebrated in a divine commissioning. This order is informed by Isaiah's experience and conveys a sense of the majesty of God. Its central focus is God's victory over sin and death in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In this order, as in the second order, the confession of sin is integrally related to the passing of the peace as a reminder that Christians ask God to forgive them "as we forgive those who trespass against us." Peace with God is inseparable from peace with neighbors. In ancient times those not yet baptized were dismissed following the Service of the Word prior to the prayers and the offertory that introduced the Service of the Sacrament. For this reason, the confession of sin occurred midway in the total service and was often integrated within the general prayers of intercession. In later times when the worship of the church was open to the public, the confession of sin was moved to a much earlier place in the opening acts of the Service of the Word. The use of the prayer for mercy in this part of the order and the use of

other traditional forms elsewhere provide an opportunity to express the universal heritage of the Christian faith.

Through the use of words and acts common to the church across the centuries and around the world, participants show that they are equally “citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”<sup>1</sup>

The sermon, in the early church and the churches of the Reformation, is essential to worship rightly ordered. The proclamation of the Christian message by this means was so treasured among early Christians that more than one sermon in a given service was not unusual. Christ’s presence in the act of preaching is a real presence of the one who promised, “where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”<sup>2</sup> The sermon, though not sacramental in the tangible sense made possible by material signs, is a witness endowed with grace through which human words attest to the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us.

The prayers of the people and the concerns of the church are closely related to the offertory. This placement is a sign that they are part of the worship offered to God with monetary gifts and the bread and wine, all of which represent the life and labor of the community of faith.

The invitation and the call to the supper emphasize that all people of faith are welcome at Christ’s table. The invitation and call celebrate not only the memory of a meal that is past, but an actual meal with the risen Christ that is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet at which Christ will preside at the end of history. The texts and outlines for the communion prayer seek to summarize God’s words and deeds in history for the world and for its salvation. Provision is made for the entire congregation to say or sing parts of this central prayer that stands at the heart of the order, and comes to its climax in the Prayer of Our Savior.

The visible breaking of the bread and pouring of the wine are symbolic actions with double significance. The wheat that is gathered to make one loaf and the grapes that are pressed to make one cup remind participants that they are

one in the body of Christ, the church. But the breaking and the pouring also announce the costliness of Christ's sacrificial life and of the discipleship to which all are called. The use of the traditional "Lamb of God," whether said or sung, reintroduces the theme of penitence just before Holy Communion is received.

The manner of distributing Holy Communion is not prescribed in the United Church of Christ. The practice of using individual cubes of bread and individual cups was introduced in the nineteenth century. Prior to that time, the usual mode of distribution was a common loaf and a common cup. Where the congregation received the bread and wine in their pews, it was sometimes necessary for those charged with serving the people to use a portion of the loaf and a separate cup adequate to serve one section of the room. The mode of intinction—dipping the bread in the wine and receiving both simultaneously—is an ancient custom still practiced as the norm in Eastern Orthodox churches. Also in the nineteenth century, grape juice became available and replaced wine in some churches. The biblical record supports most clearly the custom of one loaf and one cup shared in sequence.

The post-communion prayer is both a prayer of thanksgiving and an affirmation of the willingness of those who received communion to serve God.

The service concludes with the Song of Simeon, followed by a commissioning and a blessing. The movement is from meal to mission.

In this order, as in others, the prelude and postlude are an intrinsic part of the worship and stand within the total order of the service.

---

OUTLINE

---

**Prelude**  
**Greeting**  
**Sentences of Adoration**  
**Hymn of Adoration**  
**Confession of Sin**  
**Silence**  
**Prayer for Mercy**  
**Assurance of Pardon**  
**Passing the Peace**  
**Act of Praise**  
**Reading of Scripture**  
**Sermon**  
**Affirmation of Faith**  
**Hymn, Anthem, or Other Music**  
**Prayers of the People**  
**Concerns of the Church**  
**Offertory**  
**Invitation**  
**Communion Prayer**  
**Prayer of Our Savior**  
**Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine**  
**Lamb of God**  
**Call to the Supper**  
**Sharing the Elements**  
**Prayer of Thanksgiving**  
**Hymn of Parting**  
**Song of Simeon**  
**Commissioning**  
**Benediction**  
**Postlude**

---

PRELUDE

---

*The service may begin with music as the congregation gathers. The greeting and sentences of adoration or the hymn may follow, according to local custom.*

---

GREETING

---

*All who are able may stand for one of these or another greeting informed by scripture.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**In the name  
of the triune God:  
the Creator,  
the Christ, and  
the Holy Spirit.**

ALL

**Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**The grace  
of our Lord  
Jesus Christ  
and the love  
of God and  
the communion  
of the Holy  
Spirit be  
with you all.<sup>3</sup>**

PEOPLE

**And also  
with you.**

**[C] *for use except  
during Lent***

LEADER

**Alleluia!  
Christ is risen.**

PEOPLE

**Christ is risen  
indeed.  
Alleluia!**

---

SENTENCES OF ADORATION

---

*All who are able may stand as one or more of the following sentences or others appropriate for the day or season are said.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Our help is in the name of the Holy One,  
who made heaven and earth.<sup>4</sup>**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Christ, our paschal lamb, has been offered for us.  
Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival.<sup>5</sup>**

☐

LEADER

**In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.<sup>6</sup>**

☐

LEADER

**God's love has been poured  
into our hearts  
through the Holy Spirit  
which has been given to us.<sup>7</sup>**

☐

LEADER

**God has brought the people of the covenant  
from the land of bondage  
into freedom.**

☐

LEADER

**Jesus came to preach good news to the poor,  
to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to liberate those who are oppressed,  
and to proclaim the year  
of God's favor.<sup>8</sup>**

---

## HYMN OF ADORATION

---

*All who are able may stand. This may be a processional hymn.*

---

## CONFESSION OF SIN

---

*The people may be seated. A leader may offer one of these prayers or one in his or her own words.*

☐

LEADER

**We are called to examine  
our faithfulness to God's  
covenant with us.**

☐

LEADER

**If we say we have no sin,  
we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us.**

**God, in whose presence  
we gather,  
promises us grace  
and pardon when we  
acknowledge our  
weakness and shame.  
Let us confess our sin  
to almighty God.**

**ALL**

**Eternal God,  
whose Word is a lamp  
for our feet  
and a light for our path,  
we recognize and confess  
that we have failed  
to respond fully  
to your gracious presence  
in our lives.  
Through Jesus Christ you  
have offered us new life,  
fulfillment,  
and the freedom  
to serve you.  
We confess  
that we are captive to sin,  
that our sin binds us  
with false pride,  
and that the wrong we do is  
made worse by the good  
we leave undone.  
Reconcile us to you  
and to all people.  
God of mercy,  
forgive all our sin and  
strengthen us anew for life  
as you intend it;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.  
Amen.**

**PEOPLE**

**But if we confess our sins,  
God, who is faithful and just,  
will forgive our sins  
and cleanse us from all  
unrighteousness.<sup>9</sup>**

**LEADER**

**Let us confess our sins  
before God  
and one another.**

**ALL**

**Most merciful God,  
we confess that we are  
in bondage to sin  
and cannot free ourselves.  
We have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done  
and by what we have  
left undone.  
We have not loved you  
with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our  
neighbors as ourselves.  
For the sake  
of Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us.  
Forgive us, renew us,  
and lead us,  
so that we may delight  
in your will  
and follow in your ways,  
to the glory  
of your name.  
Amen.<sup>10</sup>**

---

SILENCE

---

*Silence may be observed for reflection and prayer.*

---

PRAYER FOR MERCY

---

*The Kyrie, Trisagion, or other words may be said or sung.  
Musical settings are on pages 449, 450, and 459.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Lord, have mercy.**

PEOPLE

**Christ, have mercy.**

LEADER

**Lord, have mercy.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Holy God,  
Holy and mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,**

ALL

**Have mercy upon us.**

---

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

---

*A leader may speak of God's pardon and mercy, using one  
of the following or her or his own words.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**God hears the confession  
of our hearts and lips.  
Through Jesus Christ  
we are forgiven all our sins,  
and by the Holy Spirit we  
are empowered for new life.**

ALL

**We believe the good news  
of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Anyone in Christ becomes  
a new person altogether;  
the past is finished and gone,  
everything has become  
fresh and new.**

**Friends,  
believe the good news  
of the gospel:**

ALL

**In Jesus Christ,  
we are forgiven.<sup>11</sup>**

---

PASSING THE PEACE

---

*As a sign of their reconciliation with God and each other,  
all may greet those around them with an embrace or a  
handshake, accompanied by such words as: "The peace of*

*God be with you,” and the response: “And also with you.”  
All who are able may rise for the passing of the peace.  
Leaders of the service may move among the congregation  
to share the signs of peace.*

---

ACT OF PRAISE

---

*All who are able may stand for a call to praise and a  
hymn, psalm, or gloria.*

LEADER

**Let us sing praise to God.**

ALL

**We will continually praise God’s holy name.**

**[A]**

*A hymn, psalm, or gloria  
such as the following may  
be read or sung.*

ALL

**Glory to God  
in the highest,  
and peace  
to God’s people on earth.**

**Holy One, heavenly God,  
sovereign God and Creator,  
we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you  
for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ,  
God’s only begotten one,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin  
of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated  
at the right hand**

**[B]**

*This gloria may be said or  
sung. Musical settings are  
on pages 451 and 460.*

ALL

**Glory to God the Creator,  
and to the Christ,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now,  
and will be for ever.  
Amen.**

**of Majesty:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Messiah,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the  
Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory  
of the triune God.  
Amen.**

---

### READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*The people may be seated as the scripture lessons are introduced. It is recommended that the schedule of readings found in the ecumenical lectionary be used. If it is not, care should be taken to maintain a balance in readings from the Old Testament, the Epistles, and the Gospels.*

*A collect for illumination, a seasonal collect, or an extemporaneous prayer asking for attentive hearts may precede the first reading. A brief introduction to the theme of each lesson may be offered. In order to distinguish the lesson from the commentary, the reader may announce the lesson as indicated.*

#### OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

READER

*before the lesson*

**Listen for the word of God in \_\_\_\_\_.**

*After the lesson, a psalm may be said or sung, followed by a gloria, unless one has been said or sung earlier, or the following or a similar announcement may be made.*

READER

**Here ends the Old Testament lesson.**

#### EPISTLE LESSON

READER

*before the lesson*

**Listen for the word of God in \_\_\_\_\_.**

READER

*following the lesson*

**Here ends the Epistle lesson.**

GOSPEL LESSON

*In some local churches, standing, by those who are able, for the reading of the Gospel is customary as it is a sign of respect for Jesus Christ, who addresses the congregation. Responses before and after this lesson may be said or sung.*

READER

*before the lesson*

**Listen to the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to \_\_\_\_\_.**

PEOPLE

Glory to you, O Christ.

READER

*following the lesson*

**This is the good news.**

PEOPLE

Praise to you, O Christ.

---

## SERMON

---

---

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

---

*All who are able may stand for a form of the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ, a creed, or a church covenant. Forms of the statement of faith, historic creeds, and other affirmations are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

---

## HYMN, ANTHEM, OR OTHER MUSIC

---

---

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

---

*The people may be seated for the prayers. Leaders may announce special concerns for prayers and invite the people to indicate needs or to name causes for thanksgiving. Intercessions may include prayers for:*

- *The church universal, including ecumenical councils, specific churches in other places, the United Church of Christ and its leaders, and this local church.*
- *The nations and all in authority.*
- *Justice and peace in all the world.*
- *The health of those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit.*
- *The needs of families, single people, and the lonely.*
- *Reconciliation with adversaries.*
- *The local community and all other communities.*
- *All who are oppressed or in prison.*

*A litany of prayers and responses, with silences, may be used; a pastoral prayer may be offered; petitions may be offered by anyone present, ending with a phrase to which all may respond, such as those below. A longer period of silence may precede or follow the prayers.*

[A]

LEADER

**Christ, in your mercy,**

PEOPLE

**Hear our prayer.**

[B]

LEADER

**Holy Spirit, our Comforter,**

PEOPLE

**Receive our prayer.**


---

## CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

---

*Leaders and people may announce information concerning the program, ministry, and people of the church.*

---

## OFFERTORY

---

*A leader may introduce the offertory and give an invitation to Holy Communion, using his or her own words or one of the following.*

[A]

LEADER

**Through Christ let us  
continually praise God  
and share what we have,  
for such sacrifices  
are pleasing to God.**

[B]

LEADER

**Let us present with joy  
our offerings  
of commitment and support  
for the work  
of Christ's church.**

PEOPLE

Let us prepare Christ's table  
with the offerings  
of our life and labor.

*Music may be offered to God's glory while the tithes and offerings are being received. Silence is also appropriate. The people may express their dedication and thanksgiving to God through music, prayers, dance, and other acts.*

*The people who are able may stand as representatives bring the gifts to the table. The communion elements may be brought to the table with the other gifts.*

[A]

*A doxology, such as the following to the tune "Old Hundredth," may be sung.*

ALL

**Praise God from whom  
all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ the Word  
in flesh born low;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
One God, Triune,  
whom we adore.  
Amen.**

[B]

*This doxology may be sung. Musical settings are on pages 452 and 461.*

ALL

**Praise God from whom  
all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ,  
all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit,  
the Comforter;  
One God, Triune,  
whom we adore.  
Amen.**

AND

*A prayer of dedication may be said.*

*If there is to be no celebration of Holy Communion, the service may be concluded with the Prayer of Our Savior, a hymn, a benediction, and a postlude.*

---

## INVITATION

---

*While all who are able stand, a leader may use these or other words informed by scripture. The people respond.*

LEADER

**Beloved in Christ,  
the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week  
Jesus Christ was raised from death,  
appeared to Mary Magdalene,  
on that same day sat at the table with two disciples,  
and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.**

*The people may sing or say the following. Musical settings  
are on pages 453 and 462.*

ALL

**This is the joyful feast  
of the people of God.  
Men and women,  
youth and children,  
come from the east and the west,  
from the north and the south,  
and gather about Christ's table.<sup>12</sup>**

LEADER

**This table is for all Christians  
who wish to know the presence of Christ  
and to share in the community of God's people.**

---

COMMUNION PRAYER

---

*All who are able may stand.*

PASTOR

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

PASTOR

**Lift up your hearts.**

PEOPLE

We lift them to God.

PASTOR

**Let us give thanks to God Most High.**

PEOPLE

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

*The pastor leads in thankfully recalling God's great acts of salvation, using the outline on page 49 or one of these.*

**[A]**

PASTOR

**We give you thanks,  
God of majesty and mercy,  
for calling forth the creation  
and raising us from dust  
by the breath of your being.**

**We bless you for the beauty  
and bounty of the earth  
and for the vision  
of the day  
when sharing by all will  
mean scarcity for none.**

**We remember the  
covenant you made  
with your people Israel,  
and we give you thanks for  
all our ancestors in faith.**

**We rejoice that you call us  
to reconciliation with you  
and all people everywhere  
and that you remain faithful  
to your covenant  
even when we are faithless.**

**We rejoice that you call  
the entire human family  
to this table  
of sacrifice and victory.  
We come in remembrance  
and celebration of the gift  
of Jesus Christ,  
whom you sent,  
in the fullness of time,  
to be the good news.  
Born of Mary,**

**[B]**

PASTOR

**We give you thanks,  
Holy One,  
almighty and eternal God,  
always and everywhere,  
through Jesus Christ,  
the only one begotten by you  
before all time,  
by whom you made  
the world and all things.**

**We bless you for your  
continual love and care  
for every creature.**

**We praise you  
for forming us in your image  
and for calling us  
to be your people.**

**Although we rebelled  
against your love,  
you did not abandon us  
in our sin,  
but sent to us prophets  
and teachers to lead us  
into the way of salvation.**

**Above all, we give you  
thanks for the gift of Jesus,  
our only Savior,  
who is the way, the truth,  
and the life.**

**In the fullness of time  
you came to us  
and received our nature  
in the person of Jesus,**

our sister in faith,  
Christ lived among us  
to reveal the mystery  
of your Word,  
to suffer and die  
on the cross for us,  
to be raised from death  
on the third day,  
and then to live in glory.

*A seasonal preface from  
Resources for the Church  
Year, beginning on page  
476, may be said here.*

We bless you, gracious God,  
for the presence  
of your Holy Spirit  
in the church  
you have gathered.  
With your sons and  
daughters of faith  
in all places and times,  
we praise you with joy.

who, in obedience to you,  
by suffering on the cross,  
and being raised  
from the dead,  
delivered us from the way  
of sin and death.

We praise you that Jesus  
now reigns with you in glory  
and ever lives to pray for us.

We thank you  
for the Holy Spirit  
who leads us into truth,  
defends us in adversity,  
and gathers us from every  
people to unite us  
in one holy church.

Therefore, with the entire  
company of saints  
in heaven and on earth,  
we worship and glorify you,  
God Most Holy.

*All may sing or say the following. Musical settings are on  
pages 454 and 463.*

ALL

Holy, holy, holy God  
of love and majesty,  
the whole universe speaks of your glory,  
O God Most High.

Blessed is the one  
who comes in the name of our God!  
Hosanna in the highest!

*The people may be seated as option A or B of the prayer  
continues. As the following words are spoken, the pastor  
may indicate the communion elements.*

PASTOR

**We remember  
that on the night  
of betrayal and desertion,  
and on the eve of death,  
Jesus gathered the disciples  
for the feast of Passover.**

**Jesus took bread,  
and after giving thanks to you,  
broke it, and gave it  
to the disciples, saying:  
“This is my body  
which is for you.  
Do this  
in remembrance of me.”**

**In the same way also the cup,  
after supper, saying:  
“This cup is the new  
covenant in my blood.  
Do this,  
as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.”<sup>13</sup>**

**Therefore we proclaim  
the mystery of our faith.**

PASTOR

**For in the night of betrayal  
Jesus took bread, and  
after giving thanks to you,  
broke the bread,  
and gave it to the disciples,  
and said: “Take, eat:  
This is my body  
which is given for you.  
Do this  
in remembrance of me.”**

**In the same way  
also after supper,  
Jesus took the cup,  
and after giving you thanks,  
gave it to them and said:  
“Drink this, all of you:  
This is my blood  
of the new covenant,  
which is poured out  
for you and many,  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this,  
as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.”<sup>14</sup>**

*Either of these may be said or sung with option A or  
option B of the prayer.*

**[A]**

*Musical settings are on  
pages 455, 456, and 464.*

ALL

**Christ’s death, O God,  
we proclaim.  
Christ’s resurrection  
we declare.  
Christ’s coming we await.  
Glory be to you, O God.**

**[B]**

ALL

**Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

*Option A or B of the prayer continues.*

PASTOR

**Eternal God, we unite  
in this covenant of faith,  
recalling Christ's suffering  
and death, rejoicing  
in Christ's resurrection,  
and awaiting Christ's return  
in victory.**

**We spread your table  
with these gifts of the earth  
and of our labor.**

**We present to you  
our very lives,  
committed to your service  
in behalf of all people.**

**We ask you  
to send your Holy Spirit  
on this bread and wine,  
on our gifts, and on us.  
Strengthen your universal  
church that it may be the  
champion of peace and  
justice in all the world.**

**Restore the earth with your  
grace that is able to make  
all things new.**

ALL

**Be present with us  
as we share this meal,  
and throughout all  
our lives,  
that we may know you  
as the Holy One,  
who with Christ  
and the Holy Spirit,  
lives for ever.  
Amen.**

PASTOR

**Holy One,  
show forth among us the  
presence of your life-giving  
Word and Holy Spirit,  
to sanctify us and your  
entire church through these  
holy mysteries.**

**Grant that all who share  
the communion  
of the body and blood  
of our risen Savior  
may be one in Jesus Christ.**

**May we remain faithful  
in love and hope,  
until the perfect feast  
with our exalted Savior  
in the eternal joy  
of your heavenly realm.**

ALL

**Gracious God,  
accept with favor  
this our sacrifice of praise,  
which we now present  
with these holy gifts.**

**We offer to you ourselves,  
giving you thanks for the  
perfect offering of the only  
one begotten by you,  
Jesus Christ our Savior:**

**By whom and with whom  
and in whom, in the unity  
of the Holy Spirit,  
all honor and glory be  
to you, eternal God,  
now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

***If option A or B of the communion prayer has been used, the service continues with the Prayer of Our Savior.***



*The pastor, following this or a similar outline, may offer the prayer of great thanksgiving in her or his own words.*

- *Give thanks for God's goodness to us shown in the creation of the world and in the events of history.*
- *Remember people of faith through whom God has spoken to the human family as witnessed in scripture.*
- *Give thanks for the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*
- *Recall Jesus' words at the institution of the supper in the upper room.*
- *Remind us that our participation in Holy Communion is a sacrifice of praise which includes the offering of our lives to God.*
- *Briefly proclaim faith in Christ who has died, is raised, and will return at the close of history.*
- *Give thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit whose presence is invoked.*

---

## PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

---

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may sing or say the prayer received from Jesus Christ.*

LEADER

**Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.**

**A**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done, on earth  
as in heaven.**

**B**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.**

**C**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.**

**Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the  
time of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>15</sup>**

**Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.**

---

**BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE**

---

*The bread is broken and the wine is poured as visible and audible reminders of the sacrificial self-giving of Jesus Christ. These actions call to mind the cost as well as the joy of Christian discipleship.*

PASTOR

*while taking the bread and breaking it*

**The bread which we break  
is the communion of the body of Christ.**

PASTOR

*while pouring the wine and raising the cup*

**The cup of blessing which we bless  
is the communion of the blood of Christ.**

---

**LAMB OF GOD**

---

*Either version of the ancient Agnus Dei<sup>16</sup> may be said or sung by all.*

**[A]**

ALL

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins  
of the world:  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins  
of the world:  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins  
of the world:  
grant us peace.**

**[B]**

*Musical settings are on  
pages 457 and 465.*

ALL

**Jesus, Lamb of God:  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins:  
have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world:  
give us your peace.**

---

CALL TO THE SUPPER

---

**[A]**

PASTOR

**The gifts of God  
for the people of God.  
Come,  
for all things are ready.**

**[B]**

PASTOR

**The gifts of God  
for the people of God.  
Take them in remembrance  
that Christ died  
and was raised for you.**

---

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

---

*In giving the bread and cup, the pastor and those assisting  
may use their own words or one of the following, and the  
people respond.*

**[A]**

*while giving the bread*

PASTOR

**Take and eat,  
this is the body of Christ,  
broken for you.**

PEOPLE

**Amen!**

**[B]**

*while giving the bread*

PASTOR

**The body of Christ,  
the bread of heaven.**

PEOPLE

**Amen!**

*while giving the cup*

PASTOR

**Take and drink,  
this is the cup  
of the new covenant,  
poured out for you.**

PEOPLE

**Amen!**

*while giving the cup*

PASTOR

**The blood of Christ,  
the cup of salvation.**

PEOPLE

**Amen!**

*After the distribution of the bread and cup, the elements  
may be covered, according to local custom.*

*Words of dismissal may precede the prayer of thanks-  
giving if people have moved from their seats to receive  
communion.*

---

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may give thanks in  
her or his own words or may use one of the following.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**[A]**

ALL

**Almighty God,  
we give you thanks for the  
gift of our Savior's presence  
in the simplicity and  
splendor of this holy meal.  
Unite us with all who are fed  
by Christ's body and blood  
that we may faithfully  
proclaim the good news  
of your love and that your  
universal church may be  
a rainbow of hope  
in an uncertain world;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Redeemer.  
Amen.**

**[B]**

ALL

**Bountiful God,  
we give you thanks  
that you have refreshed us  
at your table  
by granting us  
the presence of Christ.  
Strengthen our faith,  
increase our love  
for one another,  
and send us forth  
into the world  
in courage and peace,  
rejoicing in the power  
of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.<sup>17</sup>**

---

HYMN OF PARTING

---

*All who are able may stand. Depending on local custom, the commissioning and benediction, with or without the Song of Simeon, may precede the hymn.*

---

SONG OF SIMEON

---

*All may sing or say the ancient Nunc Dimittis. Musical settings are on pages 458 and 466.*

ALL

**Holy One,  
now 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.<sup>18</sup>**

---

COMMISSIONING

---

*All who are able may stand as a leader says these or other words of commissioning.*

LEADER

**Go forth into the world  
to serve God with gladness;  
be of good courage;  
hold fast to that which is good;  
render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted;  
support the weak;  
help the afflicted;  
honor all people;  
love and serve God,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup>**

---

BENEDICTION

---

*A leader may offer one of the following or another blessing.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**The blessing of God Almighty:  
the Creator,  
the Redeemer,  
and the Sanctifier,  
be with you all.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

**[B]**

LEADER

**Now may the God of peace  
who brought again  
from the dead  
our Savior Jesus,  
the great shepherd  
of the sheep,  
by the blood  
of the eternal covenant,  
equip you  
with everything good  
that you may do God's will,  
working in you that which  
is pleasing in God's sight;  
through Jesus Christ,  
to whom be glory  
for ever and ever.**

PEOPLE

Amen.<sup>20</sup>

---

## POSTLUDE

---

*The congregation may be seated and remain until the  
postlude is concluded.*

# Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament II

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

This order, like the first one, is shaped by the customs and practices of the church in every century and is faithful to the ecumenical convergence published in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.<sup>21</sup> It includes all aspects of our human response to God found in Isaiah's vision but for particular reasons places them in a different sequence. The flow is from adoration to instruction and only then to contrition, confession, and absolution. This flow is explained in part by the awareness that contrition and confession of sin are sometimes a response to the word of God proclaimed in the reading of scripture and the preaching of the sermon, more than an immediate response to the presence of God announced at the beginning of worship. This order concludes with a call to God's service and a commissioning in a manner that reflects Isaiah 6 and the Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament I.

In this order an effort is made to remind each worshiper not only of God's presence, but also of the presence of all other worshipers who constitute the community of faith. Without diminishing the immediate relationship of each person directly with God, all are called to recognize God's presence in the lives of those for whom Christ died. For this reason, a responsive greeting that points to human relationships is placed early in the order, and the same theme is repeated in the invocation.

Although the confession of sin, silence, assurance of pardon, and passing of the peace come later in this order than the first, they are kept as an integral unit in both orders. This is done to indicate that the passing of the peace is more than a social courtesy. It presumes that people have first asked for God's forgiveness and sought reconciliation with their neighbors. In this order, because of the Matthean

influence, the passing of the peace is placed immediately prior to the offertory.

Following the offertory, the principal prayer used at the table to mark the beginning of the eucharistic meal is the one given by Jesus. Through the centuries, this prayer has appeared at various places in orders for worship. In the earliest orders it is not mentioned. Consequently, there is uncertainty about its placement in antiquity. However, there is evidence that this great prayer of Jesus was reserved for the use of the baptized community. It likely came at some point after the offertory which marked the time when those who were not baptized were dismissed. Later it was placed in close proximity to the breaking of the bread or just before the reception of Holy Communion. John Calvin and John Knox placed it after the offertory and prior to the words of institution in a position similar to the one in this order.

At various points, two full texts are provided. The option is offered for the leader to speak extemporaneously or to prepare a text for the occasion. When a printed option is not chosen, adequate preparation will be necessary to assure that the biblical integrity of the order is maintained.

In both orders, the risen Christ is the central focus. However, this order is more explicit in its attempt to call forth the joy of Christ's victory over death. This is expressed, for example, by the placement of the resurrection acclamation in the position where the first order calls for the "Lamb of God." The prayer of thanksgiving and the dismissal accent the call of the people of God to be the church dispersed. As in the first order, the movement is from meal to mission.

---

OUTLINE

---

**Concerns of the Church**  
**Prelude**  
**Hymn of Adoration**  
**Greeting**  
**Invocation**  
**Act of Praise**  
**Reading of Scripture**  
**Sermon**  
**Affirmation of Faith**  
**Hymn, Anthem, or Other Music**  
**Prayers of the People**  
**Confession of Sin**  
**Silence**  
**Assurance of Pardon**  
**Passing the Peace**  
**Offertory**  
**Lord's Prayer**  
**Invitation**  
**Communion Prayer**  
**Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine**  
**Resurrection Acclamation**  
**Sharing the Elements**  
**Prayer of Thanksgiving**  
**Benediction**  
**Hymn of Parting**  
**Postlude**

---

## CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

---

*Leaders and people may announce information concerning the program, ministries, and people of the church here or at the offertory.*

---

## PRELUDE

---

*Music may be played as the congregation gathers.*

---

## HYMN OF ADORATION

---

*All who are able may stand. According to local custom, the hymn may follow the prelude or the greeting.*

---

## GREETING

---

*All who are able may stand as a leader offers one of these or another greeting informed by scripture.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**The grace  
of our Lord  
Jesus Christ  
and the love  
of God and  
the communion  
of the Holy  
Spirit be with  
you all.<sup>22</sup>**

PEOPLE

**And also  
with you.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Dear friends,  
let us love one  
another,  
because love  
comes from God.  
Whoever loves is  
a child of God  
and knows God.**

PEOPLE

**Whoever does  
not love does not  
know God,  
for God is love.<sup>23</sup>**

**[C]**

LEADER

**With what shall  
we come before  
the Holy One,  
and bow our-  
selves before  
God on high?**

PEOPLE

**Shall we come  
before God with  
burnt offerings,  
with calves  
a year old?**

LEADER

**God has showed  
you, O people,  
what is good;  
and what does  
the Holy One  
require of you?**

PEOPLE  
To do justice,  
and to love  
kindness,  
and to walk  
humbly with  
our God.<sup>24</sup>

---

## INVOCATION

---

*All who are able may stand.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Christ is with us.**

PEOPLE

**Christ is in our midst.**

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

**And also with you.**

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

*One of these prayers or one in a leader's own words may be offered, asking for the congregation to be made responsive to the presence of God.*

**[A]**

ALL

**Eternal God,  
companion of all  
who seek you,  
and seeker of all  
who turn away from you,  
draw near to us that  
we may draw near to you,  
and grant us the grace  
to love and to serve you that  
we may find in your will  
our true freedom;  
through Jesus Christ,  
the way, the truth,  
and the life.  
Amen.**

**[B]**

ALL

**Gracious God,  
gentle in your power and  
strong in your tenderness,  
you have brought us forth  
from the womb  
of your being  
and breathed into us  
the breath of life.  
We know that we do not  
live by bread alone  
but by every word  
that comes from you.  
Feed our deep hungers  
with the living bread  
that you give us**

in Jesus Christ.  
May Jesus' promise,  
"Where two or three are  
gathered in my name,  
there am I  
in the midst of them,"<sup>25</sup>  
be fulfilled in us.  
Make us a joyful company  
of your people  
so that with the faithful  
in every place and time  
we may praise and honor  
you, God Most High.  
Amen.

---

### ACT OF PRAISE

---

*All who are able stand as a hymn, psalm, or gloria is read or sung. During Lent, it is appropriate to omit hymns that contain the alleluia.*

**[A]**

*This hymn (tune: "Lasst Uns Erfreuen") or another hymn of praise may be sung.*

ALL

**From all that dwell below the skies**

**Let the Creator's praise arise;**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Let the Redeemer's name be sung.**

**Let God the spirit free each tongue!**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Eternal is your glory, God.**

**Eternal Word we give you laud;**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Eternal Spirit we adore,**

**Your praise shall sound from shore to shore!**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

B

*A gloria such as the following may be said or sung. Musical settings are on pages 451 and 460.*

ALL

**Glory to God the Creator,  
and to the Christ,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now,  
and will be for ever.  
Amen.**

C

*A psalm may be read or sung. This may be a responsive reading.*

---

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*The people may be seated as the scripture lessons are introduced. It is recommended that the schedule of readings found in the ecumenical lectionary be used. If it is not, care should be taken to maintain a balance in readings from the Old Testament, the Epistles, and the Gospels.*

*A collect for illumination, a seasonal collect, or an extemporaneous prayer asking for attentive hearts may precede the first reading. A brief introduction to the theme of each lesson may be offered. In order to distinguish the lesson from the commentary, the reader may announce: "A reading from \_\_\_\_\_" and may conclude: "Here ends the lesson."*

### OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

*After the Old Testament lesson, a psalm may be said or sung, followed by a gloria.*

### EPISTLE LESSON

### GOSPEL LESSON

*In some local churches, standing, by those who are able, for the reading of the Gospel is customary as it is a sign of respect for Jesus Christ, who addresses the congregation in words remembered by the early church.*

---

 SERMON
 

---



---

 AFFIRMATION OF FAITH
 

---

*All who are able may stand for a form of the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ, a creed, or a church covenant. Forms of the statement of faith, historic creeds, and other affirmations are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

---

 HYMN, ANTHEM, OR OTHER MUSIC
 

---



---

 PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
 

---

*The people may be seated. Leaders may announce special concerns for prayers and invite the people to indicate needs or to name causes for thanksgiving. Intercessions may include prayers for:*

- *The church universal, including ecumenical councils, specific churches in other places, the United Church of Christ and its leaders, and this local church.*
- *The nations and all in authority.*
- *Justice and peace in all the world.*
- *The health of those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit.*
- *The needs of families, single people, and the lonely.*
- *Reconciliation with adversaries.*
- *The local community and all other communities.*
- *All who are oppressed or in prison.*

*A litany of prayers and responses, with silences, may be used; a pastoral prayer may be offered; petitions may be offered by anyone present, ending with a phrase to which all may respond, such as those below. A longer period of silence may precede or follow the prayers.*

**A**

LEADER

**God, in your mercy,**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer.

**B**

LEADER

**O God, hear our prayer.**

PEOPLE

Let our cry come unto you.

---

CONFESSION OF SIN

---

[A]

LEADER

**Let us confess our sin  
against God and each other.**

ALL

**Merciful God,  
we know that you love us  
and that you call us  
to fullness of life,  
but around us and within us  
we see the brokenness  
of the world  
and of our ways.  
Our successes leave us empty;  
our progress does not satisfy.  
Our prosperous land  
is not the promised land  
of our longing.  
Forgive our willful neglect  
of your word,  
our insensitivity to the  
needs of others,  
and our failure to feed  
the spirit that is within us;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Redeemer.  
Amen.**

[B]

*An introduction and  
prayer from scripture may  
be used, such as the follow-  
ing paraphrased verses  
from 1 John and Psalm 51.*

LEADER

**If we say  
we have no sin,  
we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us.**

PEOPLE

**If we confess our sins,  
God is faithful and just  
and will forgive our sins  
and cleanse us  
from all unrighteousness.<sup>26</sup>**

LEADER

**Sisters and brothers,  
in the words of the psalmist,  
let us ask for the forgiveness  
we need.**

ALL

**Have mercy on us, O God,  
according to your  
steadfast love;  
according to your  
abundant mercy  
blot out our transgressions.  
Wash us thoroughly  
from our iniquity,  
and cleanse us from our sin.  
Create in us a clean heart,  
O God, and put a new and  
right spirit within us.  
Cast us not away  
from your presence,**

**and take not your Holy Spirit from us.  
Restore to us the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold us with a willing spirit.<sup>27</sup>  
Amen.**

---

SILENCE

---

*Silence may be observed for reflection and prayer.*

---

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

---

*A leader may speak of God's pardon and mercy in his or her own words or may use one of these, and the people respond.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Almighty God has forgiven you all your sins and has promised to bring you to everlasting life.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**Almighty God has forgiven you all your sins and has promised to bring you to everlasting life.**

LEADER

**Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

PEOPLE

**Through Jesus Christ we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.<sup>28</sup>**

---

PASSING THE PEACE

---

*In preparation for the offertory and Holy Communion, all may greet those around them as a sign of their desire to be at peace with all people. This sign of peace may be*

*expressed by a handshake or an embrace, accompanied by such words as: “The peace of God be with you,” and the response: “And also with you.”*

*All who are able may rise for the passing of the peace. The following words paraphrased from Matthew or other words may be used to introduce this act of reconciliation.*

LEADER

**So if you are about to offer your gift  
to God at the altar and there remember  
that your sister or brother  
has something against you,  
leave your gift  
in front of the altar,  
go at once and make peace  
with your brother or sister,  
and then come back  
and offer your gift.<sup>29</sup>**

PEOPLE

**In response to Christ’s command,  
we reach out to each other in love.**

*Leaders of the service may move among the congregation to share the signs of peace.*

*During this period, an opportunity may be given to those present to make their commitment to Christian discipleship or to renew their commitment to the Christian life.*

---

## OFFERTORY

---

*The people may be seated.*

*As part of the offering of life and labor, significant announcements concerning the mission of the church may be made at this time.*

*A leader may introduce the offertory and give an invitation to Holy Communion, using her or his own words or one of the following.*

**A**

LEADER

**We shall bring to Christ's  
table with our offerings  
the bread and wine  
for the supper.  
Christ invites to this table  
all who profess  
the Christian faith,  
who endeavor to be at  
peace with their neighbors,  
and who seek  
the mercy of God.**

**B**

LEADER

**As we prepare the table  
for Christ's supper,  
let us recall the words  
of the apostle Paul:  
So then, my sisters  
and brothers,  
because of God's great  
mercy to us  
I appeal to you:  
Offer yourselves  
as a living sacrifice to God,  
dedicated to God's service  
and pleasing to God.**

PEOPLE

**This is the true worship  
that we should offer.<sup>30</sup>**

*Music may be offered to God's glory while the tithes and offerings are being received. Silence is also appropriate. The people may express their dedication and thanksgiving to God through music, prayers, dance, and other acts.*

*The people who are able may stand as representatives bring the gifts to the table. The communion elements may be brought to the table with the other gifts.*

**A**

*This doxology may be sung. Musical settings are on pages 452 and 461.*

ALL

**Praise God from whom  
all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ,  
all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit,  
the Comforter;  
One God, Triune,  
whom we adore.  
Amen.**

**B**

*A doxology, such as the following to the tune "Old Hundredth," may be sung.*

ALL

**Praise God from whom  
all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ the Word  
in flesh born low;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
One God, Triune,  
whom we adore.  
Amen.**

AND

*A prayer of dedication may be said.*


---

LORD'S PRAYER

---

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may sing or say the prayer received from Jesus Christ.*

LEADER

**Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.****[A]**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done, on earth  
as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the  
time of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>31</sup>**

**[B]**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**[C]**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.**

*If Holy Communion is not to be celebrated, the service may be concluded with a hymn, a benediction, and a postlude.*

---

INVITATION

---

*All who are able may stand. In these or other words informed by scripture, a leader may remind the congregation that Christ is the host, and they are guests at the table.*

**A**

LEADER

**Jesus said:**

**I am the bread of life.**

**You who come to me  
shall not hunger;  
you who believe in me  
shall never thirst.**<sup>32</sup>

PEOPLE

In company with all who  
hunger for spiritual food,  
we come to this table  
to know the risen Christ  
in the sharing  
of this life-giving bread.

**B**

LEADER

**Luke, the evangelist,  
wrote of our risen Savior,  
who at the table  
with two of the disciples  
took bread and blessed  
and broke it  
and gave it to them.  
Their eyes were opened,  
and they recognized  
the risen Christ  
in the breaking  
of the bread.**

PEOPLE

In company  
with all believers  
in every time  
and beyond time,  
we come to this table  
to know the risen Christ  
in the breaking  
of the bread.

---

COMMUNION PRAYER

---

*All who are able may stand.*

PASTOR

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

PASTOR

**Lift up your hearts.**

PEOPLE

We lift them to God.

PASTOR

**Let us give thanks to God Most High.**

PEOPLE

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

*The pastor leads the congregation in thankfully recalling God's great acts of salvation, using the outline on page 72 or one of these prayers.*

Ⓐ

PASTOR

**Eternal God,  
who has created the  
heavens and the earth,  
giving breath  
to every living thing,  
we thank you  
for all the gifts of creation  
and for the gift of life itself.  
We thank you  
for making us  
in your own image,  
for forgiving us  
when we act as though you  
have no claim on us,  
and for keeping us  
in your steadfast care.**

**We rejoice in Jesus Christ,  
the only one eternally  
begotten by you,  
who was born  
of your servant Mary  
and shared the joys  
and sorrows of life  
as we know it.**

**We remember Christ's death,  
we celebrate Christ's  
resurrection, and,**

Ⓑ

PASTOR

**Holy God,  
our loving Creator,  
close to us as breathing  
and distant  
as the farthest star,  
we thank you  
for your constant love  
for all you have made.**

**We thank you for all  
that sustains life,  
for all people of faith  
in every generation  
who have given themselves  
to your will, and  
especially for Jesus Christ,  
whom you have sent  
from your own being  
as our Savior.**

**We praise you  
for Christ's birth, life,  
death, and resurrection,  
and for the calling forth  
of your church  
for its mission in the world.**

**Gifted by the presence  
of your Holy Spirit,**

**in the beloved community  
of your church,  
we await Christ's return  
at the end of history.**

**We take courage  
from the abiding presence  
of your Holy Spirit  
in our midst.**

**We offer you our praise  
for women and men  
of faith in every age  
who stand as witnesses  
to your love and justice.  
With all the prophets,  
martyrs, and saints, and  
all the company of heaven,  
we glorify you:**

*Musical settings are on  
pages 454 and 463. All may  
say or sing:*

ALL

**Holy, holy, holy God  
of love and majesty,  
the whole universe speaks  
of your glory,  
O God Most High.**

**Blessed is the one who comes  
in the name of our God!  
Hosanna in the highest!**

*The people may be seated  
or kneel. As the following  
words are spoken, the  
pastor may indicate the  
communion elements.*

PASTOR

**We remember  
that on the night**

**we offer ourselves to you  
as we unite our voices  
with the entire family  
of your faithful people  
everywhere:**

*Musical settings are on  
pages 454 and 463. All may  
say or sing:*

ALL

**Holy, holy, holy God  
of love and majesty,  
the whole universe speaks  
of your glory,  
O God Most High.**

**Blessed is the one who comes  
in the name of our God!  
Hosanna in the highest!**

*The people may be seated  
or kneel. As the following  
words are spoken, the  
pastor may indicate the  
communion elements.*

PASTOR

**Merciful God,  
as sisters and brothers  
in faith,  
we recall anew these words  
and acts of Jesus Christ.  
Now as they were eating,  
Jesus took bread, and  
blessed, and broke it,  
and gave it to the disciples  
and said: "Take, eat:  
This is my body."**

**Jesus took a cup,  
and after giving thanks,  
gave it to the disciples**

of betrayal and desertion,  
 Jesus took bread,  
 gave you thanks,  
 broke the bread,  
 and gave it to the disciples,  
 saying: "This is my body  
 which is broken for you.  
 Do this  
 in remembrance of me."

In the same way,  
 Jesus also took the cup,  
 after supper, saying:  
 "This cup is the new  
 covenant in my blood.  
 Do this, as often  
 as you drink it,  
 in remembrance of me."

By eating this bread  
 and drinking this cup,  
 we proclaim Christ's death,  
 celebrate Christ's  
 resurrection, and await  
 Christ's coming again.<sup>33</sup>

PEOPLE

Amen.

Come, Christ Jesus!

PASTOR

Gracious God,  
 we ask you to bless this  
 bread and cup and all of us  
 with the outpouring  
 of your Holy Spirit.  
 Through this meal,  
 make us the body of Christ,  
 the church,  
 your servant people,  
 that we may be salt,  
 and light, and leaven

and said: "Drink of it,  
 all of you;  
 for this is my blood  
 of the covenant,  
 which is poured out for many  
 for the forgiveness of sins."<sup>34</sup>

We remember Christ's  
 promise not to drink of the  
 fruit of the vine again  
 until the heavenly banquet  
 at the close of history,  
 and we say boldly  
 what we believe:

*All may say or sing:*

ALL

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

PASTOR

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Bless this bread,  
 and bless this fruit  
 of the vine.

Bless all of us in our eating  
 and drinking at this table  
 that our eyes may be opened,  
 and we may recognize the  
 risen Christ in our midst,  
 in each other,  
 and in all  
 for whom Christ died.

PEOPLE

Amen.

**for the furtherance  
of your will in all the world.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit.

*If option A or B of the communion prayer has been used,  
the service continues with breaking bread and pouring wine.*



*The pastor, following the outline below or a similar outline,  
may offer the prayer of great thanksgiving in his or her  
own words.*

- *Give thanks for God's goodness to us shown in the creation of the world and in the events of history.*
- *Remember people of faith through whom God has spoken to the human family as witnessed in scripture.*
- *Give thanks for the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*
- *Recall Jesus' words at the institution of the supper in the upper room.*
- *Remind us that our participation in Holy Communion is a sacrifice of praise which includes the offering of our lives to God.*
- *Briefly proclaim faith in Christ who has died, is raised, and will return at the close of history.*
- *Give thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit whose presence is invoked.*

---

### **BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE**

---

*The bread is broken and the wine is poured as visible and audible reminders of the sacrificial self-giving of Jesus Christ. These actions call to mind the cost as well as the joy of Christian discipleship.*

PASTOR

*while taking the bread and breaking it*

**Through the broken bread  
we participate in the body of Christ.**

PASTOR

*while pouring the wine and raising the cup***Through the cup of blessing  
we participate in the new life Christ gives.**

---

**RESURRECTION ACCLAMATION**

---

*Because Holy Communion is the memorial feast of the risen Christ, not a fast held for a deceased Jesus, the following words may be said immediately before the people receive the bread and cup. During the season of Lent, the alleluia may be omitted. The pastor may speak of the presence of Christ in her or his own words.*

[A]

PASTOR

**Alleluia!****Fear not,  
I am the first and the last,  
and the living one.**

PEOPLE

**I died, and behold I am  
alive for evermore.<sup>35</sup>****Alleluia!**

[B]

PASTOR

**Alleluia!****Christ our Passover  
is offered for us.**

PEOPLE

**Therefore let us  
keep the feast.****Alleluia!**

---

**SHARING THE ELEMENTS**

---

PASTOR

**The gifts of God for the people of God.  
Come, for all things are ready.**

*In giving the bread and cup, the pastor and those assisting may use their own words or one of these, and the people respond.*

[A]

*while giving the bread*

PASTOR

**The body of Christ,  
the living bread.**

PEOPLE

**Amen!**

[B]

*while giving the bread*

PASTOR

**Eat this, for it is the body  
of Christ, broken for you.**

PEOPLE

**Amen!**

*while giving the cup*

PASTOR

**The blood of Christ,  
the saving cup.**

PEOPLE

**Amen!**

*while giving the cup*

PASTOR

**Drink this,  
for it is the blood of Christ,  
shed for you.**

PEOPLE

**Amen!**<sup>36</sup>

*After the distribution of the bread and cup, the elements  
may be covered, according to local custom.*

*Words of dismissal may precede the prayer of thanks-  
giving if people have moved from their seats to receive  
communion.*

---

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may give thanks in  
his or her own words or may use one of the following.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**[A]**

ALL

**Eternal God,  
you have called your people  
from east and west  
and north and south  
to feast at the table  
of Jesus Christ.**

**We thank you  
for Christ's presence  
and for the spiritual food  
of Christ's body and blood.  
By the power  
of your Holy Spirit,  
keep us faithful  
to your will.**

**Go with us to the streets,  
to our homes,  
and to our places**

**[B]**

ALL

**We give thanks,  
almighty God,  
that you have refreshed us  
at your table  
by granting us the presence  
of Jesus Christ.**

**Strengthen our faith,  
increase our love  
for one another,  
and send us forth  
into the world  
in courage and peace,  
rejoicing in the power  
of the Holy Spirit;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.**

**Amen.**<sup>37</sup>

**of labor and leisure  
that whether we are  
gathered or scattered,  
we may be the servant  
church of the servant  
Christ, in whose name  
we rejoice to pray.  
Amen.**

*The benediction and recessional hymn may follow, or, if there is no recessional by the choir, the hymn of parting may precede the benediction.*

---

## BENEDICTION

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may use one of these or may dismiss the congregation with other words of comfort and challenge and with a blessing in words informed by scripture, and the people respond.*

**A**

LEADER

**May God bless you  
and keep you.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

LEADER

**May God's face  
shine upon you  
and be gracious to you.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

LEADER

**May God look upon you  
with kindness  
and give you peace.<sup>38</sup>**

PEOPLE

Amen.

LEADER

**Let us go forth**

**B**

LEADER

**Holy One,  
now let your servant  
go in peace;  
your word has been  
fulfilled:**

PEOPLE

**My own eyes have  
seen the salvation  
which you have prepared  
in the sight  
of every people:**

LEADER

**A light to reveal you  
to the nations;**

PEOPLE

**And the glory  
of your people Israel.<sup>39</sup>**

**into the world,  
rejoicing in the power  
of the Holy Spirit.**

PEOPLE

Thanks be to God!

---

HYMN OF PARTING

---

---

POSTLUDE

---

*The congregation may be seated and remain until the  
postlude is concluded.*

# **Brief Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

This order may be used in its fullest form in a private home or other places where a small congregation is gathered. It is not intended as an order for the Sunday celebration of the Service of Word and Sacrament by the congregation gathered for weekly worship. Depending on the situation, additional music, including a prelude and a postlude, may be incorporated into the order.

When the service is used in an abbreviated form, the affirmation of faith, the passing of the peace, and the commissioning may be omitted, as may all sections for which no text is supplied, except the reading of scripture.

When this order is used on the same occasion as the Order for Healing for Use with an Individual, that order may be used through the prayers of intercession. Then begin here with the communion prayer. While the brief order which begins on page 90 is specifically prepared for use with those who are sick, this order may also be used with the sick.

In using this Brief Service of Word and Sacrament, as in all services of the church, it is appropriate that lay people be included as leaders.

In some local churches, communion elements that have been consecrated during the regular Sunday service are used for services such as this one. In the communion prayer, there is an option that allows for the consecration of the elements during this service.

---

**OUTLINE**

---

**Greeting**  
**Sentences of Adoration**  
**Invitation**  
**Confession of Sin**  
**Assurance of Pardon**  
**Hymn of Adoration**  
**Reading of Scripture**  
**Sermon**  
**Affirmation of Faith**  
**Prayers of the People**  
**Offertory**  
**Passing the Peace**  
**Communion Prayer**  
**Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine**  
**Prayer of Our Savior**  
**Sharing the Elements**  
**Prayer of Thanksgiving**  
**Commissioning**  
**Benediction**

---

GREETING

---

*After the people have gathered, a leader may greet them informally or lead them in one of the following.*

**A**

LEADER

**In the name  
of God:  
Creator,  
Redeemer,  
and Comforter.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

**B**

LEADER

**Peace be  
to this house and  
to all for whom  
this is home.**

PEOPLE

And also to you.

**C**

LEADER

**In the name  
of the Father,  
the Son, and  
the Holy Spirit.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

---

SENTENCES OF ADORATION

---

*These or other words based on scripture may be spoken to introduce the service.*

LEADER

**The Holy One says:**

**Why spend money on what does not satisfy?**

**Why spend your wages and still be hungry?**

**Listen to me**

**and do what I say,**

**and you will enjoy the best food of all.**

**Listen now, my people,**

**and come to me;**

**come to me,**

**and you will have life!<sup>40</sup>**

**Hear also these words of Jesus Christ:**

**A**

LEADER

**I am the  
bread of life;  
anyone who  
comes to me  
shall not hunger;**

**B**

LEADER

**“Hurry down,  
Zacchaeus,  
because I must  
stay in your  
house today.”**

**C**

LEADER

**Where two  
or three gather  
in my name,  
there am I in the  
midst of them.<sup>43</sup>**

**anyone who  
believes in me  
shall never  
thirst.<sup>41</sup>**

**Zacchaeus  
hurried down  
and welcomed  
Jesus with  
great joy.  
Jesus said to him:  
“Salvation has  
come to this  
house today.”<sup>42</sup>**

*This response may follow option A, B, or C.*

PEOPLE

Amen.

Come, Christ Jesus.

---

## INVITATION

---

*A leader may summarize the scriptural background of the communion meal, using one of the following or her or his own words.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**In Luke’s Gospel  
we read that Jesus,  
at the table with two  
of the disciples,  
took bread and blessed  
and broke it,  
and gave it to them,  
and their eyes were opened,  
and they recognized the  
risen Christ in the breaking  
of the bread.**

**In the Acts of the Apostles  
we read that as the church  
was gathered,  
often in the homes  
of believers,  
Christians devoted  
themselves**

**[B]**

LEADER

**This table is open  
to all who confess Jesus  
as the Christ  
and seek to follow  
Christ’s way.  
Come to this sacred table  
not because you must,  
but because you may.  
Come not because  
you are fulfilled,  
but because in your  
emptiness you stand  
in need of God’s mercy  
and assurance.**

**Come not to express  
an opinion,  
but to seek a presence  
and to pray for a spirit.**

**to the apostles' teaching  
and community,  
to the breaking of bread,  
and to prayers.**

PEOPLE

Jesus Christ,  
the Bread of Life,  
we gather at your table  
to know you  
in the breaking of the bread.

**Come to this table, then,  
sisters and brothers,  
as you are.**

**Partake and share.**

**It is spread for you and me  
that we might again know  
that God has come to us,  
shared our common lot,  
and invited us  
to join the people  
of God's new age.<sup>44</sup>**

---

### CONFESSION OF SIN

---

*The one presiding may lead the gathering in a prayer of confession in his or her own words, invite each person to share petitions asking for forgiveness, invite all to join in a unison prayer of confession, use the following, or combine these.*

LEADER

**Jesus,  
I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.**

PEOPLE

**But only say the word,  
and your servant will be healed.<sup>45</sup>**

LEADER

**Let us confess our sins.**

ALL

**God of all mercy,  
we confess before you and each other  
that we have been unfaithful to you.  
We lack love for our neighbors,  
we waste opportunities to do good,  
and we look the other way  
when you cry out to us in the suffering  
of our brothers and sisters in need.  
We are sincerely sorry for our sins,  
both those we commit deliberately  
and those that we allow to overtake us.**

**We ask your forgiveness  
and pray for strength  
that we may follow in your way  
and love all your people  
with that perfect love which casts out all fear;  
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.  
Amen.**

---

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

---

*In her or his own words or using one of the following, a leader may assure all present of God's mercy toward all who sincerely repent of their sins.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Hear these  
comforting words:  
If you repent  
and believe in God's  
redeeming mercy,  
your sins are forgiven.  
Trust in God's promises  
and begin anew your life  
with God and all people,  
in the name of Jesus Christ.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Jesus looked up  
and said to a sinner:  
Where are your accusers?  
Has no one condemned you?  
Neither do I condemn you;  
go, and do not sin again.<sup>46</sup>**

PEOPLE

**Thanks be to God.**

---

**HYMN OF ADORATION**

---

*A hymn or doxology may be sung.*

---

**READING OF SCRIPTURE**

---

*One or more lessons from the Old and New Testaments may be read. A psalm may be read or sung. It is appropriate to include a Gospel lesson among the readings.*

---

## SERMON

---

*A brief sermon may be preached, a group study of one of the lessons may be held, silence may be observed for meditation on one or more of the lessons, or any combination of these may be undertaken.*

---

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

---

*A creed, statement of faith, church covenant, or biblical affirmation may be used. Forms of the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ, historic creeds, and other affirmations are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

---

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

---

*Prayers of thanksgiving, petition, and intercession may be offered. Bidding prayers may be particularly suitable.*

---

## OFFERTORY

---

*An offering may be received, and the bread and wine may be presented as an offering of the people.*

---

## PASSING THE PEACE

---

*In preparation for Holy Communion, the congregation, including the leaders, may greet each other with a sign of reconciliation and peace, such as a handshake or embrace, and say these or similar words.*

LEADER

**The peace of Christ be with you.**

PEOPLE

**And also with you.**

---

## COMMUNION PRAYER

---

*The pastor may use this prayer, a similar prayer, or one in her or his own words following the outline on page 49.*

PASTOR

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

PASTOR

**Lift up your hearts.**

PEOPLE

We lift them to God.

PASTOR

**Let us give thanks to God Most High.**

PEOPLE

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

PASTOR

**Holy God,**

**we praise and bless you for creation and the gift of life  
and for your abiding love which brings us close to you,  
the source of all blessing.**

**We thank you for revealing your will for us  
in the giving of the law  
and in the preaching of the prophets.**

**We thank you especially  
that in the fullness of time you sent Jesus,  
born of Mary,  
to live in our midst,  
to share in our suffering,  
and to accept the pain of death  
at the hands of those whom Jesus loved.**

**We rejoice that in a perfect victory over the grave  
you raised Christ with power  
to become sovereign in your realm.**

**We celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit  
to gather your church  
by which your work may be done in the world  
and through which we share the gift of eternal life.**

**With the faithful  
in every place and time,  
we praise with joy your holy name:**

ALL

**Holy, holy, holy God  
of love and majesty,  
the whole universe speaks of your glory,  
O God Most High.**

PASTOR

**We remember that on the night  
of betrayal and desertion,  
Jesus took bread,  
gave you thanks,  
broke the bread,  
and gave it to the disciples, saying:  
“This is my body  
which is broken for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.”**

**In the same way,  
Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying:  
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood.  
Do this,  
as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.”<sup>47</sup>**

**A** *for use to consecrate  
the elements*

PASTOR

**Consecrate, therefore,  
by your Holy Spirit,  
these gifts of bread and wine,  
and bless us that as we  
receive them at this table,  
we may offer you  
our faith and praise,  
we may be united with Christ  
and with one another,  
and we may continue  
faithful in all things.**

**B** *for use when the  
elements have been  
consecrated*

PASTOR

**Bless us, therefore,  
by your Holy Spirit  
that as we receive the  
consecrated bread  
and fruit of the vine  
at this table,  
we may offer you  
our faith and praise,  
we may be united with Christ  
and with one another,  
and we may continue  
faithful in all things.**

*The response, or one similar, may follow either option.*

ALL

**In the strength Christ gives us,  
we offer ourselves to you, eternal God,  
and give thanks  
that you have called us to serve you.  
Amen.**

---

**BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE**

---

PASTOR

*while taking the bread and breaking it*  
**Through the broken bread  
we participate in the body of Christ.**

PASTOR

*while pouring the wine and raising the cup*  
**Through the cup of blessing  
we participate in the new life Christ gives.**

---

**PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR**

---

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may say the prayer  
received from Jesus Christ. They may hold hands, if able.*

LEADER

**Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.**

**A**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done, on earth  
as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.**

**B**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our trespasses,  
as we forgive those**

**C**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive**

**Save us from the  
time of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>48</sup>**

**who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**our debtors.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.**

---

### SHARING THE ELEMENTS

---

*When communion is offered to a person who is critically ill and unable to receive in the usual manner, the bread alone or the wine alone may be received. In some circumstances, communion is best given with the bread and wine combined on a spoon or the bread dipped in wine and touched to that person's lips. If the person is unable to receive the bread and wine at all, it is appropriate to assure that person of God's love and grace which are not set aside by the inability to complete an intention of faith. The pastor may offer the bread and cup in his or her own words or may use the following.*

PASTOR

**Come, for all things are ready.**

*while giving the bread*

**Eat this, for it is the body of Christ,  
broken for you.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

PASTOR

*while giving the cup*

**Drink this,  
for it is the blood of Christ, shed for you.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.<sup>49</sup>**

PASTOR

*after all have received*

**Our Savior Jesus Christ keep and preserve you  
to everlasting life.**

---

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

---

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table  
where we have known the presence of Christ  
and have received all Christ's gifts.  
Strengthen our faith,  
increase our love for one another,  
and let us show forth your praise in our lives;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
Amen.**

---

COMMISSIONING

---

*Great sensitivity should be exercised when commissioning  
a person who is ill and unable to resume normal activity.*

**▣** *for use in any setting*

LEADER

**You are the light  
of the world.  
A city set on a hill  
cannot be hid.  
Nor does anyone light a lamp  
and put it under a bushel,  
but on a stand,  
and it gives light  
to all in the house.  
May your light so shine  
before all people,  
that they may see your  
good works and give glory  
to God who is in heaven.<sup>50</sup>**

**▣** *for use with those  
not confined*

LEADER

**Go forth into the world  
to serve God with gladness;  
be of good courage;  
hold fast to that  
which is good;  
render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted;  
support the weak;  
help the afflicted;  
honor all people;  
love and serve God,  
rejoicing in the power  
of the Holy Spirit.<sup>51</sup>**

---

**BENEDICTION**

---

*A leader may use one of these or other words of blessing.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**The blessing  
of God Almighty:  
Creator,  
Christ,  
and Holy Spirit  
be with you all.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**May God  
bless you  
and keep you.  
May God's face  
shine upon you  
and be gracious  
to you.  
May God look  
upon you  
with kindness  
and give you  
peace.<sup>52</sup>**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**[C]**

LEADER

**Hear the promise  
of Jesus Christ:  
Peace I leave  
with you;  
my peace  
I give to you;  
not as the  
world gives  
do I give to you.  
Let not your  
hearts be  
troubled,  
neither let them  
be afraid.<sup>53</sup>**

**The grace  
of Jesus Christ  
be with you all.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

# **Brief Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament for One Who Is Sick**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

This order is intended for use with sick and shut-in individuals in their homes, with their children, in hospitals, in hospices, or in nursing homes. It is to be used when people are unable to participate in services with the congregation.

When this order is used on the same occasion as the Order for Healing for Use with an Individual, that order may be used through the prayers of intercession. Then begin here with the communion prayer.

In using this brief service, as in all services of the church, it is appropriate that lay people be included as leaders.

In some local churches, communion elements which have been consecrated in the regular Sunday service are used for services such as this one. In the communion prayer there is an option which allows for the consecration of the elements during this service.

---

## **OUTLINE**

---

**Greeting**  
**Prayers of Confession, Other Prayers, and Assurance**  
**Reading of Scripture**  
**Communion Prayer**  
**Lord's Prayer**  
**Sharing the Elements**  
**Prayer of Thanksgiving**  
**Benediction**

---

## GREETING

---

*After those people who plan to participate with the person who is ill have gathered, a leader may greet them informally or may use one of these.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Hear the words of Jesus:  
I am the bread of life;  
anyone who comes to me  
shall not hunger;  
anyone who believes in me  
shall never thirst.<sup>54</sup>**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Hear the words of Jesus:  
For where two or three  
come together in my name,  
I am there with them.<sup>55</sup>**

---

## PRAYERS OF CONFESSION, OTHER PRAYERS, AND ASSURANCE

---

*The one presiding may lead those gathered in prayers of confession or may invite those present to offer in their own words petitions asking for forgiveness. After the prayer of confession, the one presiding assures all present of God's mercy to all who sincerely repent of their sins.*

*Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession may also be offered by a leader or the people.*

---

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*One or more lessons speaking to the condition of the person may be read. It is appropriate to offer brief comments related to the lessons and the situation.*

---

## COMMUNION PRAYER

---

*The pastor may use the following or a similar prayer or may offer a communion prayer in his or her own words following the outline on page 49.*

PASTOR

**Holy God,  
we praise and bless you  
for creation and the gift of life  
and for your abiding love  
which brings us close to you,  
the source of all blessing.**

**We thank you for revealing your will for us  
in the giving of the law  
and in the preaching of the prophets.**

**We thank you especially  
that in the fullness of time you sent Jesus,  
born of Mary,  
to live in our midst,  
to share in our suffering,  
and to accept the pain of death  
at the hands of those whom Jesus loved.**

**We rejoice that in a perfect victory over the grave  
you raised Christ with power  
to become sovereign in your realm.**

**We celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit  
to gather your church  
by which your work may be done in the world  
and through which we share the gift of eternal life.**

**With the faithful in every place and time,  
we praise with joy your holy name:**

**Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty,  
the whole universe speaks of your glory,  
O God Most High.**

**We remember that on the night  
of betrayal and desertion,  
Jesus took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread,**

*Here the bread is broken.*

**and gave it to the disciples, saying:  
“This is my body which is broken for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me.”**

In the same way,  
Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying:

*Here the wine is poured and the cup raised.*

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood.  
Do this, as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.”<sup>56</sup>

**A** *for use to consecrate  
the elements*

PASTOR

Consecrate, therefore,  
by your Holy Spirit,  
these gifts of bread and wine,  
and bless us  
that as we receive them  
at this table,  
we may offer you our faith  
and praise,  
we may be united with Christ  
and with one another,  
and we may continue  
faithful in all things.  
In the strength  
Christ gives us,  
we offer ourselves to you,  
eternal God,  
and give thanks  
that you have called us  
to serve you.  
Amen.

**B** *for use when the  
elements have been  
consecrated*

PASTOR

Bless us, therefore,  
by your Holy Spirit  
that as we receive the  
consecrated bread and fruit  
of the vine  
at this table,  
we may offer you our faith  
and praise,  
we may be united with Christ  
and with one another,  
and we may continue  
faithful in all things.  
In the strength  
Christ gives us,  
we offer ourselves to you,  
eternal God,  
and give thanks  
that you have called us  
to serve you.  
Amen.

---

LORD'S PRAYER

---

*All present may say the prayer received from Jesus Christ.  
If able, they may hold hands.*

LEADER

Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.

**[A]**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done, on earth  
as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the  
time of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>57</sup>**

**[B]**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**[C]**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.**

---

### SHARING THE ELEMENTS

---

*When communion is offered to a person who is critically ill and unable to receive in the usual manner, the bread alone or the wine alone may be received. In some circumstances, communion is best given with the bread and wine combined on a spoon or the bread dipped in wine and touched to the person's lips. If the person is unable to receive the bread and wine at all, it is appropriate to assure the person of God's love and grace which are not set aside by the inability to complete an intention of faith.*

*The pastor may offer the bread and cup in his or her own words or may use the following.*

PASTOR

*while giving the bread*

**Eat this,  
for it is the body of Christ,  
broken for you.**

PASTOR

*while giving the cup*

**Drink this,  
for it is the blood of Christ,  
shed for you.<sup>58</sup>**

---

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

---

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table  
where we have known the presence of Christ  
and have received all Christ's gifts.  
Strengthen our faith,  
increase our love for one another,  
and let us show forth your praise in our lives;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
Amen.**

---

## BENEDICTION

---

LEADER

**May God bless you and keep you.  
May God's face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you.  
May God look upon you with kindness  
and give you peace.<sup>59</sup>  
Amen.**

# Introduction to Orders for Services of the Word

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

Christian worship in the Protestant tradition emerged from the two major concerns of the sixteenth century reformers: that preaching should be restored to its rightful place in Christian worship and that both the bread and the cup should be made available once again to every Christian. These concerns reflect a basic understanding that corporate Christian worship is primarily a fusion of the service of the synagogue and the sacrament of the upper room. From earliest times, the full and central Sunday worship of Christian people was a Service of Word and Sacrament.

There also emerged in ancient Christian practice a series of daily offices, or spiritual exercises, using scripture and prayer to nourish Christian life. In some traditions these offices included a sermon. Eventually they became a pattern for Sunday worship without Holy Communion.

The sixteenth century reformers intended to reinstate the full service of sermon and supper, which the medieval church had lost, on each Sunday or Lord's Day. They did not succeed. John Calvin declared that any Sunday service without Holy Communion was "defective." Nevertheless, he realized that for sixteenth century Christians it was difficult to go from having little or no access to the sacrament to celebrating it every Sunday. Consequently, monthly or quarterly communion became normative in many Protestant churches.

Within the United Church of Christ and the ecumenical movement of the late twentieth century, there is a definite movement toward making the weekly Service of Word and Sacrament normative. In some situations, however, a distinct Service of the Word, without Holy Communion, remains the desire of many local churches. It is important to develop resources that have historical integrity for these

churches. Furthermore, it is appropriate to provide within a Service of the Word some expression of those particular worship practices valued by those in the free church tradition of Reformation Christianity.

The judgment that any Sunday service that does not include Holy Communion is inadequate or unacceptable worship must be avoided. The *ante-communion* or Service of the Word leading to Holy Communion has its own unity, instructs people in the faith, and offers acceptable worship to God. It was the weekly worship that nourished early pilgrims preparing to make deeper commitments to Christ and the church. After these non-communicants were dismissed, the service moved into the mass, a word meaning “after the dismissal.” Over the years, this sequence has been interpreted by some to imply that the Service of the Word is merely a weak prologue leading to the more important Eucharist, or Holy Communion. In reality, the Service of the Word possesses an integrity that gives it intrinsic meaning alongside the service of the upper room.

The sixteenth century reformers celebrated this integrity and restored the power of the read and preached word to weekly worship. Reformed worship did not replace communion with preaching, but sought to upgrade the medieval mass to a full Service of Word and Sacrament. Reformed worship did not create a Service of the Word by adding a sermon to the daily offices used in the discipline of monastic life. For many in the free church tradition, a Service of the Word sets out the full salvation story and is a recognition of the sacramental power of preaching. It can stand alone or be part of the Service of Word and Sacrament.

The offertory in a Service of the Word may be located in one of two places. One placement follows the Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament. The intercessions or prayers of the people are voiced after the sermon and in response to it. The offertory follows the sermon and the prayers and, as a gathering of the gifts of the people, constitutes a sacramental form of dedication and renewal.

The second placement moves from the scripture readings directly into a prayer service that is followed by the offertory. While this order has the disadvantage of separating the sermon from the lessons, it allows the sermon to build upon both the witness of scripture and the contemporary human struggle to walk with God.

By placing the sermon after the prayers of confession and intercession and the recommitment expressed in the offertory, the preached word leads worship back to the promises of God. A service arranged this way usually closes with a prayer of thanksgiving, perhaps the Prayer of Our Savior, a hymn, and a benediction. The sermon is not placed near the end because it is the most important part of worship, but because this is one way that mature Christians explore the meaning of the gospel together. In churches where children do not remain for the sermon, this order allows them to share a more complete worship experience including the offertory.

A Service of the Word may completely omit the confession and assurance sequence or place it after the word has been read or preached rather than at the beginning of the service. It is clear that the earliest Christian services did not always contain major penitential elements. A convincing argument may also be made that people are only ready to confess their sin and receive God's pardon after hearing the word and finding themselves wanting.

A Service of the Word may or may not include a creed or statement of faith. Most early orders did not include such public declarations in corporate worship each week. They assumed that the salvation story was retold in each communion prayer or prayer of great thanksgiving. In the sixteenth century, however, the renewed concern for catechism often led to the placement of a creed immediately after the scripture lessons or the sermon in response to the word.

The orders in this book preserve the integrity of a Service of the Word and incorporate the concerns flowing from the free church tradition.

# **Order for the Service of the Word I**

---

## **OUTLINE**

---

**Prelude  
Call to Worship  
Hymn of Adoration  
Introit  
Prayer of Confession  
Silence  
Assurance of Pardon  
Passing the Peace  
Psalm or Responsive Reading  
Gloria  
Reading of Scripture  
Sermon  
Affirmation of Faith  
Hymn, Anthem, or Other Music  
Prayers of the People  
Lord's Prayer  
Concerns of the Church  
Offertory  
Hymn  
Commissioning and Benediction  
Postlude**

---

## PRELUDE

---

*The service may begin with music as the congregation gathers. The hymn or introit may follow, according to local custom.*

---

## CALL TO WORSHIP

---

*A leader may use one of the following or may offer other words appropriate to the season.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Morning has broken.  
Let us give thanks  
for the gift of life  
and for the presence  
of the Holy One among us.  
Let us worship God  
together.**

PEOPLE

**Thanks be to God!**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Our help is in the name  
of God,  
who made heaven  
and earth.  
Let us worship God.**

---

## HYMN OF ADORATION

---

*All who are able may stand. This may be a processional.*

---

## INTROIT

---

*An introit related to the season may be said or sung.*

---

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

---

*All may be seated. A leader may offer a prayer based on scripture, may use his or her own words, or may use one of the following prayers.*

LEADER

**Let us confess our sins  
before God and one another.**

**[A]**

**ALL**

**Almighty and merciful God,  
you created and are  
creating still.**

**In your presence our limits  
lie stark before us.**

**We confess our unclean  
lips, our cold hearts,  
our turning away  
from neighbors,  
our broken promises,  
and our unrepentant hours.  
Forgive us, O Holy One.**

**We confess that we have  
squandered the gifts  
you have given.**

**We have neglected the land.  
We have grasped for goods.  
We have used each other.  
We have loved power more  
than people.**

**Forgive us, O Holy One.**

**Cleanse from us  
the illusion of innocence.**

**Come into our hearts,  
and make us new again.**

**We pray in the name  
of Jesus.**

**Amen.**

**[B]**

**LEADER**

**Most merciful God,  
we confess that we are  
in bondage to sin  
and cannot free ourselves.**

**We have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed  
by what we have done  
and by what we have  
left undone.**

**We have not loved you  
with our whole heart.**

**We have not loved  
our neighbors as ourselves.**

**For the sake  
of Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us.**

**Forgive us, renew us,  
and lead us,  
so that we may delight  
in your will  
and follow in your ways,  
to the glory  
of your holy name.**

**Amen.<sup>60</sup>**

---

**SILENCE**

---

*Silence may be observed for reflection and prayer.*

---

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

---

*A leader may speak of God's pardon or mercy in her or his own words or may use one of the following.*

**A**

LEADER

**In Jesus Christ,  
God knows and receives us  
as we are.  
Listen, give thanks,  
and live.**

**B**

LEADER

**Almighty God,  
who is great in mercy  
and promises forgiveness  
of sin to all  
who truly repent  
and are sincere in faith,  
have mercy on you,  
pardon and deliver you  
from all sin,  
confirm and strengthen you  
in all goodness,  
and bring you  
to everlasting life.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**Thanks be to God.**

---

## PASSING THE PEACE

---

*As a sign of their reconciliation with God and each other,  
all may greet those around them with an embrace or a  
handshake, accompanied by such words as: "The peace of  
God be with you," and the response: "And also with you."*

*All who are able may rise for the passing of the peace.  
Leaders of the service may move among the congregation  
to share the signs of peace.*

---

## PSALM OR RESPONSIVE READING

---

*A psalm may be sung or read responsively or in unison.*

---

## GLORIA

---

*All who are able may stand for a gloria or another hymn  
of praise.*

**A**

*This gloria may be said or sung. Musical settings are on pages 451 and 460.*

ALL

**Glory to God the Creator,  
and to the Christ,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now,  
and will be for ever.  
Amen.**

**B**

*A gloria such as the following may be read or sung, or another hymn of praise may be sung.*

ALL

**Glory to God  
in the highest,  
and peace  
to God's people on earth.**

**Holy One, heavenly God,  
sovereign God  
and Creator,  
we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you  
for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ,  
God's only begotten one,  
Lord God,  
Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin  
of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated  
at the right hand  
of Majesty:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone  
are the Messiah,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are  
the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory  
of the triune God.  
Amen.**

---

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*The people may be seated as the scripture lessons are introduced. It is recommended that the schedule of readings found in the ecumenical lectionary be used. If it is not, care should be taken to maintain a balance in readings from the Old Testament, the Epistles, and the Gospels.*

*A collect for illumination, a seasonal collect, or an extemporaneous prayer asking for attentive hearts may precede the first reading. A brief introduction to the theme of each lesson may be offered. In order to distinguish the lesson from the commentary, the reader may announce the lesson.*

### OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

READER

*before the lesson*

**Listen for the word of God in \_\_\_\_\_.**

*After the lesson, a psalm may be said or sung, followed by a gloria, unless one has been said or sung earlier, or the following or a similar announcement may be made.*

READER

**Here ends the Old Testament lesson.**

### EPISTLE LESSON

READER

*before the lesson*

**Listen for the word of God in \_\_\_\_\_.**

READER

*following the lesson*

**Here ends the Epistle lesson.**

### GOSPEL LESSON

*In some local churches, standing, for those who are able, for the reading of the Gospel is customary as it is a sign of respect for Jesus Christ, who addresses the congregation in words remembered by the early church. The responses before and after this lesson may be said or sung.*

READER

*before the lesson*

**Listen to the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to \_\_\_\_\_.**

PEOPLE

Glory to you, O Christ.

READER

*following the lesson*

**This is the good news.**

PEOPLE

Praise to you, O Christ.

---

## SERMON

---

---

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

---

*All who are able may stand for a form of the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ, a creed, or a church covenant. Forms of the statement of faith, historic creeds, and other affirmations are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

---

## HYMN, ANTHEM, OR OTHER MUSIC

---

---

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

---

*The people may be seated. Leaders may announce special concerns for prayers and invite the people to indicate needs or to name causes for thanksgiving. Intercessions may include prayers for:*

- The church universal, including ecumenical councils, specific churches in other places, the United Church of Christ and its leaders, and this local church.*
- The nations and all in authority.*
- Justice and peace in all the world.*
- The health of those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit.*
- The needs of families, single people, and the lonely.*
- Reconciliation with adversaries.*
- The local community and all other communities.*
- All who are oppressed or in prison.*

*A litany of prayers and responses, with silences, may be*

*used; a pastoral prayer may be offered; petitions may be offered by anyone present, ending with a phrase to which all may respond, such as those below. A longer period of silence may precede or follow the prayers.*

**A**

LEADER

**Christ, in your mercy,**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer.

**B**

LEADER

**Holy Spirit, our Comforter,**

PEOPLE

Receive our prayer.

---

### LORD'S PRAYER

---

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may sing or say the prayer received from Jesus Christ.*

**A**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done, on earth  
as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the  
time of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>61</sup>**

**B**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy  
name. Thy  
kingdom come.  
Thy will be done  
on earth as it is  
in heaven. Give  
us this day our  
daily bread. And  
forgive us our  
trespasses, as we  
forgive those  
who trespass  
against us. And  
lead us not into  
temptation, but  
deliver us from  
evil. For thine is  
the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**C**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.**

---

## CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

---

*The people may be seated. A leader and the people may announce information concerning the program, ministry, and people of the church.*

---

## OFFERTORY

---

*A leader may use his or her own words or one of the following to introduce the offertory.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Let everyone give,  
not grudgingly  
or of necessity,  
but from the fullness  
of our gratitude to God.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Let us give,  
as each is able,  
according to the blessings  
God has given each of us.**

*Music may be offered to God's glory while the tithes and offerings are being received. Silence is also appropriate. The people may express their dedication and thanksgiving to God through music, prayers, dance, and other acts.*

*The people who are able may stand as representatives bringing the gifts to the table.*

**[A]**

*This doxology may be sung. Musical settings are on pages 452 and 461.*

ALL

**Praise God from whom  
all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ,  
all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit,  
the Comforter;  
One God, Triune,  
whom we adore.  
Amen.**

**[B]**

*A doxology, such as the following to the tune "Old Hundredth," may be sung.*

ALL

**Praise God from whom  
all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ the Word  
in flesh born low;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
One God, Triune,  
whom we adore.  
Amen.**

AND

*A prayer of dedication may be said.*

---

HYMN

---

---

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

---

**[A]**

LEADER

**The blessing of the God  
of Sarah and of Abraham;  
the blessing of Jesus Christ,  
born of Mary;  
the blessing  
of the Holy Spirit,  
who broods over us  
as a mother over her children;  
be with you all.  
Amen.<sup>62</sup>**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Go forth into the world  
to serve God with gladness;  
be of good courage;  
hold fast to that  
which is good;  
render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted;  
support the weak;  
help the afflicted;  
honor all people;  
love and serve God,  
rejoicing in the power  
of the Holy Spirit.<sup>63</sup>**

**The grace of Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion  
of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you all.<sup>64</sup>  
Amen.**

---

POSTLUDE

---

*The congregation may be seated and remain until the  
postlude is concluded.*

# **Order for the Service of the Word II**

---

## **OUTLINE**

---

**Concerns of the Church**  
**Prelude**  
**Call to Worship**  
**Hymn of Adoration**  
**Invocation**  
**Prayer of Our Savior**  
**Psalm or Responsive Reading**  
**Gloria**  
**Prayer for Illumination or Collect for the Day**  
**Reading of Scripture**  
**Sermon**  
**Hymn, Anthem, or Other Music**  
**Prayers of the People**  
**Passing the Peace**  
**Offertory**  
**Hymn**  
**Commissioning and Benediction**  
**Postlude**

---

## CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

---

*Leaders and the people may announce information concerning the program, ministry, and people of the church now or at the offertory.*

---

## PRELUDE

---

*The service may begin with music as the congregation gathers. The call to worship or hymn may follow, according to local custom.*

---

## CALL TO WORSHIP

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may offer one of the following or other words appropriate to the season.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Rejoice,  
for God is among us.  
Give thanks,  
for in Christ  
we are a new people.  
Sing praise,  
for we come  
to worship God.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Come from the east  
and the west,  
the north and the south,  
and worship the God  
of our fathers and mothers,  
the God of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

**The grace of Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the communion  
of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all.<sup>65</sup>**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

---

## HYMN OF ADORATION

---

*All who are able may stand. This may be a processional hymn.*

---

INVOCATION

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may offer a prayer in her or his own words or may use one of these, asking for the worshipers to be made responsive to the presence of God.*

**A**

LEADER

**Christ is with us.**

PEOPLE

Christ is in our midst.

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**B**

LEADER

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

AND

**A**

ALL

**O God,  
distant yet near,  
we gather as witnesses  
to your promise that if we  
seek you with all our hearts,  
we will find you.  
Be among us this day.  
Hear the confessions  
of our mouths  
and the yearnings  
of our hearts.  
Help us change the  
narrowness of our vision  
and the pettiness  
of our living.  
Make us new again  
with your holy grace.  
Grant us the maturity  
to accept your many gifts  
in humility  
and to use them  
with faithfulness.  
Grant to us your spirit**

**B**

ALL

**Gracious God,  
gentle in your power and  
strong in your tenderness,  
you have brought us forth  
from the womb  
of your being  
and breathed into us  
the breath of life.  
We know that we do not  
live by bread alone  
but by every word  
that comes from you.  
Feed our deep hungers  
with the living bread  
that you give us  
in Jesus Christ.  
May Jesus' promise,  
"Where two or three are  
gathered in my name,  
there am I  
in the midst of them,"<sup>66</sup>  
be fulfilled in us.  
Make us a joyful company**

that our worship may have  
integrity and energy,  
ever witnessing to your holy  
presence in our lives.

We praise and give thanks  
to you, Eternal Presence;  
through Jesus Christ  
we pray.  
Amen.

of your people  
so that with the faithful  
in every place and time  
we may praise  
and honor you,  
God Most High.  
Amen.

### PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may sing or say the  
prayer received from Jesus Christ.*

LEADER

Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.

**A**

ALL

Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done, on earth  
as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the  
time of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.

**B**

ALL

Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,

**C**

ALL

Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,

**Amen.**<sup>67</sup>

**and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**for ever.  
Amen.**

---

**PSALM OR RESPONSIVE READING**

---

*A psalm may be sung or read responsively or in unison.*

---

**GLORIA**

---

*All who are able may stand for a gloria or another hymn of praise.*

**[A]**

*This gloria may be said or sung. Musical settings are on pages 451 and 460.*

**ALL**

**Glory to God the Creator,  
and to the Christ,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now,  
and will be for ever.  
Amen.**

**[B]**

*A gloria such as the following may be read or sung, or another hymn of praise may be sung.*

**ALL**

**Glory to God  
in the highest,  
and peace  
to God's people on earth.  
Holy One, heavenly God,  
sovereign God and Creator,  
we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you  
for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
God's only begotten one,  
Lord God,  
Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin  
of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right  
hand of Majesty:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone  
are the Messiah,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are  
the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory  
of the triune God.  
Amen.**

---

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION  
OR COLLECT FOR THE DAY**

---

*The people may be seated. A leader may offer a prayer for illumination in her or his own words asking for open hearts and attentive minds, may use a seasonal collect, or may use one of these.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Eternal God,  
in the reading  
of the scripture,  
may your word be heard;  
in the meditations  
of our hearts,  
may your word be known;  
and in the faithfulness  
of our lives,  
may your word be shown.  
Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Almighty God,  
you have revealed yourself  
to us as one God;  
give us grace to continue  
steadfast in the living  
of our faith  
and constant in our  
worship of you,  
for you live and reign,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.**

---

**READING OF SCRIPTURE**

---

*It is recommended that the schedule of readings found in the ecumenical lectionary be used. If it is not, care should be taken to maintain a balance in readings from the Old Testament, the Epistles, and the Gospels.*

*A brief introduction to the theme of each lesson may be*

*offered. In order to distinguish the lesson from the commentary, the reader may announce: "A reading from \_\_\_\_\_" and may conclude: "Here ends the lesson."*

---

## SERMON

---

---

## HYMN, ANTHEM, OR OTHER MUSIC

---

---

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

---

*The people may be seated. Leaders may announce special concerns for prayers and invite the people to indicate needs or to name causes for thanksgiving. Intercessions may include prayers for:*

- The church universal, including ecumenical councils, specific churches in other places, the United Church of Christ and its leaders, and this local church.*
- The nations and all in authority.*
- Justice and peace in all the world.*
- The health of those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit.*
- The needs of families, single people, and the lonely.*
- Reconciliation with adversaries.*
- The local community and all other communities.*
- All who are oppressed or in prison.*

*A litany of prayers and responses, with silences, may be used; a pastoral prayer may be offered; petitions may be offered by anyone present, ending with a phrase to which all may respond, such as those below. A longer period of silence may precede or follow the prayers.*

**A**

LEADER

**Merciful God,**

PEOPLE

**Hear our prayer.****B**

LEADER

**Healing Spirit,**

PEOPLE

**Receive our prayer.**

---

## PASSING THE PEACE

---

*As a sign of their reconciliation with God and each other, all may greet those around them with an embrace or a handshake, accompanied by such words as: "The peace of God be with you," and the response: "And also with you."*

*All who are able may rise for the passing of the peace. Leaders of the service may move among the congregation to share the signs of peace.*

---

## OFFERTORY

---

*As part of the offering of life and labor, significant announcements concerning the mission of the church may be made.*

*Music may be offered to God's glory while the tithes and offerings are being received. Silence is also appropriate. The people may express their dedication and thanksgiving to God through music, prayers, dance, and other acts.*

*Upon presentation of the offerings, a leader may offer a prayer of dedication, and a doxology may be sung. See pages 452 and 461 for musical settings of a doxology.*

---

## HYMN

---

---

## COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

---

**A**

LEADER

**Let us go forth into the  
new seasons of our lives.**

PEOPLE

**We go forth into growing  
and changing and living.**

LEADER

**Let us go with caring  
awareness for the world  
and all that is in it.**

**B**

LEADER

**God's peace go with you  
into the worlds  
in which you live;  
be nurtured by the time  
of gathering,  
be faithful in the time apart.  
Love and serve each other  
in the name  
of the faithful God,**

PEOPLE

We go to discover the needs  
and opportunities around us.

LEADER

Let us go forth in peace  
and be led out in joy.

ALL

We go in God's  
continuing presence,  
with the power to love  
and the strength to serve.  
Amen.<sup>68</sup>

who calls us  
to be God's people;  
and the blessing of God,  
Creator, Redeemer,  
and Sanctifier,  
be with us always.  
Amen.

---

POSTLUDE

---

*The congregation may be seated and remain until the  
postlude is concluded.*

# **Order for the Service of the Word III**

---

## **OUTLINE**

---

**Concerns of the Church**  
**Prelude**  
**Hymn of Adoration**  
**Call to Worship**  
**Invocation**  
**Sentences of Praise**  
**Psalm or Responsive Reading**  
**Gloria**  
**Reading of Scripture**  
**Prayers of the People**  
**Offertory**  
**Hymn**  
**Sermon**  
**Prayer of Thanksgiving**  
**Lord's Prayer**  
**Hymn**  
**Benediction**  
**Postlude**

---

## CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

---

*Leaders and the people may announce information concerning the program, ministry, and people of the church now or at the offertory.*

---

## PRELUDE

---

*The service may begin with music as the congregation gathers. The hymn or call to worship may follow, according to local custom.*

---

## HYMN OF ADORATION

---

*All who are able may stand. This may be a processional hymn.*

---

## CALL TO WORSHIP

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may use words appropriate for the season or may use one of these.*

**A**

LEADER

**God knows us  
and our hungers.  
God loves us like a father  
and nurtures us  
like a mother.  
God draws us to each other  
and claims us  
as the people of God.  
Knowing this,  
let us worship God.**

**B**

LEADER

**The Holy One bends low  
at home with the humble,  
taking up residence  
in the contrite heart  
and forming all people  
in God's image.  
Come, let us worship.  
Let us offer thanksgiving  
and praise to God.**

---

## INVOCATION

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may offer a prayer in her or his own words or may use one of the following, asking for the worshipers to be made responsive to the presence of God.*

**[A]**

ALL

**O God of the morning  
and of the evening hours,  
let your Spirit come on us  
here gathered.**

**This is the holy place  
where we, your people,  
call on you in faith,  
joining heart and voice  
in thanksgiving and praise  
to your name.  
Amen.**

**[B] *for use in the morning***

ALL

**We come before you,  
O God,  
and wait for the kindling  
flame of your Holy Spirit,  
calling us into fuller  
and richer lives.  
You have blessed us  
by the night's rest  
and by morning's light.  
Open us to your claim  
on us.  
Show us your way.  
Let us live in the spirit  
of Jesus Christ our Savior.  
Amen.**

---

### SENTENCES OF PRAISE

---

*All who are able may stand as one or more of these sentences are said, or other sentences appropriate for the day or liturgical season are offered.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Blessed is God,  
who reveals to us the presence of the Christ  
and who incorporates us into divine love.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**God has brought the people of the covenant  
from the land of bondage into freedom.**

**[C]**

LEADER

**In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.<sup>69</sup>**

---

PSALM OR RESPONSIVE READING

---

*A psalm may be sung or read responsively or in unison.*

---

GLORIA

---

*All who are able may stand for a gloria or another hymn of praise.*

[A]

*This gloria may be said or sung. Musical settings are on pages 451 and 460.*

ALL

**Glory to God the Creator,  
and to the Christ,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now,  
and will be for ever.  
Amen.**

[B]

*A gloria such as the following may be read or sung, or another song of praise may be sung.*

ALL

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace  
to God's people on earth.**

**Holy One, heavenly God,  
sovereign God and Creator,  
we worship you,  
we give you thanks,  
we praise you  
for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ,  
God's only begotten one,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin  
of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right  
hand of Majesty:  
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone  
are the Messiah,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are  
the Most High,**

**Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory  
of the triune God.  
Amen.**

---

### READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*The people may be seated. It is recommended that the schedule of readings found in the ecumenical lectionary be used. If it is not, care should be taken to maintain a balance in readings from the Old Testament, the Epistles, and the Gospels.*

*A brief introduction to the theme of each lesson may be offered. In order to distinguish the lesson from the commentary, the reader may announce: "A reading from \_\_\_\_\_" and may conclude: "Here ends the lesson."*

*The reading of scripture may begin with the following or other words of preparation.*

LEADER

**God offers to us,  
through prophets and apostles,  
words of life which through faith become the word of life.  
Listen then for that word in these lessons.**

---

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

---

*The people may be seated for the prayers. Leaders may announce special concerns for prayers and invite the people to indicate needs or to name causes for thanksgiving. Intercessions may include prayers for:*

- The church universal, including ecumenical councils, specific churches in other places, the United Church of Christ and its leaders, and this local church.*
- The nations and all in authority.*
- Justice and peace in all the world.*
- The health of those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit.*
- The needs of families, single people, and the lonely.*

- *Reconciliation with adversaries.*
- *The local community and all other communities.*
- *All who are oppressed or in prison.*

*A litany of prayers and responses, with silences, may be used; a pastoral prayer may be offered; petitions may be offered by anyone present, ending with a phrase to which all may respond, such as those below. A longer period of silence may precede or follow the prayers.*

[A]

LEADER

**Holy Spirit,**

PEOPLE

Be with us as we pray.

[B]

LEADER

**Healing Spirit,**

PEOPLE

Receive our prayer.

---

## OFFERTORY

---

*As part of the offering of life and labor, significant announcements concerning the mission of the church may be made. Music may be offered to God's glory while the gifts are being received. Silence is also appropriate. The people may express their dedication and thanksgiving to God through music, prayers, dance, and other acts.*

*The people who are able may stand as representatives bring the gifts to the table.*

[A]

*A doxology, such as the following to the tune "Old Hundredth," may be sung.*

ALL

**Praise God from whom  
all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ the Word  
in flesh born low;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
One God, Triune,  
whom we adore.  
Amen.**

[B]

*This doxology may be sung. Musical settings are on pages 452 and 461.*

ALL

**Praise God from whom  
all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ,  
all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit,  
the Comforter;  
One God, Triune,  
whom we adore.  
Amen.**

*A leader may offer a prayer of dedication, using one of these or his or her own words.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Bless these tithes and offerings, O God, returned to you. Multiply and use them to bring the word and the touch of Jesus to this place and throughout the world, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Holy One, blessed are you, who entrust to our care and use the richness of creation. Through our tithes and offerings, we return to you a portion of that which you have given us. May they be a means of serving you in the mission to which you have called us; through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

---

HYMN

---

---

SERMON

---

---

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

---

*A leader may offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the opportunity to hear and understand God's word in her or his own words or may use this prayer.*

LEADER

**Thanks be to you, O God, for from the beginning you have entrusted us with your word and have called us to give heart, mind, voice, and love to serving its truth, even as Jesus Christ brought it to life among us. Amen.**

---

LORD'S PRAYER

---

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may sing or say the prayer received from Jesus Christ.*

LEADER

**Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.**

**A**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done, on earth  
as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the  
time of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>70</sup>**

**B**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**C**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.**

---

HYMN

---

---

BENEDICTION

---

*A leader may use one of the following or may dismiss the*

*congregation with other words of comfort and challenge  
and with a blessing informed by scripture.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**May God's Holy Spirit  
lead you.**

**May God's strength  
protect you.**

**May God's peace  
be with you.**

**Go now  
in the name of God,  
by the grace of Christ,  
and with the presence  
of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Let us go  
and meet the world  
which God loves  
and for which Christ died.  
Let us proclaim that  
God is worthy of our trust  
and Christ of our discipleship.  
Let us live as heirs of Christ  
and as the people of God  
in the midst of God's world.  
Amen.**

---

## POSTLUDE

---

*The congregation may be seated and remain until the  
postlude is concluded.*

# Order for Baptism

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

A person is incorporated into the universal church, the body of Christ, through the sacrament of baptism. The water, words, and actions of the sacrament are visible signs that convey the Christian's burial and resurrection with Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4). The invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the water and upon the candidates for baptism is an affirmation that it is God who takes the initiative in the sacrament. "Baptism is both God's gift and our human response to that gift." It is "a sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the church of every time and place."<sup>1</sup>

In the United Church of Christ people are baptized either as children or adults. Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church, the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and the beginning of their new growth into full Christian faith and life.

When an infant or young child is baptized, one or both parents and/or one or more sponsors promise to assume certain responsibilities for the Christian nurture of the baptized child. One of the parents or sponsors should be a member in good standing of a Christian church. Those who are baptized at an early age are given an opportunity in their youth to make a personal profession of faith through confirmation.

Parents, in consultation with the pastor, may choose sponsors for infants and young children who are to be baptized. Other candidates for baptism may also be given this opportunity to have sponsors. At the time of the baptismal service, the sponsors, who accompany new Christians on their journeys of faith, may accompany the candidates and present them for baptism. They may make promises

identical to the promises of the parents concerning their role. At the end of the Order for Baptism, they may be among those introducing the newly baptized to the congregation, perhaps by moving with them throughout the congregation.

Baptism is not only a personal celebration in the lives of the individual candidates and their families, but also a central celebration in the life of the local church which embodies the universal church in a particular place. For this reason, baptism should take place in the presence of the community of faith gathered for public worship. In officiating at a service of baptism, the pastor acts as a representative of the church universal. When urgent circumstances make it necessary to undertake baptism apart from the worshiping congregation, leaders of the local church should participate in the ceremony with the pastor. If an ordained minister is not available in such circumstances, a lay person may administer the sacrament.

Baptism should occur only once in a person's life. If there is a question about whether baptism has taken place, a conditional phrase may be added as a person is baptized, such as "If you are not already baptized . . ."

It is important to consider the meaning conveyed in the location of the baptism in the church building. A baptismal service held in a narthex or near a door to the sanctuary emphasizes initiation or entry into the church. Baptism held in the center of the sanctuary in the midst of the congregation stresses incorporation into the community of faith. Baptism held at the chancel, near the pulpit and table, accents the connections between baptism, God's word, and communion. A baptismal service held in a place visually cut off from the people communicates that baptism is peripheral to church life.

Water is an essential element of baptism. Its presence and use should be boldly dramatized in the service. The mode of baptism remains a matter of choice. The candidates, or their parents and sponsors, in consultation with the pastor, may elect sprinkling, immersion, or pouring.

Baptism is most properly incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament, where it follows the sermon and precedes Holy Communion. By baptism, a person becomes a member of Christ's church and is welcome at Christ's table. For the newly baptized, the journey is from the font to the feast of the table.

Some churches use a lighted paschal candle during baptism. *Paschal*, derived from the Hebrew "to pass over," refers to the lamb sacrificed for its blood which was used as a sign for death to pass over the houses of the people of Israel before the Exodus. Thus their children were saved. In Christian worship, a large paschal candle is used to symbolize Jesus, the one whose death and resurrection bring salvation and eternal life to God's people and so deliver them, as the Israelites had been delivered.

This order includes instructions for incorporating confirmation and reception of members.

---

OUTLINE

---

*This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. A hymn may precede this order. When used with the Order for Confirmation or Order for Reception of Members, begin with the prayer of baptism and end with the act of praise.*

**Invitation**  
**Welcome**  
**Address**  
**Questions of the Candidates**  
**Congregational Assent**  
**Affirmation of Faith**  
**Prayer of Baptism**  
**Act of Baptism**  
**Act of Praise**  
**Prayer for the Baptized**  
**Benediction**

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

*Water in adequate supply may be in the baptistry, a font, a bowl, or a pitcher, depending upon local custom. If it is the practice of the local church to use a paschal candle, it may stand near the place of baptism and be lighted.*

---

## INVITATION

---

*The pastor and others who will lead the baptismal service may invite those who desire baptism for themselves or their children to come to the place where baptism will be celebrated. They may go out into the congregation to escort the candidates to the place for baptism. The invitation may be given informally, in words that reflect the growing relationship between the local church and the candidates.*

*As an expression of a special ministry of hospitality to children to be baptized, all children present may be invited to stand near children who are to be baptized.*

*A baptismal hymn may be sung.*

---

## WELCOME

---

*The pastor and people may introduce the baptismal service, using one of these statements or similar words.*

**A**

PASTOR

**Members and friends in Christ, we gather now to celebrate the gift of grace in the sacrament of baptism.**

PEOPLE

There is one body and one Spirit.  
There is one hope in God's call to us.

**B**

PASTOR

**Dear friends, as we come to this font of living water, let us recall the meaning of baptism.**

**For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body,**

**C** *for use when children are baptized*

PASTOR

**They were bringing children to Jesus that Jesus might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, Jesus was indignant,**

PASTOR

**There is one Lord,  
one faith,  
one baptism,  
one God and  
Creator of us all.<sup>2</sup>**

**though many,  
are one body,  
so it is  
with Christ.**

PEOPLE

**For by one Spirit  
we were all  
baptized into  
one body  
—Jews or Greeks,  
slaves or free—  
and all were  
made to drink  
of one Spirit.**

PASTOR

**Now you are the  
body of Christ  
and individually  
members of it.<sup>3</sup>**

**and said to them,**

PEOPLE

**“Let the children  
come to me,  
do not hinder  
them; for to such  
belongs the realm  
of God.**

**Truly, I say  
to you, whoever  
does not receive  
the realm of God  
like a child shall  
not enter it.”**

PASTOR

**And Jesus took  
them in his arms  
and blessed them,  
laying his hands  
upon them.<sup>4</sup>**

---

## ADDRESS

---

*The pastor may address those gathered, using one of these options or other words based on scripture.*

Ⓐ

PASTOR

**Jesus came to John  
to be baptized by him.  
But John tried to make  
him change his mind.  
“I ought to be baptized  
by you,” John said,  
“yet you have come to me!”**

PEOPLE

**Jesus said,  
“Let it be so for now.  
For in this way,**

Ⓑ

PASTOR

**Jesus said:  
Unless we are born anew,  
we cannot see  
the reign of God;  
unless we are born of water  
and the Spirit,  
we cannot enter  
God’s new order.<sup>7</sup>**

**Paul the apostle said:  
All of us who have been  
baptized into Christ Jesus**

we shall do all  
that God requires.”  
So John agreed.

PASTOR

**As soon as Jesus  
was baptized, he came up  
out of the water.  
Then heaven was opened  
to him, and  
he saw the Spirit of God  
coming down like a dove  
and lighting on him.**

PEOPLE

Then a voice said  
from heaven,  
“This is my own dear Son,  
with whom I am well pleased.”<sup>5</sup>

PASTOR

**At another time Jesus said:  
Go and make disciples  
of all nations,  
baptizing them  
in the name of the Father  
and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup>**

**were baptized  
into Christ’s death.  
We were buried therefore  
with Christ by baptism  
into death,  
so that as Christ was raised  
from the dead,  
to the glory of God,  
we too might walk  
in newness of life.<sup>8</sup>**

AND

**Ⓐ *for baptism of infants  
and young children***

PASTOR

**The sacrament of baptism  
is an outward and visible  
sign of the grace of God.  
Inasmuch as the promise  
of the gospel is not only to  
us but also to our children,  
baptism with water and the  
Holy Spirit is the mark**

**Ⓑ *for baptism of older  
children, youth, and adults***

PASTOR

**Baptism is the sacrament  
through which we are  
united to Jesus Christ  
and given part  
in Christ’s ministry  
of reconciliation.  
Baptism is the visible sign  
of an invisible event:**

of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church, the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and discipleship.<sup>9</sup>

the reconciliation of people to God. It shows the death of self and the rising to a life of obedience and praise. It shows also the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on those whom God has chosen. In baptism, God works in us the power of forgiveness, the renewal of the Spirit, and the knowledge of the call to be God's people always.<sup>10</sup>

*This response may follow either option.*

PEOPLE

This is the water of baptism.  
Out of this water we rise with new life,  
forgiven of sin  
and one in Christ,  
members of Christ's body.

## QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

*If there are no infants or young children to be baptized, continue with the questions for older children and adults on page 138.*

### INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

*These questions may be used when the candidates are unable to speak for themselves. If more than one child is to be baptized, all parents and sponsors may respond in unison.*

PASTOR

*addressing the parent(s)*

**Do you desire to have your child(ren) baptized into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?**

PARENT(S)

*I/ We do.*

PASTOR

*addressing the parent(s) and sponsor(s), if any*

**Will you encourage** *this child/ these children*  
**to renounce the powers of evil**  
**and to receive the freedom of new life in Christ?**

PARENT(S) AND SPONSOR(S)

*I/ We will, with the help of God.*

PASTOR

**Will you teach** *this child/ these children*  
**that** *he/ she/ they* **may be led to profess**  
**Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?**

PARENT(S) AND SPONSOR(S)

*I/ We will, with the help of God.*

PASTOR

**Do you promise, by the grace of God,**  
**to be Christ's disciple(s),**  
**to follow in the way of our Savior,**  
**to resist oppression and evil,**  
**to show love and justice,**  
**and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ**  
**as best you are able?**

PARENT(S) AND SPONSOR(S)

*I/ We do, with the help of God.*

PASTOR

**Do you promise, according to the grace given you,**  
**to grow with** *this child/ these children* **in the Christian faith,**  
**to help** *this child/ these children*  
**to be** *a faithful member/ faithful members*  
**of the church of Jesus Christ,**  
**by celebrating Christ's presence,**  
**by furthering Christ's mission in all the world,**  
**and by offering the nurture of the Christian church**  
**so that** *she/ he/ they* **may affirm** *her/ his/ their* **baptism?**

PARENT(S) AND SPONSOR(S)

*I/ We do, with the help of God.*

*If there are no older children or adults to be baptized, continue with the congregational assent on page 139.*

OLDER CHILDREN AND ADULTS

*These questions may be used when candidates are able to speak for themselves. If more than one person is to be baptized, they may respond to the questions in unison.*

PASTOR

*addressing the candidate(s)*

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name(s)

**do you desire to be baptized  
into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I do.

PASTOR

*addressing the sponsor(s), if any*

**Are you ready with God's help  
to guide and encourage \_\_\_\_\_  
by counsel and example, name(s)  
in prayer and with love,  
to follow the way of Jesus Christ?**

SPONSOR(S)

I am.

PASTOR

*addressing the candidate(s)*

**Do you renounce the powers of evil  
and desire the freedom of new life in Christ?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I do.

PASTOR

**Do you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I do.

PASTOR

**Do you promise,  
by the grace of God,  
to be Christ's disciple,  
to follow in the way of our Savior,  
to resist oppression and evil,  
to show love and justice,  
and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ  
as best you are able?**

CANDIDATE(S)

**I promise, with the help of God.**

PASTOR

**Do you promise,  
according to the grace given you,  
to grow in the Christian faith  
and to be a faithful member  
of the church of Jesus Christ,  
celebrating Christ's presence  
and furthering Christ's mission in all the world?**

CANDIDATE(S)

**I promise, with the help of God.**

---

### CONGREGATIONAL ASSENT

---

*All who are able may stand as the congregation is asked to make promises.*

PASTOR

**Jesus Christ calls us  
to make disciples of all nations  
and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism.**

**Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament,  
promise your love, support, and care  
to the one(s) about to be baptized,  
as *he/she/they* live(s) and grow(s) in Christ?**

PEOPLE

**We promise our love, support, and care.**

---

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

---

*All who are able may stand. Responses are made in unison by each worshiper, including the candidate(s) for baptism.*

PASTOR

**Let us unite with the church  
in all times and places  
in confessing our faith in the triune God.**

[A]

PASTOR

**Do you believe in God?**

PEOPLE

I believe in God.

PASTOR

**Do you believe  
in Jesus Christ?**

PEOPLE

I believe in Jesus Christ.

PASTOR

**Do you believe  
in the Holy Spirit?**

PEOPLE

I believe in the Holy Spirit.

[B]

*An ancient baptismal creed, another creed, or a statement of faith may be used in full or in an abbreviated version. The style should allow congregational response. Forms of the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, historic creeds, and other affirmations of faith are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

*When incorporating baptism and confirmation or reception of members, begin the Order for Baptism here.*

---

## PRAYER OF BAPTISM

---

*The congregation may be seated. A prayer may be offered, using the pastor's own words, option A with B, or B alone.*

PASTOR

**Christ be with you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

PASTOR

**Let us pray.**

**A**

PASTOR

**We thank you, God,  
for the gift of creation  
called forth by your saving Word.  
Before the world had shape and form,  
your Spirit moved over the waters.  
Out of the waters of the deep,  
you formed the firmament  
and brought forth the earth  
to sustain all life.**

**In the time of Noah,  
you washed the earth  
with the waters of the flood,  
and your ark of salvation bore a new beginning.**

**In the time of Moses,  
your people Israel passed  
through the Red Sea waters  
from slavery to freedom  
and crossed the flowing Jordan  
to enter the promised land.**

**In the fullness of time,  
you sent Jesus Christ,  
who was nurtured  
in the water of Mary's womb.**

**Jesus was baptized by John  
in the water of the Jordan,  
became living water to a woman  
at the Samaritan well,  
washed the feet of the disciples,  
and sent them forth  
to baptize all the nations  
by water and the Holy Spirit.**

*The water may be visibly poured.*

*The following prayer, option B, may be used alone or with option A.*

B

PASTOR

**Bless by your Holy Spirit,  
gracious God, this water.  
By your Holy Spirit  
save those who confess  
the name of Jesus Christ  
that sin may have no power over them.  
Create new life in *the one/all*  
baptized this day  
that *she/he/they* may rise in Christ.  
Glory to you, eternal God,  
the one who was, and is, and shall always be,  
world without end.  
Amen.**

---

## ACT OF BAPTISM

---

### NAMING OF A CHILD

*When a child is baptized, as each child is handed into the arms of the pastor, the parent(s) may be asked to name the child.*

PASTOR

**By what name will your child be called?**

PARENT(S)

\_\_\_\_\_.  
name

*The pastor, administering the water by pouring, sprinkling, or immersion, says one of these.*

A

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**you are baptized  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

B

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**I baptize you  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

*The pastor may lay hands on the head of the baptized and say these or similar words.*

PASTOR

**The Holy Spirit be upon you,**

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**child of God,  
disciple of Christ,  
member of the church.**

---

### ACT OF PRAISE

---

*A doxology or another act of praise may follow the baptism.*

*If this order is being used in conjunction with one of the Orders for Affirmation of Baptism, return to the Order for Confirmation at the prayer on page 150 or the Order for Reception of Members at the address on page 162.*

---

### PRAYER FOR THE BAPTIZED

---

*A prayer for the baptized may be said, using one of the following or the pastor's own words.*

[A]

PASTOR

**We give you thanks,  
O Holy One, mother and  
father of all the faithful,  
for *this your child/these your  
children* and for the grace  
acknowledged here today  
in water  
and the Holy Spirit.**

**Embrace us all as sons and  
daughters in the one  
household of your love.**

**Grant us grace to receive,  
nurture, and befriend *this  
new member/these new members*  
of the body of Christ.**

[B] *includes optional  
words for use when a child  
is baptized*

PASTOR

**Let us pray for *the one/those*  
baptized today.**

**Gracious God,  
you have filled the world  
with joy by giving us  
the gift of Jesus.**

**Bless *this newly baptized person/  
these newly baptized people.***

**May *she/he/they*  
be filled with joy;  
may *he/she/they* never  
be ashamed to confess  
a personal faith in you.**

ALL

**Give to the newly baptized:  
strength for life's journey,  
courage in time of suffering,  
the joy of faith,  
the freedom of love,  
and the hope of new life;  
through Jesus Christ,  
who makes us one.  
Amen.**

**Bless the parent(s)**

**and sponsor(s)**

**of** *this child/these children.*  
**May** *she/he/they* **always**  
**show** *her/his/their*  
**gratitude for the life**  
**you have given**  
**by loving and caring**  
**for** \_\_\_\_\_ .  
name(s)

**Bless these your  
faithful people.  
Unite them in the peace  
of Christ and the company  
of the Holy Spirit.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

---

## BENEDICTION

---

*Those leading the service may greet the newly baptized, the parents, and the sponsors informally. A lighted candle or another gift signifying discipleship may be given to each newly baptized person. The pastor, sponsors, or others may move through the congregation with the newly baptized and introduce the person(s) as a sign of entry and incorporation into the living community of faith.*

PASTOR

**Go in the peace of Christ.**

ALL

**Thanks be to God.**

*Those who have participated in the Order for Baptism may return to their places in the congregation.*

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

# **Order for Confirmation: Affirmation of Baptism**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

A person is incorporated into the universal church, the body of Christ, through the sacrament of baptism. When an infant or very young child is baptized, the baptismal promises are made by one or more parents and/or sponsors. These adult Christians assume certain responsibilities for the Christian nurture of the baptized child. Those who consent to this ministry of nurture are members in good standing of a Christian church in order that they may honor their promises fully. The entire congregation also assumes the role of sponsors as its members promise to provide a supportive Christian community in which a child may grow in awareness and understanding concerning the meaning of life in Christ.

As a child who was baptized in infancy approaches adolescence, the local church offers that person the opportunity to give public assent to the baptismal promises. Confirmation celebrates this occasion of affirmation of baptism in the life of the individual and of the local church.

Before a service of confirmation is scheduled, the appropriate leaders of the local church shall be satisfied that the participants have been instructed properly in the Christian faith and personally desire to affirm their baptism. This order is designed to be used within a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word. The service shall be held in the presence of the worshiping congregation. When urgent circumstances make it necessary to hold the service apart from the worshiping congregation, appropriate leaders of the local church shall participate in the ceremony with the pastor.

Parents and sponsors stand with those who are affirming their baptism as an expression of continuing support and concern for their Christian pilgrimage. If a young person who has not been baptized but has shared in a preparatory

class with peers wishes to participate with classmates rather than receive baptism on a separate occasion, he or she may be baptized as indicated in the instructions.

---

## OUTLINE

---

*This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon.*

**Invitation**  
**Sentences**  
**Questions of the Candidates**  
**Affirmation of Faith**  
**Prayer of the Candidates**  
**Prayers of the Congregation**  
**Act of Confirmation**  
**Prayer of Confirmation**  
**Address**  
**Question about Participation**  
**Welcome**  
**Greeting of Christian Love**  
**Prayer**  
**Benediction**

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

---

INVITATION

---

*After the sermon has been preached, appointed representatives and the pastor may gather in the chancel for confirmation. An elected leader of the church may invite all who have indicated willingness to affirm their baptism by confirmation to come forward, using the following or similar words.*

LEADER

**We invite to come forward** *the one/those*  
**who wish(es) to affirm** *his/her/their* **baptism**  
**by being confirmed.**

*The name(s) of the individual(s) may be read, and the candidate(s) may come and stand, if able.*

LEADER

**Friends in Christ,**  
**we all are received into the church**  
**through the sacrament of baptism.**  
*This person has/ These people have* **found nurture and support**  
**in the midst of the family of Christ.**  
**Through prayer and study**  
*she/he/they has/have* **been led**  
**by the Holy Spirit**  
**to affirm** *her/his/their* **baptism**  
**and to claim in our presence**  
*her/his/their* **covenantal relationship**  
**with Christ and the members of the church.**  
*He/She/They is/are* **here**  
**for service to Jesus Christ,**  
**using the gifts**  
**which the Holy Spirit bestows.**

---

SENTENCES

---

*One of the following or other passages from scripture may be read.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Hear the words of Jesus:  
I am the vine,  
you are the branches.  
Anyone who  
abides in me, and  
I in that person,  
is the one who  
bears much fruit.  
If you abide in  
me, and my words  
abide in you,  
ask whatever you  
will, and it shall  
be done for you.  
If you keep my  
commandments,  
you will abide  
in my love.  
These things I  
have spoken to  
you, that my joy  
may be in you,  
and that your joy  
may be full.<sup>11</sup>**

**[B]**

LEADER

**God's message is  
near you,  
on your lips and  
in your heart,  
that is, the  
word of faith  
that we preach.  
If you confess  
with your lips  
that Jesus is Lord  
and believe that  
God raised Jesus  
from the dead,  
you will be saved.  
For it is by our  
faith that we are  
put right  
with God;  
it is by our  
confession that  
we are saved.<sup>12</sup>**

**[C]**

LEADER

**You are no  
longer strangers  
and sojourners,  
but you are  
equally citizens  
with the saints  
and members  
of the household  
of God,  
built upon the  
foundation of the  
apostles and  
prophets,  
Christ Jesus  
alone being the  
cornerstone,  
in whom the  
whole structure is  
joined together  
and grows into a  
holy temple  
in Christ;  
in whom you also  
are built into it  
for a dwelling  
place of God  
in the Spirit.<sup>13</sup>**

---

## QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

---

*These questions parallel the questions asked of candidates for baptism. If there is more than one candidate, they may be asked together and respond in unison.*

*The first question includes words for candidate(s) being baptized as well as one(s) affirming baptism. With more than one candidate, it may be necessary to address the question using each set of words.*

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name(s)  
**do you desire to** *affirm your baptism/be baptized*  
**into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I do.

PASTOR

**Do you renounce the powers of evil  
and desire the freedom of new life in Christ?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I do.

PASTOR

**Do you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I do.

PASTOR

**Do you promise, by the grace of God,  
to be Christ's disciple,  
to follow in the way of our Savior,  
to resist oppression and evil,  
to show love and justice,  
and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ  
as best you are able?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I promise, with the help of God.

PASTOR

**Do you promise,  
according to the grace given you,  
to grow in the Christian faith  
and to be a faithful member  
of the church of Jesus Christ,  
celebrating Christ's presence  
and furthering Christ's mission in all the world?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I promise, with the help of God.

---

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

---

*All who are able may stand. The responses are made in unison by each worshiper, including the candidate(s).*

PASTOR

**Let us unite with the church  
in all times and places  
in confessing our faith in the triune God.**

**A**

PASTOR

**Do you believe in God?**

PEOPLE

I believe in God.

PASTOR

**Do you believe  
in Jesus Christ?**

PEOPLE

I believe in Jesus Christ.

PASTOR

**Do you believe  
in the Holy Spirit?**

PEOPLE

I believe in the Holy Spirit.

**B**

*An ancient baptismal creed, another creed, a statement of faith, or the local church covenant may be used in full or in an abbreviated version. The style should allow congregational response. Forms of the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, historic creeds, and other affirmations are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

*The congregation may be seated.*

*If there is a candidate for baptism, use the Order for Baptism, beginning with the prayer of baptism on page 140. Following the act of praise on page 143, return to this point of the Order for Confirmation.*

*If no one is to be baptized, the service continues with the prayer of the candidates which follows.*

---

**PRAYER OF THE CANDIDATES**

---

*The candidates who are able may stand or kneel.*

PASTOR AND CANDIDATE(S)

**O God, my God,  
known to me in Jesus Christ,  
I give myself to you as your own,  
to love and serve you faithfully  
all the days of my life.  
Amen.<sup>14</sup>**

---

**PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

---

PASTOR

**Let us pray in silence.**

*A period of silent prayer follows.*

PASTOR

**Let us pray together.**

ALL

**Almighty God,  
who in baptism  
received these your servants into the church,  
forgave their sins,  
and promised them eternal life,  
increase in them the gifts  
of your Holy Spirit.  
Grant love for others,  
joy in serving you,  
peace in disagreement,  
patience in suffering,  
kindness toward all people,  
goodness in evil times,  
faithfulness in temptation,  
gentleness in the face of opposition,  
self-control in all things.  
Thereby strengthen them  
for their ministry in the world;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
Amen.**

*If the Lord's Prayer is not to be said elsewhere in the service, it may be said at this time.*

---

## ACT OF CONFIRMATION

---

*Parents and baptismal and/or confirmation sponsors, if any, may come forward and stand, if able, near the confirmands. Candidates who are able may kneel. The pastor and other leaders of the local church may place hands upon each candidate individually. One of the following or similar words may be said.*

**[A]**

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**the God of peace  
sanctify you.  
I pray that you will be  
preserved blameless  
to the coming of our Savior  
Jesus Christ.**

CANDIDATE(S) AND PEOPLE  
Amen.

**[B]**

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**the God of mercies  
multiply grace and peace  
in you, enable you truly  
and faithfully to keep  
your vows, defend you  
in every time of danger,  
preserve you to the end,  
and finally bring you  
to rest with all the saints  
in glory everlasting.**

CANDIDATE(S) AND PEOPLE  
Amen.

OR

**[C]**

PASTOR

**Strengthen, O God,  
this your servant**

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**with your heavenly grace  
that *he/she* may continue  
yours for ever;  
and daily increase in *him/her*  
your Holy Spirit, until you  
receive *him/her* at last  
in your eternal home.**

CANDIDATE(S) AND PEOPLE  
Amen.

**[D]**

PASTOR

**O God, in the grace  
of Jesus Christ you have  
accepted this your servant**

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**through the water  
of baptism.  
Nourish in *her/him* the  
power of your Holy Spirit  
that *she/he* may serve you  
in the world.**

CANDIDATE(S) AND PEOPLE  
Amen.

---

PRAYER OF CONFIRMATION

---

PASTOR

**We rejoice,  
O merciful God,  
with *this person/these people*  
in the gift of the Holy Spirit,  
and in the Spirit's power  
to awaken us to new truth  
and to inspire us to venture  
into fullness of life.**

**We give you thanks  
that *she/he/they* *has/have* been moved  
to affirm *her/his/their* baptism.  
Help *him/her/them* to live  
not for *himself/herself/themselves*  
but for Christ and those whom Christ loves.  
Keep *her/him/them* steady  
and abounding in hope,  
never giving up,  
pressing toward the goal of life with you  
in Jesus Christ.**

CANDIDATE(S) AND PEOPLE

Amen.

*The newly confirmed individual(s) who are able may rise  
and stand in place.*

---

ADDRESS

---

PASTOR

**By your baptism  
you were made one with us  
in the body of Christ, the church.  
Today we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith  
which has brought you  
to this time and place.  
We celebrate your presence  
in this household of faith.**

---

QUESTION ABOUT PARTICIPATION

---

PASTOR

**Do you promise to participate in the life and mission  
of this family of God's people,  
sharing regularly in the worship of God  
and enlisting in the work of this local church  
as it serves this community and the world?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I promise, with the help of God.

---

WELCOME

---

*Members of the local church who are able may stand and  
say the following or other words of welcome.*

PASTOR

**Let us, the members of \_\_\_\_\_,  
express our welcome \_\_\_\_\_ local church  
and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.**

PEOPLE

We promise you our continuing friendship and prayers  
as we share the hopes and labors  
of the church of Jesus Christ.  
By the power of the Holy Spirit  
may we continue to grow together  
in God's knowledge and love  
and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

---

GREETING OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

---

*The congregation may be seated. The pastor and represen-  
tatives of the local church may greet each newly confirmed  
person individually with these or other words and may  
offer the hand of Christian love.*

PASTOR AND REPRESENTATIVES

**In the name of Jesus Christ,  
and on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_,  
local church  
we extend to you the hand of Christian love.**

---

PRAYER

---

PASTOR

**Let us pray.**

**A**

PASTOR

**Eternal God,  
we praise you  
for calling us  
to be your  
servant people  
and for gathering  
us into the body  
of Christ.  
We thank you  
for sending to us  
*this believer/these  
believers* that  
we may work  
together in  
serving the needs  
of others.**

**Confirm in us  
the power  
of your covenant  
that we may live  
in your Spirit,  
share regularly  
in worship,  
and so love each  
other that we  
may have among  
us the same mind  
which was  
in Christ Jesus,  
to whom be all  
honor and glory.**

ALL  
**Amen.**<sup>15</sup>

**B**

PASTOR

**Almighty and  
everliving God,  
may your hand  
ever be over  
your servant(s)  
confirmed today.  
May your  
Holy Spirit  
ever be with  
*her/him/them*.  
So lead  
*him/her/them*  
in the knowledge  
and obedience  
of your Word  
that *he/she/they*  
may serve you  
in this life  
and dwell  
with you  
in the life  
to come;  
through Jesus  
Christ.**

ALL  
**Amen.**<sup>16</sup>

**C**

PASTOR

**O God,  
we praise you  
for calling us  
to faith and  
for gathering us  
into the church,  
the body  
of Christ.  
We thank you  
for your people  
gathered in this  
local church  
and rejoice  
that you have  
increased  
our community  
of faith.**

**Together may we  
live in the Spirit,  
building one  
another up  
in love,  
sharing in the life  
and worship of  
the church, and  
serving the world  
for the sake  
of Jesus Christ.**

ALL  
**Amen.**<sup>17</sup>

---

BENEDICTION

---

PASTOR

**Go in the peace of Christ.**

PEOPLE

Thanks be to God.

*Those who have participated in the Order for Confirmation may return to their places in the congregation.*

*At the conclusion of this order, a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

# **Order for Reception of Members: Affirmation of Baptism**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

A person is incorporated into the universal church, the body of Christ, through the sacrament of baptism. Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of acceptance of individuals into the care of Christ's church, the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and the beginning of their new growth into full Christian faith and life. Baptism is not only a personal celebration in the lives of the individual candidates and their families, but also a central celebration in the life of the local church which embodies the universal church in a particular place. For this reason, baptism takes place in the presence of the community of faith gathered for public worship. Public worship is also the setting for affirmation of baptism.

While baptism occurs only once in a person's life, there are times when Christians feel called to affirm their baptism. For adolescents, this usually occurs in confirmation. A congregation may be offered an opportunity for affirmation of baptism. One such opportunity is the service of water in the Order for the Great Vigil of Easter, beginning on page 238. When Christians unite with a local church, they affirm their baptism. This order asks those being received as members to respond to questions parallel to those of baptism as they affirm their baptism.

In the United Church of Christ, people unite with a local church by baptism and confirmation or by profession of faith and baptism. They also unite by reaffirmation or re-profession of faith or letter of transfer or certification from other Christian churches.

Before the Order for Reception of Members is scheduled, the appropriate leaders of the local church shall be satisfied

that the participants have been instructed properly in the Christian faith and personally desire to affirm their baptism. If people are uniting by letter of transfer or certification from other Christian churches, it is the responsibility of the leaders to verify that the documents are in order.

This order is designed to be used within a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word. The service shall be held in the presence of the worshipping congregation. When urgent circumstances make it necessary to hold the service apart from the worshipping congregation, appropriate leaders of the local church shall participate in the ceremony with the pastor. There are instructions in this order for the Order for Baptism to be used for adults who have not been baptized and wish to unite with the local church by profession of faith. Confirmation may or may not follow.

---

## OUTLINE

---

*This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon.*

**Invitation**  
**Sentences**  
**Questions of the Candidates**  
**Affirmation of Faith**  
**Address**  
**Question about Participation**  
**Welcome and Reception**  
**Greeting of Christian Love**  
**Prayer**  
**Benediction**

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

---

## INVITATION

---

*After the sermon has been preached, appointed representatives and the pastor may gather in the chancel. An elected leader of the church may invite all who have indicated willingness to affirm their baptism by joining this local church to come forward, using the following or similar words.*

LEADER

**We invite to come forward** *the one/those*  
**who wish(es) to affirm** *his/her/their* **baptism**  
**by uniting with us in this household of faith.**

*The name(s) of the individual(s) may be read and the candidate(s) may come forward and stand, if able. If member(s) are being received from other churches by letter of transfer, that information may be presented.*

LEADER

**Friends in Christ,**  
**we all are received into the church**  
**through the sacrament of baptism.**  
*This person has/ These people have* **found nurture and support**  
**in the midst of the family of Christ.**  
**Through prayer and study**  
*she/he/they has/have* **been led**  
**by the Holy Spirit**  
**to affirm** *her/his/their* **baptism**  
**and to claim in our presence**  
*her/his/their* **covenantal relationship**  
**with Christ and the members of the church.**  
*He/She/They is/are* **here**  
**for service to Jesus Christ,**  
**using the gifts**  
**which the Holy Spirit bestows.**

---

## SENTENCES

---

*One of the following or other passages from scripture may be read.*

**A**

LEADER

**Hear the words of Jesus:  
I am the vine,  
you are the branches.  
Anyone who abides in me, and I in that person, is the one who bears much fruit. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.<sup>18</sup>**

**B**

LEADER

**God's message is near you, on your lips and in your heart, that is, the word of faith that we preach. If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by our faith that we are put right with God; it is by our confession that we are saved.<sup>19</sup>**

**C**

LEADER

**You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are equally citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus alone being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in Christ; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.<sup>20</sup>**

---

## QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATES

---

*These questions parallel the questions asked of candidates for baptism. If there is more than one candidate, they may be asked together and respond in unison.*

*The first question includes words for candidate(s) being baptized as well as one(s) affirming baptism. With more than one candidate, it may be necessary to address the question using each set of words.*

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name(s)  
**do you desire to** *affirm your baptism/be baptized*  
**into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I do.

PASTOR

**Do you renounce the powers of evil  
and desire the freedom of new life in Christ?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I do.

PASTOR

**Do you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I do.

PASTOR

**Do you promise, by the grace of God,  
to be Christ's disciple,  
to follow in the way of our Savior,  
to resist oppression and evil,  
to show love and justice,  
and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ  
as best you are able?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I promise, with the help of God.

PASTOR

**Do you promise,  
according to the grace given you,  
to grow in the Christian faith  
and to be a faithful member  
of the church of Jesus Christ,  
celebrating Christ's presence  
and furthering Christ's mission in all the world?**

CANDIDATE(S)

I promise, with the help of God.

---

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

---

*All who are able may stand. The responses are made in unison by each worshiper, including the candidate(s).*

PASTOR

**Let us unite with the church  
in all times and places  
in confessing our faith in the triune God.**

**A**

PASTOR

**Do you believe in God?**

PEOPLE

I believe in God.

PASTOR

**Do you believe  
in Jesus Christ?**

PEOPLE

I believe in Jesus Christ.

PASTOR

**Do you believe  
in the Holy Spirit?**

PEOPLE

I believe in the Holy Spirit.

**B**

*An ancient baptismal creed, another creed, a statement of faith, or the local church covenant may be used in full or in an abbreviated version. The style should allow congregational response. Forms of the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, historic creeds, and other affirmations are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

*The congregation may be seated.*

*If there is a candidate for baptism, use the Order for Baptism, beginning with the prayer of baptism on page 140. Following the act of praise on page 143, return to this point of the Order for Reception of Members.*

*If no one is to be baptized, the service continues here.*

---

**ADDRESS**

---

*The following or similar words may be addressed to all people uniting with the church by baptism, reaffirmation or re-profession of faith, or by transfer or certification from other Christian churches.*

PASTOR

**By your baptism you were made one with us  
in the body of Christ, the church.**

**Today we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith  
which has brought you to this time and place.  
We give thanks for every community of faith  
that has been your spiritual home,  
and we celebrate your presence  
in this household of faith.**

---

### **QUESTION ABOUT PARTICIPATION**

---

PASTOR

**Do you promise to participate in the life and mission  
of this family of God's people,  
sharing regularly in the worship of God  
and enlisting in the work of this local church  
as it serves this community and the world?**

CANDIDATE(S)

**I promise, with the help of God.**

---

### **WELCOME AND RECEPTION**

---

*Members of the local church who are able may stand and  
say the following or other words of welcome.*

PASTOR

**Let us, the members of \_\_\_\_\_,  
express our welcome                      local church  
and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.**

PEOPLE

**We welcome you with joy  
in the common life of this church.  
We promise you our friendship and prayers  
as we share the hopes and labors  
of the church of Jesus Christ.  
By the power of the Holy Spirit  
may we continue to grow together  
in God's knowledge and love  
and be witnesses of our risen Savior.**

---

## GREETING OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

---

*The congregation may be seated. The pastor and representatives of the local church may greet each new member personally with these or other words and may offer the hand of Christian love.*

PASTOR AND REPRESENTATIVES

**In the name of Jesus Christ,  
and on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_,**  
local church

**we extend to you the hand of Christian love,  
welcoming you into the company of this local church.**

---

## PRAYER

---

PASTOR

**Let us pray.**

**[A]**

PASTOR

**Eternal God,  
we praise you  
for calling us  
to be your  
servant people  
and for gathering  
us into the body  
of Christ.  
We thank you  
for sending to us  
*this believer/these  
believers* that  
we may work  
together in  
serving the needs  
of others.**

**Confirm in us  
the power  
of your covenant  
that we may live**

**[B]**

PASTOR

**Almighty and  
everliving God,  
may your hand  
ever be over  
your servant(s)  
who made a  
commitment  
to membership  
here today.  
May your  
Holy Spirit  
ever be with  
*her/him/them*.  
So lead  
*him/her/them*  
in the knowledge  
and obedience  
of your Word  
that *he/she/they*  
may serve you  
in this life**

**[C]**

PASTOR

**O God,  
we praise you  
for calling us  
to faith and for  
gathering us into  
the church, the  
body of Christ.  
We thank you  
for your people  
gathered in this  
local church  
and rejoice  
that you have  
increased  
our community  
of faith.**

**Together may we  
live in the Spirit,  
building one  
another up**

**in your Spirit,  
share regularly  
in worship,  
and so love each  
other that we  
may have among  
us the same mind  
which was  
in Christ Jesus,  
to whom be all  
honor and glory.**

ALL  
Amen.<sup>21</sup>

**and dwell  
with you  
in the life  
to come;  
through Jesus  
Christ.**

ALL  
Amen.<sup>22</sup>

**in love,  
sharing in the life  
and worship  
of the church,  
and serving  
the world  
for the sake  
of Jesus Christ.**

ALL  
Amen.<sup>23</sup>

---

**BENEDICTION**

---

PASTOR

**Go in the peace of Christ.**

PEOPLE

Thanks be to God.

*Those who have participated in the Order for Reception of Members may return to their seats.*

*At the conclusion of this order, a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*



---

# Services of a Church's Life

---

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---

# **Order for Lighting Advent Candles**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

An Advent wreath with Advent candles is a tradition that helps Christians focus attention on the coming of the Christ at Bethlehem and at the close of history. As Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year, this season may be used to retell the biblical stories of the life of Jesus.

The lighting of Advent candles may take place at an appropriate point in a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word. The candles could be lighted during the opening acts or at the time of the reading of scripture.

The suggestions offered here may encourage worship leaders to create new traditions for their local churches. Children and youth should be included in the preparation of the Advent wreath and as leaders in lighting the candles.

Purple, the liturgical color of the season of Advent, usually is shown in the four candles surrounding a larger white Christ candle in the center of the Advent wreath, although local church traditions vary.

A theme should continue through Advent to Christmas. The theme of light is often used in the northern hemisphere because Advent is experienced at the darkest time of the year. Jesus is the Light of the World and thus brings God's hope. Traditions regarding the order of the themes of hope, peace, love, and joy may differ in some local churches.

This is also a good time to integrate worship and the educational program of the church. Common themes for the worship and the educational program enhance the celebration of Christ's birth.

This order, which illustrates one approach to the use of the Advent wreath, is adapted and used by permission of United

Church Press. It was published in 1977 as “Celebrating Advent in the Congregational Service of Worship” in *Advent: A Congregational Life/Intergenerational Experience*, copyright 1977 United Church Press.

---

## OUTLINE

---

*This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word as part of the opening acts or at the time of the reading of scripture.*

*The outline is followed each Sunday of Advent.*

**Introductory Sentences**  
**Reading of Scripture**  
**Lighting of the Candle(s)**  
**Prayer**  
**Hymn**

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue.*

---

## FIRST SUNDAY: HOPE

---

*During this order, one candle of the Advent wreath is lighted. It may be any candle in the wreath except the central Christ candle.*

---

### INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES

---

LEADER

**Today is the beginning of Advent—  
the preparation time  
for celebrating Christ's birth.  
We are here because God's promises  
to our ancestors came true  
when Jesus was born.  
God's promise is kept each Sunday  
when we worship  
because Christ is in our midst.  
God will keep the promise  
to come again in glory.**

---

### READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*Read Isaiah 60:2.*

---

### LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

---

LEADER

**We light this candle  
to proclaim the coming  
of the light of God  
into the world.  
With the coming of this light there is *hope*.  
Because of Christ we not only have hope,  
but we believe that good is stronger than evil.  
God wants us to work for good in this world.**

*Light one candle in the wreath.*

---

PRAYER

---

LEADER

**O God, we thank you  
that Jesus brought hope into our world.  
By the good news of the Bible  
you are still bringing hope to people.  
Help us to be ready to welcome Jesus Christ  
so that we may think good thoughts  
and do good deeds  
and so that we may be a people of hope  
in our world.**

ALL

**Amen.**

---

HYMN

---

---

SECOND SUNDAY: PEACE

---

*The candle lighted on the first Sunday may be relighted  
when other candles are lighted in preparation for the ser-  
vice. During this order, a second Advent candle, other  
than the central Christ candle, is lighted.*

---

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES

---

LEADER

**We gather around the Advent wreath today  
knowing that we are not perfect—  
that we all make mistakes and do bad things.  
Only Jesus obeyed God fully.  
Jesus helps us to live as God wants us to live.  
Jesus gives us peace.**

---

READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*Read Isaiah 9:6-7.*

---

## LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

---

LEADER

**We light this candle  
to proclaim the coming  
of the light of God  
into the world.**

**With the coming of this light there is *peace*,  
for Christ is called the “Prince of Peace.”  
Christ’s name is also Emmanuel, “God with us.”  
The presence of Christ with us gives us peace day by day.**

*Light the second candle in the wreath.*

---

## PRAYER

---

LEADER

**Eternal God, we thank you  
that through all the years  
you have given peace to your people.  
Help us to have your peace in our lives.  
We pray that, in this Advent season,  
we may, by what we do,  
show your presence to the sick, to the hungry,  
and to the lonely,  
so that they too may have peace.**

ALL

**Amen.**

---

## HYMN

---

---

## THIRD SUNDAY: LOVE

---

*The candles lighted on previous Sundays may be relighted  
when other candles are lighted in preparation for the  
service. During this order, a third Advent candle, other  
than the central Christ candle, is lighted.*

---

## INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES

---

LEADER

**As we gather around the Advent wreath today,  
we rejoice that Christmas is a time of prayer  
and of open hearts when we sing songs of joy.  
Christmas is a time of worship—  
the moment when the busiest of us pause in wonder.  
Christmas happens when God comes to us  
in love through Jesus Christ  
and fills us with love for all humankind.**

---

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*Read 1 John 4:9-11.*

---

## LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

---

LEADER

**We light this candle to proclaim the coming  
of the light of God into the world.  
With the coming of this light there is *love*.  
Such great love helps us to love God and one another.**

*Light the third candle in the wreath.*

---

## PRAYER

---

LEADER

**O God, we thank you  
that Jesus showed your love for every person—  
babies and children, old people and young,  
sick people and those who were strong,  
rich people and those who were poor.  
Come to us in this Advent season,  
and give us love in our hearts for all people.**

ALL

**Amen.**

---

## HYMN

---

---

## FOURTH SUNDAY: JOY

---

*The candles lighted on previous Sundays may be relighted when other candles are lighted in preparation for the service. During this order the fourth Advent candle, one other than the central Christ candle, is lighted.*

---

### INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES

---

LEADER

**Soon we shall celebrate the birth of Jesus.  
We worship God with joy in our hearts  
as we are reminded of the words the angel said  
on that first Christmas Day:  
“Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy  
which will come to all the people.”<sup>1</sup>**

---

### READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*Read John 15: 9-11.*

---

### LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

---

LEADER

**We light this candle to proclaim the coming  
of the light of God into the world.  
With the coming of this light there is joy,  
joy that is ours not only at Christmas but always.**

*Light the fourth candle in the wreath.*

---

### PRAYER

---

LEADER

**O Holy One, as Christmas draws near,  
there is a sense of excitement in the air.  
We can feel a joy in our lives  
and see it in those around us.**

**Still, for some of us this is a sad time  
because of unhappy things  
that have happened in our lives.  
Help us to have the joy  
that does not depend on earthly happiness  
but on you.  
Help us to be filled with your joy  
so that we may share it with a joyless world.**

ALL

**Amen.**

---

HYMN

---

---

CHRISTMAS: GOOD NEWS

---

*All candles in the Advent wreath remain unlighted throughout the service until they are lighted during this order.*

---

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES

---

LEADER

**Good evening [morning]!  
On this Christmas Eve [Day] we are gathered  
as God's people to celebrate again  
what Christ's coming means to the world.  
We join with Christians all over the world  
who are celebrating tonight [today].**

---

READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*A different person may read each passage: Isaiah 9:6;  
Luke 2:10, 14; and Romans 5:5.*

---

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

---

LEADER

**Tonight [Today] we relight the four Advent candles  
and recall what the good news means.**

*A leader lights a candle while saying each word: **hope, peace, love, joy.***

LEADER

**Jesus Christ is the greatest gift  
who makes all these other gifts possible.  
So, we light the Christ candle now,  
as we think about what Christ's coming means  
to each one of us.**

*A leader lights the central Christ candle.*

---

PRAYER

---

LEADER

**We thank you, God,  
for your gift of Jesus Christ to the entire world.  
We thank you that Christ's coming  
makes hope, peace, love, and joy possible  
for every person in every nation.  
Encourage us to do our part  
to bring goodwill and peace to our families,  
our churches, our neighborhoods, and the world.  
Now let your Spirit put us in touch with you,  
the living God, through the words and music  
we hear tonight [today].  
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.**

ALL

**Amen.**

---

HYMN

---

# Order for Ash Wednesday

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent for many in the Christian church. The forty days of fasting (not counting Sundays) may begin with the imposition of the ashes on the foreheads of the faithful.

During the moving ancient ceremony, the ashes—from which Ash Wednesday gets its name—were placed on the foreheads of the faithful with the words from Genesis: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” While this service was widely used after the seventh century, there is evidence that such a service originated in Gaul in the sixth century and was at first “confined to public penitents doing penance for grave and notorious sin, whom the clergy tried to comfort and encourage by submitting themselves to the same public humiliation.”<sup>2</sup>

While the imposition of ashes is not widely used in the tradition of the United Church of Christ, the service of penitence and confession is used before the celebration of Holy Communion. Very often the service provides periods of extended silence for personal prayers and reflection.

Ashes may be placed on the forehead of each worshiper as part of the act of confession and as a sign of mortality and penitence. Traditionally, ashes are prepared before the service by burning palm or olive branches and grinding the ashes together with a little water or oil. The leader’s thumb is used to transfer the mixture from a shallow bowl to each participant’s forehead. A towel or napkin is provided for cleaning the hands of the leader.

The Order for Ash Wednesday is designed to begin a service. Following this order, a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word begins, omitting the portions of that order which have occurred during the Order for Ash Wednesday.

This order is adapted from an order in both *The Book of Common Prayer* and the *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

The following scripture passages may be used on Ash Wednesday: Psalm 51:1-13; Psalm 103; Joel 2:12-19; 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:2; and Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21.

---

## OUTLINE

---

***This order begins a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word.***

**Prelude**

**Greeting**

**Sentences**

**Hymn of Adoration**

**Confession of Sin, including Imposition of Ashes**

***A hymn may be sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word follows, beginning with the reading of scripture and omitting the elements that have occurred during this order.***

---

PRELUDE

---

*The service may begin with music as the congregation gathers in a penitential atmosphere.*

---

GREETING

---

*All who are able may stand. This or another Lenten greeting may be used.*

LEADER

**Let us look to Jesus,  
the pioneer and perfecter of our faith,  
who for the joy that was waiting  
endured the cross.<sup>3</sup>**

---

SENTENCES

---

*All who are able may stand. The leader may offer these and/or other words based on scripture.*

LEADER

**Jesus came to preach good news to the poor,  
to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to liberate those who are oppressed,  
and to proclaim the year of God's favor.<sup>4</sup>**

---

HYMN OF ADORATION

---

---

CONFESSION OF SIN

---

*The people may be seated. A leader may use these or other words to invite confession.*

LEADER

**As disciples of Jesus Christ,  
we are called to struggle against everything  
that leads us away from the love of God and neighbor.  
Repentance, fasting, prayer, study, and works of love  
help us return to that love.**

**I invite you, therefore,  
to commit yourselves to love God and neighbor  
by confessing your sin  
and by asking God for strength  
to persevere in your Lenten discipline.**

*Silence may be observed for reflection and prayer.*

*The one presiding may lead the people in confession.  
A period of silence also may be included following  
each response.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

PEOPLE

**Most holy and merciful God:  
We confess to you and to one another,  
and to the whole communion of saints  
in heaven and on earth,  
that we have sinned by our own fault  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.**

LEADER

**We have not loved you  
with all our heart, and mind, and strength.  
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
We have not forgiven others  
as we have been forgiven.**

PEOPLE

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

LEADER

**We have been deaf to your call  
to serve as Christ served us.  
We have not been true  
to the mind of Christ.  
We have grieved your Holy Spirit.**

PEOPLE

**Have mercy on us, O God.**

LEADER

**We confess to you, O God,  
all our past unfaithfulness.  
The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives,**

PEOPLE

We confess to you, O God.

LEADER

**Our self-indulgent appetites and ways  
and our exploitation of other people,**

PEOPLE

We confess to you, O God.

LEADER

**Our anger at our own frustration  
and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,**

PEOPLE

We confess to you, O God.

LEADER

**Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts  
and our dishonesty in our daily life and work,**

PEOPLE

We confess to you, O God.

LEADER

**Our negligence in prayer and worship  
and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,**

PEOPLE

We confess to you, O God.

LEADER

**Accept our repentance, O God,  
for the wrongs we have done.  
For our neglect of human need and suffering  
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,**

PEOPLE

Accept our repentance, O God.

LEADER

**For all false judgments,  
for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors,**

**and for our prejudice and contempt  
toward those who differ from us,**

PEOPLE

Accept our repentance, O God.

LEADER

**For our waste and pollution of your creation  
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,**

PEOPLE

Accept our repentance, O God.

LEADER

**Restore us, O God,  
and let your anger depart from us.**

PEOPLE

Favorably hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.  
Amen.

*Silence may be observed for confession and prayer.*

*In her or his own words, a leader may invite those who wish to receive ashes to come forward. Recipients who are able may kneel or stand. The leader may apply ashes to the forehead of each person with these or other words.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Remember that  
you are dust,  
and to dust  
you shall return.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Turn away from your sins  
and believe the good news.**

*After all who wish to receive ashes have received them, the prayers of confession may be concluded with these or other words.*

LEADER

**Accomplish in us, O God,  
the work of your salvation,**

PEOPLE

That we may show forth your glory.

LEADER

**By the cross and passion of our Savior,**

PEOPLE

**Bring us with all your saints  
to the joy of Christ's resurrection.**

ALL

**Amen.**

LEADER

*addressing the congregation*

**Almighty God does not desire the death of sinners,  
but rather that they may turn  
from their wickedness and live.**

**Therefore we implore God to grant us true repentance  
and the Holy Spirit  
that those things which we do this day  
may be pleasing to God,  
that the rest of our lives may be lived faithfully,  
and that at the last we may come to God's eternal joy;  
through Jesus the Christ.**

ALL

**Thanks be to God!**

*At the conclusion of this order, a hymn may be sung. A  
Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word  
follows, beginning with the reading of scripture and omit-  
ting elements that have occurred during this order.*

# Order for Palm/Passion Sunday

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

Passion Sunday (*Judica me*), by the medieval period, was observed on the fifth Sunday in Lent, that is, the Sunday before Palm Sunday. In western Europe during the nineteenth century, the entire week was called “Passion Week.” It was characterized by services in which Christ’s suffering and death were liturgically anticipated and remembered. The most ancient witnesses, however, associate this practice not with the fifth Sunday in Lent but with the Saturday immediately before Palm Sunday. For this and other reasons, the liturgical reform movement today, with remarkable consensus, has chosen to see Palm/Passion Sunday as a unit. The distinction between Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the events of Christ’s suffering and death is fully honored, with the greater emphasis being placed on the latter.

Palm/Passion Sunday is the gateway to Holy Week. It is appropriate that both Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the full account of Christ’s passion, death, and burial be commemorated in the principal worship of the congregation on this day. Where this is not done, Christians are deprived of adequate preparation for the events of Holy Week, and those who attend only Sunday worship will experience a distorted transition from the triumph of Palm Sunday to the victory of an Easter devoid of the reality of Christ’s suffering and death on the cross.

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem is best commemorated in an introduction to the service which includes a congregational procession into the sanctuary. Where this is done, arrangements should be made to accommodate those whose abilities do not include walking easily. When a full procession is not feasible, the ceremony may be held in the chancel with the choir and worship leaders representing the congregation in the procession.

The reading of the passion of Jesus Christ is an ancient practice worthy of the time it requires. If the full lesson is read in dramatic form by rehearsed participants, the congregation is enabled to visualize the historic events in the fullness of their power. A brief sermon may further explain an aspect of the passion message.

This order is to be used with a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word. It replaces the beginning of the service and adds another Gospel lesson.

---

## OUTLINE

---

***This order replaces the beginning of a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word.***

**Gathering**

**Greeting**

**Prayer**

**Reading of the Palm Sunday Gospel**

**Blessing of the Palms**

**Hymn of Adoration**

**Collect for Illumination**

**Reading of Scripture**

***A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word follows, beginning at the point after the reading of scripture and omitting the elements that have occurred during this order.***

---

## GATHERING

---

*The people may assemble informally in a special place outdoors, in a parish hall, or in the usual place of worship. Palm branches or cuttings of evergreen or other trees may be distributed to all as they arrive or may be placed where they are visible to all present and may be distributed after the blessing. The church bell may be sounded to announce the beginning of the service.*

---

## GREETING

---

*The one presiding may give necessary instructions and may lead a responsive greeting with these or similar words.*

Ⓐ

LEADER

**Hosanna!**

PEOPLE

Hosanna in the highest!

ALL

**Praise be to God!**

Ⓑ

LEADER

**Lift your heads and behold  
Emmanuel, "God with us."**

PEOPLE

Behold our God  
who comes riding  
on an ass,  
the ruler who dares to be  
last rather than first.

---

## PRAYER

---

LEADER

**Christ is with us.**

PEOPLE

Christ is in our midst.

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

PEOPLE

Merciful God,  
as we enter Holy Week  
and gather at your house of prayer,  
turn our hearts again to Jerusalem,  
to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ,

that united with Christ  
and all the faithful  
we may one day enter in triumph  
the city not made by human hands,  
the new Jerusalem,  
eternal in the heavens,  
where with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
Christ lives in glory for ever.  
Amen.

---

READING OF THE  
PALM SUNDAY GOSPEL

---

*The account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem may be read.  
The people may stand or sit depending upon physical  
arrangements, individuals' abilities, and local custom. The  
ecumenical lectionary suggests the following cycle of  
Gospel lessons.*

YEAR A: Matthew 21:1-11

YEAR B: Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16

YEAR C: Luke 19:28-40

---

BLESSING OF THE PALMS

---

*The one presiding may lead the congregation in a prayer  
of thanksgiving and blessing using these or similar words.*

LEADER

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

LEADER

**Let us give thanks to God Most High.**

PEOPLE

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**O God, who in Jesus Christ  
triumphantly entered Jerusalem,  
heralding a week of pain and sorrow,  
be with us now  
as we follow the way of the cross.  
In these events of defeat and victory,  
you have sealed the closeness  
of death and resurrection,  
of humiliation and exaltation.  
We thank you for these branches  
that promise to become for us  
symbols of martyrdom and majesty.  
Bless them and us  
that their use this day may announce in our time  
that Christ has come  
and that Christ will come again.  
Amen! Come, Christ Jesus!**

*If the palms were not distributed earlier, they may be distributed at this time. If there is to be a procession into or around the sanctuary, the following words may be used to introduce it.*

LEADER

**Let us go forth in peace.**

PEOPLE

In the name of Christ.

Amen.

---

### HYMN OF ADORATION

---

*A suitable hymn may be sung as all enter the sanctuary or as the choir and worship leaders process to their places.*

---

### COLLECT FOR ILLUMINATION

---

*The people may be seated. This collect or another asking for open hearts and attentive minds may be used prior to the first lesson.*

LEADER

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God.**

PEOPLE

**Hosanna in the highest!**

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

PEOPLE

Eternal God,  
whose whisper silences the shouts of the mighty,  
quiet within us every voice but your own.  
Speak to us now  
through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ  
that by the power of your Holy Spirit  
we may receive grace to show forth Christ's love  
in lives committed to your service.

ALL

**Amen.**

---

### READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*It is fitting on Passion Sunday that in addition to the Old Testament and Epistle lessons, chosen according to the lectionary suggestions, the Gospel of Christ's passion be read in dramatic form as the final lesson. With the congregation seated, a narrator and individuals or groups assigned the parts of the speakers in the lesson may recite it in full, reading with dramatic effect. Several rehearsals may be needed.*

*The ecumenical lectionary suggests the following cycle of passion lessons to be read following the selected Old Testament and Epistle lessons.*

YEAR A: Matthew 26:14 through Matthew 27:66

YEAR B: Mark 14:1 through Mark 15:47

YEAR C: Luke 22:14 through Luke 23:56

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word follows, beginning at the point after the reading of scripture and omitting the elements that have occurred.*

# Order of the Table for Maundy Thursday

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## INTRODUCTION

---

*Maundy* is the English form of the Latin word meaning *commandment*. Jesus' new commandment to "love one another even as I have loved you" is the focus of Maundy Thursday. This love is demonstrated in Jesus' example of servanthood and the gift of Jesus' self in Holy Communion. The theme of servanthood is sometimes included in the observance of Maundy Thursday through a service of foot-washing. The Order for Tenebrae follows the conclusion of a Maundy Thursday service of the table in some local churches.

Although some local churches traditionally celebrate the institution of Holy Communion in their usual place of worship, others prefer a less formal setting. This service is intended to be informal and intimate. It may be held in the auditorium or dining hall of the church building and includes a common meal. The service may take place around the tables where the meal is served.

The tables may be clustered around a primary table. The pastor, her or his family who are present, and a deacon or other representative of the church and his or her family may sit at the primary table. A representative may be appointed to each of the other tables. Families are encouraged to sit together, without making single people feel excluded.

A simple table setting is appropriate. A small glass may be at each place setting at every table, and candles may be placed on each table. A small loaf of bread and a pitcher of wine or grape juice for each table may be placed in a central position on the primary table. It is helpful for each participant to have an order of service placed at each plate.

Plan a simple meal which requires no servers except at the beginning. Placing the food and beverage on the table as the people gather allows all to participate fully in the meal and the service.

---

**OUTLINE**

---

**Arrival and Informal Greeting**

**Greeting**

**Prayer**

**Meal**

**Introduction**

**Hymn**

**Reading of Scripture**

**Meditation**

**Silence**

**Invitation**

**Communion Prayer**

**Prayer of Our Savior**

**Sharing the Elements**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Hymn of Thanksgiving**

**Dismissal and Benediction**

---

**ARRIVAL AND INFORMAL GREETING**

---

*If possible have subdued lighting. As the people arrive, the candles may be lighted. People may be encouraged to greet one another and to gather around tables set in advance for the meal.*

---

**GREETING**

---

*At the appointed time, the pastor or another representative may greet those gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, welcome them to the service, and lead them in a litany.*

LEADER

**We are gathered in the presence of God,  
who asks us to choose  
between life and death,  
between blessing and curse.**

PEOPLE

**We are gathered like the people of Israel,  
who were challenged to choose the way of life.**

LEADER

**Like them, we often follow the ways of death.**

PEOPLE

**Yet, like them, we have the freedom each day  
to begin anew by the grace of God.**

LEADER

**By our presence here,  
we are saying that we choose life.**

ALL

**Let us praise the God of love and life  
who has called us to this place.  
Amen.**

---

**PRAYER**

---

*A leader may offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the day and the meal.*

---

## MEAL

---

*A simple meal may be shared and the tables cleared, leaving individual glasses and candles.*

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

*A leader may offer words of greeting and introduction.*

---

## HYMN

---

*Words may be printed on an order of service.*

---

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*The lessons for Maundy Thursday may be read. The ecumenical lectionary suggests Psalm 116:12-19 and:*

YEAR A: Exodus 12:1-14, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26,  
John 13:1-15

YEAR B: Exodus 24:3-8, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17,  
Mark 14:12-26

YEAR C: Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 10:16-25,  
Luke 22:7-20

---

## MEDITATION

---

*A leader may offer a brief sermon on the lessons.*

---

## SILENCE

---

*The people may be invited to prepare themselves for Holy Communion by joining in silence, reflection, and confession at the tables.*

---

## INVITATION

---

LEADER

**This table is open to all who confess Jesus as the Christ and seek to follow Christ's way.**

**Come to this sacred table  
not because you must,  
but because you may.  
Come not because you are fulfilled,  
but because in your emptiness  
you stand in need of God's mercy and assurance.  
Come not to express an opinion,  
but to seek a presence  
and to pray for a spirit.  
Come to this table, then,  
sisters and brothers, as you are.  
Partake and share.  
It is spread for you and me  
that we might again know  
that God has come to us,  
shared our common lot,  
and invited us to join the people of God's new age.<sup>5</sup>**

---

**COMMUNION PRAYER**

---

*The pastor may offer a prayer of consecration and thanksgiving using his or her own words or one of the prayers from the Services of Word and Sacrament. Elements of the prayer are outlined on page 49.*

---

**PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR**

---

---

**SHARING THE ELEMENTS**

---

*The deacons or other representatives may come to the primary table and receive a pitcher and a loaf for each table. At the tables, each person may break the bread and pass it, then may fill a glass and pass the pitcher. A familiar hymn, such as "Let Us Break Bread Together," may be sung during the passing of the elements. According to the custom of the church, individuals may partake as the elements reach them or may hold each element so that all may partake together.*

---

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

---

LEADER

**O God, by coming to your table  
we receive more gifts than we deserve.  
We give thanks for Jesus Christ,  
through whom we receive life  
and in whom we are bound in covenant.  
Renew us so we may willingly serve as Christ served.  
Amen.**

---

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

---

*All may sing the last stanza of “Let Us Break Bread Together” or another hymn of thanksgiving.*

---

DISMISSAL AND BENEDICTION

---

*A leader may dismiss the people with words of comfort and challenge and a blessing informed by scripture.*

# Order for Footwashing

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

In footwashing the church recalls the example of Jesus' humility as Good Friday drew near and Jesus performed this menial domestic chore for the protesting disciples. It was the custom in the ancient world that provision be made for the feet of guests to be bathed when they arrived at the home of their host. This task was ordinarily done by servants or people of low rank in the larger family. The Gospel of John (13:1-17), where the story is recounted, does not tell why this act of hospitality was omitted when Jesus and the disciples arrived for the meal. It is clear that no one but Jesus volunteered to rise from the table and perform the servile but gracious act. Jesus waited for others to remedy the oversight, but none did. It was *during* the meal that Jesus rose from the table and began the task in silence.

The church observes footwashing because Jesus offered it as an example whereby Christians may mutually observe the place of humility and service in the Christian life. It is not itself the only or highest example of humility and service, but symbolically it demonstrates them in great power.

A service of footwashing may be held at any time, but it is traditionally included in the evening service of Maundy Thursday in Holy Week.

Careful preparation is necessary. It is important that people be given notice of the nature of the service and that participants be encouraged to use footwear that is easily removed. The service may be observed in a room where people can be seated in a manner to permit access for the washing. It is recommended that basins be arranged for approximately every ten people, along with an adequate supply of towels. If footwashing is held in a sanctuary containing pews, an area at the front of the sanctuary may be arranged for a small number at a time to participate. If footwashing takes

place with representatives only, with one person washing the feet of a few people chosen for that purpose, it is suggested that the washing be done in such a way as to be seen by the entire congregation.

Footwashing may take place within a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word, or it may be held as a full service.

---

## OUTLINE

---

*This order may be used alone. When it is incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word, the portion of the Order for Footwashing before the introduction may be omitted. An affirmation of faith and a hymn may precede this order.*

Call to Worship  
Hymn  
Confession of Sin  
Assurance of Pardon  
Telling the Story  
Sermon  
Hymn  
Introduction  
Footwashing  
Prayer of Thanksgiving

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue, or a hymn and benediction may close the order.*

*If footwashing is to be included within another service, following the sermon all who are able may stand and unite in an affirmation of faith and a hymn. The lesson from John may be read in part or full. The Order for Footwashing may begin with the introduction on page 203.*

---

## CALL TO WORSHIP

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may open the service with these or other words.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Make a joyful noise  
to the Holy One,  
all the lands!  
Serve God with gladness!  
Come into God's presence  
with singing!**

PEOPLE

**For the Holy One is good;  
God's steadfast love endures  
for ever,  
and God's faithfulness  
to all generations.<sup>6</sup>**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Create in me a clean heart,  
O God,  
and put a new and right  
spirit within me.**

PEOPLE

**Cast me not away  
from your presence,  
and take not your  
Holy Spirit from me.**

LEADER

**Purge me from my sin,  
and I shall be pure;**

PEOPLE

**Wash me,  
and I shall be clean indeed.<sup>7</sup>**

---

## HYMN

---

*All who are able may stand as a hymn about service, humility, penitence, or related themes is sung.*

---

## CONFESSION OF SIN

---

*All may be seated or those who are able may kneel. The person presiding may lead the people in confession, using these or other words.*

LEADER

**If we say we have no sin,  
we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us.**

PEOPLE

**If we confess our sins,  
God is faithful and just  
and will forgive our sins  
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.<sup>8</sup>**

LEADER

**Brothers and sisters in Christ,  
let us confess our sins in silence  
and ask God for the forgiveness we need.**

*Extended silence may follow for reflection and prayer.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

Ⓐ

ALL

**Gracious God,  
we have denied  
your intentions for us.  
We have preferred our way  
to Christ's way.  
We have served ourselves  
and things we have made.  
We have disobeyed your  
commandment to love  
others as we love ourselves.  
Forgive us,  
and awaken us to faith  
and to a life of service;  
through Jesus Christ,  
who came not to be served,  
but to serve,  
and who served you  
even to death,  
for our redemption.  
Amen.**

Ⓑ

ALL

**Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your  
loving-kindness;  
in your great compassion  
blot out my offenses.  
Wash me through  
and through  
from my wickedness and  
cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my  
transgressions, and  
my sin is ever before me.  
Amen.<sup>9</sup>**

---

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

---

[A]

LEADER

**While we were yet helpless,  
at the right time  
Christ died for the ungodly.**

PEOPLE

The love of God for us  
is shown in this:  
While we were yet sinners,  
Christ died for us.<sup>10</sup>

[B]

LEADER

**We have, then,  
my sisters and brothers,  
complete freedom to go  
into the most holy place,  
God's very presence,  
by means of the death  
of Jesus.**

PEOPLE

We have a great priest  
in charge of the house  
of God.

LEADER

**So let us come near to God  
with a sincere heart  
and a sure faith;**

PEOPLE

With hearts that have been  
purified from a guilty  
conscience,  
and with bodies washed  
with clean water.<sup>11</sup>

---

## TELLING THE STORY

---

*The people may sit or those who are able may stand. The reading may be spoken by one voice, used as a responsive reading, or presented dramatically by a narrator and two others taking the roles of Jesus and of Peter.*

NARRATOR (LEADER)

**It was now the day before the Passover festival.  
Jesus and his disciples were at supper.  
So Jesus rose from the table,  
took off his outer garment,  
and tied a towel around his waist.**

**Then Jesus poured some water into a washbasin  
and began to wash the disciples' feet  
and dry them with the towel around his waist.**

**Jesus came to Simon Peter,  
who said to him:**

PETER (PEOPLE)

Are you going to wash my feet, Lord?

NARRATOR (LEADER)

**Jesus answered Peter:**

JESUS (PEOPLE)

You do not understand now what I am doing,  
but you will understand later.

NARRATOR (LEADER)

**Peter declared:**

PETER (PEOPLE)

Never at any time will you wash my feet!

NARRATOR (LEADER)

**Jesus answered:**

JESUS (PEOPLE)

If I do not wash your feet,  
you will no longer be my disciple.

NARRATOR (LEADER)

**Simon Peter answered:**

PETER (PEOPLE)

Lord, do not only wash my feet, then!  
Wash my hands and head, too!

NARRATOR (LEADER)

**Jesus said:**

JESUS (PEOPLE)

Anyone who has taken a bath is completely clean  
and does not have to wash,  
other than the feet.

NARRATOR (LEADER)

**After washing their feet,  
Jesus put the outer garment back on,  
returned to his place at the table,  
and said:**

JESUS (PEOPLE)

Do you understand what I have just done to you?

You call me Teacher and Lord,  
and it is right that you do so,  
because that is what I am.

I, your Lord and Teacher,  
have just washed your feet.  
You, then, should wash one another's feet.  
I have set an example for you,  
so that you will do just what I have done for you.

*Silence may be observed for reflection before the lesson  
is concluded.*

NARRATOR (LEADER)

**Jesus said:**

JESUS (PEOPLE)

I am telling you the truth:  
No slave is greater  
than the master who is served,  
and no messenger is greater  
than the one who sends the message.  
Now that you know this truth,  
how happy you will be  
if you put it into practice.<sup>12</sup>

---

## SERMON

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---

## HYMN

---

*All who are able may stand.*

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

*All who are able may stand as a leader introduces foot-  
washing in the following or similar words. Following this  
introduction, others may assist in directing the people in  
the procedures to be carried out.*

LEADER

**Friends in Christ,  
we are reminded by the scriptures,  
in diverse words and symbols,  
of what God intends for us.  
The water of our baptism is a cleansing sign  
of our dying and rising with Christ.**

**The bread and wine of Holy Communion are saving food,  
announcing to us again Christ's sacrifice and victory  
for our salvation.**

**Now, at Christ's command,  
we share the water of humility,  
and stoop,  
as once Christ stooped,  
to wash the feet of others.**

**A** *for use when all partici-  
pate in footwashing*

LEADER

**With Peter,  
we also open ourselves  
to another  
and allow our feet  
to be washed.**

PEOPLE

**How happy we will be  
if we put into practice  
the truth of humility.**

**B** *for use when only  
representatives participate  
in footwashing*

LEADER

**How happy we will be  
if we put into practice  
the truth of humility.**

PEOPLE

**With God's help,  
may we each practice  
humility.**

---

## FOOTWASHING

---

*The people may be seated for the footwashing. Those who wish to participate may remove their footwear and place it under their chairs. If the footwashing is to be done by representatives only, those chosen to have their feet washed may move to the front of the congregation, be seated in chairs provided, remove their footwear, and place it under their chairs.*

*To begin the footwashing, a deacon or another appointed person kneels before the person in the next seat, places that person's feet in the basin one at a time, lifts and dries each foot, and rises. The person whose feet have been washed also may rise, exchange the peace with the one who did the washing, and likewise turn to the person sitting next, kneel, and repeat the footwashing. People who have had their feet washed and have washed the feet of another may be seated and replace their footwear. The feet of the one who began the footwashing are to be washed before the cycle is completed. Adjustments will need to be made for those whose abilities do not include some of these physical movements.*

*If this is to be done by representatives only, the one presiding or another appointed officer of the church may wash the feet of each of the representatives and may also greet each in an exchange of peace.*

---

### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

---

*When the footwashing is completed, all who are able may stand. The one presiding may lead the people in this or another prayer of thanksgiving.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**O God, we give you thanks  
for the gift of Jesus Christ,  
the only one begotten by you before all worlds.  
We thank you for the splendor  
of Christ's life of service.  
We thank you for symbols of love and humility.  
We ask that you will strengthen us  
for the service to which you call us,  
that we may find in lowering ourselves, in washing,  
and in all other acts of mercy,  
the fullness of life  
that we see in Jesus Christ,**

**who with you and the Holy Spirit,  
lives in exaltation,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

*When this order is observed alone, the service may be concluded with a hymn and a benediction. When it is incorporated within a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word, that service continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

# Order for Tenebrae

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## INTRODUCTION

---

Tenebrae is the Latin term for *shadows*. It is a service of lessons accompanied by the gradual extinguishing of lights. Although many local churches observe the ceremony at the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday Service of Word and Sacrament, it is historically associated with the evenings of Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week. The readings on these evenings commemorated the events of the following day. On Wednesday, they commemorated the Last Supper, the betrayal, and the arrest; on Thursday, Christ's passion, trial, and death; and on Friday, Christ's burial and the destitution of the disciples. In the service presented here, these events are combined in one ceremony.

Tenebrae may be held as a full service, or the readings and extinguishing of lights may be incorporated within another service.

It is recommended that twelve candles, representing the twelve disciples, and a larger candle, representing Christ, be placed where they may be seen by all. No other candles should be lighted for this service. A careful rehearsal for all who share the leadership of the service is essential to its effectiveness. When Tenebrae follows Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday, it is appropriate that the readers and candles be arranged around an extended communion table. On other occasions, the readers may be at a lectern or near the candle to be extinguished following the reading. Regardless of their position, it is of great importance that the congregation be able to hear and understand the readings from scripture.

---

OUTLINE

---

*This order may be used alone. When it is incorporated into another service, only the readings and extinguishing of lights need to be used. In a Service of Word and Sacrament, the readings and extinguishing of lights may follow the post-communion prayer of thanksgiving. Then the instructions for departure are also followed.*

Prelude  
Sentences  
Hymn of Adoration  
Collect  
Lighting of the Candles  
Confession of Sin  
Prayer for Mercy  
Assurance of Pardon  
Hymn, Anthem, or Other Music  
Readings and Extinguishing of Lights  
Lord's Prayer  
Departure

*A continuing vigil may begin at the conclusion of the Order for Tenebrae.*

*When Tenebrae is observed as a full service, the complete order below may be used. When it is incorporated within another service, only the readings and extinguishing of lights need to be used, with consideration given to the instructions for departure.*

*All candles may remain unlighted until “O Gracious Light” or an anthem is sung at the time designated for lighting them.*

---

## PRELUDE

---

*The service may begin with music as the congregation gathers.*

---

## SENTENCES

---

*All who are able may stand for one or both of these.*

Ⓐ

LEADER

**Jesus said:**

**I am the light of the world.**

PEOPLE

Anyone who follows me will not walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life.<sup>13</sup>

Ⓑ

LEADER

**If I say,**

**“Let the darkness cover me,  
and the light around me turn to night,”  
darkness is not dark to you, O God.**

PEOPLE

The night is as bright as the day;  
darkness and light to you are both alike.<sup>14</sup>

---

## HYMN OF ADORATION

---

*All who are able may stand as a hymn on the theme of God’s light is sung.*

---

COLLECT

---

*All who are able may stand while this or another opening prayer is said.*

LEADER

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

And with you also.

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**Gracious God,  
you give us the sun to illumine the day  
and the moon and stars to shine by night.  
Kindle in us the flame of your love  
that our lives may shed abroad the radiance of your light  
and the world may be full of the splendor of your glory;  
through Jesus Christ,  
the Sun of Righteousness.  
Amen.**

---

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

---

*The people may be seated. The candles to be used in the service may be lighted during the singing of “O Gracious Light” (“Phos Hilaron”) or another hymn. The text here is adapted from the ancient version of the “Phos Hilaron.”*

ALL

**O gracious Light,  
Pure brightness of the eternal Creator in heaven,  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!**

**Now as we come to the setting of the sun,  
And our eyes behold your vesper light,  
We sing your praises, Holy God, One in Trinity.**

**You are worthy at all times  
To be praised by happy voices,  
O Christ of God, O giver of life,  
And to be glorified through all the worlds.**

---

**CONFESSION OF SIN**

---

*The people may be seated or those who are able may kneel. A leader may invite the people to confess in silence or may incorporate a unison prayer and silence. This or another call to confession and prayer may be used.*

LEADER

**Brothers and sisters,  
we are called to be children of the day  
and not children of the night.**

PEOPLE

**Let us approach the throne of grace  
that we may receive mercy.**

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**Gracious God,  
our sins are too heavy to carry,  
too real to hide,  
and too deep to undo.  
Forgive what our lips tremble to name,  
what our hearts can no longer bear,  
and what has become for us  
a consuming fire of judgment.  
Set us free from a past that we cannot change;  
open to us a future in which we can be changed;  
and grant us grace  
to grow more and more  
in your likeness and image;  
through Jesus Christ,  
the light of the world.  
Amen.**

---

**PRAYER FOR MERCY**

---

*The Kyrie, Trisagion, or another prayer for mercy may be said or sung. Musical settings are on pages 449, 450, and 459.*

**A**

LEADER

**Lord, have mercy.**

PEOPLE

**Christ, have mercy.**

LEADER

**Lord, have mercy.**

**B**

LEADER

**Holy God,  
Holy and mighty,  
Holy Immortal One,**

ALL

**Have mercy upon us.**

---

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

---

LEADER

**This is the message we have heard from Christ  
and proclaim to you:  
God is light.**

PEOPLE

**If we walk in the light  
as Christ is in the light,  
we have communion with one another,  
and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us  
from all sin.<sup>15</sup>**

---

### HYMN, ANTHEM, OR OTHER MUSIC

---

*A hymn, anthem, or other music about Christ's passion  
may be offered.*

---

### READINGS AND EXTINGUISHING OF LIGHTS

---

*The people may be seated. When used in a Service of  
Word and Sacrament, this ceremony may follow the post-  
communion hymn. When used in a Service of the Word, it  
may replace the reading of scripture.*

*As a dramatic portrayal of the desertion of Christ by the  
disciples, twelve people extinguish the candles and leave  
the room in sequence. These same people may read the  
assigned lessons. Diverse numbers of readings and  
candles may be used. If twelve readings are chosen, one*

*candle may be extinguished after each reading. If fewer than twelve readings are chosen, those without lessons may extinguish their candles in silence, one at a time. The Christ candle may be extinguished or momentarily hidden.*

*The schedule of readings includes eight lessons taken from all four Gospels. If twelve lessons are desired, then other appropriate ones may be added. An alternative schedule may also be developed by dividing into twelve sections the long passion narrative in the Gospel of John (Chapters 13-19).*

*When this order is used on Maundy Thursday following Holy Communion, it is suggested that the candles and twelve representatives be placed about an extended communion table. The lessons may be read while the representatives are seated. After each lesson, the reader may extinguish a candle and leave the room.*

#### FIRST READING

Shadow of Betrayal

Matthew 26:20-25

*Candle one is extinguished; the reader may leave the room.*

#### SECOND READING

Shadow of Desertion

Matthew 26:31-35

*Candle two is extinguished; the reader may leave the room.*

#### THIRD READING

Agony of the Soul

Luke 22:39-44

*Candle three is extinguished; the reader may leave the room.*

#### FOURTH READING

Unshared Vigil

Mark 14:32-41

*Candle four is extinguished; the reader may leave the room.*

#### FIFTH READING

“Father, the hour is come”

John 17:1-6

*Candle five is extinguished; the reader may leave the room.*

#### SIXTH READING

“That they may all be one”

John 17:15-22

*Candle six is extinguished; the reader may leave the room.*

SEVENTH READING

Arrest in the Garden

John 18:1-5

*Candle seven is extinguished; the reader may leave the room.*

EIGHTH READING

Shadow of the Cross

Mark 15:16-20

*Candle eight is extinguished; the reader may leave the room.*

*In silence, the remaining four candles representing the disciples are extinguished in sequence by four people who may also leave the room.*

FINAL READING

The Word was God

John 1:1-4,14,10,12; 3:19,  
paraphrased

*A person may read these or other appropriate verses from a location near the central Christ candle.*

READER

**Before the world was created,  
the Word already existed;  
the Word was with God,  
and the Word was the same as God.  
From the beginning the Word was with God.  
Through the Word  
God made all things;  
not one thing in all creation was made without the Word.  
The Word was the source of life,  
and this life brought light to humanity.**

**The Word became a human being  
and, full of grace and truth,  
lived among us.**

**The Word was in the world;  
and though God made the world through the Word,  
the world did not recognize the Word.  
Some, however, did receive the Word  
and believed in the Word.  
So the Word gave them the right  
to become God's children.**

---

**This is how the judgment works:  
The light has come into the world,  
but people love the shadows rather than the light,  
because their deeds are evil.<sup>16</sup>**

*At the conclusion of the reading, the reader may extinguish the Christ candle or may remove it from the vision of the people. A loud noise may be made as this is done to signify Christ's death. After a pause, the candle may be relighted or returned to its place to stand as a symbolic promise of the resurrection.*

---

### LORD'S PRAYER

---

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may sing or say the prayer received from Jesus Christ.*

---

### DEPARTURE

---

*All may leave the darkened church in silence. The continuity of events leading to Easter is best symbolized if the benediction is omitted at this service. A vigil may begin at the conclusion of this order in churches where one is observed from Maundy Thursday until the first service of Easter.*

# Order for Good Friday

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

The Order for Good Friday is intended to rehearse the passion story of our Savior Jesus Christ. While the mood is solemn, it is also one of hope, looking forward to the great Easter celebration.

Some traditions prepare a service so that the seven last words of Jesus from the cross form the theme for the meditations.

In some traditions, a rough-hewn cross is carried into the chancel during the service.

The service offered here is taken from the ancient Christian tradition of the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>17</sup> The structure of the prayers of intercession seeks to capture the need of the penitent to hear the story of the passion and also to pray for the whole of society. In the ancient services, much of the time the congregation was invited to stand to help participants understand the suffering of Jesus on the cross. Many times lay members shared in the leadership by reading the passion story to create dramatic interest.

---

OUTLINE

---

**Sentences**

**Invocation**

**Reading of Scripture**

**Silence**

**Hymn**

**Reading of the Passion Story**

**Hymn**

**Sermon**

**Prayer**

**Prayer of Our Savior**

**Meditation about the Cross**

**Hymn**

**Benediction**

*The service is often without instrumental music except to support singing by the congregation. The leaders may enter in silence.*

---

## SENTENCES

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may offer the following and/or other sentences from scripture.*

LEADER

**Blessed be our God,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

---

## INVOCATION

---

*All who are able may stand.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**Almighty God,  
we ask you to look with mercy on your family  
for whom our Savior Jesus Christ was willing  
to be betrayed,  
to be given over to the hands of sinners,  
and to suffer death on the cross;  
who now lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

---

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*The people may be seated as Hosea 6:1-6, Isaiah 52:13-53:12, or other scripture passages are read.*

---

## SILENCE

---

*Silence may be observed for reflection and prayer.*

---

HYMN

---

*All who are able may stand as "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" or another hymn is sung.*

---

READING OF THE PASSION STORY

---

*The passion story may be read by one person, or a different person may read each part.*

PART I

Mark 9:30-37; 10:17-23, 46-52

PART II

Mark 11:1-11, 14:1-25

John 13:2-17

PART III

John 12:20-28, 13:31-14:10

Matthew 26:36-56

PART IV

John 17:1-10, 17:16-23

Luke 22:54-71

Matthew 27:3-10

PART V

Mark 15:1-14

Luke 23:4-11

Matthew 27:11-31

PART VI (SEVEN LAST WORDS)

Luke 23:26-32

Matthew 27:33, 34, 37

Luke 23:35, 36; 23:34, 39-43

John 19:25-27

Luke 23:44-45

Matthew 27:46

John 19:28-30

Luke 23:46

PART VII

Matthew 27:51-66

---

HYMN

---

*All who are able may stand for a hymn on a passion theme.*

---

SERMON

---

---

PRAYER

---

*A leader may guide the people in a bidding prayer, with silence for the prayers of the people. Some or all of the following sections may be used.*

LEADER

**Let us pray, brothers and sisters,  
for the holy church of God  
throughout the world  
that God may guide it  
and gather it together  
so that we may worship God  
in peace and tranquility.**

*Silent prayer.*

LEADER

**Almighty and eternal God,  
you have shown your glory  
to all nations in Jesus Christ.  
Guide the work of the church.  
Help it to persevere in faith,  
to proclaim your name,  
and to offer salvation to people everywhere.  
We ask this through Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

LEADER

**Let us pray for our pastor(s) and other ordained ministers,  
for all servants of the church,  
and for all the people of God.**

*Silent prayer.*

LEADER

**Almighty and eternal God,  
your Spirit guides the church and makes it holy.  
Strengthen and uphold our pastor(s) and our leaders;  
keep them in health and safety  
for the good of the church,  
and help each of us to do faithfully the work  
to which you have called us.  
We ask this through Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

LEADER

**Let us pray for those preparing for baptism,  
that God may make them responsive to God's love  
and give them new life in Jesus Christ.**

*Silent prayer.*

LEADER

**Almighty and eternal God,  
you continually bless the church with new members.  
Increase the faith and understanding  
of those preparing for baptism.  
Give them a new birth as your children.  
Keep them in the faith and communion  
of your holy church.  
We ask this through Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

LEADER

**Let us pray for those who do not believe in Christ,  
that the light of the Holy Spirit may show them  
the way of salvation.**

*Silent prayer.*

LEADER

**Almighty and eternal God,  
enable those who do not acknowledge Christ  
to receive the truth of the gospel.**

**Help us, your people,  
to grow in love for one another,  
to grasp more fully the mystery of your Godhead,  
and so to become more perfect witnesses of your love  
in the sight of all people.  
We ask this through Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

LEADER

**Let us pray for those who do not believe in God,  
that they may find the God  
who is the author and goal of our existence.**

*Silent prayer.*

LEADER

**Almighty and eternal God,  
you created humanity  
so that all might long to know you  
and have peace in you.  
Grant that,  
in spite of the hurtful things  
that stand in their way,  
all may recognize in the lives of Christians  
the tokens of your love and mercy  
and gladly acknowledge you  
as the one true God of us all.  
We ask this through Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

LEADER

**Let us pray for those who serve in public office,  
that God may guide their minds and hearts,  
so that all of us may live in true peace and freedom.**

*Silent prayer.*

LEADER

**Almighty and eternal God,  
you are the champion of the poor and oppressed.**

**In your goodness,  
watch over those in authority  
so that people everywhere may enjoy  
justice, peace, freedom,  
and a share in the goodness of your creation.  
We ask this through Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

LEADER

**Let us pray that the almighty and merciful God  
may heal the sick,  
comfort the dying,  
give safety to travelers,  
free those unjustly deprived of liberty,  
and rid the world of falsehood, hunger, and disease.**

*Silent prayer.*

LEADER

**Almighty and eternal God,  
you give strength to the weary  
and new courage to those who have lost heart.  
Hear the prayers of all who call on you  
in any trouble  
that they may have the joy  
of receiving your help in their need.  
We ask this through Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

---

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

---

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may sing or say the prayer  
received from Jesus Christ.*

---

MEDITATION ABOUT THE CROSS

---

*If a cross is a focal point for the congregation, the follow-  
ing may be said.*

LEADER

**Behold the cross  
on which hung the salvation of the whole world.**

PEOPLE

Come, let us worship the Christ,  
the child of God.

LEADER

**Behold the cross  
on which hung the salvation of the whole world.**

PEOPLE

Come, let us worship the Christ,  
the child of God.

LEADER

**Behold the cross  
on which hung the salvation of the whole world.**

PEOPLE

Come, let us worship the Christ,  
the child of God.

*Silence may be observed for meditation and prayers.*

---

## HYMN

---

*A hymn may be sung on the theme of the merciful Christ.*

---

## BENEDICTION

---

LEADER

**We adore you,  
O Christ,  
and we bless you.**

PEOPLE

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

*The leaders may leave in silence. The people may depart  
quietly as they finish their private meditation and prayers.*

# Order for the Great Vigil of Easter

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

The Great Vigil of Easter, scheduled anytime after sunset on Holy Saturday and before sunrise on Easter Sunday, is an ancient liturgy of the church with deep roots in scripture. It is a full liturgy, rich in symbolism and dramatic in form. It is a complex and lengthy service that requires careful advance planning, considerable participation by the congregation, and a thorough rehearsal for all its leaders.

The Great Vigil of Easter seeks to proclaim the cosmic significance of God's saving acts in history through four integrally related services held on the same occasion. It appeals to the total person through various human senses. Music plays an important role in the effectiveness of the vigil. Consequently, the church's music leaders and choirs will need adequate time to prepare. In this vigil a cantor usually sings parts that otherwise might be read.

The vigil begins with the service of light. By the use of fire, candles, words, movement, and music, it seeks to portray the pilgrim people of God following the *pillar of fire* given in Jesus Christ, the light of the world. A tall Easter or paschal candle, plain or decorated, is used in procession to represent Jesus Christ. Individual candles may also be lighted from the Easter candle to dramatize "a flame divided but undimmed." Planning for the procession should include consideration of those who do not move easily.

The vigil continues with a Service of the Word. From two to twelve lessons from the Old Testament are read in the minimally lighted church. The lessons seek to portray a panoramic view of all that God has done for the human family in preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. They are read at length, unhurriedly, in the spirit of those who patiently watch and wait in the true sense of the word *vigil*—with alertness. At the end of the readings from the

Old Testament, the Service of the Word reaches a climactic moment when the gloria or another hymn of the church is sung to herald Christ's resurrection. In some traditions, the church bell and the organ, silent since Maundy Thursday evening, are used again for the first time during the singing of this major hymn. The Epistle and Gospel lessons are then read, and a sermon may be preached.

The service of water follows. This is a service of the sacrament of baptism or the renewal of baptismal vows. Water plays a prominent role in this service. It may be used to sprinkle the entire congregation as a reminder of the baptism each Christian has experienced.

The Great Vigil of Easter concludes with a celebrative service of bread and wine. In the joyous hours of Easter morning, the people of God festively share the sacrament of Holy Communion, not as followers of a deceased Jesus but as followers of the risen Jesus Christ whose return is awaited at the end of history. This portion of the vigil follows an order for the Service of Word and Sacrament.

In churches where the Great Vigil of Easter is a new observance, it is suggested that a Lenten study program or other means be used to interpret the history and purpose of the vigil for the people and to elicit their active involvement in the planning of the four component services.

The Great Vigil of Easter may be celebrated in an abbreviated form, lasting between one and one and one-half hours, or a fuller form may exceed two hours. Detailed suggestions and directions require careful reading and preparation.

The Order for the Great Vigil of Easter is based on ancient texts and contemporary editions of the vigil used in the churches of Eastern Orthodoxy, the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran churches, and the United Methodist Church in the United States.

---

**OUTLINE**

---

**Service of Light**

**Lighting of New Fire**

**Greeting**

**Blessing of New Fire**

**Lighting of the Paschal Candle**

**Easter Proclamation**

**Service of the Word**

**Greeting**

**Old Testament Readings**

**Act of Praise**

**New Testament Readings**

**Sermon**

**Hymn**

**Service of Water**

**Greeting**

**Blessing of Water**

**Renewal of Baptismal Vows**

**Blessing of the People**

**Service of Bread and Wine**

**Greeting**

**Passing the Peace**

*A Service of Word and Sacrament continues, beginning  
with the offertory.*

---

## SERVICE OF LIGHT

---

---

### LIGHTING OF NEW FIRE

---

*The people may assemble in silence outdoors or within the darkened church. A small fire may be started on the ground or in an urn or kettle that will safely contain it. When the ceremony is held indoors, the people may face the rear of the sanctuary toward an entrance where the ceremony is held. When the fire is ready, the leader may proceed with the greeting.*

---

### GREETING

---

*All who are able may stand as a leader greets the people in these or other words.*

LEADER

**Grace to you from Jesus Christ,  
who was, and is, and is to come.**

**Sisters and brothers in Christ,  
on this most holy night  
when our Savior Jesus Christ passed  
from death to life,  
we gather with all the church  
throughout the world  
in vigil and prayer.**

**This is the Passover of Jesus Christ:  
Through light and the word,  
through water and the bread and wine,  
we recall Christ's death and resurrection,  
we share Christ's triumph over sin and death,  
and with invincible hope  
we await Christ's coming again.**

**Hear the word of God:  
In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.  
In the Word was life,**

**and the life was the light of all humanity.  
The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.<sup>18</sup>**

---

**BLESSING OF NEW FIRE**

---

*A leader, located near the flame, may offer the following  
or a similar prayer.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.  
Eternal God, giver of light and life,  
bless this new flame,  
that by its radiance and warmth  
we may respond to your love and grace,  
and be set free from all that separates us  
from you and from each other;  
through Jesus Christ,  
the Sun of Righteousness.  
Amen.**

---

**LIGHTING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE**

---

*A leader, using a taper, may take flame from the fire and  
light the paschal candle, saying these or similar words.*

LEADER

**May the light of Christ,  
rising in glory,  
illumine our hearts and minds.**

**FIRST RAISING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE**

*Immediately after the words above, the bearer may raise  
the paschal candle, and the following words may be said  
or sung responsively.*

CANTOR OR READER

**Christ our light.**

PEOPLE

**Thanks be to God.**

*If individual candles are provided for the congregation, the process of lighting them may begin after the first raising of the paschal candle. The one bearing the paschal candle, and all other leaders, may process toward the table. When the ceremony is held outdoors, the entire congregation may share in the processional into the church. When the ceremony is held indoors, the smaller procession may move from the entrance to the chancel. As the procession moves forward, all candles other than those on the table may also be lighted.*

## SECOND RAISING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

*If the congregation is processing into the church from outdoors, the second raising of the candle may be held at the entrance door. If the people are already in the sanctuary, the paschal candle may be elevated midway of the aisle.*

CANTOR OR READER

**Christ our light.**

PEOPLE

Thanks be to God.

## THIRD RAISING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

*The paschal candle may be raised the third time at its stand in the center of the chancel, between the table and the congregation.*

CANTOR OR READER

**Christ our light.**

PEOPLE

Thanks be to God.

*The paschal candle may be placed in its stand.*

---

## EASTER PROCLAMATION

---

*While all who are able remain standing, holding their candles, a cantor may stand between the table and the paschal candle, facing the congregation, and sing the following ancient Easter hymn. The indented verses may be omitted to shorten the hymn.*

CANTOR OR READER

**Rejoice, heavenly powers!  
Sing, choirs of angels!  
Jesus Christ, our light, is risen!  
Sound the trumpet of salvation!**

**Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,  
Radiant in the brightness of your Sovereign!  
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!  
Night vanishes for ever!**

**Rejoice, O servant church! Exult in glory!  
The risen Savior shines upon you!  
Let this place resound with joy,  
Echoing the mighty song of all God's people!**

**My dearest friends,  
Standing with me in this holy light,  
Join me in asking God's mercy,  
That God may give an unworthy minister  
Grace to sing these Easter praises.**

CANTOR OR READER

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

**And also with you.**

CANTOR OR READER

**Lift up your hearts.**

PEOPLE

**We lift them to God.**

CANTOR OR READER

**Let us give thanks to God Most High.**

PEOPLE

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

CANTOR OR READER

**It is truly right  
That with full hearts and minds and voices  
We should praise you, the unseen God,  
The eternal Creator,  
And your only begotten one,  
Our Savior Jesus Christ.**

**For Christ has ransomed us  
With the blood  
And for our salvation  
Has paid you the cost  
Of Adam and Eve's sin!**

**This is our Passover feast,  
When Christ, the true lamb, is slain,  
Whose blood consecrates the homes  
Of all believers.**

**This is the night  
When first you saved our ancestors:  
You freed the people of Israel  
From their slavery  
And led them dry-shod through the sea.**

**This is the night when the pillar of fire  
Destroyed the shadows of sin!**

**This is the night when Christians everywhere,  
Washed clean of sin  
And freed from all defilement,  
Are restored to grace  
And grow together in holiness.**

**This is the night when Jesus Christ  
Broke the chains of death  
And rose triumphant from the grave.**

**O God, how wonderful your care for us!  
How boundless your merciful love!  
To ransom a slave  
You gave your only child.**

**O happy fault,  
O necessary sin of Eve and Adam,  
That gained for us so great a redeemer!**

**Most blessed of all nights, chosen by God  
To see Christ rising from the dead!**

**Of this night scripture says:  
"The night will be as clear as day;  
It will become my light, my joy."**

The power of this holy night  
Dispels all evil,  
Washes guilt away,  
Restores lost innocence,  
Brings mourners joy;  
It casts out hatred, brings peace,  
And humbles earthly pride.

Night truly blessed  
When heaven is wedded to earth  
And humanity is reconciled with God!

Therefore, gracious Creator,  
In the joy of this night,  
Receive our evening sacrifice of praise,  
Your church's solemn offering.

Accept this Easter candle,  
A flame divided but undimmed,  
A pillar of fire that glows to your honor, O God.

Let it mingle with the lights of heaven  
And continue bravely burning  
To dispel the shadows of this night!

May the Morning Star which never sets  
Find this flame still burning:  
Christ, that Morning Star,  
Who came back from the dead,  
And shed your peaceful light  
On all creation,  
Your only begotten one  
Who lives and reigns for ever.

PEOPLE  
Amen.

*At the conclusion of the Easter proclamation, if individual candles have been provided for the congregation, it may be wise for safety reasons to ask the people to extinguish their candles and be seated. As this is done, only those electric lights necessary for reasonable vision should be turned on.*

---

## SERVICE OF THE WORD

---

*The number of Old Testament lessons traditionally read for the vigil varies from two to twelve. The reading of Exodus 14 is always included. Four Old Testament lessons with accompanying prayers are suggested here.*

*Other lessons traditionally used are: Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13 (Noah and the flood); Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28 (a new heart and a new spirit); Ezekiel 37:1-14 (the valley of the dry bones); Jonah 3:1-10 (our missionary calling); Zephaniah 3:14-20 (the gathering of God's people); Isaiah 54:5-14 (love calls us back); Isaiah 4:2-6 (hope for Israel); and Daniel 3:1-29 (song of three men).*

*It is customary for certain psalms or canticles to be sung following particular readings. These have been noted.*

*The people serving as readers may stand, if they are able, around the paschal candle and move after each reading so that the one reading stands between the table and the paschal candle, facing the congregation and flanked by the other readers. If they are able, they may hold their candles during the readings.*

---

## GREETING

---

*A leader may introduce the Service of the Word in these or similar words.*

LEADER

**Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:**

**We have begun our solemn vigil.**

**As we watch and wait,**

**let us listen to the word of God,**

**recalling God's saving acts throughout history**

**and how, in the fullness of time,**

**God's Word became flesh and dwelt among us:**

**Jesus Christ, our Redeemer!**

PEOPLE

**We do not live by bread alone,**

**but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**

---

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS**

---

**FIRST LESSON**

The Creation

Genesis 1:1-2:3 or Genesis 1:1, 26-31

Anthem

Psalms 33:1-11 or Psalm 46:5-10

Collect

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**Almighty God, who wonderfully created,  
yet more wonderfully restored,  
the dignity of human nature,  
grant that we may share the divine life  
of the one who came to share our humanity:  
Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.  
Amen.**

**SECOND LESSON**

Abraham's and Sarah's Faithfulness

Genesis 22:1-18

Anthem

Psalms 33:12-22 or Psalm 16

Collect

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**Gracious God of all believers,  
through Sarah's and Abraham's trustful obedience  
you made known your covenant love  
to our ancestors and to us.  
By the grace of Christ's trustful obedience,  
even unto death,  
fulfill in your church and in all creation  
your promise of a new covenant,  
written not on tablets of stone  
but on the tablets of human hearts;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
Amen.**

**THIRD LESSON**

Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea

Exodus 14:15-15:1 or

Exodus 14:21-29

Anthem  
Collect

The Song of Moses

Exodus 15:1-19

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**God our Savior,  
even today we see the wonders of miracles  
you worked long ago.**

**You once saved a single nation from slavery,  
and now you offer that salvation to all  
through the grace of baptism.**

**May all the peoples of the world become true  
daughters and sons of Abraham and Sarah  
and be made worthy of the heritage of Israel;  
through Jesus Christ,  
our only mediator and advocate.**

**Amen.**

#### FOURTH LESSON

Salvation Offered Freely to All

Isaiah 55:1-11

Anthem

The First Song of Isaiah

Isaiah 12:2-6

Collect

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**Eternal God, you created all things  
by the power of your Word,  
and you renew the earth by your Spirit.**

**Give now the water of life  
to all who thirst for you,  
and nourish with the spiritual food of bread and wine  
all who hunger for you,  
that our lives on earth may bear the abundant fruit  
of your heavenly reign;  
through Jesus Christ,  
the firstborn from the dead,  
who, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
lives and reigns for ever.**

**Amen.**

---

ACT OF PRAISE

---

*The readers may return to their places, and all who are able may stand to sing the gloria or another hymn of praise. Musical settings of a gloria are on pages 451 and 460.*

*During the singing of this hymn, the candles on or near the table may be lighted, additional electric lights may be turned on, and the church bell may be pealed joyfully. In some congregations it is the custom not to use the organ until this hymn.*

---

NEW TESTAMENT READINGS

---

*The people may be seated. A collect may be said prior to the Epistle.*

## EPISTLE LESSON

Our Death and Resurrection  
in Jesus Christ

Romans 6:3-11

Anthem

Psalm 114, Psalm 118, or another hymn

*All who are able may stand for the reading of the Gospel suggested in the ecumenical lectionary. The reading may be introduced by singing or saying an alleluia and/or "Glory to You, O Christ." It may be followed by "Praise to You, O Christ" and/or an alleluia.*

## GOSPEL LESSON

Christ's Resurrection

Year A: Matthew 28:1-10

Year B: Mark 16:1-8

Year C: Luke 24:1-12

---

SERMON

---

---

HYMN

---

*All who are able may stand for a hymn introducing the baptism theme.*

---

## SERVICE OF WATER

---

*If there are candidates for baptism, the Order for Baptism, beginning on page 129, may be used. When this occurs, the affirmation of faith in the Order for Baptism is addressed to all and replaces the renewal of baptismal vows in the vigil.*

*If any of the newly baptized are to be received into the local church, the Order for Reception of Members, beginning on page 157, may be used.*

*Following the benediction that concludes the Order for Baptism, the vigil continues with the blessing of the people on page 242.*

---

## GREETING

---

*A pitcher of water and one or more basins may be placed where they may be seen by all. Sprigs of pine or another native tree may be placed near the pitcher and basins.*

*The one presiding, near the pitcher of water, may lead the people in a responsive greeting, using the following or other suitable words. The people may be seated.*

LEADER

**Dear friends,  
on this night of prayerful vigil  
as we come to this font of living water,  
let us recall the meaning of baptism.**

**For just as the body is one  
and has many members,  
and all the members of the body,  
though many,  
are one body,  
so it is with Christ.**

PEOPLE

**For by one Spirit  
we were all baptized into one body—**

Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—  
and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

LEADER

**Now you are the body of Christ  
and individually members of it.<sup>19</sup>**

---

## BLESSING OF WATER

---

*One of the following prayers or a similar one may be said.*

**A**

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**We thank you, God,  
for the gift of creation  
called forth  
by your saving Word.  
Before the world had shape  
and form, your Spirit  
moved over the waters.  
Out of the waters of the deep,  
you formed the  
firmament and brought  
forth the earth  
to sustain all life.**

**In the time of Noah  
you washed the earth  
with the waters of the flood,  
and your ark of salvation  
bore a new beginning.**

**In the time of Moses  
your people Israel  
passed through the  
Red Sea waters  
from slavery to freedom  
and crossed the flowing  
Jordan to enter  
the promised land.**

**B**

LEADER

**Eternal God,  
on this night of watching  
and waiting,  
we offer our prayers to you.**

PEOPLE

**Be with us  
as we recall the wonder  
of our creation  
and the greater wonder  
of our redemption.**

*As the following words are  
spoken, the water may be  
poured into the basins.*

LEADER

**Bless this water.  
It makes the seeds to grow.  
It refreshes us  
and makes us clean.**

PEOPLE

**You have made of it  
a servant of your  
loving-kindness:  
Through water you set your  
people free and quenched  
their thirst in the desert.**

**In the fullness of time,  
you sent Jesus Christ  
who was nurtured in the  
water of Mary's womb.**

**Jesus was baptized by John  
in the water of the Jordan,  
became living water to a  
woman at the Samaritan  
well, washed the feet  
of the disciples,  
and sent them forth to  
baptize all the nations by  
water and the Holy Spirit.**

*As the following words are  
spoken, the water may be  
poured into the basins.*

**Bless by your Holy Spirit,  
gracious God, this water  
that by it we may be  
reminded of our baptism  
into Jesus Christ and  
that by the power of your  
Holy Spirit we may be kept  
faithful until you receive us  
at last in your eternal home.**

ALL

**Glory to you,  
eternal God, the one  
who was, and is,  
and shall always be,  
world without end.  
Amen.**

LEADER

**With water  
the prophets announced  
a new covenant that you  
would make with all  
humanity.**

PEOPLE

**By water, made holy  
by Christ in the Jordan,  
you made our sinful nature  
new in the bath  
that gives rebirth.**

LEADER

**Let this water remind us  
of our baptism.**

PEOPLE

**Let us share the joy  
of our brothers and sisters  
throughout the world who  
are baptized this Easter;  
through Jesus Christ  
our risen Savior.  
Amen.**

---

## RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

---

*All who are able may stand. The following creed in ques-  
tion form; a full creed, statement of faith, or covenant; or*

*another form prepared for the occasion may be used. The questions are addressed to the congregation as individuals for affirmation of each person's baptism.*

LEADER

**Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil  
and renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?**

PEOPLE

I do.

LEADER

**Do you believe in God?**

PEOPLE

I believe in God,  
the creator of heaven and earth.

LEADER

**Do you believe in Jesus Christ?**

PEOPLE

I believe in Jesus Christ,  
the only one begotten of God before all worlds.

LEADER

**Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?**

PEOPLE

I believe in God, the Holy Spirit.

LEADER

**Will you continue  
in the apostles' teaching and community,  
in the breaking of bread,  
and in prayer?**

PEOPLE

I will, with God's help.

LEADER

**Will you strive for justice and peace among all people,  
respecting the dignity of every human being?**

PEOPLE

I will, with God's help.

---

## BLESSING OF THE PEOPLE

---

*All who are able may stand. In these or similar words, a leader may invoke God's blessing upon all who have renewed their vows.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**Eternal God,  
you have come to us in Jesus Christ,  
given us a new birth by water  
and the Holy Spirit,  
and forgiven all our sins.**

**Bless us now with the grace we need  
to fulfill what we have promised.**

PEOPLE

**Keep us faithful to our Savior Jesus Christ,  
for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

*While the choir sings an anthem (such as one based on Ephesians 4:4-6) or as the congregation sings a hymn, leaders may move among the congregation and sprinkle the people with water from the basins using the sprigs from a tree. The mood appropriate for the occasion is joy.*

*At the conclusion of the sprinkling, the leaders may return to the baptismal font and pour the remaining water from the basins into the font in full view of the people.*

*If an anthem, rather than a congregational hymn, is sung during the sprinkling, a hymn may be sung by all as an introduction to the service of bread and wine.*

---

## SERVICE OF BREAD AND WINE

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### GREETING

---

*All who are able may stand. The one presiding may lead the following, or another, greeting from the table.*

LEADER

**Alleluia!**

**Christ is risen.**

PEOPLE

Christ is risen indeed!

Alleluia!

---

### PASSING THE PEACE

---

*All who are able may stand. These or other words may introduce the passing of the peace.*

LEADER

**So if you are about to offer your gift  
to God at the altar  
and there remember that your sister or brother  
has something against you,  
leave your gift in front of the altar,  
go at once and make peace with your brother or sister,  
and then come back and offer your gift.<sup>20</sup>**

PEOPLE

In response to Christ's command,  
we reach out to each other in love.

*Leaders of the service may move among the congregation to shake hands, embrace, or make another sign of peace. A verse of a hymn may be sung as this is done. When the people have exchanged greetings of peace, all may return to their seats.*

*The order continues with a Service of Word and Sacrament, beginning with the offertory. A special preface for Easter may be included within the communion prayer. A preface for Easter is on page 497.*

# **Order for Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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This order may be used before a child's baptism. It provides a ritual acknowledgement of the important event of birth or adoption. It may be used when baptismal counseling or the assignment of baptism to particular days in the church year, such as Easter or Pentecost, causes a delay. It may be used when parents wish their children to make their own decisions of faith. Options are indicated in the order for use when children have been baptized previously.

It is appropriate that this order be held within a Sunday service of the church. This order may be incorporated within a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word. During that service one or more of the following scripture passages may be used:

Deuteronomy 6:4-7: Diligently teach your children.

Deuteronomy 31:12-13: Do this that your children may hear and learn.

1 Samuel 1:9-11, 20-28; 2:26: Birth and presentation of Samuel.

Psalm 8: God's graciousness.

Psalm 78: God's glorious deeds.

Matthew 18:1-4: Those who humble themselves like children will be the greatest.

Mark 10:13-16: Blessing of the children.

Luke 2:22-32, 52: Jesus' presentation in the temple.

This order is based on one developed by the Commission on Worship of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU) and is used by permission. There are minor variations in the order offered here. The order from the Consultation on Church Union begins with the presentation on page

247. Helpful commentary is included in the COCU publication, "An Order of Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child."<sup>21</sup>

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## OUTLINE

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*This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. An affirmation of faith and a hymn may precede this order.*

**Greeting and Introduction**  
**Presentation**  
**Act of Praise**  
**Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession**  
**Naming the Child**  
**Covenant**  
**Congregational Assent**  
**Blessing**  
**Prayer**  
**Benediction**

*A hymn may be sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

***Following the sermon, all who are able may stand and unite in an affirmation of faith and a hymn.***

***A leader may invite those who wish to give thanks for their child to come forward with the child.***

---

## GREETING AND INTRODUCTION

---

LEADER

**Hear the promise of God to Sarah and Abraham:  
I will indeed bless you,  
and I will multiply your descendants  
as the stars of heaven  
and as the sand which is on the seashore.<sup>22</sup>**

**With the people of Israel,  
we give thanks to God  
for the coming of a child,  
a sign of God's blessing,  
a gift of hope.**

**God creates all things;  
all life is a gift from God.**

**For this we give thanks.**

**We give special thanks for children  
who remind us powerfully and personally  
of the reality of God's creating and creative powers.  
Children are a sign of God's creation.**

**They are also a sign of God's salvation.**

**The trust of a child before all risk  
leads us in the way of God.**

**The prophet Isaiah writes:**

**The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,  
and a little child shall lead them.<sup>23</sup>**

**Jesus came into our midst as a child,  
and we are to come to Jesus  
with the openness of children.**

**Only then may we have hope  
of entering the realm of God.**

**Jesus said,  
“Who is my mother,  
and who are my brothers?”  
And stretching out his hand toward the disciples,  
Jesus said, “Here are my mother and brothers!  
For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven  
is my brother, and sister, and mother.”<sup>24</sup>**

---

PRAYER OF  
THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

---

Ⓐ *for the birth of a child*

LEADER

**O God, like a mother who  
comforts her children,  
you strengthen us  
in our solitude;  
you sustain us  
and provide for us.  
We come before you with  
gratitude for the gift of this  
child, for the joy which has  
come into this family, and  
for the grace with which you  
surround them and all of us.  
As a father cares for his  
children, so continually  
look on us with  
compassion and goodness.  
Pour out your Spirit.  
Enable your servants  
to abound in love,  
and establish our homes  
in holiness;  
through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

Ⓑ *for the adoption of  
a child*

LEADER

**O God,  
you have adopted all of us  
as your children.  
We give thanks to you  
for the child who has come  
to bless this family  
and for the parent(s) who  
have welcomed this child  
as *her/his/their* own.  
By the power  
of your Holy Spirit,  
fill their home  
with love, trust, and  
understanding;  
through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

---

NAMING THE CHILD

---

Ⓐ *for a child already named*

LEADER

**What name have you given  
this child?**

*The parent(s) presenting  
the child respond(s) with  
the child's full name.*

Ⓑ *for conferring the name*

LEADER

**What name do you now  
give this child?**

*Each parent may place  
a hand on the child.*

PARENT(S)

*I/ We name you \_\_\_\_\_ .*  
full name

## COVENANT

## LEADER

*addressing the parent(s)*

**In accepting \_\_\_\_\_ as a gift from God,**  
name  
**you also acknowledge your faith in Jesus Christ**  
**and the responsibility that God places upon you**

*The parent(s) respond with the following or similar words, saying them or repeating them after the leader.*

PARENT(S)

I/ We receive \_\_\_\_\_ name

from the hand of a loving Creator.

With humility and hope,

*I/we* accept the obligation which is *mine/ours*

to love and nurture *him/her*

and to lead *him/her* to Christian faith

by teaching and example.

## *I/ We* ask for the power of the Holy Spirit

and the support of the church

that I/we may be a good steward/good stewards  
of this gift of life.

## CONGREGATIONAL ASSENT

*All who are able may stand.*

LEADER

*addressing the congregation*

**The church is the family of Christ,  
the community in which we grow  
in faith and commitment.**

## PEOPLE

We rejoice to take \_\_\_\_\_ under our care.  
name

We seek God's grace to be a community  
in which the gospel is truly proclaimed to all.

We will support you and minister with you  
as workers together in Christ Jesus  
and heirs of Christ's promise.

---

BLESSING

---

*A leader may take the child and say the following or other words of blessing.*

**A**    *for an unbaptized child*

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
may the eternal God bless  
you and watch over you.  
May Jesus Christ  
incorporate you into his  
death and resurrection  
through baptism.  
May the Holy Spirit  
sanctify you and bring you  
to life everlasting.  
Amen.

**B**    *for a baptized child*

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
may the eternal God bless  
you and watch over you.  
May Jesus Christ  
incorporate you into his  
death and resurrection.  
May the Holy Spirit  
sanctify you and bring you  
to life everlasting.  
Amen.

*The leader may return the child to the family.*

---

PRAYER

---

*A leader may offer this or other prayers.*

LEADER

Gracious God,  
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named:  
Out of the treasures of your glory strengthen us  
through your Spirit.  
Help us joyfully to nurture \_\_\_\_\_  
within your church. name  
Bring her/him by grace to baptism/ Christian maturity  
that Christ may dwell in her/his heart through faith.  
Give power to \_\_\_\_\_ and to us  
name  
that with all your people we may grasp  
the breadth and length,  
the height and depth of Christ's love.  
Enable us to know this love,  
though it is beyond knowledge,

**and to be filled with your own fullness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

*If the Lord's Prayer is not used at another point in the service, it may now be prayed by all.*

---

**BENEDICTION**

---

LEADER

**Glory to God,  
who, by the power at work among us,  
is able to do far more than we can ask or imagine.  
Glory be given to this God from generation to generation  
in the church and in Christ Jesus for ever!**

ALL

**Amen.**

*Family members return to their places in the congregation.*

*At the conclusion of this order, a hymn may be sung and  
a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the  
Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

# **Order for Times of Passage: Farewell**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

People experience periods in their lives which shape the future. The church celebrates and acknowledges the most familiar of those passage times: birth, marriage, death.

There are other passage times in each of our lives. People leave the local church to move to another community. Couples become engaged. A person secures a new job. One “returns” from a personal or family crisis. These moments in the life of the individual can be deep and important spiritual and educational experiences. Though these passages are not those for which major religious rites are celebrated, the faith community can celebrate with individuals in such moments of significance and meaning.

There is not a singular way in which times of passage should be observed. One example is this service of farewell. It is important that worship leaders seek to be intentional in designing ways appropriate to the person and the setting for the observance. The service may include words and symbols which link it to the stories and images of the faith community. People who are experiencing the particular time of passage being celebrated should be involved in the planning and, where appropriate, in the leadership of the liturgy.

The service may include an opportunity to name the event being observed, a time for people to witness to their experiences and feelings, and a reading and exposition of the word which gives perspective to that being experienced. There may also be a sense of sending forth those leaving to new ministry. There may be an offering of thanksgiving for the journey of faith and for the sharing in the midst of this community of God’s people.

A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may provide the context in which the special celebration is

held. In those services, it is suggested that it follow the sermon and be associated with the prayers of the people.

Scripture and the proclamation of the word should be used freely. The Bible is the story of God's saving acts in history and of the response of the people of God to those acts. The events described in the Bible cover a panorama of human experiences. Search the scriptures to find the verses and stories and challenges that relate most deeply to the time of passage which is being acknowledged. Music is also an important vehicle for expressing feelings for which words may not provide adequate expression, depending on the setting of the celebration.

Celebration of passages provides an opportunity for people to remember stories of the experience being observed and to draw new insights from them. Such stories may be shared in different ways, both verbally and visually, using drawings, slides, movies, skits, interpretive dance, mime, and other media. Full consideration should be given to ethnic and local customs of the church and of the individual.

On rare occasions, services may recall periods of separation, but not farewell: when children are missing; when people slip into a hopeless life on the street; when family members, friends, and community residents are held hostage; when families must endure endless waiting for loved ones in prison. All these are times of passage, and all will require special prayers and special services.

As one example of the kind of service that may be held at a time of passage, this order is for those moving away. This may be used for people moving permanently from the community for new jobs or into care facilities or retirement communities. It may also be used for those leaving for a particular time period, such as those who leave for college or military service.

A portion of this order is for use when a pastor or another authorized minister is leaving a local church that she or he has served. In these cases, it is appropriate to have a repre-

sentative of the association and/or conference participate in the service. If the authorized minister has served in another organization on behalf of the local church, it is also appropriate to have a representative of that organization participate in the service.

---

## OUTLINE

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*This order may be used alone. When it is incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word, it may follow the sermon.*

**Greeting**

**Remembrance and Recognition**

**Giving and Sharing Symbols**

**Ending an Authorized Ministry**

**Recognition of the End**

**Vows of Release**

**Witness of the Association/Conference**

**Prayer**

**Hymn of Thanksgiving**

**Benediction**

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue.*

---

## GREETING

---

LEADER

**Our church family is constantly changing.**

**People come and go.**

**Babies are born.**

**Children grow up.**

**People commit themselves to one another.**

**Loved ones and friends among us  
come to the end of their lives.**

**Individuals move into our community and church life.**

**Others leave us, moving away to new places,  
new experiences, and new opportunities.**

**It is important and right  
that we recognize these times of passage,  
of endings and beginnings.**

**Today we share the time of farewell  
with *a friend/friends* who *is/are* leaving.**

---

## REMEMBRANCE AND RECOGNITION

---

*An opportunity may be given for the recognition that it is in the midst of the congregation of God's people that Christians gather at significant times of passage in their lives. The member(s) of the local church leaving the community are invited to come forward. Others who have been closely involved may be invited to join them.*

*The pastor or another representative of the local church and one or two friends may speak of the occasion being observed and share brief stories reminding the congregation of the gifts and contributions of the person(s) leaving. The person(s) being recognized may speak of the significance of the church for their faith and life.*

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## GIVING AND SHARING SYMBOLS

---

*Symbols may be given to those leaving and to the church, with appropriate words of appreciation and thanks.*

*If the person leaving is not an authorized minister who has been serving in or on behalf of the church, the service continues with the prayer on page 258.*

## RECOGNITION OF THE END

LEADER

date

name

position

AUTHORIZED MINISTER

church name

number of years

I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted.

As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

## PEOPLE

We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness,  
and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere.

We express our gratitude for your time among us.

We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes.

Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

**AUTHORIZED MINISTER**

I forgive you and accept your gratitude,  
trusting that our time together and our parting  
are pleasing to God.

We do,  
with the help of God.

**WITNESS OF THE ASSOCIATION/CONFERENCE**

*Church officers may come forward. A representative of the association or conference addresses them, using these or similar words.*

REPRESENTATIVE

On behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_  
association/conference

and the United Church of Christ,

I witness to the words spoken:

words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release.

The member churches of our association and conference hold each of you in prayer.

We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

OFFICERS

Thanks be to God.

**PRAYER**

*All who are able may stand.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**[A]**

LEADER

**O God,**  
**we give thanks**  
**for remembered times**  
**when we, together,**  
**have shared the life of faith.**  
**We thank you for the**  
**moments we have shared**  
**with** *this person/these people*  
**in worship, in learning,**  
**in service.**

**We pray that**

\_\_\_\_\_  
name(s)

**will be aware of your**  
**Spirit's guidance**

**[B]**

ALL

**God, whose everlasting love**  
**for all is trustworthy,**  
**help each of us**  
**to trust the future**  
**which rests in your care.**  
**The time we were together**  
**in your name saw our**  
**laughter and tears,**  
**our hopes and**  
**disappointments.**  
**Guide us as we hold these**  
**cherished memories but**  
**move in new directions,**  
**until that time to come**

**as** *he/she/they* **move(s)**  
**to** *a new and unknown place/  
new and unknown places,*  
**in the name of Jesus**  
**the Savior.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

**when we are completely**  
**one with you**  
**and with each other,**  
**in the name of Jesus Christ**  
**we pray.**  
**Amen.**

---

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

---

---

BENEDICTION

---

LEADER

**Go now,**  
**surrounded by our love**  
**and led by the promises of God,**  
**the presence of Jesus Christ,**  
**and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**  
**Amen.**

*When the Order for Times of Passage is incorporated into  
a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word,  
those who have gone forward to participate in this order  
may return to their places in the congregation and the ser-  
vice continues.*

# **Order for Special Occasions in a Church's Life**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

It is important to observe special occasions in the life of a local church that mark points of passage and growth. These occasions include the anniversary of the founding of a local church, the burning of a mortgage, the dedication and consecration of buildings or newly designed space, the dedication of gifts, reunions of members and of specific groups within the local church, and times of recovenanting of the people or between pastor and people.

Each of these times can be deep and important spiritual and educational moments for the members of the local church. The uniqueness of these times and of the faith experiences out of which they grow makes it impossible for one service to cover all occasions. It is important for members of the church, particularly those people who have some direct relationship to the event that is to be celebrated, to share in the planning and leading of the service.

A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may provide the context within which the special celebration is held. It is suggested that the special observance follow the sermon and be associated with the prayers of the people. In the case of dedications, items related to the liturgical life of the church may be dedicated at those points in the service and at those places in the room where they will normally function. Items not related to one part of the liturgical order of service may be dedicated at the time of the prayers of the people or at the offertory.

The resources in this order require further development by the planners of each specific service.

Symbols are important means of communication which help people to relate the past to the present and to connect the item being dedicated to the life and mission of the

church. Wherever possible, it is helpful to include symbols as well as words in a service such as this. Mortgages held up and symbolically burned visibly bring home the reality of the moment. Charters or other items from the past help to focus on the journey that has been made to this point of anniversary observance. When a new or renovated building is dedicated, beginning the ceremony outdoors and entering the new or renovated space is an effective and dramatic way of centering on the nature of the occasion. Use of a specific gift can enhance the service, such as dedication of a baptismal font followed by a baptism.

Music may play a role in harmonies and in words expressed in choral texts and hymns. Feelings for which words may not provide adequate expression may be celebrated through song and instrumental music. Music may provide an opportunity for moving through the church building in a festive manner. It may also be incorporated with dance or other movement to celebrate special occasions and gifts. Music may be commissioned for the occasion.

---

## OUTLINE

---

***This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon, or its elements may be incorporated into a service at various points.***

**Hymn, Anthem, or Other Music**

**Address**

**Reading of Scripture**

**Litany**

**Proclamation**

**Prayer**

***A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue, or a hymn and a benediction may close the order.***

*This order may follow the sermon in a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word, or its elements may be incorporated into a service at various points.*

---

### HYMN, ANTHEM, OR OTHER MUSIC

---

*A hymn or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played. Many hymns are appropriate, but a special one may be written for the occasion. Dance by a small group or movement through the building by the congregation may be included.*

---

### ADDRESS

---

*A leader may introduce the reason for the celebration, using words, pictures, or other symbols.*

---

### READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*Choose scripture stories and challenges that reflect most deeply the event the church is celebrating. Possible scripture lessons include the following.*

#### OLD TESTAMENT

1 Chronicles 29:10-18

2 Chronicles 6:18-31

Psalms 24, 84, 122

Isaiah 6:1-8

#### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 7:24-27

John 2:13-17

1 Corinthians 3:9-17

Ephesians 2:19-22

Revelation 21:2-5

*Representatives of the church who have a special relationship to the event being celebrated may read the lessons.*

---

### LITANY

---

*A litany of thanksgiving, affirmation, and hope may be written for the occasion by people in the church family. A litany of memories written by those who have been in the church the longest time or a litany of dreams and hopes written by children are two possibilities among many.*

*The following litanies are based on a traditional one used for the dedication of a church building. They will need to be adapted to the specific situation.*

**A** *for a building dedication*

LEADER

**For the worship of God  
in prayer and praise,  
for the preaching  
of the Word,  
for the celebration  
of the holy sacraments,**

PEOPLE

**We dedicate this building.**

LEADER

**For the comfort  
of those who mourn,  
for the help of those  
who are perplexed,  
for the guidance of those  
who seek strength,**

PEOPLE

**We dedicate this building.**

LEADER

**For the support  
and nurture of families,  
for the guidance  
of children,  
for the calling of youth  
to a life of service,**

PEOPLE

**We dedicate this building.**

LEADER

**For guarding against evil,  
for fostering faithfulness,  
for promoting peace and  
justice in all the earth,**

PEOPLE

**We dedicate this building.**

**B** *for an anniversary or  
other special occasion*

LEADER

**For the worship of God  
in prayer and praise,  
for the preaching  
of the Word,  
for the celebration  
of the holy sacraments,**

PEOPLE

**Offered by this church,  
we give thanks.**

LEADER

**For the comfort  
of those who mourn,  
for the help of those  
who are perplexed,  
for the guidance of those  
who seek strength,**

PEOPLE

**Offered by this church,  
we give thanks.**

LEADER

**For the support  
and nurture of families,  
for the guidance  
of children,  
for the calling of youth  
to a life of service,**

PEOPLE

**Offered by this church,  
we give thanks.**

LEADER

**For guarding against evil,  
for fostering faithfulness,**

LEADER

**For the opening of minds  
to your truth,  
for the care of the needy,  
for the giving of hope  
and courage,**

PEOPLE

**We dedicate this building.**

LEADER

**For the unity  
of all believers in Christ,  
for the carrying of the  
gospel into all the world,  
for the furtherance  
of the unity of all people,**

PEOPLE

**We dedicate this building.**

LEADER

**For the consecration  
of life and service,  
in grateful remembrance  
of those who have gone  
before us,  
and in gratitude for our life  
together in this church,**

PEOPLE

**We dedicate this building  
to the glory of God,  
to the honor of Jesus Christ,  
and to the praise  
of the Holy Spirit.**

ALL

**Thanks be to God!**

**for promoting peace and  
justice in all the earth,**

PEOPLE

**Offered by this church,  
we give thanks.**

LEADER

**For the opening of minds  
to your truth, for the care  
of the needy, for the giving  
of hope and courage,**

PEOPLE

**Offered by this church,  
we give thanks.**

LEADER

**For the unity  
of all believers in Christ,  
for the carrying of the  
gospel into all the world,  
for the furtherance  
of the unity of all people,**

PEOPLE

**Offered by this church,  
we give thanks.**

LEADER

**For the consecration  
of life and service,  
in grateful remembrance  
of those who have gone  
before us, and in gratitude  
for our life together  
in this church,**

ALL

**We give thanks to you  
for this church's past and  
pray for your continued  
blessing and guidance.  
Amen.**

---

## PROCLAMATION

---

*A time of celebration is a time to remember. Stories of history, heritage, planning, and effort enable people to stay in touch with the faith experience of those who have gone before them. Stories may be shared verbally and visually, using such means as drawings, slides, movies, skits, interpretive dance, mime, and other media. Full consideration needs to be given to ethnic and local customs of the church and its members as sources of material.*

*Anniversaries and special occasions are also times to look to the future. People may be invited to write down their hopes and plans for what they want the church to be and do in five or ten or twenty-five years. These may be shared in the service.*

---

## PRAYER

---

*Prayers may be offered at specific places that focus on the theme or themes of the observance. At the anniversary of a church building, prayers of blessing and hope may be offered at each of the four corners of the building. Specific themes may be associated with the corners, as is sometimes done in African religious rituals. These themes could be: worship and celebration, learning and growth, service and action, and community and relationship. If prayers do not focus on such themes, one of these general prayers or a prayer prepared for the occasion may be used.*

▣ *for a dedication*

ALL

**O God of all creation,  
we give thanks for the  
calling to be your church  
and for the power you give  
us to fulfill our calling.  
We are a people  
with a past full of assurance  
and a future full of hope.**

▣ *for a special occasion*

ALL

**Eternal God,  
we offer thanksgiving  
and praise to you  
on this festive day.  
We give you thanks  
for those who responded  
to your call to establish  
this church.**

**Today we dedicate  
this \_\_\_\_\_ to you.  
May the meaning we see  
in this \_\_\_\_\_  
live on in us so that each  
time we see it or use it,  
we may be reminded  
of your holy presence.  
May we pass on to our  
children and our children's  
children the significance  
of this \_\_\_\_\_  
so that their journey  
of faith may be enhanced.  
To you be the power  
and the glory for ever.  
Amen.**

**We acknowledge our  
gratitude for the continuing  
ministry and mission  
of our church through  
\_\_\_\_\_ years.**

**We thank you for all that  
our church has meant to its  
members, to those its  
ministry has touched,  
and to the United Church  
of Christ.**

**In tender memory,  
we rejoice at the inspiration  
which has been found here,  
through the preaching  
of your word,  
through the singing  
of hymns to your praise,  
and through the sharing of  
life-sustaining sacraments.**

**Look upon us this day  
with mercy.**

**Bless us as we reconsecrate  
ourselves to you.**

**Sanctify our lives and our  
work through this church.**

**Help us to preserve the best  
of our past and to be open  
to new vision.**

**May this local church long  
continue to be a sign  
of your Spirit and a witness  
to Jesus Christ,  
in whose name we pray.  
Amen.**

***This order may conclude with a hymn and a benediction,  
or a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the  
Word may continue.***

# **Order for Reconciliation of a Penitent Person**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

Services of reconciliation are one means by which the church expresses the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 5:10). Christians are called to “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). Priesthood, by definition, is a ministry exercised in behalf of others. It is the privilege and responsibility of Christians to intercede for one another, share mutual concerns, forgive one another’s sins with God’s help, and assure one another of God’s forgiveness when Christians are alienated from God and neighbors. This order offers the freeing power of confession and absolution.

This order may be adapted to the particular circumstance in which it is to be used. It is absolutely essential that great care be taken to protect the confidentiality of the conversation with the penitent person. A pastor or another representative of the church may lead the service. It is recommended that this order be used only after the one leading it has had adequate opportunity to establish a relationship with the person seeking reconciliation.

For full participation, the person seeking reconciliation must have a copy of the order. A careful review of the order may provide a way of interpreting the meaning and purpose of personal confession.

---

OUTLINE

---

**Greeting**

**Words of Comfort from Scripture**

**Confession**

**Pastoral Conversation**

**Prayer of the Penitent Person**

**Assurance of Pardon**

**Thanksgiving**

**Passing the Peace**

---

GREETING

---

*When the person seeking reconciliation arrives, the pastor or another representative of the church may greet the person informally and establish an atmosphere of openness.*

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ  
be with you.**

PENITENT PERSON

And also with you.

**[A]**

LEADER

**Hear the words  
of the psalmist:  
Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your  
loving-kindness;  
in your great compassion  
blot out my offenses.  
Wash me through  
and through  
from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me  
from my sin.  
For I know my  
transgressions,  
and my sin is ever  
before me.<sup>25</sup>**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Let us say together these  
words of the psalmist:**

ALL

**Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your  
loving-kindness;  
in your great compassion  
blot out my offenses.  
Wash me through  
and through  
from my wickedness  
and cleanse me  
from my sin.  
For I know my  
transgressions,  
and my sin is ever  
before me.<sup>26</sup>**

---

WORDS OF COMFORT FROM SCRIPTURE

---

*Scripture may be read as a reminder of God's promise of love and forgiveness. The reading may be shared by those present. One or more of the following or other passages may be read.*

Isaiah 53:4-6

Ezekiel 11:19-20

Matthew 6:14-15, 9:12-13, 11:28-30

Luke 6:31-38, 11:9-10, 15:1-7

John 3:16

Colossians 1:3-14, 3:1-17

1 Timothy 1:5

1 John 1:1-2, 5-10

---

## CONFESSION

---

*A confession may be said by all. After a period of silence, the person seeking reconciliation may be encouraged to make a confession in his or her own words.*

### GENERAL CONFESSION

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**[A]**

ALL

**Most merciful God,  
we confess that we have  
sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have  
left undone.**

**We have not loved you  
with our whole heart.**

**We have not loved our  
neighbors as ourselves.**

**We are truly sorry,  
and we humbly repent.**

**For the sake of our Savior  
Jesus Christ, have mercy  
on us and forgive us that  
we may delight in your will  
and follow in your ways,  
to the glory of your name.**

**Amen.**<sup>27</sup>

**[B]**

ALL

**Gracious God,  
our sins are too heavy  
to carry, too real to hide,  
and too deep to undo.  
Forgive what our lips  
tremble to name,  
what our hearts can no  
longer bear, and what has  
become for us a consuming  
fire of judgment.  
Set us free from a past  
that we cannot change;  
open to us a future in which  
we can be changed;  
and grant us grace to grow  
more and more  
in your likeness and image;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.**

**Amen.**

## INDIVIDUAL CONFESSION

*The person seeking reconciliation may confess silently and/or aloud.*

---

 PASTORAL CONVERSATION
 

---

*The pastor or another representative of the church may encourage dialogue with the person and offer understanding, comfort, counsel, and support.*

---

 PRAYER OF THE PENITENT PERSON
 

---

[A]

PENITENT PERSON

Almighty God,  
 God of strength  
 and mercy,  
 who sent Jesus to  
 save and forgive,  
 I trust you.  
 Forgive my sins.  
 Refresh my spirit.  
 Free me  
 to love myself,  
 my neighbor,  
 and you.  
 Amen.

[B]

PENITENT PERSON

Lord Jesus,  
 have mercy on  
 me, a sinner.  
 Amen.

*The petition may  
 be repeated  
 several times.*

[C]

PENITENT PERSON

God,  
 be merciful  
 to me, a sinner.  
 Amen.

---

 ASSURANCE OF PARDON
 

---

*The person seeking reconciliation is assured of God's forgiveness with the following or similar words. Agreement about questions to be asked should be reached in advance.*

[A]

LEADER

**This is a true  
 saying, and  
 worthy of all  
 to be received,**

[B]

LEADER

**If we confess  
 our sins,  
 God is faithful  
 and just,**

[C]

LEADER

**I acknowledged  
 my sin to you,  
 and I did not  
 hide my iniquity;**

that Christ Jesus  
came into the  
world to save  
sinners.<sup>28</sup>

This is God's gift  
to us and  
to the world,  
so we can know  
abundant life.

and will forgive  
our sins and  
cleanse us  
from all  
unrighteousness.<sup>29</sup>

I said, "I will  
confess my  
transgressions  
to God";  
then you forgave  
the guilt  
of my sin.<sup>30</sup>

AND

*A pastor or another representative of the church may ask the following or a similar question, and the person may respond in this or some other way.*

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**do you believe the promise of God's forgiveness?**

PENITENT PERSON

I believe.

*When it seems appropriate, the following question may also be asked.*

LEADER

**Do you forgive those who have sinned against you?**

*Time may be given for the one seeking reconciliation to reflect and to respond in this or some other way.*

PENITENT PERSON

I do, with God's help.

*The leader may give the declaration of pardon in these or similar words.*

LEADER

**In Christ's name,  
and as one with you in the church,  
I declare to you:  
Your sins are forgiven.  
Go in peace,  
in the knowledge of God's mercy.**

---

## THANKSGIVING

---

*A pastor or another representative of the church may offer a prayer in her or his own words or may use the brief prayer and/or the acclamation.*

**A**

LEADER

**Creator and Savior,  
giver and forgiver of life,  
we give you thanks for \_\_\_\_\_, name  
your son/daughter in faith,  
who, feeling your presence  
and trusting your grace,  
has thrown off the anxiety of sin  
to receive the hope of your love.  
We offer our thanks to you,  
our good and gracious God,  
in the name of Jesus Christ  
by whom all sins are forgiven.**

PENITENT PERSON

**Amen.**

**B**

LEADER

**Now there is rejoicing in heaven;  
for you were lost,  
and are found;  
you were dead,  
and now you are alive in Jesus Christ.  
God has put away all your sins.<sup>31</sup>**

---

## PASSING THE PEACE

---

*A pastor or another representative of the church and the one reconciled may greet each other, hold hands, or embrace, and conclude their time together.*

LEADER

**The peace of God be with you always.**

PENITENT PERSON

**And also with you.**

# **Order for Corporate Reconciliation**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

Services of reconciliation are one means by which the church expresses the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 5:10). Christians are called to “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). Priesthood, by definition, is a ministry exercised in behalf of others. It is the privilege and responsibility of Christians to intercede for one another, share mutual concerns, forgive one another’s sins with God’s help, and assure one another of God’s forgiveness when Christians are alienated from God and neighbors. This order offers the freeing power of confession and absolution.

This order may be adapted to the particular circumstance in which it is to be used. It is intended for any occasion when a local church assembles for the confession of sin and the assurance of God’s pardon. The occasion may be one related to communal, national, or global strife; or to one of the penitential days or seasons of the church year; or in preparation for Holy Communion. When it is used in relation to Holy Communion but on a separate occasion, this service and a Service of Word and Sacrament may be used in full. When it is used on the same occasion as Holy Communion, this order may be used in full and a Service of Word and Sacrament may begin at the offertory.

The Order for Corporate Reconciliation may require considerable preparation if it is to be used in relation to some specific strife or difficulty. When this occurs, the relevance of the order may be enhanced significantly by the use of prayers, litanies, and exhortations specifically prepared for the occasion.

The theme of this service is not human sinfulness but divine grace which makes reconciliation possible. Joy, expressed through music and in other ways, is appropriate. The

placement of hymns and other music in the service is left to the discretion of those planning the service. The order may be led by a pastor or other representatives of the church.

Each worshiper needs a copy of the order. A careful review of the order may provide a way of interpreting the meaning and purpose of confession.

---

## OUTLINE

---

*This order may be used alone or incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament.*

Greeting  
Sentences  
Collect  
Examination of Conscience  
Prayer  
Reading of Scripture  
Sermon  
Affirmation of Faith  
Call to Confession  
Confession of Sin  
Silence  
Assurance of Pardon  
Affirmation of Pardon

**Order for Word  
and Sacrament,  
beginning with  
the offertory**

**Prayers  
Collect  
Passing the Peace  
Lord's Prayer  
Act of Praise  
Benediction**

*When this order is used in relation to Holy Communion but on a separate occasion, this order and a Service of Word and Sacrament may be used in full. When it is used on the same occasion as Holy Communion, this order may be used through the affirmation of pardon and a Service of Word and Sacrament may then begin at the offertory.*

---

## GREETING

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may greet the people with one of these or with other words and then explain briefly the specific purpose of the service.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**The grace of our Lord  
Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the communion  
of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.<sup>32</sup>**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

**[B]**

LEADER

**In the name  
of the triune God:  
Creator, Liberator,  
and Healer.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

---

## SENTENCES

---

*All who are able may stand. One of the following or other appropriate sentences from scripture may be read.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**Bless the Holy One,  
O my soul;  
and all that is within me,  
bless God's holy name!**

PEOPLE

**Bless the Holy One,  
O my soul,  
and forget not  
all God's benefits,**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Jesus said:  
Ask, and it will be given;  
seek, and you will find;  
knock, and it will be  
opened to you.**

PEOPLE

**For everyone  
who asks receives,  
and those who seek find,**

LEADER

**Who forgives  
all your iniquity,  
who heals all your diseases,**

PEOPLE

Who redeems your life  
from the grave,  
who crowns you  
with steadfast love  
and mercy,

LEADER

**Who satisfies you with  
good as long as you live,**

PEOPLE

So that your youth is  
renewed like the eagle's.<sup>33</sup>

and to each who knocks  
it will be opened.<sup>34</sup>

---

## COLLECT

---

*All who are able may stand. One of the following prayers  
or a similar one may be offered.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

[A]

ALL

**God of ancient wisdom  
and emerging truth, your  
love makes all things new.  
Fill us with the hope,  
not of those who think  
they are without sin,  
but of those who know  
they have sinned,  
who trust in your mercy,  
and who long  
for your heavenly reign  
to come on the earth;  
through Jesus Christ,**

[B]

ALL

**God of all mercy  
and consolation,  
come to the aid  
of your people,  
turning us from our sin  
to live for you alone.  
Give us the power  
of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may attend to your  
word, confess our sins,  
receive your forgiveness,  
and grow into the fullness  
of Jesus Christ,**

**who lived and died and rose  
again for us  
and for our salvation.  
Amen.**

**the one begotten by you  
before all worlds,  
our Savior and Redeemer.  
Amen.<sup>35</sup>**

---

**EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE**

---

*The people may be seated. One or more of the following  
may be used. Silent reflection may follow each response.*

**A**

LEADER

**Hear the commandments of God:  
I am the Holy One, your God,  
who brought you out of bondage.  
You shall have no other gods but me.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.

LEADER

**You shall not make for yourself any idol.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.

LEADER

**You shall not invoke with malice  
the name of the Holy One, your God.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.

LEADER

**Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.

LEADER

**Honor your father and your mother.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.

LEADER

**You shall not commit murder.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.

LEADER

**You shall not commit adultery.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.

LEADER

**You shall not steal.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.

LEADER

**You shall not be a false witness.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.

LEADER

**You shall not covet anything  
that belongs to your neighbor.**

PEOPLE

God, have mercy on us  
and guide us in your way.<sup>36</sup>

☐

LEADER

**Jesus said the first commandment is:  
The Holy One, our God, is the only Holy One;  
and you shall love the Holy One, your God,  
with all your heart, and with all your soul,  
and with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.  
The second commandment is this:  
You shall love your neighbor  
as you love yourself.  
No other commandment is greater than these.<sup>37</sup>**



LEADER

**Let us call to mind the words of Jesus Christ:**

**Blessed are the poor in spirit;**

PEOPLE

Theirs is the reign of God.

LEADER

**Blessed are those who mourn;**

PEOPLE

They shall be comforted.

LEADER

**Blessed are the meek;**

PEOPLE

They shall inherit the earth.

LEADER

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness;**

PEOPLE

They shall be satisfied.

LEADER

**Blessed are the merciful;**

PEOPLE

They shall obtain mercy.

LEADER

**Blessed are the pure in heart;**

PEOPLE

They shall see God.

LEADER

**Blessed are the peacemakers;**

PEOPLE

They shall be called children of God.

LEADER

**Blessed are those persecuted for righteousness' sake;**

PEOPLE

Theirs is the reign of God.

LEADER

**Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you  
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.**

PEOPLE

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.<sup>38</sup>

---

## PRAYER

---

*The following prayer or a similar one may be offered.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

PEOPLE

Merciful God,  
from whom come all holy desires and just works,  
breathe into our hearts by your Holy Spirit  
the gift of obedient faith,  
that we, knowing your will,  
may treasure these words in our minds and hearts  
and may in all things love and serve you.  
Amen.<sup>39</sup>

---

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*The lectionary lessons for the day, one of these suggested sets of lessons, or other appropriate lessons may be read. One or more of these penitential psalms may be said or sung: Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143. Appropriate lessons include the following.*

**[A]**

Ezekiel 11:19-20  
Ephesians 5:1-14  
Matthew 22:34-40

**[B]**

Isaiah 1:10-18  
Ephesians 4:17-32  
John 15:12-17

---

## SERMON

---

*A sermon may be offered. A less formal address may be used in which the people are invited to share in dialogue and all present are given an opportunity to offer mutual consolation. There may be silence for reflection.*

---

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

---

*All who are able may stand for a form of the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ, a creed, or a church*

*covenant. Forms of the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, historic creeds, and other affirmations are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

## CALL TO CONFESSION

*All who are able may stand. One of the following or other sentences from scripture may be said in preparation for the prayers of confession.*

**A**

LEADER

**When I declared  
not my sin,  
my body wasted  
away through  
my groaning all  
day long.**

PEOPLE

For day and  
night your hand  
was heavy  
upon me;  
my strength  
was dried up  
as by the heat  
of the summer.

LEADER

**I acknowledged  
my sin to you,  
and I did not  
hide my iniquity;**

PEOPLE

I said:  
“I will confess my  
transgressions  
to God”;  
then you forgave  
the guilt of  
my sin.<sup>40</sup>

**B**

LEADER

**If we say  
we have no sin,  
we deceive  
ourselves, and  
the truth is not  
in us.**

PEOPLE

If we confess  
our sins,  
God is faithful  
and just  
and will forgive  
our sins  
and cleanse us  
from all  
unrighteousness.<sup>41</sup>

**C**

LEADER

**Since we have a  
great high priest  
who has passed  
through the  
heavens, Jesus,  
the only one  
begotten by God,**

PEOPLE

Let us then  
with confidence  
draw near to the  
throne of grace,  
that we may  
receive mercy  
and find grace  
to help in time  
of need.<sup>42</sup>

---

## CONFESSION OF SIN

---

*The people may sit or those who are able may kneel. All may join in one of these prayers or a general confession prepared for the occasion. A special litany may be used responsively or antiphonally. A litany may be read twice, giving each half of the congregation opportunity to make confession and receive the promise of forgiveness.*

LEADER

**Let us confess our sins.****[A]**

ALL

**Gracious God,  
our sins are too  
heavy to carry,  
too real to hide,  
and too deep  
to undo.  
Forgive what our  
lips tremble to  
name, what our  
hearts can no  
longer bear,  
and what has  
become for us a  
consuming fire  
of judgment.  
Set us free from  
a past that we  
cannot change;  
open to us a  
future in which  
we can be  
changed; and  
grant us grace  
to grow more  
and more  
in your likeness  
and image;**

**[B]**

ALL

**Most merciful  
God, we confess  
that we have  
sinned against  
you in thought,  
word, and deed,  
by what we have  
done, and by  
what we have  
left undone.  
We have not  
loved you with  
our whole heart.  
We have not  
loved our  
neighbors as  
ourselves.  
We are truly  
sorry, and we  
humbly repent.  
For the sake of  
our Savior Jesus  
Christ, have  
mercy on us and  
forgive us that  
we may delight  
in your will**

**[C]**

ALL

**Have mercy  
on us, O God,  
according to  
your steadfast  
love; according  
to your  
abundant mercy  
blot out our  
transgressions.  
Wash us  
thoroughly from  
our iniquity,  
and cleanse us  
from our sin.  
Create in us  
a clean heart,  
O God, and put  
a new and right  
spirit within us.  
Cast us not away  
from your  
presence, and  
take not your  
Holy Spirit  
from us. Restore  
to us the joy  
of your salvation,**

**through Jesus  
Christ our Savior.  
Amen.**

**and follow  
in your ways,  
to the glory  
of your name.  
Amen.<sup>43</sup>**

**and uphold us  
with a willing  
spirit.<sup>44</sup>  
Amen.**

---

## SILENCE

---

*Time may be given for individuals to confess specific sin  
silently.*

---

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

---

*In these or similar words, a leader and all present assure  
each other of God's mercy and pardon.*

**A**

LEADER

**While we were  
yet helpless,  
at the right time  
Christ died  
for the ungodly.**

PEOPLE

God's love for us  
is shown in this:  
While we were  
yet sinners,  
Christ died  
for us.<sup>45</sup>

**B**

LEADER

**Jesus said:  
Come to me,  
all of you  
who are tired  
from carrying  
heavy loads,**

PEOPLE

And I will give  
you rest.

LEADER

**Take my yoke  
and put it  
on you,  
and learn  
from me,**

PEOPLE

Because I am  
gentle and  
humble in spirit;  
and you will  
find rest.

**C**

LEADER

**Jesus said  
to a sinner:  
Where are your  
accusers?  
Has no one  
condemned you?**

PEOPLE

Neither do I  
condemn you;  
go, and do not  
sin again.<sup>47</sup>

LEADER

**For the yoke  
I will give you  
is easy,**

PEOPLE

**And the load I  
will put on you  
is light.<sup>46</sup>**

---

**AFFIRMATION OF PARDON**

---

*All who are able may stand as a leader asks these or similar questions to the congregation as individuals.*

LEADER

**Do you believe that God is willing,  
for Christ's sake, to forgive all your sins?**

PEOPLE

**I believe.**

LEADER

**Do you forgive those who have sinned against you?**

PEOPLE

**I do, with the help of God.**

LEADER

**Do you resolve to offer yourself  
to the guidance of the Holy Spirit  
that you may have the power to resist evil  
and to do what is good?**

PEOPLE

**I do.**

LEADER

**In Christ's name, and as one with you in the church,  
I declare to you: Your sins are forgiven.**

PEOPLE

**In Christ's name,  
and as sisters and brothers in the church,  
we declare to you: Your sins are forgiven.**

ALL

**Thanks be to God.**

*If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, a Service of Word and Sacrament follows, beginning with the offertory. If Holy Communion is not to be celebrated on this occasion, this order continues.*

---

## PRAYERS

---

*Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession may be offered by leaders and the people.*

---

## COLLECT

---

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**O God,  
from whom come all holy desires,  
all good counsels,  
and all just works;  
give to us, your servants,  
that peace which the world cannot give  
that our hearts may be set  
to obey your commandments;  
and that we,  
being defended from the fear of our enemies,  
may live in peace and quietness;  
through the intercession  
of Jesus Christ our Savior,  
who lives and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever.  
Amen.<sup>48</sup>**

---

## PASSING THE PEACE

---

*As a sign of their reconciliation with God and each other, all may greet those around them with an embrace or handshake, accompanied by such words as: "The peace of God be with you," and the response:*

*“And also with you.” Leaders may move among the congregation to share the signs of peace.*

---

## LORD’S PRAYER

---

*If this prayer is not incorporated elsewhere in the service, it may be said here.*

---

## ACT OF PRAISE

---

*A gloria, doxology, or hymn of praise may be sung.*

---

## BENEDICTION

---

**[A]**

LEADER

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

PEOPLE

**Thanks be to God.<sup>49</sup>**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Hear the promise  
of Jesus Christ:  
Peace I leave with you;  
my peace I give to you;  
not as the world gives  
do I give to you.  
Let not your hearts  
be troubled,  
neither let them  
be afraid.<sup>50</sup>  
The grace of Jesus Christ  
be with you all.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

# **Order for Recognition of the End of a Marriage**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

This order is intended for those occasions when a man and a woman who have experienced a divorce wish to acknowledge responsibility for their separation, affirm the good that continues from the previous relationship, and promise in the presence of God, family, and supportive friends to begin a new relationship. Great sensitivity to the particular circumstances of the couple will be needed on the part of those who assist them in planning the service. Considerable advance preparation may be necessary. The promises indicated within the order should be developed by the woman and man themselves, with whatever counsel they request.

The service is penitential in nature and cannot be construed to be an encouragement of divorce or a deprecation of marriage. It does not celebrate the failure of a relationship, but acknowledges that a divorce has occurred and that two human beings are seeking in earnest to reorder their lives in a wholesome, redemptive way. The service is a reminder that nothing can separate people from the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Elements of the service may be used during pastoral counseling when a public service seems inappropriate.

Hope and joy are appropriate in this service as a man and woman pledge goodwill to each other and responsibly arrange for continuing obligations they may share.

If there are children of mature age in the family of the divorced woman and man, they may wish to share in this service in a supportive way. With great care, the one presiding may include them.

---

## OUTLINE

---

**Greeting**

**Introduction**

**Prayers**

**Reading of Scripture**

**Statements of Commitment**

**Affirmation**

**Benediction**

*A divorced woman and man may invite the pastor or another representative of the church to lead the service in a supportive informal gathering of members and friends.*

---

## GREETING

---

*All may stand for one or more of the following or for other words of scripture.*

Ⓐ

LEADER

**Let us remember these words from Jesus:  
Where two or three are gathered in my name,**

PEOPLE

There am I in the midst of them.<sup>51</sup>

Ⓑ

LEADER

**God is our shelter and strength,  
always ready to help in times of trouble.**

PEOPLE

So we will not be afraid,  
even if the earth is shaken  
and mountains fall into the ocean depths;

LEADER

**Even if the seas roar and rage,  
and the hills are shaken by the violence.<sup>52</sup>**

PEOPLE

God is our shelter and strength.

Ⓒ

LEADER

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

LEADER

**Let us with confidence draw near to the throne of grace;**

PEOPLE

That we may receive mercy  
and find grace to help in time of need.<sup>53</sup>

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

*In these or similar words, a leader may explain the nature and purpose of the service. There are optional words for use if the man and woman are parents.*

LEADER

**We are here****to witness an end and a beginning****and to share the making of new commitments.**

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have decided,

woman

man

**after much effort, pain, and anger,****that they will no longer be wife and husband,****but they wish to respect and be concerned for each other.**

*for parents*

LEADER

**They are now, and will continue to be,****parents to their child(ren),****and they wish to be responsible for** *him/her/each of them.*

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are grateful to you,

man

woman

**who are family and friends,****for your love and support, your efforts of healing,****and your presence here.**

*Those gathered may say in unison or repeat after the leader the following or other words of support.*

PEOPLE

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,

woman

man

**in this difficult time,****we join with you as your friends.****We have been with you****in your joys, in your struggles, and in your tears.****We have not always known how to be helpful.****Although we may not fully understand,****we accept your decision.****We care, and we give you our love.**

---

PRAYERS

---

*One or both of the following prayers or other prayers may be offered. The second prayer is a prayer of confession and is followed by words of assurance concerning God's mercy and grace.*

**A**

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**O God, make us aware of your presence.  
You have blessed us in all our moments:  
of joining, of relating, of intending, and of beginning.  
Be with us in our times of separating and of ending,  
releasing us from those vows we can no longer keep;  
we ask in Christ's name.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**B**

LEADER

**Let us ask God for the forgiveness we need.**

ALL

**God of all mercy,  
we know that you love us even when we are not sure  
that we love ourselves.  
Embrace us when frustration and failure  
leave us hollow and empty.  
Forgive our sins,  
and grant us forgiving hearts toward others.  
In the confession of our lips,  
show us now the promise of a new day,  
the springtime of the forgiven;  
through Jesus Christ,  
who is able to make all things new.  
Amen.**

LEADER

**God's love for us is shown in this:  
While we were yet sinners,  
Christ died for us.<sup>54</sup>**

---

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*One or more lessons may be read. The man and woman, other family members, or friends may assist with the scripture reading.*

### PSALMS

Psalms 13; 31:1-2, 9-10, 14, 16; 91:1-6, 9-12; 130:1-7

### NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 4:35-41

Mark 9:33-37, *if children are involved*

Romans 8:35, 37-39

1 John 4:1-12, 19-21

---

## STATEMENTS OF COMMITMENT

---

*In these or similar words, the leader may invite the woman and man to speak words leading to hope about the future.*

### LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
man woman

*some of us/your family and friends* **were present when you made your commitment to marriage. Before God, and all of us, we invite you to share the new commitments you are prepared to make.**

*Here may follow personal words spoken by the woman and man. The words may express some of the agreements they have made with each other after much work, anguish, and counseling. Areas that may be included are:*

- *regret, apology, and confession related to unfulfilled intentions;*
- *mutual care and respect;*
- *support and care for their children;*
- *the need for supportive friends;*
- *affirmation of good continuing from their life together.*

*The leader may invite words of support and love from those present or from a representative among them.*

---

## AFFIRMATION

---

*The leader or the entire gathering may say these or similar words of affirmation. There are optional words that recognize the presence of children from the relationship.*

LEADER/ALL

**We affirm you in the new commitments you have made:  
commitments which find you separated  
but still concerned about each other  
and wishing each other goodwill,**

**commitments which enable you  
to support and to love your child(ren),**

**and commitments which help  
to heal the pain you may feel.  
Count on God's presence;  
trust our support;  
begin anew.**

---

## BENEDICTION

---

**[A]**

LEADER

**Go in peace.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

**[B]**

LEADER

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

PEOPLE

Amen.<sup>55</sup>

# **Order for Healing for Use with an Individual**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

Services of healing have a biblical heritage appropriate for the full life of a local church. Anointing and the laying on of hands are acts closely related to the covenant of faithful love between God and Israel and between God and the church. In scripture, monarchs are anointed, prophets commissioned, the Holy Spirit conferred, the sick healed, and the dead raised in acts of faith accompanied by anointing with oil, the laying on of hands, or touch in another form. The symbolism of touch has survived almost universally among churches in the laying on of hands at confirmation and ordination. The power of touch in healing is finding renewed acceptance as is the unity of the total person.

In the New Testament, faith, forgiveness of sins, and healing are frequently inseparable but distinct aspects of one experience. Out of mercy and compassion, God works to bring about reconciliation that restores peace between God and humanity, among individuals and communities, within each person, and between humankind and the creation. Guilt, anxiety, fear, broken relationships, and the loneliness of alienation all contribute to human sickness. Healing, in the Christian sense, is the reintegration of body, mind, emotions, and spirit that permits people, in community, to live life fully in a creation honored by prudent and respectful use.

In this healing service, four themes are intertwined: God's word, growth in faith, forgiveness of sin, human touch.

In scripture, God's word reassures us of the Creator's love and compassion. Jesus' acts of healing, the healing ministry of the New Testament church, and contemporary experiences of healing all testify to the health and fullness God makes possible in human life.

Faith in the inclusive sense of trust and belief in God's unmerited goodness is an integral cornerstone of the New Testament understanding of healing. Individuals and communities of believers nurture each other in their mutual growth in faith. God does not promise that we will be spared suffering, but does promise to be with us in our suffering. Trusting that promise, we are enabled to bear the unbearable and recognize God's sustaining nearness in pain, in sickness, and in injury.

Forgiveness of sin is often closely associated with healing in the New Testament. The connection of forgiveness and healing affirms the psychosomatic unity of individuals recognized by modern health sciences. It admits the importance of openness and honesty to every relationship of love. It sets health in the context of relationships restored by confession and forgiveness.

In the New Testament, touch plays a central role in the healing ministry. The power of touch is recognized, whether in the anointing with oil, the laying on of hands, or the less formal gesture of holding someone's hand or touching a wound. Jesus frequently touched others: blessing children, washing feet, healing injuries or disease, and raising people from death. Jesus also allowed himself to be touched, washed, embraced, anointed. To allow oneself to be touched is an act of openness. To touch another is an act of acceptance in which a person transfers something of oneself to another: love, affection, protection, strength, power, acceptance. Touch in the healing ministry embodies the embrace of God for the redeemed creation when in the mystery of last things God will make all things new.

In James (5:13-16), prayer, anointing, confession, and forgiveness are shown to have a place in healing. This passage may be included in the scripture read during the service.

This order is a brief service for use in the privacy of a sick-room or home or in some other place when time or circumstances prohibit the sick person from sharing in a corporate service of healing. When this service is to be used, it is

recommended that the pastor or another representative of the church visit privately with the sick person to review the meaning and purpose of this service and its compatibility with modern medicine. A preliminary visit will also open the way for trust and affection. At that time, the person requesting the service may determine which elements of the service best meet his or her needs.

The service may be led by more than one person. It is often helpful to allow time for personal reflection and prayer following the service.

Holy Communion may be celebrated in the same visit as the Order for Healing for Use with an Individual. If so, following the prayers of intercession in this order, begin with the communion prayer in the Brief Order for One Who Is Sick on page 91, and continue with that order.

This service requires careful preparation. Private counsel and prayer allow for a deeper exploration of the problems and the resources available for healing, including medical, emotional, and spiritual aid. It is especially important that this service bring personal affirmation to the sick person, no matter how formally or informally it is led.

Directions for standing and sitting or kneeling have been omitted from the instructions for this service. Those planning the service need to be sensitive to physical and other limitations of those who participate and give helpful directions accordingly.

Olive oil is traditionally used in anointing. For use in sick-rooms and homes, it may be placed in a pen-like vial that is easily carried from place to place.

---

OUTLINE

---

*Sections of this order that fit the particular needs of the sick person may be used, or the entire order may be used.*

**Greeting and Preparation**

**Reading of Scripture**

**Confession of Sin**

**Reaffirmation of Faith**

**Assurance of Pardon**

**Order for Anointing,  
with the laying on  
of hands as an option**

**Order for the Laying  
on of Hands, without  
anointing**

**Prayers of Intercession**

**Brief Order for the Service  
of Word and Sacrament  
for One Who Is Sick,  
beginning with the  
communion prayer**

**Prayer of Our Savior  
Benediction**

*A pastor or another representative of the church may use the sections of this order that fit the particular needs of the sick person who has requested this ministry and is unable to participate in a corporate service of healing.*

---

## GREETING AND PREPARATION

---

*A pastor or another representative of the church, in the name of Jesus Christ and the church, may greet the sick person and others who are present, explain briefly the meaning and nature of the service, and invite all to participate fully. The following words may be used in greeting.*

LEADER

**Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ.**

**Your brothers and sisters of \_\_\_\_\_  
send you their love.** local church

---

## READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*One or more of the following lessons may be read, depending on the circumstances of the sick person. Others present may assist with the readings. If anointing with oil is to follow, it is recommended that the lesson from James conclude the readings. Lessons may be interpreted briefly.*

PSALMS

Psalms 20, 23, 91, 103, 145:13-21

EPISTLES

Acts 3:1-10

Hebrews 12:1-2

James 5:13-16

1 John 1:5-2:2, 5:13-15

GOSPELS

Matthew 8:1-4, 8:5-13, 8:14-17, 9:2-8

Mark 6:7, 12-13; 10:46-52

Luke 17:11-19

John 9:1-12

---

CONFESSION OF SIN

---

*If it seems appropriate, the leader may invite the sick person to share any trouble or difficulty that hinders her or his relationship with God. The words below may be used.*

**[A]**

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
the scriptures tell us  
to bear one another's  
burdens and so fulfill  
the law of Christ.<sup>56</sup>

As your sister/brother  
in Christ,  
I ask you now,  
are you at peace with God,  
or is there anything in your  
life that causes you to feel  
separated from God  
and less than the full person  
God calls you to be?

**[B]**

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
the scriptures tell us  
not to be anxious  
about our lives  
or about tomorrow.  
Are there anxieties  
that cause you to feel  
separated from the peace  
which God promises?

*Time for silence, reflection, and personal sharing may be given. Counsel, within the competency of the pastor or the other representative, may be offered. If the person desires it, a prayer of confession may be said, such as the following, one from a Service of Word and Sacrament, an extemporaneous one, or one from another source. The Order for Reconciliation of a Penitent Person, which begins on page 268, may be used.*

LEADER

Let us ask God for the forgiveness we need.

ALL

Have mercy on us, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out our transgressions.  
Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity,  
and cleanse us from our sin.

**Create in us a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within us.  
Cast us not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from us.  
Restore to us the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold us with a willing spirit.<sup>57</sup>  
Amen.**

### REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*If it seems appropriate, the sick person may be given an opportunity to reaffirm a personal commitment to Jesus Christ in these or similar words.*

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ?**

INDIVIDUAL

**I do.**

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*God's pardon is declared in these or similar words.*

**[A]**

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**take comfort  
in the assurance  
that even those things  
that are hidden from  
memory, or are too deep  
for our words,  
are not beyond God's  
forgiving love.  
God, who knows us  
completely, bestows  
pardon and peace.**

INDIVIDUAL

**Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**God's love for us  
is shown in this:  
While we were yet sinners,  
Christ died for us.<sup>58</sup>**

INDIVIDUAL

**Amen.**

*If anointing and the laying on of hands are not part of the service, continue with the prayers of intercession on page 305. If anointing is omitted, but the laying on of hands is part of the service, continue with that order on page 304.*

## ORDER FOR ANOINTING

### THANKSGIVING OVER OIL

*If the sick person is to be anointed with oil, one of the following prayers or a similar one may be said.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**O God, our Redeemer,  
giver of health  
and salvation,  
we give you thanks  
for the gift of oil.**

**As the apostles anointed  
many who were sick,  
and you healed them,  
so may your Holy Spirit  
come on us and on this oil  
that the one who  
receives this anointing  
in repentance and faith  
may be made well  
in accordance  
with your will;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.**

INDIVIDUAL  
Amen.<sup>59</sup>

**[B]**

LEADER

**Eternal God, you are the  
Sun of Righteousness  
who rises with healing  
in your wings to put  
to flight all enemies  
that assault us.**

**We thank you for oil,  
used by prophets  
and apostles as a sign  
of your grace and favor.  
Send your Holy Spirit  
on us and on this  
medicine of mercy that  
through this anointing  
your servant may again  
know the health  
that comes from you;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.**

INDIVIDUAL  
Amen.

### ACT OF ANOINTING AND THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

*Touching the thumb to the oil and then to the sick person's forehead, the pastor or another representative of the church may make the sign of the cross and say the following or similar words of anointing.*

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**on your confession of repentance and faith,  
you are now anointed with oil  
in the name of Jesus Christ,  
for the forgiveness of sins,  
for the strengthening of your faith,  
and for healing and peace,  
according to God's grace and wisdom.**

INDIVIDUAL

Amen.<sup>60</sup>

*If both anointing and the laying on of hands are  
desired, the following or similar words may be said.  
All people present may be invited to participate in the  
laying on of hands.*

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**I/we lay my/our hands upon you  
in the name of our Sovereign and Savior  
Jesus Christ,  
calling upon Christ  
to uphold and fill you with grace  
that you may know the healing power  
of God's love.**

INDIVIDUAL

Amen.<sup>61</sup>

*If the laying on of hands has occurred or will not occur,  
continue with the prayers of intercession on the next page.*

---

**ORDER FOR THE  
LAYING ON OF HANDS**

---

*All people present may be invited to lay on hands as  
the following or similar words are said.*

**[A]**

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_ ,  
name  
**on your confession  
of repentance and faith,  
I lay my hands upon you  
in the name  
of Jesus Christ,  
for the forgiveness of sins,  
for the strengthening  
of your faith, and for  
your healing and peace,  
according to God's grace  
and wisdom.**

INDIVIDUAL  
Amen.<sup>62</sup>

**[B]**

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_ ,  
name  
**I lay my hands upon you  
in the name of our  
Sovereign and Savior  
Jesus Christ,  
calling upon Christ  
to uphold and fill you  
with grace  
that you may know  
the healing power  
of God's love.**

INDIVIDUAL  
Amen.<sup>63</sup>

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*All present may be invited to join the leader in offering prayers for the sick person and for physicians, nurses, and others who minister to that person's needs.*

*If Holy Communion is desired, begin with the communion prayer in a Brief Order of Word and Sacrament for One Who Is Sick on page 91, and continue with that order.*

## PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

## BENEDICTION

LEADER

**May God bless you and keep you.  
May God's face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you.  
May God look upon you with kindness  
and give you peace.<sup>64</sup>**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

# **Order for Healing for Congregational Use**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

Services of healing have a biblical heritage appropriate for the full life of a local church. Anointing and the laying on of hands are acts closely related to the covenant of faithful love between God and Israel and between God and the church. In scripture, monarchs are anointed, prophets commissioned, the Holy Spirit conferred, the sick healed, and the dead raised in acts of faith accompanied by anointing with oil, the laying on of hands, or touch in another form. The symbolism of touch has survived almost universally among churches in the laying on of hands at confirmation and ordination. The power of touch in healing is finding renewed acceptance as is the unity of the total person.

In the New Testament, faith, forgiveness of sins, and healing are frequently inseparable but distinct aspects of one experience. Out of mercy and compassion, God works to bring about reconciliation that restores peace between God and humanity, among individuals and communities, within each person, and between humankind and the creation. Guilt, anxiety, fear, broken relationships, and the loneliness of alienation all contribute to human sickness. Healing, in the Christian sense, is the reintegration of body, mind, emotions, and spirit that permits people, in community, to live life fully in a creation honored by prudent and respectful use.

In this healing service, four themes are intertwined: God's word, growth in faith, forgiveness of sin, human touch.

In scripture, God's word reassures us of the Creator's love and compassion. Jesus' acts of healing, the healing ministry of the New Testament church, and contemporary experiences of healing all testify to the health and fullness God makes possible in human life.

Faith in the inclusive sense of trust and belief in God's unmerited goodness is an integral cornerstone of the New Testament understanding of healing. Individuals and communities of believers nurture each other in their mutual growth in faith. God does not promise that we will be spared suffering, but does promise to be with us in our suffering. Trusting that promise, we are enabled to bear the unbearable and recognize God's sustaining nearness in pain, in sickness, and in injury.

Forgiveness of sin is often closely associated with healing in the New Testament. The connection of forgiveness and healing affirms the psychosomatic unity of individuals recognized by modern health sciences. It admits the importance of openness and honesty to every relationship of love. It sets health in the context of relationships restored by confession and forgiveness.

In the New Testament, touch plays a central role in the healing ministry. The power of touch is recognized, whether in the anointing with oil, the laying on of hands, or the less formal gesture of holding someone's hand or touching a wound. Jesus frequently touched others: blessing children, washing feet, healing injuries or disease, and raising people from death. Jesus also allowed himself to be touched, washed, embraced, anointed. To allow oneself to be touched is an act of openness. To touch another is an act of acceptance in which a person transfers something of oneself to another: love, affection, protection, strength, power, acceptance. Touch in the healing ministry embodies the embrace of God for the redeemed creation when in the mystery of last things God will make all things new.

In James (5:13-16), prayer, anointing, confession, and forgiveness are shown to have a place in healing. This passage may be included in the scripture read during the service.

Use of this order requires careful preparation. Private counsel and prayer allow for a deeper exploration of the problems and the resources available for healing, including medical, emotional, and spiritual aid. It is recommended

that the public service of healing be supported by intercessory prayer groups that meet on a regular basis.

Directions for standing and sitting or kneeling have been omitted from the instructions for this service. Those planning the service will need to be especially sensitive to physical and other limitations of those who participate and give helpful directions accordingly.

Olive oil is traditionally used in anointing. It may be placed in a small bowl or other vessel.

---

OUTLINE

---

*If this order is used alone, music is to be incorporated into the service. When used within another service, this order may begin with the prayers of intercession and conclude with the prayer of thanksgiving and with a dismissal if people have come forward.*

Greeting

Sentences

Hymn

Reading of Scripture

Sermon

Call to Confession

Silence

Corporate Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Prayers of Intercession

**Order for Anointing,  
with the laying on  
of hands as an option**

**Order for the Laying  
on of Hands,  
without anointing**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord's Prayer

**Dismissal**

Hymn of Parting

Benediction

*At the conclusion of the prayer of thanksgiving and a dismissal, if necessary, a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue.*

*When used within another service, this order may begin with the prayers of intercession and conclude with the prayer of thanksgiving.*

*When used within a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word, it may be incorporated within the prayers of the people.*

*When used within Service of Word and Sacrament II, it may be appropriate to begin the abbreviated order for healing following the assurance of pardon and prior to the passing of the peace.*

*When this order for healing is used by itself, a prelude and postlude, anthems, and other music or use of other arts may be incorporated within it in accordance with local custom and in recognition of the role of music and non-verbal expression in healing.*

---

## GREETING

---

LEADER

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.<sup>65</sup>**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

---

## SENTENCES

---

*One or more of these may be said.*

**A**

LEADER

**Jesus said:  
Heal the sick and tell them,  
“God’s heavenly reign is near you.”<sup>66</sup>**

**B**

LEADER

**Hear these words of Jesus:  
I tell you,**

**whatever you ask in prayer,  
believe that you receive it,  
and you will.**<sup>67</sup>



LEADER

**The apostle Paul said:**

**Do not conform yourselves  
to the standards of this world,  
but let God transform you inwardly  
by a complete change of your mind.**<sup>68</sup>

---

HYMN

---

*The congregation may sing a hymn about God's love for  
the human family.*

---

READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*One or more psalms may be read or sung and lessons read.  
Members of the local church may be invited to assist with  
the reading. If anointing with oil is to follow, it is recom-  
mended that the reading from James be included among  
the lessons.*

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:26-31

2 Kings 5:1,9-15

Psalms 20, 23, 91, 103, 145:13-21

EPISTLES

Acts 3:1-10

Hebrews 12:1-2

James 5:13-16

1 John 1:5-2:2, 5:13-15

GOSPELS

Matthew 8:1-4, 8:5-13, 8:14-17, 9:2-8

Mark 6:7, 12-13; 10:46-52

Luke 17:11-19

John 9:1-12

---

**SERMON**

---

---

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

---

*A leader may use her or his own words; appropriate sections from the Order for Corporate Reconciliation, which begins on page 275; or one of the following to invite all present to seek the forgiveness of God and neighbor.*

**A****LEADER**

**To bear one another's burdens in prayer is a holy privilege. It also demands a willingness to be a channel for God's power.**

**Therefore, in silence, let us offer our confessions to God that we may be cleansed of anything that might hinder our efforts as intercessors.<sup>69</sup>**

**In confessing, let us name those sins which separate and distort: sins of pride, self-love, and resentment; sins of hatred, bitterness, and jealousy.**

**Let us name also our connection with humanity's sins: sins of poverty, war, hunger, injustice, neglect, and discrimination.**

**B****LEADER**

**Jesus said: Ask, and it will be given; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.**

**PEOPLE**

**For everyone who asks receives, and those who seek find, and to each who knocks it will be opened.<sup>70</sup>**

**LEADER**

**Friends in Christ, God knows our needs before we ask and in our asking prepares us to receive the gift of grace. God ministers to us not as one who is absent but as one who is present in human hands, voices, and lives full of the Holy Spirit.**

**Let us open our lives to God's healing presence and forsake all that separates us from God and neighbor.**

**Let us be mindful  
not only of personal evil  
but also of our communal  
sins of family, class, race,  
and nation.**

**Let us confess to God  
in silence whatever has  
wounded us or brought  
injury to others  
in body, mind, or spirit  
that we may receive mercy  
and become for each other  
ministers of God's grace.**

---

## SILENCE

---

*Silence may be offered for personal examination of conscience and for prayers for forgiveness.*

---

## CORPORATE CONFESSION

---

*If it seems appropriate to summarize the prayers of all corporately, one of the following prayers or one in a leader's own words may be used.*

LEADER

**Let us confess our sins together.**

**[A]**

ALL

**Have mercy on us, O God,  
according to your steadfast  
love; according to your  
abundant mercy blot out  
our transgressions.  
Wash us thoroughly  
from our iniquity,  
and cleanse us from our sin.  
Create in us a clean heart,**

**[B]**

ALL

**Eternal God,  
in whom we live and move  
and have our being,  
whose face is hidden  
from us by our sins,  
and whose mercy we forget  
in the hardness  
of our hearts,  
cleanse us, we pray,**

**O God,  
and put a new and right  
spirit within us.  
Cast us not away  
from your presence,  
and take not your  
Holy Spirit from us.  
Restore to us the joy  
of your salvation,  
and uphold us  
with a willing spirit.<sup>71</sup>  
Amen.**

**from all our offenses,  
and deliver us from proud  
thoughts and vain desires,  
that with lowliness and  
meekness we may draw  
near to you,  
trusting in your grace,  
and finding in you  
our refuge and strength;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.  
Amen.<sup>72</sup>**

---

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

---

*In these or similar words, the people are assured of God's mercy and pardon.*

LEADER

**If we confess our sins,  
God is faithful and just  
and will forgive our sins  
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.<sup>73</sup>**

**Brothers and sisters,  
I announce with joy that we are forgiven.**

PEOPLE

**Thanks be to God.**

---

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

---

*Requests for intercessory prayers may be gathered on cards provided before the service or may be invited orally. The names and needs of the persons desiring prayers may be read or repeated briefly and time given after each name for the congregation to pray in silence. Others present may be invited to join a leader in offering prayers for those who are sick and for physicians, nurses, and others who minister to individuals' needs. The following prayer may be used as a model of a prayer for those who are sick.*

LEADER

**O God of all comfort,  
our help in time of need,  
we humbly ask you  
in the power of your Holy Spirit  
to enter and heal your servant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

**Look upon *her/him* with your mercy;  
comfort *him/her* with the assurance  
of your care and goodness;  
save *her/him* from temptation and despair;  
give *him/her* patience under affliction;  
and enable *her/him*  
to live the remainder of life in peace;  
through Jesus Christ,  
who came that we may have life  
and have it more abundantly.  
Amen.<sup>74</sup>**

*If the laying on of hands is to take place without anointing, continue with the Order for the Laying on of Hands on page 318. If neither anointing nor the laying on of hands is to take place, continue with the prayer of thanksgiving on page 319.*

## ORDER FOR ANOINTING

### THANKSGIVING OVER OIL

*If oil is to be used, one of the following prayers or a similar one may be said.*

[A]

LEADER

**O God, our Redeemer,  
giver of health  
and salvation,  
we give you thanks  
for the gift of oil.  
As the apostles anointed  
many who were sick,**

[B]

LEADER

**Eternal God, you are  
the Sun of Righteousness  
who rises with healing  
in your wings to put  
to flight all enemies  
that assault us.  
We thank you for oil,**

**and you healed them,  
so may your Holy Spirit  
come on us and on this oil,  
that *the one/those* who  
receive(s) this anointing  
in repentance and faith  
may be made well  
in accordance  
with your will;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>75</sup>

**used by prophets  
and apostles as a sign  
of your grace and favor.  
Send your Holy Spirit  
on us and on this  
medicine of mercy that  
through this anointing  
your servants may again  
know the health  
that comes from you;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

#### INVITATION TO ANOINTING AND THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

*In these or similar words, the people may be invited to receive anointing. The indented words may be included if those to be anointed also will have hands laid on them. Instructions may be included to indicate the designated place for people to gather.*

LEADER

**Those who desire to be anointed**

**and to have hands laid on them**

**for spiritual healing may come forward.**

**If you wish us to come to you, raise your hand  
or ask your neighbor to identify you for us.**

**You may come for yourself,**

**or you may come as a channel of God's healing power  
for someone else.**

**During the anointing,**

**and the laying on of hands,**

**we invite all present to make silent prayers  
for each one who is seeking God's healing.**

# ACT OF ANOINTING

*Touching the thumb to the oil and then to each person's forehead, a leader may make the sign of the cross and say these or similar words.*

[A]

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
on your confession  
of repentance and faith,  
you are now anointed  
with oil in the name  
of Jesus Christ,  
for the forgiveness  
of sins,  
for the strengthening  
of your faith,  
and for healing  
and peace,  
according to God's grace  
and wisdom.

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>76</sup>

[B]

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
as I anoint you,  
so may God grant you  
the powerful presence  
of the Holy Spirit.  
With infinite mercy,  
may God forgive your sins,  
release you from suffering,  
and restore you to health  
and strength. May God  
deliver you from all evil,  
preserve you in all  
goodness, and bring you  
to everlasting life;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>77</sup>

## ACT OF THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

*The pastor and/or other representatives of the church may say these or similar words as they lay hands on each individual who desires it.*

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_, I/we lay my/our hands upon you  
name  
in the name of our Sovereign and Savior  
Jesus Christ, calling upon Christ  
to uphold and fill you with grace,  
that you may know the healing power of God's love.

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>78</sup>

*If the laying on of hands has occurred or will not occur, continue with the prayer of thanksgiving on the next page.*

## ORDER FOR THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

### INVITATION TO THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

*Those who wish to receive the laying on of hands may be invited to come forward with these or other words. Instructions may be included to indicate the designated place for people to gather.*

LEADER

**Those who desire to have hands laid on them for spiritual healing may come forward.**

**If you wish us to come to you, raise your hand or ask your neighbor to identify you for us.**

**You may come for yourself or you may come as a channel of God's healing power for someone else.**

**During the laying on of hands, we invite all present to make silent prayers for each one who is seeking God's healing.**

### ACT OF THE LAYING ON OF HANDS WITHOUT ANOINTING

*The pastor and/or other representatives of the church may say these or similar words as they lay hands on each individual who desires it.*

**A**

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**on your  
confession of  
repentance  
and faith,  
I/we lay  
my/our hands  
upon you**

**B**

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**I/we lay  
my/our hands  
upon you  
in the name of  
our Sovereign  
and Savior  
Jesus Christ,**

**C**

LEADER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**as I/we lay  
my/our hands  
upon you,  
so may God  
grant you  
the powerful  
presence**

**in the name  
of Jesus Christ,  
for the  
forgiveness  
of sins,  
for the  
strengthening  
of your faith,  
and for healing  
and peace,  
according  
to God's grace  
and wisdom.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>79</sup>

**calling on Christ  
to uphold  
and fill you  
with grace,  
that you may  
know the  
healing power  
of God's love.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>80</sup>

**of the  
Holy Spirit.  
With infinite  
mercy, may  
God forgive  
your sins,  
release you  
from suffering,  
and restore you  
to health  
and strength.  
May God  
deliver you  
from all evil,  
preserve you  
in all goodness,  
and bring you  
to everlasting  
life; through  
Jesus Christ  
our Savior.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>81</sup>

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*If people have come forward for anointing or for the laying on of hands, they may remain for this prayer and the Lord's Prayer and be dismissed to their places in the congregation prior to the hymn. This prayer or another, written or extemporaneous, may be offered.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**We give praise and thanks to you, O God!  
In Jesus Christ, you have given us life;  
brought ministry, forgiveness, healing, and peace;  
commanded the disciples to heal the sick;  
and continued the healing ministry among us to this day.**

**Keep us mindful of your love and mercy  
that we may be faithful  
throughout all our days,  
in the name of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

---

**LORD'S PRAYER**

---

---

**DISMISSAL**

---

*If people have come forward for anointing or the laying on of hands, they may be dismissed in these or similar words.*

LEADER

**Go in peace to love and serve God.**

---

**HYMN OF PARTING**

---

---

**BENEDICTION**

---

LEADER

**May God bless you and keep you.  
May God's face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you.  
May God look upon you with kindness  
and give you peace.<sup>82</sup>**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

# Order For Marriage

*This order has been adapted from United Church of Christ Book of Worship's original Order for Marriage to provide language that may be used for any marriage, regardless of gender.*

---

## INTRODUCTION

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The essence of marriage\* is a covenanted commitment that has its foundation in the faithfulness of God's love. The marriage ceremony is the glad occasion on which two people unite in the mutual exchange of covenant promises. The one presiding acts as an official representative of the church and gives the marriage the church's blessing. The congregation joins in affirming the marriage and in offering support and thanksgiving for the new family.

It is the responsibility of the one who presides to meet with the couple prior to the marriage ceremony in order to counsel them concerning the Christian understanding of the marriage relationship.

Congregational participation, ethnic traditions, and local customs may be taken into consideration when planning the Order for Marriage. Hymns and other music of joy, praise, and thanksgiving may be included in the service after consultation with the congregation's music leaders and in keeping with a sense of the appropriateness of their use in a religious service. Psalms may be sung or said responsively, and other readings or statements may be used.

The one presiding may invite the couple to share in the writing and planning of their service. A Christian marriage ceremony is a service of worship offered to God. Family and friends of the couple may be invited to share the leadership of the service by reading scripture or by offering prayers or in other ways.

If the couple desires to be married within the regular Sunday service of the congregation, the Order for Marriage may be

celebrated following the sermon.

If a couple requests Holy Communion on the occasion of their wedding, a Service of Word and Sacrament may be used as indicated in this order. The one presiding needs to use informed judgment as to circumstances in which Holy Communion can be celebrated meaningfully and with theological and biblical integrity. The religious affiliations of those to be assembled for the wedding will affect the decision. When a Service of Word and Sacrament is used, the prayers and other elements of the service printed here may be substituted in the proper places in that service.

All present may more easily participate in the service if a copy of this order is available to them in a bulletin.

It is the responsibility of the one presiding at the marriage to understand and conform to the laws in the place where the ceremony is to be held.

*\* Some may choose, for legal or personal reasons, to substitute other terms such as "holy union" or "sacred covenant" throughout this order.*

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OUTLINE

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**Prelude**

**Entrance**

**Greeting**

**Introduction**

**Prayer**

**Reading of Scripture**

**Sermon**

**Declaration of Intention**

**Pledge of Support**

**Vows of the Marriage Covenant**

**Exchange of Symbols**

**Announcement of Marriage**

**Blessing**

**Passing the Peace**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**  
**Prayer of Our Savior**

**Order for Holy Communion**

**Benediction**

**Hymn or Postlude**

---

 PRELUDE
 

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 ENTRANCE
 

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*Banners, ribbons, flowers, candles, white carpeting, or other items may be used in the procession in accordance with local custom. A hymn, psalm, canticle, or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music may be played.*

*The couple to be married may enter the sanctuary together or separately. They may be accompanied by their parents, other members of the family, and friends. People in the congregation who are able may stand for the processional.*

---

 GREETING
 

---

*The couple to be married and the wedding party may stand, if they are able, facing the one presiding. The one presiding may use one of the following greetings or another one based on scripture.*

**A**

PASTOR

**The grace of our Lord  
Jesus Christ and the  
love of God and the  
communion of the Holy  
Spirit be with you all.<sup>1</sup>**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

**B**

PASTOR

**Love comes from God.  
Everyone who truly loves  
is a child of God.<sup>2</sup>  
Let us worship God.**

---

 INTRODUCTION
 

---

*The one presiding may state the Christian understanding of marriage, using one of the following or other words.*

**[A]**

PASTOR

**Dearly beloved, we are gathered here as the people of God to witness the marriage of**

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

**and \_\_\_\_\_,**  
name

**We come to share in their joy and to ask God to bless them. Marriage is a gift of God, sealed by a sacred covenant. God gives human love. Through that love, two persons come to know each other with mutual care and companionship. God gives joy. Through that joy, they may share their new life with others as Jesus shared new wine at the wedding in Cana. With our love and our prayers, we support**

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

**and \_\_\_\_\_**  
name

**as they now freely give themselves to each other.**

**[B]**

PASTOR

**Dear Friends, we have come together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of**

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

**and \_\_\_\_\_,**  
name

**to surround them with our prayers, and to share in their joy. The scriptures teach us that the bond and covenant of marriage is a gift of God, a holy mystery in which two become one flesh, an image of the union of Christ and the church. As this couple give themselves to each other today, we remember that at Cana in Galilee our Savior Jesus Christ made the wedding feast a sign of God's reign of love. Let us enter into this celebration confident that through the Holy Spirit, Christ is present with us now. We pray that this couple may fulfill God's purpose for the whole of their lives.**

## PRAYER

*One of these, a prayer of confession with an assurance of pardon, or a prayer for illumination may be offered.*

PASTOR

**Let us pray.**

**[A]**

ALL

**O God, we gather to celebrate your gift of love and its presence among us. We rejoice that two people have chosen to commit themselves to a life of loving faithfulness to one another. We praise you, O God, for the ways you have touched our lives with a variety of loving relationships. We give thanks that we have experienced your love through the life-giving love of Jesus Christ and through the care and affection of other people.**

**At the same time, we remember and confess to you, O God, that we often have failed to be loving, that we often have taken for granted the people for whom we care most. We selfishly neglect and strain the bonds that unite us with others. We hurt those who love us**

**[B]**

ALL

**Gracious God, always faithful in your love for us, we rejoice in your presence. You create love. You unite us in one human family. You offer your word and lead us in light. You open your loving arms and embrace us with strength. May the presence of Christ fill our hearts with new joy and make new the lives of your servants whose marriage we celebrate. Bless all creation through this sign of your love shown in the love of**

\_\_\_\_\_ name

**and** \_\_\_\_\_

name

**for each other. May the power of your Holy Spirit sustain them and all of us in love that knows no end. Amen.**

**and withdraw from the community that encircles us. Forgive us, O God. Renew within us an affectionate spirit. Enrich our lives with the gracious gift of your love so that we may embrace others with the same love. May our participation in this celebration of love and commitment give to us a new joy and responsiveness to the relationships we cherish; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.**

PASTOR

**Through the great depth and strength of God's love for us, God reaches out to us to forgive our sins and to restore us to life. Be assured, children of God, that God's love enfolds us and up builds us so that we may continue to love one another as God has loved us.<sup>3</sup>**

---

#### READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*The congregation may be seated. One or more scripture lessons may be read by the one presiding, by members of the family, or by members of the wedding party. If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, it is appropriate that the readings include a Gospel lesson. A hymn, a psalm, or other music may be offered between readings or before or after the sermon.*

*Passages for consideration for use include the following ecumenical suggestions.*

## **OLD TESTAMENT**

Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:18-24

Ruth 1:1-8, 14-17

1 Samuel 18:1b, 3, 20:16-17, 42a

Psalms 23, 33, 34, 37:3-7, 67, 100, 103, 112, 117, 121,  
127, 128, 136, 145, 148, 150

Song of Solomon 2:8-13, 8:6-7

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Isaiah 54:5-8

Hosea 2:16-23

## **EPISTLES**

Romans 8:31-39; 12:1-2, 9-18

1 Corinthians 6:15-20, 13:1-13

Ephesians 3:14-21; 5:2, 21-33

Colossians 3:12-17

1 Peter 3:1-9

1 John 3:18-24, 4:7-16

Revelation 19:1, 5-9

## **GOSPELS**

Matthew 5:1-12; 5:13-16; 7:21, 24-29; 19:3-6; 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9, 13-16

John 2:1-11, 15:9-17

---

## **SERMON**

---

*A brief sermon, charge, or other response to scripture may be given.*

*Depending on the religious affiliations of those gathered for the marriage service, it may be appropriate for all who are able to stand and say a creed or affirmation of faith. Forms of the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, historic creeds, and other affirmations are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

---

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

---

PASTOR

*addressing the couple*

**Before God and this congregation,  
I ask you to affirm your willingness  
to enter this covenant of marriage  
and to share all the joys and sorrows  
of this new relationship,  
whatever the future may hold.**

PASTOR

*addressing one*

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**will you enter into the covenant of marriage with**

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**and will you love *her/him* faithfully  
as long as you both shall live?**

ONE

**I will, with the help of God.**

PASTOR

*addressing the other*

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**will you enter into the covenant of marriage with,**

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**and will you love *her/him* faithfully as long as you both  
shall live?**

ONE

**I will, with the help of God.**

---

 PLEDGE OF SUPPORT
 

---

*This pledge of support should be used at the discretion of the pastor and in consultation with the people involved. It allows the family and congregation to pledge their support and encouragement to the couple. It is important to consider use of the pledge when there are children from previous relationships.*

*Children who will share in the new family may be addressed in these or similar words. They may stand, if able, at their places or may move near the couple.*

PASTOR

*addressing each child by name,*

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name(s)

**you are entering a new family.  
Will you give to this new family  
your trust, love, and affection?**

EACH CHILD

I will, with the help of God.

PASTOR

*addressing the couple*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
name name

**will you be faithful and loving parents to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_?**

name(s) of children

COUPLE

We will, with the help of God.

*The pastor may invite the immediate families of the couple, including adults or younger children from previous relationships, to stand in place, if they are able, and to offer their support in these or similar words.*

PASTOR

*addressing the families*

*please stand/please answer* **in support of this couple.**

## FAMILY MEMBERS

*All family members may be seated. Person(s) who escorted the couple may be seated with their families. The pastor may address the congregation in these or similar words.*

*addressing the congregation*

**are making together? If so, please say, “We do.”**

We do.

PASTOR

**Bless us as we offer our prayerful and loving support to their marriage. Bless them as they pledge their lives to each other. With faith in you and in each other, may this couple always bear witness to the reality of the love to which we witness this day. May their love continue to grow, and may it be a true reflection of your love for us all; through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

---

VOWS OF THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

---

*The pastor may introduce the covenant promises in the following or similar words.*

[A]

PASTOR

---

name

**and** 

---

 name

**by your covenant promises  
shared with us, unite your-  
selves in marriage and be  
subject to one another out  
of reverence for Christ.**

[B]

PASTOR

---

name

**and** 

---

 name

**speak your covenant  
promises that you have  
come to offer God.**

*If able, the couple may face each other and join hands. They may say these or other words of covenant.*

ONE

---

name

I give myself to you in the covenant of marriage.  
I promise to love and sustain you in this covenant,  
from this day forward,  
in sickness and in health,  
in plenty and in want,  
in joy and in sorrow,  
as long as we both shall live.

ONE

---

name

I give myself to you in the covenant of marriage.  
I promise to love and sustain you in this covenant,  
from this day forward,  
in sickness and in health,  
in plenty and in want,

in joy and in sorrow,  
as long as we both shall live.

---

### EXCHANGE OF SYMBOLS

---

*It is recommended that the giving and receiving of rings or other symbols be shared equally by both partners.*

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
name name

**what will you share to symbolize your love?**

*The couple may name the symbol(s) and present them/it to the pastor, who may hold or place a hand on the symbol(s) and offer one of these or another prayer.*

**[A]**

PASTOR

**By these symbols/this symbol of covenant promise, Gracious God, remind**

\_\_\_\_\_  
name  
**and** \_\_\_\_\_  
name

**of your encircling love and unending faithfulness that in all their life together they may know joy and peace in one another.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

**[B]**

PASTOR

**Eternal God, who in the time of Noah gave us the rainbow as a sign of promise, bless these symbols/this symbol that they/it also may be signs/a sign of promises fulfilled in lives of faithful loving; through Jesus Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

*If both partners receive symbols, options A and B are used.*

**[A]**

ONE

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

I give you *this/these* \_\_\_\_\_

symbol(s)

as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

PARTNER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

I receive *this/these* \_\_\_\_\_

symbol(s)

as a sign of our love and faithfulness.

**[B]**

ONE

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

I give you *this/these* \_\_\_\_\_

symbol(s)

as a sign of my love and faithfulness.

PARTNER

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

I receive *this/these* \_\_\_\_\_

symbol(s)

as a sign of our love and faithfulness.

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

*If able, the couple may stand or kneel and join hands, and the pastor may place a hand on their joined hands while announcing the marriage, using one of these or other words.*

**[A]**

PASTOR

*addressing the couple*

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

and \_\_\_\_\_

name

**you have committed yourselves to each other in this joyous and sacred cov-**

**[B]**

PASTOR

*addressing the congregation*

**Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.<sup>5</sup>**

*addressing the couple*

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

and \_\_\_\_\_

name

**enant. Become one. Fulfill your promises. Love and serve God, honor Christ and each other, and rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit.**

*addressing the congregation:*

**By their promises made before us this day,**

\_\_\_\_\_ name  
and \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_ name  
**have united themselves in the sacred covenant of marriage. Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.<sup>4</sup>**

**you are married with the blessing of Christ's church. Be merciful in all your ways, kind in heart, and humble in mind. Accept life, and be most patient and tolerant with one another. Forgive as freely as God has forgiven you. And, above everything else, be truly loving. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, remembering that as members of one body you are called to live in harmony, and never forget to be thankful for what God has done for you.<sup>6</sup>**

---

### BLESSING

---

*If they are able, the couple may stand or kneel, with children from previous relationships who will share their household, if any, standing nearby. A blessing may be given for the couple or the family.*

**[A] *blessing for the couple***

PASTOR

**The grace of Christ attend you; the love of God surround you; the Holy Spirit keep you that you may grow in holy love, find delight in each other always, and remain faithful until your life's end.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

**[B] *blessing for the family***

PASTOR

**May the God of Sarah and Abraham, who watches over all the families of the earth, bless your new family and establish your home in peace and steadfast love.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

---

 PASSING THE PEACE
 

---

*The one presiding may invite those who are able to stand and exchange gestures of peace.*

PASTOR

**The peace of God be with you always.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

*The couple may embrace. Using the same words as the pastor or similar ones, they may move among the congregation exchanging the peace. After passing the peace, the people may be seated, and the couple may return to their places.*

*If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, the service continues on page 341; if it is not celebrated, the prayer begins.*

---

 PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING
 

---

*The people may be seated. One of these or a similar prayer of thanksgiving and intercession may be offered.*

PASTOR

**Let us pray.**

**[A]**

PASTOR

**Most gracious God, we give you thanks for your tender love. You sent Jesus Christ to come among us, to be born of a human mother, and to make the way of the cross into the way of life. We thank you, too, for consecrating the union of two people in Christ's name.**

**[B]**

PASTOR

**Merciful God, we thank you for your love that lives within us and calls us from loneliness to companionship. We thank you for all who have gone before us. We thank you for our own parents, and for all, whether married or single, who are mother**

**By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour out the abundance of your blessing on**

\_\_\_\_\_ name  
**and** \_\_\_\_\_ name

**Defend them from every enemy. Lead them into all peace. Let their love for each other be a seal on their hearts, a mantle about their shoulders, and a crown on their heads. Bless them in their work and in their companionship, in their sleeping and in their waking, in their joys and in their sorrows, in their lives and in their deaths. Nurture them in a community of the faithful gathered about you.**

**or father to us, and for countless parents whose names we do not know. We thank you as we grow to the fullness of the stature of Christ. Bless**

\_\_\_\_\_ name  
**and** \_\_\_\_\_ name

**that they may have the grace to live the promises they have made. Defend them from all enemies of their love. Teach them the patience of undeserved forgiveness. Bring them to old age, rejoicing in love's winter more fully than in its springtime.**

*The following words of the prayer may be used if children who will share in the couple's household are present. If these words are not used, continue with option A or B of the prayer.*

**PASTOR**

**Bless this child/these children,**

\_\_\_\_\_ name

**that he/she/they may find in this new home a haven of love and joy where Jesus Christ is honored in kind words and tender deeds.**

**[A]**

PASTOR

**Finally, in your mercy,  
bring**\_\_\_\_\_  
name**and** \_\_\_\_\_

name

**to that table where your  
saints feast for ever in  
your heavenly home;  
through Jesus Christ our  
sovereign Savior who,  
with you and the Holy  
Spirit, lives and reigns,  
one God, for ever and  
ever.**

PEOPLE

Amen.<sup>7</sup>**[B]**

PASTOR

**At the last, receive them  
and all of us at the love  
feast prepared for all  
the faithful in your  
eternal home, where  
Jesus Christ, with you  
and the Holy Spirit, one  
God, reigns in love for  
ever.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

---

**PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR**

---

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may sing or say the prayer  
received from Jesus Christ.*

**[A]**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your king-  
dom come,  
your will  
be done, on  
earth as in  
heaven. Give****[B]**

ALL

**Our Father  
who art in  
heaven, hal-  
lowed be thy  
name. Thy  
kingdom  
come. Thy  
will be done  
on earth as it  
is in heaven.****[C]**

ALL

**Our Father  
who art  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy king-  
dom come.  
Thy will  
be done on  
earth as it****[D]**

ALL

**Our Father-  
Mother,  
who is in the  
heavens, may  
your name be  
made holy,  
may your do-  
minion come,  
may your  
will be done,  
on the earth**

us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.<sup>8</sup>

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

as it is in heaven. Give us today the bread we need; and forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors; and do not put us to the test, but rescue us from evil. For yours is the dominion, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.<sup>9</sup>

*If Holy Communion is not to be celebrated, continue with the benediction.*

---

#### ORDER FOR HOLY COMMUNION

---

*If the sacrament of Holy Communion is to be celebrated, a Service of Word and Sacrament may be used, beginning with the offering of the communion elements. The newly married couple, others in the wedding party, or members of the family may bring the communion elements to the table. The invitation and prayers below may be substituted for ones in a Service of Word and Sacrament. Holy Communion is properly the supper of Jesus Christ, and all Christians who are present are invited to participate. Practical arrangements for the wedding party will be necessary, such as chairs for them during parts of the service.*

## INVITATION

*The pastor may go to the table and give this or another invitation.*

PASTOR

**This table is open to all who wish to receive Jesus Christ in company with all believers in all time and beyond time. This is the joyful feast of the people of God. Christ is present with gifts of new life, as once Christ was present at Cana in Galilee with the gift of new wine. We come to know Christ in the breaking of bread and the pouring of wine.**

COMMUNION PRAYER

*All who are able may stand. This prayer may replace the communion prayer in a Service of Word and Sacrament.*

PASTOR

**God be with you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

PASTOR

**Lift up your hearts.**

PEOPLE

We lift them to God.

PASTOR

**Let us give thanks to God Most High.**

PEOPLE

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

PASTOR

**Blessed are you,  
O God our Creator.  
From the womb of your being  
you brought forth worlds.  
Into mere dust you blew the breath of life,  
creating women and men  
to bear your likeness in the world.  
You create, love, and care for all that is.**

**We praise and thank you,  
nurturing God, that in Jesus  
you bring joy and hope to loving hearts,  
and offer health and power to human relationships.  
Even the powers of sorrow and death  
could not contain Christ's joy.  
From the tomb our risen Savior came  
to share bread again among the beloved.  
In the glory of your banquet hall,  
Christ prepares a wedding feast  
for all the faithful who even now praise you.**

PEOPLE

Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty,  
the whole universe speaks of your glory,  
O God Most High.

Blessed is the one who comes  
in the name of our God!

Hosanna in the highest!

*The people may be seated or those who are able may kneel. At the words concerning the bread and wine, the one presiding may indicate the elements.*

PASTOR

**Merciful God,  
we remember that on the night  
of betrayal and desertion,  
Jesus took bread, gave thanks to you,  
broke the bread,  
and gave it to the disciples, saying:  
"Take and eat, this is my body broken for you."**

**Likewise, Jesus took the cup of blessing and said:  
"Drink of this cup.**

**It is the new covenant in my blood,  
poured out for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.**

**Do this in memory of me."<sup>10</sup>**

**With joy we thank you,**

**God of gladness and warmth,  
that at Pentecost you sent your Holy Spirit  
to dance about the heads of your people,  
enabling your word to be heard afresh.  
Now send your Holy Spirit on these gifts  
of bread and wine and on us  
that we may be set afire with your love  
and leap with joy at your presence.  
Pour out your blessing on**

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
name name

**May they sing a new song of your great love  
in communion with you and all your saints  
in heaven and on earth.**

**May their love for each other  
proclaim the love of Christ for all of us.  
May the faithful service of all your people  
bring peace, justice, joy, and love to all the world;  
through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor are yours,  
Holy God,  
now and for ever.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

*If the Prayer of Our Savior has not been said earlier in the service, it may be said before the sharing of the communion elements.*

*The people may come forward or receive the elements where they are seated. If they come forward, the pastor may give each person the bread, and the newly married couple may offer the chalice(s) or individual cups. If trays of individual cups are used, the couple may be positioned at the sides of the pastor, next to attendants with empty trays for the used cups. Hymns of joy and thanksgiving may be sung by the congregation while the elements are being shared.*

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*When all have been served and the table is in order, the wedding party may return to its place and all who are able may stand for the prayer of thanksgiving.*

PASTOR

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**Thank you, O God,  
for refreshing us at your table.  
By your grace you have nourished us  
with the living presence of Christ,  
the bread of life,  
that we may share life together.  
Send us forth in the power of your Holy Spirit  
to give ourselves in love  
until your entire human family is gathered  
at your table,  
glorifying and praising you  
in the name of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

---

BENEDICTION

---

*All who are able may stand. One of these or another blessing may be given for all present.*

[A]

PASTOR

**Go forth in the love of  
God; go forth in hope and  
joy, knowing that God is  
with you always. And the  
peace of God, which passes  
all understanding, keep  
your hearts and minds in  
the knowledge and love of  
God and of Christ Jesus;<sup>11</sup>  
and the blessing of God,**

[B]

PASTOR

**May God bless you and  
keep you. May God's face  
shine upon you and be  
gracious to you. May God  
look upon you with kind-  
ness and give you peace.<sup>12</sup>**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**Creator, Redeemer, and  
Sanctifier, be with you,  
and remain with you  
always.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

---

**HYMN OR POSTLUDE**

---

*A hymn may be sung or other suitable music offered as the  
wedding party and congregation depart.*

# **Order for the Blessing of a Civil Marriage**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

This order is provided for couples who have entered marriage in a civil ceremony. If the blessing takes place within a regular Sunday service of the congregation, it may follow the sermon. The couple may be invited to come forward and stand before the pastor, if they are able. At the conclusion of the blessing, the couple may return to the congregation, and the service may continue according to the customary order. This order may be used on an occasion set aside for the blessing of a marriage alone.

The couple may wish to use the Order for Marriage as the basis for the blessing of their civil marriage. If so, it will be necessary to reword that text.

The pledge of support from the Order for Marriage on page 331 may be used totally or in part. It includes statements by children from previous relationships, other family members, and the congregation.

It is the responsibility of the one presiding to confirm that a civil ceremony already has taken place and that the marriage laws of the place in which the blessing of the marriage is to be held are fully respected.

---

OUTLINE

---

*This order may be used alone or as part of a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. If this order is not incorporated into another service, add the starred (\*) items and music.*

**Greeting**

**Introduction**

**Prayer\***

**Reading of Scripture\***

**Sermon\***

**Promises**

**Blessing of Symbols**

**Announcement of Marriage**

**Blessing and Thanksgiving**

**Benediction\***

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue.*

---

GREETING

---

*The married couple, with special guests invited to join them, may stand facing the one presiding, if they are able. The greeting may be omitted if the blessing takes place within another service.*

PASTOR

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.<sup>12</sup>**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

---

INTRODUCTION

---

*The one presiding may state the reason for gathering, using one of the following or other words.*

**[A]**

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_ name  
**and** \_\_\_\_\_ name  
**have given themselves to  
each other in marriage  
according to the laws of  
the state. They are here to  
declare their love for each  
other and to receive on  
their marriage the blessing  
of God and the church.**

**[B]**

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_ name  
**and** \_\_\_\_\_ name  
**have been married accord-  
ing to the laws of the state;  
they have made a solemn  
contract with each other.  
Now, in faith, they come  
before the church to declare  
their marriage covenant  
and to acknowledge God's  
good news for their lives.<sup>13</sup>**

*The service may continue with the prayer, recommendations for scripture readings, and a sermon from the Order for Marriage. The prayer begins on page 328. If this blessing takes place within another service, the reading of scripture and sermon will have occurred earlier in the service.*

---

**PROMISES**

---

*The couple reaffirms the promises made in the civil ceremony. It may be necessary to adjust the wording here to conform to promises made earlier. The couple, if they are able, may face each other and join hands.*

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

**you have given yourself to \_\_\_\_\_  
in the covenant of marriage.**      name

**Do you reaffirm your promise  
to love and sustain him/her,  
in sickness and in health,  
in plenty and in want,  
in joy and in sorrow,  
as long as you both shall live?**

ONE

I do.

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

**you have given yourself to \_\_\_\_\_  
in the covenant of marriage.**      name

**Do you reaffirm your promise  
to love and sustain him/her,  
in sickness and in health,  
in plenty and in want,  
in joy and in sorrow,  
as long as you both shall live?**

ONE

I do.

---

**BLESSING OF SYMBOLS**

---

*The pastor may hold or place a hand on the ring(s) or other symbol(s) and say one of the following,*

**[A]** *for ring(s) or other symbol(s)*

PASTOR

**Eternal God,  
who in the time of Noah  
gave us the rainbow  
as a sign of promise,  
bless *these symbols /this symbol*  
that *they/it* also may be  
*signs/a sign* of promises  
fulfilled in lives  
of faithful loving;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Savior.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

**[B]** *for ring(s)*

PASTOR

**Bless, O God, the wearing  
of *these rings/this ring* to be  
*symbols/a symbol* of the cov-  
enant promises by which  
these children of yours  
have given themselves to  
each other; through Jesus  
Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE

Amen.<sup>14</sup>

---

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF MARRIAGE

---

*If they are able, the couple may stand or kneel and join hands, and the pastor may place a hand on their joined hands while addressing the couple with these or other words.*

PASTOR

**Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.<sup>15</sup>  
and \_\_\_\_\_,**

name

name

**you are married with the blessing of Christ's church. Help  
each other; be united; live in peace. The God of love and  
peace be with you always.**

---

### BLESSING AND THANKSGIVING

---

*The blessing on page 337 and the prayer of thanksgiving on page 338 from the Order for Marriage may be used.*

*If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, consult the instructions on page 341. This order may be concluded with a benediction from the Order for Marriage on page 345 or another benediction, or a Service of the Word may continue.*

# **Order for Renewal of the Marriage Covenant**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

This order is for couples who are celebrating an anniversary of their marriage or for couples who are celebrating reconciliation in their marriage.

If the renewal takes place within a Sunday service of the congregation, it may follow the sermon. The couple may be invited to come forward and stand before the pastor, if they are able. At the conclusion of the renewal, the couple may return to the congregation, and the service may continue according to the customary order. This order also may be used on an occasion set aside for the renewal of the marriage covenant alone.

The couple may wish to use the Order for Marriage as the basis for the renewal of their covenant. If so, it will be necessary to reword the text to indicate reaffirmation.

It is the responsibility of the one presiding to confirm that a valid marriage has previously taken place.

The couple, their family, or friends may share memories and special symbols during the service.

---

## **OUTLINE**

---

*This order may be used alone or as part of a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. If this order is not incorporated into another service, add the starred (\*) items and music.*

**Greeting**

**Introduction**

**Prayer\***

**Reading of Scripture\***

**Sermon\***

**Renewal of Covenant Promises**

**Recognition of Renewal**

**Blessing and Thanksgiving**

**Benediction\***

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue.*

---

GREETING

---

*The married couple, with special guests invited to join them, may stand facing the pastor, if they are able. The greeting may be omitted if the renewal of the marriage covenant takes place within another service.*

PASTOR

**Dear friends,  
let us love one another,  
because love comes from God.  
Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God.**

PEOPLE

Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.<sup>16</sup>

---

INTRODUCTION

---

**A** *at an anniversary*

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_ and,  
name

name  
**we rejoice to celebrate  
with you the renewal  
of your marriage covenant,  
on your \_\_\_\_\_ anniversary.  
We celebrate the delight  
you have found  
in each other  
and thank you for  
being a sign of God's  
love among us.**

**B** *at a time of  
reconciliation*

PASTOR

\_\_\_\_\_ and  
name  
name

**we rejoice to celebrate  
with you the renewal  
of your marriage covenant,  
as you recommit yourselves  
to each other.  
We celebrate the delight  
you have found  
in each other and thank  
you for being a sign of  
God's love among us.**

*The couple may describe one or two memories, or other family members or friends may bring greetings or reminisce as a way of celebrating the years of marriage.*

## RENEWAL OF COVENANT PROMISES

I am blessed to be married to you,  
and I promise anew  
to love and sustain you  
in the covenant of marriage,  
in sickness and in health,  
in plenty and in want,  
in joy and in sorrow,  
as long as we both shall live.

ONE

\_\_\_\_\_,  
partner  
I am blessed to be married to you,  
and I promise anew  
to love and sustain you  
in the covenant of marriage,  
in sickness and in health,  
in plenty and in want,  
in joy and in sorrow,  
as long as we both shall live.

---

### RECOGNITION OF RENEWAL

---

*If they are able, the couple may stand or kneel and join hands, and the pastor may place a hand on their joined hands while addressing the couple with these or similar words.*

PASTOR

**Those whom God has joined together let no one separate.<sup>17</sup>**  
**\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,**

name name  
**you have spoken again your covenant of love. God  
grant you grace to fulfill in your life together the solemn  
promises you made in the springtime of your love and  
renewed today in the presence of the church.**

---

### BLESSING AND THANKSGIVING

---

*The blessing on page 337 and the prayer of thanksgiving on page 338 from the Order for Marriage may be used.*

*If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, consult the instructions on page 341. This order may be concluded with a benediction from the Order for Marriage on page 345 or another benediction, or a Service of the Word may continue.*

# **Order for the Time of Dying**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

When the church is notified that a person is near death, the pastor, perhaps with another representative, may go as soon as possible to minister to the dying person and to others who are present, using all or part of this service. In this ministry, sensitivity to local and ethnic customs is of great importance and may require that the prayers be memorized or that the themes of the prayers be expressed freely in the representative's own words.

It is wise to assume that the dying person is able to hear the spoken prayers and psalms even when vital life signs are visibly failing. The use of silence is also appropriate, as human presence itself is a ministry.

Human touch, both with the one dying and with others who are present, is a sign of comfort and solidarity. The representative may hold the hand of the dying person or touch the head or shoulder while offering the prayers and psalms. Others present may be invited to reach out to each other, the representative, and the dying person.

If death has occurred before the representative arrives, the order may begin with the commendation, continue with psalms for the comfort of the living followed by the Lord's Prayer, and end with a benediction.

---

OUTLINE

---

*If the person has died before the representative arrives, the order may be: commendation, psalms, Lord's Prayer, and benediction.*

**Greeting**

**Prayers for the Person near Death**

**Psalms**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Prayer for Those Who Care for the Sick**

**Prayer for the Grieving**

**Commendation, for use if death has occurred**

**Benediction**

---

GREETING

---

*When the pastor or another representative arrives, this greeting or some other may be used informally.*

REPRESENTATIVE

**The love of God,  
and the peace of Christ,  
and the comfort of the Holy Spirit  
be with all of you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

---

PRAYERS FOR THE PERSON NEAR DEATH

---

*One or both of the following may be used or the representative may offer similar prayers in her or his own words while touching the person. Others present may share in the laying on of hands.*

**A**

REPRESENTATIVE

**Almighty God,  
by your gentle power  
you raised Jesus Christ from death.  
Watch over this child of yours,  
our brother/sister, \_\_\_\_\_.**

name

**Fill his/her eyes with light  
that he/she may see, beyond human sight,  
a home within your love,  
where pain is gone and physical frailty becomes glory.  
Banish fear.  
Brush away tears.  
Let death be gentle as nightfall,  
promising a new day  
when sighs of grief turn to songs of joy,  
and we are joined again  
in the presence of Jesus Christ in our heavenly reunion.**

PEOPLE

Amen.<sup>1</sup>



REPRESENTATIVE

**Eternal God,**  
**you know our needs before we ask,**  
**and you hear our cries**  
**through lips unable to speak.**  
**Hear with compassion**  
**the yearnings of your servant \_\_\_\_\_,**  
name  
**and the prayers**  
**that we would pray had we the words.**  
**Grant *her/him* the assurance**  
**of your embrace,**  
**the ears of faith**  
**to hear your voice,**  
**and the eyes of hope**  
**to see your light.**  
**Release *him/her* from all fear**  
**and from the constraints of life's faults**  
**that *he/she* may breathe *his/her* last**  
**in the peace of your words:**  
**Well done,**  
**good and faithful servant;**  
**enter into the joy of your God.<sup>2</sup>**  
**We ask this through Jesus Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

---

## PSALMS

---

*A representative may read one or more Psalms: 23; 46:1-3, 10-11; or others. Selected passages begin on page 518.*

---

## LORD'S PRAYER

---

*Near the dying person, all present may hold hands, if able, and say in full voice the prayer received from Jesus Christ.*

REPRESENTATIVE

**Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.**

**A**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done, on earth  
as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the  
time of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>3</sup>**

**B**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**C**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.**

---

**PRAYER FOR THOSE  
WHO CARE FOR THE SICK**

---

*In these or similar words, the representative may pray for family, physicians, nurses, and others who minister to the dying person.*

REPRESENTATIVE

**Merciful God,  
we thank you for all who minister to \_\_\_\_\_  
in this time of her/his great need. name**

**Give them compassion and tenderness  
and the fullest use of their gifts  
that they may have the blessed peace  
of knowing they honor you  
in their acts of healing and comfort.  
As death draws near  
and there is no more they can do,  
let them hear again the words of Jesus Christ:  
As often as you did it to one of the least of these,  
you did it to me;<sup>4</sup>  
and fill them with the joy of your Holy Spirit.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

---

### PRAYER FOR THE GRIEVING

---

*In these or similar words, the representative may pray for  
all who bear the burden of grief.*

REPRESENTATIVE

**Great God of all mystery,  
if in the presence of death our thoughts are startled  
and our words flutter about like frightened birds,  
bring us stillness  
that we may cover the sorrow of our hearts  
with folded hands.  
Give us grace to wait on you silently and with patience.  
You are nearer to us than we know,  
closer than we can imagine.  
If we cannot find you,  
it is because we search in far places.  
Before we felt the pain,  
you suffered it;  
before the burden came upon us,  
your strength lifted it;  
before the sorrow darkened our hearts,  
you were grieved.  
As you walk in the valley of every shadow,  
be our good shepherd  
and sustain us while we walk with you,**

lest in weakness we falter.  
 Though the pain deepens,  
 keep us in your way  
 and guide us past every danger;  
 through Jesus Christ our Savior.

PEOPLE  
 Amen.<sup>5</sup>

*If death has not occurred, omit the commendation.*

### COMMENDATION

*If death has already occurred, the representative may say the following or other words while touching the deceased person.*

REPRESENTATIVE

**Depart, O Christian** *sister/brother*,  
 out of this world:  
 in the name of God Most Holy,  
 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 this *day/night*  
 in the peace of God's eternal home.

PEOPLE  
 Amen.<sup>6</sup>

AND

[A]

REPRESENTATIVE

**Into your hands,**  
**O merciful Savior,**  
 we commend  
 our *brother/sister*,

\_\_\_\_\_  
 name

**Accept, we pray,**

[B]

REPRESENTATIVE

**Into your hands,**  
**O merciful Savior,**  
 we commend your  
 servant \_\_\_\_\_.

name

**Acknowledge,**  
**we humbly pray,**

**this son/daughter of yours,  
whose name you know.**

**Receive her/him  
into your merciful arms,  
into the shelter of your  
care, and into the  
glorious company  
of your saints in light.**

**May he/she and  
all the departed  
rest in your peace.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

**a sheep of your own fold,  
a lamb of your own flock,  
and a daughter/son**

**of your own redeeming.  
Receive him/her into the  
arms of your mercy,  
into the blessed rest  
of everlasting peace,  
and into the company  
of the saints in light.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>7</sup>

---

## BENEDICTION

---

*This or another benediction may conclude the service.*

REPRESENTATIVE

**May God bless you and keep you.**

**May God's face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you.**

**May God look upon you with kindness  
and give you peace.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>8</sup>

# **Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

In the Christian community, death is a corporate experience that touches the life of the entire family of faith. When a death occurs, the immediate family is encouraged to notify the church as soon as possible and to share fully in planning a service. They may also assist in leading the service. Sensitive consideration is to be given to ethnic traditions, local customs, and the particular circumstances of the bereaved.

The service recognizes both the pain and sorrow of the separation that accompanies death and the hope and joy of the promises of God to those who die and are raised in Jesus Christ. The service celebrates the life of the deceased, gives thanks for that person's life, and commends that life to God. It offers consolation to the bereaved by acknowledging their grief and anger or guilt. It provides the Christian community and others an opportunity to support the bereaved with their presence. Its purpose is to affirm once more the powerful, steadfast love of God from which people cannot be separated, even by death.

The service is an act of corporate worship: God's word is read and proclaimed, hymns may be sung, prayers offered, and the sacrament of Holy Communion shared by those who desire it. The service should be at an hour convenient for the immediate family and the community of faith. If possible, the service most appropriately is held in the place where the congregation regularly gathers for worship. If it is held in another place, it is important that it remain a corporate act of the church's worship. This order, or some other, in the hands of the congregation will enable full participation in the service.

The presence of the coffin may help the bereaved and the congregation to confront and deal with the reality of death. The coffin is closed for the service. A white pall or another

appropriate covering may be placed over the coffin symbolizing the resurrection, de-emphasizing the relative expense of coffins, and showing the equality of all people in the services of the church.

The service may also be used when the body of the deceased is not present. Then the committal service may be held prior to this service, within it, or following it. Consult the Order for Committal, beginning on page 384, for directions.

If it is the custom of the congregation to use a large paschal candle, it is lighted as a symbol of resurrection faith. If the coffin is present, the candle is placed near the coffin.

Christians often hold membership in praiseworthy organizations other than the church. It is most appropriate for memorial rituals of those groups to be held apart from the Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died to avoid compromising this service's integrity.

Customs surrounding death vary, especially those related to racial and ethnic traditions. Local churches may observe special anniversaries of a death or hold a service once a year to remember all who have died during the year. Prayers, readings, and ritual observances from various traditions may be incorporated at all remembrance times.

---

OUTLINE

---

**Prelude**

**Procession and Sentences**

**Hymn of Adoration**

**Greeting**

**Prayer**

**Reading of Scripture**

**Sermon**

**Words of Remembrance**

**Affirmation of Faith**

**Hymn, Anthem, or Other Music**

**Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

**Order for Holy  
Communion from  
Brief Order for the  
Service of Word and  
Sacrament, beginning  
with the communion  
prayer**

**Silence  
Prayer of Our Savior**

**Commendation**

**Song of Simeon**

**Benediction**

**Hymn**

**Postlude**

---

## PRELUDE

---

*The service may begin with music for a service of the resurrection. If the coffin is set in place before the people arrive or is not present at all, the service may continue with the opening hymn or the greeting.*

---

## PROCESSION AND SENTENCES

---

*If the coffin is brought into the church in a procession, a leader may meet it at the entrance and say any of the following sentences as she or he precedes the coffin and family up the aisle to the chancel. If there is no procession, the sentences may be used following the greeting. Those who are able may stand for the procession. The one presiding may say one or more sentences.*

LEADER

**Hear the promises of God.**

Ⓐ

LEADER

**God is near to all who call,  
who call from their hearts.  
The desires of those who fear God are fulfilled;  
their cries are heard;  
they are saved.<sup>9</sup>**

Ⓑ

LEADER

**I am the resurrection and the life;  
all who believe in me,  
though they die,  
yet shall they live,  
and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.<sup>10</sup>**

Ⓒ

LEADER

**Fear not,  
I am the first and the last,  
and the living one;  
I died, and behold I am alive for evermore.<sup>11</sup>**



LEADER

**Fear not,  
for I am with you,  
be not dismayed,  
for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you,  
I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my victorious hand.<sup>12</sup>**



LEADER

**When we were baptized into Christ Jesus,  
we were baptized into Christ's death.  
By our baptism, then,  
we were buried with Christ  
and shared Christ's death,  
in order that,  
just as Christ was raised from death  
by the glorious power of God,  
so too we might live a new life.<sup>13</sup>  
For if we have been united with Christ  
in a death like Christ's,  
we shall certainly be united with Christ  
in a resurrection like Christ's.<sup>14</sup>**



LEADER

**Blessed are the dead  
who die in Christ.  
"Blessed indeed," says the Spirit,  
"that they may rest from their labors,  
for their deeds follow them!"<sup>15</sup>**

---

### HYMN OF ADORATION

---

*As the procession nears the chancel, a hymn may be sung.  
If there is no procession, the people who are able may rise  
for the opening hymn as a leader enters; or a leader may  
enter during the prelude and open with the greeting and/or  
the sentences. Then the service may continue with the hymn.*

---

**GREETING**

---

*All who are able may stand. A leader may greet the people informally, name the person for whom they gather in thanksgiving, and interpret briefly the meaning of the service. One or more of the following greetings may be used.*

**A**

LEADER

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.<sup>16</sup>**

PEOPLE

**And also with you.**

**B**

LEADER

**Friends,  
we gather here in the protective shelter  
of God's healing love.  
We are free to pour out our grief,  
release our anger,  
face our emptiness,  
and know that God cares.  
We gather here as God's people,  
conscious of others who have died  
and of the frailty  
of our own existence on earth.  
We come to comfort and to support one another  
in our common loss.  
We gather to hear God's word of hope  
that can drive away our despair  
and move us to offer God our praise.  
We gather to commend to God with thanksgiving  
the life of \_\_\_\_\_  
name  
as we celebrate the good news of Christ's resurrection.  
For whether we live or whether we die,  
we belong to Christ who is Lord  
both of the dead and of the living.<sup>17</sup>**



LEADER

**Gracious is our God and righteous;  
our God is full of compassion.**

PEOPLE

I will walk in the presence of God  
in the land of the living.

LEADER

**I will fulfill my vows to God  
in the presence of all God's people.**

PEOPLE

Precious in the sight of God  
is the death of those who die in faithfulness.<sup>18</sup>

---

PRAYER

---

*The people may be seated. The service may continue with  
a confession of sin and an assurance of pardon or a collect  
or a prayer of thanksgiving for the communion of saints.*



LEADER

**The peace of Christ  
be with you.**

PEOPLE

And also with you.

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**Almighty God,  
whose will is sovereign and  
whose mercy is boundless,  
look upon us in our sorrow  
and enable us to hear  
your word.  
Help us hear so that,  
through patience  
and the encouragement  
of the scriptures,**



ALL

**Holy God,  
whose ways are not our  
ways and whose thoughts  
are not our thoughts,  
grant that your Holy Spirit  
may intercede for us  
with sighs too deep  
for human words.  
Heal our wounded hearts  
made heavy by our sorrow.  
Through the veil of our  
tears and the silence  
of our emptiness,  
assure us again  
that ear has not heard,  
nor eye seen,  
nor human imagination  
envisioned,**

**we may hold fast to the assurance of your favor and the hope of life eternal; through Jesus Christ our risen Savior. Amen.**

**what you have prepared for those who love you; through Jesus Christ, the firstborn from the dead. Amen.**

---

### READING OF SCRIPTURE

---

*The psalms, read responsively or antiphonally or sung, may be used before and/or after the lessons. It is appropriate to include at least one Gospel lesson. Where it is the custom, all who are able may stand for the Gospel reading. Members of the family of the deceased and other lay persons may be readers. A gloria may be said or sung at the conclusion of the final psalm. Suggested readings include the following.*

#### PSALMS

Psalms 23; 27:7-14; 42:1-5; 46; 90:1-4, 12-17; 121; 130; 139:1-18, 23-24

#### OLD TESTAMENT

Job 19:25-27

Isaiah 25:6-9, 61:1-3

Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33

#### EPISTLES

Acts 10:34-43

Romans 8:9-11, 31-39

1 Corinthians 13, 15:12-20, 15:35-50

2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 16; 5:1-5

Ephesians 3:14-21

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

2 Timothy 1:8-13

Revelation 21:1-6

#### GOSPELS

Matthew 5:3-10, 11:28-30

Luke 23:33, 39-43

John 6:37-40; 11:17-27; 12:24-26; 14:1-3, 18-19, 25-27

---

SERMON

---

*The people may be seated for a sermon.*

---

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

---

*A leader or a friend or member of the family of the deceased may offer thanksgiving for the one who has died and recall the individual's uniqueness if this is desired and has not been done during the sermon.*

---

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

---

*All who are able may stand and affirm the resurrection faith by saying a creed, statement of faith, or other affirmation, such as the following from Romans. Other affirmations of faith are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

LEADER

**Let us say again what we believe.**

ALL

**We believe there is no condemnation  
for those who are in Christ Jesus,  
and we know that in everything  
God works for good with those who love God,  
who are called according to God's purpose.  
We are sure that neither death, nor life,  
nor angels, nor principalities,  
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.<sup>19</sup>  
Amen.**

---

HYMN, ANTHEM, OR OTHER MUSIC

---

*Music may be offered in God's praise.*

---

PRAYERS OF  
THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

---

*These or other similar prayers may be offered. A litany may be used. The prayers may be used individually or together, with or without each “Amen” said by the pastor or people. Prayers to be offered at the death of a child follow the general prayers.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**A**

LEADER

**Merciful God, we thank you for your word;  
it is a lamp for our feet, a light for our path.  
We thank you especially that in the night of our grief  
and in the shadows of our sorrow,  
we are not left to ourselves.  
We have the light of your promises  
to sustain and comfort us.  
Through our tears,  
give us vision to see in faith  
the consolation you intend for us.  
In your mercy,  
grant us the unfailing guidance of your saving Word,  
both in life and in death;  
through Jesus Christ our risen Savior.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**B**

LEADER

**O God, our strength and our redeemer,  
giver of life and conqueror of death,  
we praise you with humble hearts.  
With faith in your great mercy and wisdom,  
we entrust \_\_\_\_\_ to your eternal care.  
name  
We praise you for your steadfast love for her/him  
all the days of her/his earthly life.**

**We thank you for all that *he/she* was  
to those who loved *him/her***

**and for *his/her* faithfulness  
to the church of Jesus Christ.**

*Mention may be made of the person's Christian life  
and service.*

**We thank you that for \_\_\_\_\_  
name**

**all sickness and sorrow are ended, and**

**death itself is past  
and that *she/he* has entered the home  
where all your people gather in peace.  
Keep us all in communion with your faithful people  
in every time and place,  
that at last we may rejoice together in the heavenly family  
where Jesus Christ reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.



LEADER

**God of all mercies and all comfort,  
in tender love and compassion,  
embrace your sorrowing servants.  
Be their refuge and strength,  
an ever present help in trouble.  
Show them again the love of Christ  
that passes all human understanding;  
for by death Christ has conquered death,  
and by rising Christ has opened to all of us  
the gates of everlasting life.  
Thanks be to you, O God.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.



LEADER

**Let us pray for ourselves.**

PEOPLE

O God, whose days are without end  
and whose mercies cannot be counted,  
awaken us to the shortness and uncertainty of human life.

By your Holy Spirit,  
lead us in faithfulness all our days.

When we have served you in our generation,  
may we be gathered with those who have gone before,  
having the testimony of a good conscience,  
in the communion of your holy church,  
in the confidence of a certain faith,  
in the comfort of a saving hope,  
in favor with you, our God,  
and at perfect peace with the world;  
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.  
Amen.

*At the death of a child, the following prayers or others  
in the leader's own words may be offered.*



LEADER

**Gentle God,  
born an infant in Jesus Christ  
in the family of Joseph and Mary,  
we give you thanks for \_\_\_\_\_ born among us  
full of hope and promise.**

**We remember that Jesus Christ lifted children  
into loving arms to embrace and bless them.**

**We ask you to embrace and bless \_\_\_\_\_  
as part of your heavenly family where, name  
by your grace, our lives are brought to fullness  
in the peace of your eternal home.**

**We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
your beloved child, and our risen Savior.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**E** *for parents*

LEADER

**God of all mercies,  
whose heart aches with our human hurting,  
we commend to your love the parent(s) of this child,**

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name(s) of parent(s)

**and all *his/her/their* children who mourn.**

**Sustain the family  
in this loss and in their loneliness.  
Kindle anew the ashes of joy.  
Grant the peace of knowing  
that this child is with you,  
the Mother and Father of us all,  
both in this life  
and in the life that is to come;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

*If Holy Communion is not to be celebrated, the service may be concluded with silence, the Prayer of Our Savior, the commendation, and the closing acts that follow.*

*If Holy Communion is to be celebrated, the service continues with the offertory of the bread and wine in the Brief Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament on page 83. Members of the family or friends of the deceased may bring the bread and wine to the table. All Christians present may be invited to receive. After the post-communion prayer of thanksgiving from the Brief Order for the Service of Word and Sacrament, the Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died may continue with the commendation on page 381 and the closing acts which follow it.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SILENCE**  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Silence may be observed for reflection and prayer.*

---

**PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR**

---

*Standing, sitting, or kneeling, all may sing or say the prayer received from Jesus Christ.*

LEADER

**Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.**

**[A]**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done,  
on earth  
as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us  
our sins as we  
forgive those  
who sin  
against us.  
Save us  
from the time  
of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the  
kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>20</sup>**

**[B]**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name. Thy  
kingdom come.  
Thy will be  
done on earth  
as it is  
in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our trespasses,  
as we forgive  
those who  
trespass against  
us. And lead us  
not into  
temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**[C]**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name. Thy  
kingdom come.  
Thy will be  
done on earth  
as it is  
in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
And lead us  
not into  
temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.**

## COMMENDATION

*All who are able may stand. The leader may go to the coffin for one of the following or another commendation. The words are also appropriate if no coffin is present.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**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**

name

**to your merciful care.  
We do this in the faith  
of Christ Jesus,  
who died and rose again  
to save us and is now alive  
and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit  
in glory for ever.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

**[B]**

LEADER

**Into your hands,  
O merciful Savior,  
we commend your servant**

name

**Acknowledge,  
we humbly pray,  
a sheep of your own fold,  
a lamb of your own flock,  
and a daughter/son  
of your own redeeming.  
Receive her/him into the  
arms of your mercy,  
into the blessed rest  
of everlasting peace,  
and into the company  
of the saints in light.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.<sup>21</sup>**

## SONG OF SIMEON

*All who are able may stand and sing or say the ancient Nunc Dimittis. Musical settings are on pages 458 and 466.*

ALL

**Holy One,  
now 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.<sup>22</sup>**

*At the request of the family of the deceased or in the case of cremation, the Order for Committal may take place, following instructions in that order on page 384.*

## BENEDICTION

*While all who are able stand, a leader may give the benediction. According to local custom, the hymn may precede the benediction.*

**A**

LEADER

**Now may the God of peace  
who brought again from  
the dead our Savior Jesus,  
the great shepherd  
of the sheep,  
by the blood  
of the eternal covenant,  
equip you  
with everything good  
that you may do God's will,  
working in you that which  
is pleasing in God's sight,  
through Jesus Christ;  
to whom be glory  
for ever and ever.**

PEOPLE

Amen.<sup>23</sup>

**B**

LEADER

**May God bless you  
and keep you.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

LEADER

**May God's face shine upon  
you and be gracious to you.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

LEADER

**May God look upon you  
with kindness  
and give you peace.<sup>24</sup>**

PEOPLE

Amen.

*for use, except during  
Lent*

LEADER

**Alleluia. Christ is risen.**

PEOPLE

**Christ is risen indeed.  
Alleluia.**

LEADER

**Let us go forth  
in the name of Christ.**

PEOPLE

**Thanks be to God.**

---

HYMN

---

*All who are able may stand for a hymn. If there is to be a recessional, the leader(s) may precede the coffin and the family to the door.*

---

POSTLUDE

---

# Order for Committal

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

The Order for Committal is a summary of the Easter faith. It may be used in its full form before or following the Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died, or apart from that service. If, for pastoral and practical reasons, the committal is incorporated within the Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died, it may follow the commendation and Song of Simeon and precede the benediction and closing hymn. When this occurs, the greeting and opening sentences of the Order for Committal may be omitted. The committal proper may be said by the leader who is near the coffin, if it is present. The Lord's Prayer may be omitted. The service may be closed with the benediction from either order, followed by a hymn.

If the Order for Committal is used alone, the leader may wish to incorporate within it appropriate parts of the Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died.

Customs concerning interment, entombment, scattering of ashes, burial at sea, and giving of the body to research institutions are diverse. The Order for Committal may be adapted to respect these customs, but it remains a summary of the Easter faith.

---

**OUTLINE**

---

***This order may be used alone. When it is incorporated into the Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died, the greeting, sentences, and Lord's Prayer may be omitted and a benediction from either order may be used.***

**Greeting  
Sentences  
Committal  
Lord's Prayer  
Prayers  
Benediction**

*When this order is incorporated into the Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died, the greeting and sentences may be omitted.*

*A leader may precede the coffin and the congregation to the site of burial.*

---

## GREETING

---

LEADER

**The peace of Christ be with you.**

PEOPLE

**And also with you.**

---

## SENTENCES

---

*A leader may read one or more of the following opening sentences or any not used in the Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died.*

Ⓐ

LEADER

**We would not have you ignorant,  
brothers and sisters,  
concerning those who are asleep,  
that you may not grieve  
as others do who have no hope.  
For since we believe  
that Jesus died and rose again,  
even so, through Jesus,  
God will bring with Jesus  
those who have fallen asleep.<sup>25</sup>**

Ⓑ

LEADER

**“Death is swallowed up in victory.  
O death, where is your victory?  
O death, where is your sting?”  
Thanks be to God,  
who gives us the victory  
through our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>26</sup>**



**So you have sorrow now,  
but I will see you again  
and your hearts will rejoice,  
and no one will take your joy from you.<sup>27</sup>**



**Behold, I am coming soon.  
I am the Alpha and the Omega,  
the first, and the last,  
the beginning and the end.<sup>28</sup>**

## COMMITTAL

*At the head of the coffin or near the urn of ashes and facing the people, a leader may say the following or similar words.*



**Almighty God,**  
in whose eternal care  
are all your people,  
**we commit** *this body/ these ashes*  
of \_\_\_\_\_ to  
name  
*the earth/ the sea/ the elements/  
this resting place*  
**in confident and certain  
hope of the resurrection  
to eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ,  
the firstborn from the dead.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.



**Eternal God, who breathed  
into lifeless dust  
and brought forth Adam  
and Eve in your image,  
we return to** *the earth/  
the sea/ the elements/  
this resting place*  
**the** *breathless body/  
lifeless ashes*  
**of your servant**

\_\_\_\_\_ ,  
**believing that as you raised  
 Jesus Christ from death,  
 you will breathe life  
 into us again  
 so that we may live  
 with you for ever.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

*According to local custom, the leader(s) and members of the family may cast earth upon the coffin during or following the committal.*

---

## LORD'S PRAYER

---

*If this prayer was said in a service immediately prior to the committal or will follow shortly in a service after the committal, it may be omitted here.*

LEADER

**Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.**

**[A]**

ALL

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
hallowed be  
your name,  
your kingdom  
come, your will  
be done, on earth  
as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the  
time of trial  
and deliver us  
from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now  
and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>29</sup>**

**[B]**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

**[C]**

ALL

**Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be  
thy name.  
Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will  
be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
And forgive us  
our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us  
from evil.  
For thine  
is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.**

---

**PRAYERS**

---

*A leader may use one of these or her or his own words.*

**A**

LEADER

**Almighty God,  
by the death  
of Jesus Christ  
you have taken  
away the sting  
of death,  
by Christ's time  
in the tomb you  
have sanctified  
the graves  
of the saints,  
and by Christ's  
glorious  
resurrection  
you have  
brought life  
and immortality  
to light.  
We thank you  
for the victory  
of life over death  
which you have  
won for us  
and for all who  
sleep in Christ.  
Keep us  
in everlasting  
communion with  
all who wait  
for you on earth  
and all who are  
with you in  
heaven, where  
Christ reigns**

**B**

LEADER

**Almighty God,  
fountain of all  
mercy and giver  
of all comfort,  
deal graciously,  
we pray, with all  
who mourn,  
that casting all  
their care on you,  
they may know  
the consolation  
of your love;  
through Jesus  
Christ our  
Savior.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>31</sup>

**C**

LEADER

**Let us pray for  
our own needs.**

ALL

**Merciful God,  
support us all the  
day long of this  
life full of trouble,  
until the shadows  
lengthen and the  
evening comes,  
and the busy  
world is hushed,  
and the fever  
of life is over,  
and our work  
is done.  
Then in your  
tender mercy  
grant us a safe  
lodging, and  
a holy rest,  
and peace  
at the last;  
through Jesus  
Christ our  
Redeemer.  
Amen.<sup>32</sup>**

**with you and the  
Holy Spirit,  
ever one God,  
for ever  
and ever.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.<sup>30</sup>

---

## BENEDICTION

---

*When used within the Order for Thanksgiving for One Who Has Died, one of the following benedictions or one from that order may be used, followed by a hymn.*

**[A]**

LEADER

**May the God of hope  
fill you with all joy  
and peace in believing,  
so that by the power  
of the Holy Spirit  
you may abound in hope.<sup>33</sup>  
Go in the peace of Christ.**

PEOPLE  
Amen.

**[B]**

LEADER

**The peace of God,  
which passes all  
understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds  
in the knowledge  
and love of God,  
and of Christ Jesus  
our risen Savior.<sup>34</sup>  
And the blessing  
of God Almighty,  
Creator,  
Redeemer,  
and Comforter,  
be among you and  
remain with you always.  
Amen.**

# **Order for Recognition of a Student in Care of Association**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

In this order the people of God celebrate the initial response of a Christian to the call of God to serve in the ordained ministry of the church. It is an occasion for entering a covenant of support with the candidate. In this service the association offers its nurture as the candidate seeks to understand more fully God's purpose for her or his life and pursues the study and other preparation necessary for ordination to Christian ministry.

More than one student may be recognized in one service. Representatives of the association committee on the ministry, in consultation with the candidates, plan the service of recognition.

The service may be held at any meeting or service of worship at which the association is assembled. This may be an association meeting, a special occasion such as a banquet, or a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word.

The candidate(s) may sit with the congregation until requested to come forward at the presentation.

---

## OUTLINE

---

***This order is to be held during a gathering of the association. It may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon or may be used during a meeting or other event.***

**Greeting**

**Presentation**

**Recognition**

**Vows**

**Prayer of Recognition**

**Declaration**

***A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue, or a hymn and a benediction may close the order.***

*When this order is part of a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word, it may follow the sermon. A hymn may be sung. After the hymn, all may be seated except the representative(s) of the association, the representative(s) of the local church(es) where the candidate(s) are members, the advisor(s) of the student(s), and the candidate(s) for recognition.*

*The greeting may be used at the opening of the service rather than at the opening of this order.*

---

## GREETING

---

*The moderator or another representative of the association may greet the people, and they may respond in these or similar words.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ,  
the head of the church,  
who is not without witnesses in any age.**

**Hear these words to Timothy:**

**As for you,  
be strong through the grace that is ours  
in union with Christ Jesus.**

PEOPLE

**Take the teachings that you heard me proclaim  
in the presence of many witnesses,  
and entrust them to reliable people,  
who will be able to teach others also.**

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Do your best to win full approval in God's sight;**

PEOPLE

**Be a worker who is not ashamed of your work,  
one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth.<sup>1</sup>**

---

## PRESENTATION

---

*A representative of each local church that is recommending a student to be received in care of the association may*

*address a representative of the association in these or similar words. The candidate's full name may be used in the first reference. Thereafter, the first name only may be used.*

EACH LOCAL CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the association representative*

\_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ,  
local church  
after carefully considering the call to ordained ministry  
of \_\_\_\_\_,  
full name of candidate  
respectfully requests that the \_\_\_\_\_ Association  
association  
receive \_\_\_\_\_ as a student in care of this association,  
name  
according to the faith and order  
of the United Church of Christ.

---

## RECOGNITION

---

*The candidate(s) may stand, if able, before the association and be addressed in these or similar words by representative(s) of the association.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**The recognition of a student in care is the way an association of the United Church of Christ affirms a person's call from God to prepare for ordained ministry in Christ's church. We celebrate the action of your local church(es) to recommend you. We affirm the action of the committee on the ministry to receive you into care.**

**An ordained minister of the United Church of Christ is one of its members who has been called by God and ordained to preach and teach the gospel, to administer the sacraments and rites of the church, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership.<sup>2</sup>**

**Your intention to prepare yourself for this ministry will require diligent and prayerful work.**

**The association, through its committee on the ministry, promises to assist you in your pilgrimage of learning**

so that when you request ordination,  
you will have been nurtured  
by Christ's church in our midst.  
With you, we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit  
as the future opens before you,  
and we invite you to call on the association  
wherever we may be helpful to you  
in your preparation for ordained ministry.

---

## VOWS

---

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the candidate(s)*

As you enter into this covenant  
with this association,  
do you promise to seek its guidance,  
to receive its support,  
and to communicate with it regularly  
through your advisor?

CANDIDATE

I do, with God's help.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the local church representative(s)*

As a representative of the local church  
of a newly recognized student in care of this association,  
do you join in this covenant,  
on behalf of the local church,  
vowing to encourage *him/her*  
in the preparation for ordained ministry,  
and undergirding *him/her*  
with prayer, support, and nurture?

LOCAL CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE

I do, with God's help.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the advisor(s)*

As advisor(s) of a newly recognized  
student in care of association,  
do you join in this covenant,

**pledging to support *her/him*  
in ways mutually agreeable to you  
as *she/he* continues the pilgrimage of learning,  
to maintain regular contact with *her/him* ,  
and to report regularly on the relationship  
to the association,  
through the committee on the ministry?**

ADVISOR

I do, with God's help.

*All who are able may stand.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the members of the association*

**Do you, the ministers and delegates of this association,  
confirm the covenant made this day with \_\_\_\_\_ ?**

name(s)

**Do you agree to offer encouragement  
and to sustain *him/her/them*  
in the continued preparation  
for ordained ministry  
in the church of Jesus Christ,  
to pray for *him/her/them* ,  
and to recognize *him/her/them*  
in this special relationship with the association?**

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

We do, with praise and thanksgiving to God.

---

## PRAYER OF RECOGNITION

---

*All who are able may stand.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**God of the prophets and martyrs  
in every age and land,  
we thank you for those in our generation  
who hear and answer your call  
to prepare for the ordained ministry of your church.  
Grant your Holy Spirit to \_\_\_\_\_**

name(s)

**that *he/she/they* may grow in faith,  
be filled with courage,  
and increase in love.  
Confirm in *her/him/them*  
the call to ministry you intend,  
that *she/he/they* may find in service to you  
the liberty that comes to those  
who give themselves for others;  
through Jesus Christ,  
who came not to be served, but to serve,  
and who served you even to death  
for our redemption.**

ALL  
Amen.

---

## DECLARATION

---

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**In the name of Jesus Christ,  
and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association  
of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference  
of the United Church of Christ,  
I declare that you are *a student/students* in care  
of this association.**

ALL  
**Thanks be to God.**

*The association representative(s) may give a greeting of Christian love, such as a handshake with appropriate words, to the student(s) in care. The proper certificate and a symbolic gift may be given to each student.*

*A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue, or a hymn and a benediction may close the order.*

# **Order for Ordination to Ministry**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

In this order the people of God celebrate Christ's gift of ministry to the church. In planning the service, set the time so that people from other local churches within the association, representatives of other Christian communions, and guests from synagogues or other communities of faith may participate. Services of ordination held on Sunday mornings prohibit the enrichment afforded by this participation.

Representatives of the association committee on the ministry, in full consultation with the ordinand and the local church where the service will be held, plan the service of ordination. The conference may be represented in the planning. Lay and ordained people may share in the leadership of the service.

This order may be incorporated within a Service of Word and Sacrament or within a Service of the Word. The installation of the pastor may immediately follow the order for ordination. It is fitting that a sermon be preached concerning the ministry of all people of God and the particular ministry of those ordained in and on behalf of the church. The service may be enriched by the generous use of music. Plans should be made in consultation with the music leaders of the local church.

The ordinand may sit with the congregation until requested to come forward.

---

OUTLINE

---

***This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. An affirmation of faith and a hymn may precede the Order for Ordination to Ministry.***

**Greeting  
Presentation  
Exhortation  
Examination  
Acclamation  
Laying on of Hands  
Declaration**

***The Order for Installation of a Pastor may begin, following the instructions in that order. If installation does not follow immediately, a hymn may be sung and a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.***

*Following the sermon, all who are able may stand and unite in an affirmation of faith and a hymn. After the hymn, all may be seated except the representative(s) of the association, the representative(s) of the local church, and the ordinand. The ordinand may remain in the congregation.*

*The greeting may be used at the opening of the service rather than at the opening of this order.*

---

## GREETING

---

*The moderator or another representative of the association may greet the people, and they may respond in these or similar words.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Grace to you and peace from God,  
who is and who was and who is to come,  
and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness  
and the sovereign of the rulers on earth.<sup>3</sup>**

**The \_\_\_\_\_ Association**

association

**of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference**

conference

**of the United Church of Christ  
greet you in the name of Jesus Christ,  
the head of the church.**

PEOPLE

**To God, who by the power at work within us  
is able to do far more abundantly  
than all that we ask or think,  
be glory in the church  
and in Christ Jesus to all generations,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.<sup>4</sup>**

---

## PRESENTATION

---

*A representative of the local church that is requesting the ordination may address a representative of the association*

*in these or similar words. The ordinand's full name may be used in the first reference. Thereafter, the first name only may be used.*

LOCAL CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the association representative*

\_\_\_\_\_  
local church United Church of Christ,  
after carefully considering the call to ordained ministry  
of \_\_\_\_\_,  
full name of ordinand  
respectfully requests that the \_\_\_\_\_ Association  
association  
ordain \_\_\_\_\_ to the ministry  
name  
of the church of Jesus Christ,  
consistent with scripture  
and with the traditions of the church universal,  
and according to the faith and order  
of the United Church of Christ.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the congregation*

The \_\_\_\_\_ Association has reviewed the request  
association  
of \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ.  
local church

We have prayerfully examined \_\_\_\_\_  
name  
concerning *her/his* fitness for ministry in Christ's church.  
We are pleased,  
on behalf of the United Church of Christ,  
to authorize the ordination of \_\_\_\_\_  
name  
into the Christian ministry.

*addressing the ordinand*

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
servant of God,  
we invite you to come forward  
as a sign of your consent  
to receive ordination into Christian ministry.

*The ordinand may leave his or her place in the congregation and may stand, if able, at the chancel before the representative(s) of the association, who review(s) the United Church of Christ's Constitution and Bylaws regarding ordination.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**The United Church of Christ acknowledges  
as its sole head, Jesus Christ,  
Son of God and Savior.  
It acknowledges as kindred in Christ  
all who share in this confession.**

**It looks to the word of God  
in the scriptures,  
and to the presence and power  
of the Holy Spirit,  
to prosper its creative and redemptive work  
in the world.**

**It claims as its own the faith  
of the historic church  
expressed in the ancient creeds  
and reclaimed in the basic insights  
of the Protestant reformers.**

**It affirms the responsibility  
of the church in each generation  
to make this faith its own  
in reality of worship,  
in honesty of thought and expression,  
and in purity of heart before God.**

**In accordance with the teaching of our Lord  
and the practice prevailing  
among evangelical Christians,  
it recognizes two sacraments:  
Baptism and . . . Holy Communion.**

**The United Church of Christ recognizes  
that God calls the whole church  
and every member  
to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ**

by witnessing to the gospel  
in church and society.  
The United Church of Christ seeks to undergird  
the ministry of its members  
by nurturing faith,  
calling forth gifts,  
and equipping members for Christian service.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Ordination is the rite**  
whereby the United Church of Christ  
through an association,  
in cooperation with the person  
and a local church  
of the United Church of Christ,  
recognizes and authorizes that member  
whom God has called to ordained ministry,  
and sets that person apart by prayer  
and the laying on of hands.  
By this rite  
ordained ministerial standing is conferred  
and authorization given  
to perform the duties  
and exercise the prerogatives  
of ordained ministry  
in the United Church of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

---

### EXHORTATION

---

*A representative of the association may then say these or similar words.*

**[A]**

ASSOCIATION  
REPRESENTATIVE

**Hear these words**  
from the prophet  
Isaiah:  
I heard the voice  
of the Holy One  
saying,

**[B]**

ASSOCIATION  
REPRESENTATIVE

**Hear these words**  
from the  
apostle Paul:  
How are people  
to call upon one  
in whom

**[C]**

ASSOCIATION  
REPRESENTATIVE

**Hear these words**  
from Jesus Christ  
to the first  
disciples:  
Follow me, and I  
will make you

**“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me!”<sup>6</sup>**

**How wonderful it is to see a messenger coming across the mountains, bringing good news, the news of peace!**

**The messenger announces victory and says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”<sup>7</sup>**

**The Spirit of God is upon me, because the Holy One has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to those who are bound.<sup>8</sup>**

**they have not believed?**

**And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard?**

**So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.<sup>9</sup>**

**fishers of humanity.<sup>10</sup>**

**Hear also these words of Jesus: You know that the rulers of the Gentiles dominate them, and their great leaders exercise authority over them.**

**It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave.<sup>11</sup>**

---

## EXAMINATION

---

*A representative of the association may then ask the ordinand the following questions.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
**before God and this congregation,  
we ask you:**

**Are you persuaded that God has called you  
to be an ordained minister  
of the church of Jesus Christ,  
and are you ready with the help of God  
to enter this ministry  
and to serve faithfully in it?**

ORDINAND

I am.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Do you,  
with the church throughout the world,  
hear the word of God  
in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,  
and do you accept the word of God  
as the rule of Christian faith and practice?**

ORDINAND

I do.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Do you promise to be diligent in your private prayers  
and in reading the scriptures,  
as well as in the public duties of your office?**

ORDINAND

I do, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Will you be zealous in maintaining  
both the truth of the gospel  
and the peace of the church,  
speaking the truth in love?**

ORDINAND

I will, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Will you be faithful  
in preaching and teaching the gospel,**

**in administering the sacraments and rites of the church,  
and in exercising pastoral care and leadership?**

ORDINAND

I will, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Will you keep silent all confidences shared with you?**

ORDINAND

I will, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Will you seek to regard all people  
with equal love and concern  
and undertake to minister impartially  
to the needs of all?**

ORDINAND

I will, relying on God's grace.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Do you accept the faith and order  
of the United Church of Christ;  
and will you,  
as an ordained minister in this communion,  
ecumenically reach out toward all who are in Christ  
and show Christian love  
to people of other faiths  
and people of no faith?**

ORDINAND

I do and I will, relying on God's grace.

---

### ACCLAMATION

---

*Those official delegates of the association (clergy and others  
so designated) who are able may stand.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the members of the association*

**People of God,  
you have heard the promises \_\_\_\_\_ has made.  
What is your will?**

name

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

By the grace of God,

*he/she* is worthy!

Let us ordain *her/him*.

Come, Holy Spirit.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Will you support \_\_\_\_\_ in the ministry of Christ?**  
name

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

We will.

*The people may show their approval and support by applause, a hymn, or some other means.*

---

## LAYING ON OF HANDS

---

*The ordinand may kneel, if able. A leader may invite those who are to share in the laying on of hands to come forward. The congregation may be given an opportunity to participate in the ordination in a symbolic way. "Veni Creator, Spiritus" or another hymn may be sung by the choir alone or with the congregation.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**The laying on of hands is the symbolic act whereby the church in every age recognizes God's call to ministry in the lives of faithful women and men and asks the Holy Spirit to confer on them gifts for ordained ministry.**

*Those who have come forward to lay on hands may now do so. Silence may be observed. Then an association representative may lead in prayer.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Let us pray.**

**Eternal God,  
in wisdom you govern all things,  
and from the beginning  
you have chosen faithful people  
to serve you in ministry,  
calling some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists,  
some pastors and teachers,  
to equip all your people  
for the work of the ministry  
and for building up the body of Christ.<sup>12</sup>  
Now bless and sanctify by your Holy Spirit  
your servant \_\_\_\_\_,**

name

**whom we, in your name and in obedience to your will,  
by prayer and with the laying on of hands,  
ordain to the ministry of the church,  
committing to *him/her* the authority  
to preach your word,  
administer the sacraments,  
and exercise the responsibilities  
of pastor and teacher.**

**Bestow on \_\_\_\_\_**

name

**the power of your Holy Spirit,  
confirming what we do.**

**Let the same mind be in *her/him*  
that was also in Christ Jesus.**

**Enable *him/her* to nourish your people  
in the faith of the gospel.**

**Fill *her/his* speech with truth  
and *her/his* life with purity.**

**Increase the faith of \_\_\_\_\_ in you,**

name

**strengthen *him/her* in the day of trouble,  
prosper *his/her* words and works  
that your name may be glorified and your truth exalted;  
through Jesus Christ our Sovereign and Savior.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

Thanks be to God!

*The newly ordained minister may rise.*

**In the name of Jesus Christ,  
the head of the church,  
and by the authority of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association  
of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference**

association  
conference

*A Bible may be presented to the newly ordained minister with these or other words.*

**Receive at our hands this Bible  
of which you are appointed as an interpreter.  
Be diligent in the study of its message  
that you may speak with the authority of truth,  
and be a faithful minister of the word and sacraments.**

*A certificate of ordination may be presented, and a gesture of Christian love may be made with these or other words.*

**You are granted ordained ministerial standing  
in the United Church of Christ;  
and in behalf of its people,  
we offer you the hand of Christian love.**

*The leaders may greet the newly ordained minister.*

*If the newly ordained minister is to be installed within this service, the Order for Installation of a Pastor follows the Order for Ordination to Ministry. See the introduction to that order, beginning on page 412, for instructions.*

*If installation does not immediately follow, a hymn may be sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues. It is appropriate that the newly ordained minister serve communion and give the benediction.*

# **Order for Installation of a Pastor**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

In this order the association, at the request of a local church, confirms and celebrates the covenant between a local church and a newly called pastor and teacher and reaffirms the covenantal relationship of all the churches in the association. In planning the service, set the time so that people from other churches within the association, representatives of other Christian communions, and guests from synagogues or other communities of faith may participate. Services of installation held on Sunday mornings prohibit the enrichment afforded by this participation.

Representatives of the association committee on the ministry, in full consultation with the pastor to be installed and the local church requesting the service, plan the service of installation. Conference representatives may participate in the planning. Lay and ordained people may share in the leadership of the service.

This order may be incorporated within a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word. It is fitting that a sermon be preached concerning the ministry of all the people of God and the particular ministry of a pastor and teacher within the life of the church. The service may be enriched by the generous use of music. Plans should be made in consultation with the music leaders of the local church.

When the order for installation is part of a service of ordination, only the covenant, prayer, and declaration need to be used.

The person to be installed may sit with the congregation until requested to come forward at the presentation.

---

OUTLINE

---

*This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. An affirmation of faith and a hymn may precede this order. When it is used immediately following the Order for Ordination to Ministry, begin with the covenant.*

Greeting  
Presentation  
Exhortation  
Covenant  
Prayer of Installation  
Declaration

*A hymn may be sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

*Following the sermon, all who are able may stand and unite in an affirmation of faith and a hymn. After the hymn, all may be seated except the representative(s) of the local church, the representative(s) of the association, and the pastor who is to be installed. The pastor to be installed may remain among the congregation.*

*The greeting may be used at the opening of the service rather than at the opening of this order.*

*When the Order for Installation of a Pastor is part of a service of ordination, begin with the covenant on page 417.*

---

## GREETING

---

*The moderator or another representative of the association may greet the people, and they may respond in these or similar words.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**The \_\_\_\_\_ Association**  
association

**of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference**  
conference

**of the United Church of Christ  
 greets you in the name of Jesus Christ,  
 the head of the church in heaven and on earth.**

**Therefore, since we are surrounded  
 by so great a cloud of witnesses,  
 let us also lay aside every weight and sin  
 which clings so closely,  
 and let us run with perseverance the race  
 that is set before us.**

PEOPLE

**Let us look to Jesus  
 the pioneer and perfecter of our faith,  
 who for the joy that was waiting  
 endured the cross,  
 despising the shame,  
 and is seated at the right hand  
 of the throne of God.<sup>13</sup>**

---

## PRESENTATION

---

*A representative of the local church that is requesting the installation may address a representative of the association in these or similar words. The pastor's full name may be used in the first reference. Thereafter, the first name only may be used.*

### LOCAL CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the association representative*

\_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ,  
local church  
 under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,  
 has called \_\_\_\_\_ as its pastor and teacher  
full name of pastor  
 and respectfully requests that the  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Association install *her/him*  
association  
 in this ministry among us,  
 according to the faith and order  
 of the United Church of Christ.

### ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the congregation*

The \_\_\_\_\_ Association has reviewed  
association  
 the request of \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ.  
local church  
 We have prayerfully examined \_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
 and we are pleased to install *him/her*  
 as your pastor and teacher.

*addressing the pastor*

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name  
 servant of God,  
 we invite you to come forward  
 as a sign of your acceptance  
 of the call to this office.

*The pastor may leave his or her place in the congregation and may stand, if able, before the representative(s) of the association.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Installation is the action  
of an association  
of the United Church of Christ  
in cooperation with a local church.  
Installation confirms and celebrates  
the covenantal relationship  
among a local church,  
its pastor and teacher,  
and the United Church of Christ.  
Installation is a sign  
that these covenantal partners are committed  
to share mutually in the mission  
of the United Church of Christ  
and of the ecumenical church.**

---

EXHORTATION

---

*Representative(s) of the association may read these or  
other words from scripture.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the congregation*

**Hear these words from the apostle Paul:  
We beg you, our brothers and sisters,  
to pay proper respect  
to those who work among you,  
who guide and instruct you  
in the Christian life.  
Treat them with the greatest respect and love  
because of the work they do.  
Be at peace among yourselves.**

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the pastor*

**We urge you, our *sister/brother*,  
warn the idle,  
encourage the timid,  
help the weak,  
be patient with all.**

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing all*

**See that no one pays back wrong for wrong,  
but at all times  
make it your aim to do good  
to one another and to all people.  
Be joyful always,  
pray at all times,  
be thankful in all circumstances.  
This is what God wants of you,  
in your life in Christ Jesus.<sup>14</sup>  
Amen.**

***When this order immediately follows the Order for Ordination to Ministry, begin this order with the covenant.***

---

COVENANT

---

***The pastor may remain before the representative(s) of the association.***

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the congregation*

**Dear friends,**

\_\_\_\_\_ **United Church of Christ has declared that,**  
local church  
**having gathered  
under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,  
it has called \_\_\_\_\_**  
name  
**to minister in this place  
as pastor and teacher  
and that it now receives him/her  
as appointed by God  
for this ministry.**

**The \_\_\_\_\_ Association**  
association  
**of the United Church of Christ has declared  
that she/he has met all the necessary conditions  
for installation to this office.**

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the pastor*

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**seeing that you are called to ordained ministry  
by the grace of God**

**and that \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ**  
local church

**has been led to call you as pastor and teacher,  
are you willing to enter this covenant  
with its members who are one in Christ  
with us in the \_\_\_\_\_ Association?**  
association

PASTOR

I am willing, and I promise to serve this church faithfully,  
preaching and teaching the word of God,  
administering the sacraments,  
and fulfilling the pastoral office,  
according to the faith and order  
of the United Church of Christ.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the congregation*

**Members of \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ,**  
local church  
**will those who are able rise and affirm your covenant  
with your pastor and teacher?**

*Members of the church who are able stand for the  
remainder of the covenant.*

LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERS

We, the members

of \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ,  
local church

receive \_\_\_\_\_ as our pastor and teacher,  
name

promising to labor with *him/her* in the ministry of the gospel  
and to give *him/her* due honor and support.

We gather with *her/him*

and with the United Church of Christ

as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the association members***Members of \_\_\_\_\_ Association,**  
association**will those who are able rise and affirm your covenant  
with \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ**  
local church  
**and its pastor and teacher?***Members of the association who are able stand for the  
remainder of the covenant.*

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

**We, the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association**  
association**of the United Church of Christ,****gather with you,****the people and the pastor and teacher****of \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ,**  
local church**as a sign of our covenant****and in celebration of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.**

---

## PRAYER OF INSTALLATION

---

*All who are able may stand as a representative of the asso-  
ciation prays in these or similar words.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Let us pray.****Almighty God,****you have called your servants****to make promises before you;****now enable us to keep our vows****that we may remain steadfast in faith****and fruitful in every good work.****Bless, we pray, your servant \_\_\_\_\_**  
name**to whom the care of your people****in this church is now committed.****Pour out your Holy Spirit on *him/her*,****on the people of \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ,**  
local church

**and on all the churches of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association**  
association  
**that our mutual ministry may be served**  
**with all faithfulness, diligence, and courage.**  
**Grant us the spirit of power and of love**  
**and of a sound mind.**  
**Make our ministry a means of awakening the careless,**  
**strengthening the faithful,**  
**comforting the afflicted,**  
**building up your church,**  
**and converting sinners to you.**  
**Guard us against the snares of temptation**  
**that we may be kept pure in heart,**  
**fervent in spirit,**  
**and valiant against evil.**  
**And at the last, by your grace,**  
**receive us in your eternal home,**  
**where, with you and the Holy Spirit,**  
**Christ reigns in glory,**  
**one God, for ever and ever.**

ALL

**Amen.**

---

## DECLARATION

---

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**In the name of Jesus Christ,**  
**and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association**  
association  
**of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference**  
conference  
**of the United Church of Christ,**  
**I declare you duly installed as pastor and teacher**  
**of \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ.**  
local church

ALL

**Thanks be to God.**

*The people may show their approval and support by  
applause, a hymn, or some other means. The association*

*representative(s) may make a gesture of Christian love to the newly installed person, such as a handshake with appropriate words. The congregation and newly installed person may be seated.*

*Separate charges or one common charge may be given the pastor and congregation. The charge to the pastor and teacher may be presented dramatically by symbolically illustrating diverse pastoral functions. At the font and table, the sacramental ministries may be reviewed; at the pulpit, the preaching of the word. A key to the church building, a copy of the church constitution, a stole, a Bible, or other symbols may be used in a similar way.*

*If representatives from other Christian communions or from synagogues or other communities of faith have been invited and are present, a representative from among them may be given an opportunity to bring greetings to the local church and the newly installed pastor and teacher following the charge. The same courtesy may be extended to a representative of the civic community.*

*At the conclusion of this order, a hymn may be sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith. It is appropriate that the newly installed pastor serve communion and give the benediction.*

# Order for Commissioning

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

In this order the people of God celebrate Christ's gift of diverse ministries to the church. In planning the service, set the time so that people from other local churches within the association and other guests may participate. Commissionings held on Sunday mornings prohibit the enrichment afforded by this participation.

Representatives of the association committee on the ministry, in full consultation with the candidate and the local church or agency requesting the service, plan the service of commissioning. Lay and ordained people may share in the leadership of the service.

Commissioning may be incorporated within a Service of Word and Sacrament or within a Service of the Word. It is fitting that a sermon be preached concerning the ministry of all the people of God and the special ministry of commissioned ministers within the life of the church.

The candidate may sit with the congregation until requested to come to the chancel at the presentation.

---

OUTLINE

---

***This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. An affirmation of faith and a hymn may precede the Order for Commissioning.***

**Greeting  
Presentation  
Exhortation  
Examination  
Covenant  
Prayer of Commissioning  
Declaration**

***A hymn may be sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.***

*Following the sermon, all who are able may stand and unite in an affirmation of faith and a hymn. After the hymn, all may be seated except the representative(s) of the local church or agency presenting the candidate, the representative(s) of the association, and the candidate for commissioning. The candidate may remain among the congregation.*

*The greeting may be used at the opening of the service rather than at the opening of this order.*

---

## GREETING

---

*The moderator or another representative of the association may greet the people, and they may respond in these or similar words.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**The \_\_\_\_\_ Association**  
association  
**of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference**  
conference

**of the United Church of Christ  
 greets you in the name of Jesus Christ,  
 the head of the church,  
 who calls us to the ministry of reconciliation.**

**Hear these words from the apostle Paul:  
 My sisters and brothers,  
 I want you to know the truth about gifts  
 from the Holy Spirit.  
 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts,  
 but the same Spirit gives them.**

PEOPLE

**There are different ways of serving,  
 but the same God is served.**

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**There are different abilities to perform service,  
 but the same God gives ability to each of us  
 for our particular service.**

PEOPLE

**The Spirit's presence is shown in some way  
 in each person for the good of all.<sup>15</sup>**

---

## PRESENTATION

---

*A representative of the local church or agency that is requesting the commissioning may address a representative of the association in these or similar words. The candidate's full name may be used in the first reference. Thereafter, the first name only may be used.*

LOCAL CHURCH/AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the association representative*

Friend in Christ,

\_\_\_\_\_,  
local church/agency

under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,

has called \_\_\_\_\_  
full name of candidate

to serve as \_\_\_\_\_  
position

and respectfully requests that the

\_\_\_\_\_ Association commission *her/him*  
association

for this ministry,

according to the faith and order  
of the United Church of Christ.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the congregation*

The \_\_\_\_\_ Association has reviewed

the request of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
association local church/agency

We have prayerfully examined \_\_\_\_\_  
name

concerning *his/her* fitness for this ministry,

and we are pleased to commission *him/her*

to serve as \_\_\_\_\_ .  
position

*addressing the candidate*

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

servant of God,

we invite you to come forward as a sign of your acceptance  
of the call to this commissioned ministry.

*The candidate may leave her or his place in the congregation and may stand, if able, at the chancel before the representative(s) of the association who review(s) the United Church of Christ's Constitution and Bylaws regarding commissioning.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**The United Church of Christ acknowledges  
as its sole head, Jesus Christ,  
Son of God and Savior.  
It acknowledges as kindred in Christ  
all who share in this confession.**

**It looks to the word of God in the scriptures,  
and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit,  
to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world.  
It claims as its own the faith of the historic church  
expressed in the ancient creeds  
and reclaimed in the basic insights  
of the Protestant reformers.**

**It affirms the responsibility of the church  
in each generation to make this faith its own  
in reality of worship,  
in honesty of thought and expression,  
and in purity of heart before God.**

**In accordance with the teaching of our Lord  
and the practice prevailing  
among evangelical Christians,  
it recognizes two sacraments:  
Baptism and . . . Holy Communion.**

**The United Church of Christ recognizes  
that God calls the whole church and every member  
to participate in and extend the ministry of Jesus Christ  
by witnessing to the gospel in church and society.  
The United Church of Christ seeks to undergird  
the ministry of its members  
by nurturing faith,  
calling forth gifts,  
and equipping members for Christian service.**

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Commissioning is an act whereby the United Church of Christ through an association, in cooperation with a person and a local church of the United Church of Christ, recognizes and authorizes that member whom God has called to a specific church-related ministry which is recognized by that association, but not requiring ordination or licensing. By this act the status of commissioned minister is conferred and authorization granted to perform duties necessary to and for the specific ministry.<sup>16</sup>**

---

## EXHORTATION

---

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Hear these words from the apostle Paul:  
At all times make it your aim  
to do good to one another and to all people.  
Be joyful always,  
pray at all times,  
be thankful in all circumstances.  
This is what God wants of you,  
in your life in Christ Jesus.<sup>17</sup>**

---

## EXAMINATION

---

*A representative of the association may then ask the candidate the following questions.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

\_\_\_\_\_,  
name

**before God and this congregation, we ask you:  
Are you persuaded that God has called you  
to the ministry of \_\_\_\_\_,**

position

**and are you ready with the help of God  
to enter this ministry on behalf of the whole church  
and to serve faithfully according to the faith and order  
of the United Church of Christ?**

CANDIDATE

I am.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**With the church throughout the world,  
do you hear the word of God  
in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,  
and do you accept the word of God  
as the rule of Christian faith and practice?**

CANDIDATE

I do.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Will you perform the duties  
of your commissioned ministry  
at \_\_\_\_\_**

place of service

**as one summoned by God to labor,  
giving God the glory  
and looking to God for your strength?**

CANDIDATE

I will, trusting in God's grace.

---

## COVENANT

---

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the congregation*

**Members of \_\_\_\_\_,**

local church/agency

**will those who are able rise and affirm your covenant  
with \_\_\_\_\_**

name

**as a commissioned minister in your midst?**

*Members of the local church and/or agency who are able  
stand for the remainder of the covenant.*

LOCAL CHURCH/AGENCY MEMBERS

We receive you as a commissioned minister among us.

We promise to labor with you

as your brothers and sisters in Christ.

We gather with you and the United Church of Christ  
as a sign of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the association members***Members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association ,**  
association**will those who are able rise and affirm your covenant  
with \_\_\_\_\_**local church/agency  
**and its newly commissioned member?***Members of the association who are able stand.*

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

**We, the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association**  
association**of the United Church of Christ,  
gather with you,  
the people and the one commissioned,  
as a sign of our covenant  
and in celebration of our mutual ministry in Christ's name.**

---

**PRAYER OF COMMISSIONING**

---

*All who are able may stand as a representative of the association prays in these or similar words.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Let us pray.****Almighty God,  
who out of your great love gathered one church  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
to be the light of the world,  
we thank you for those in all ages  
who have given their lives to tend it,  
to care for it, to lead it,  
and to serve in every way to forward its ministry.****Now we thank you especially for \_\_\_\_\_ ,**  
name  
**whom we commission in your name  
for the ministry to which you have called him/her.****Guide, inspire, empower \_\_\_\_\_ ,**  
name**and keep her/him faithful to your call  
that by her/his life,**

**your church may continue to be blessed  
and its mission brought closer  
to the fulfillment you intend;  
through Jesus Christ,  
the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.**

ALL

**Amen.**

---

**DECLARATION**

---

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**In the name of Jesus Christ,  
and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association  
of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference**

association

conference

**of the United Church of Christ,  
I declare that you are commissioned  
in the United Church of Christ.**

ALL

**Thanks be to God.**

*The people may show their approval and support by  
applause, a hymn, or other means. The representatives of  
the association and local church or agency may extend the  
hand of Christian love to the newly commissioned minister.*

*The congregation and newly commissioned minister may  
be seated.*

*Separate charges or one common charge may be given to  
the congregation and to the newly commissioned minister.  
The charge to the commissioned minister may be dramati-  
cally presented with symbols of the position.*

*At the conclusion of this order, a hymn may be sung. A  
Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word  
continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

# **Order for Affirmation of Ministry (Installation of Lay Leaders)**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

In this order the people of God in a local church celebrate the diverse ministries to which God calls all baptized people. It is a service of recognition and installation for those who consent to serve in an elected or appointed office in the church. Equally, it is a service of recognition and affirmation for those actively engaged in a variety of ministries in the world (community service, ministries in the work setting, caring for others, and the like). It is used when people want to be recognized and supported and to be called to accountability by the local church of which they are members.

The service is a reminder that to be a Christian is to be a servant. All ministry in the church is Christ's ministry. In union with Christ and in partnership with each other, Christians are called to serve according to the gifts given to them.

The pastor and other representatives of the local church, including the people to be affirmed, plan the service. Local customs and traditions may require significant adaptation of the printed order.

It is appropriate that the Order for Affirmation of Ministry be held within a Sunday service of the church or at a gathering of the church specifically called for this purpose. This order may be incorporated within a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word. It is especially fitting that parts of this service consist of original material prepared particularly for the occasion.

---

## OUTLINE

---

***This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. An affirmation of faith and a hymn may precede the Order for Affirmation of Ministry.***

**Greeting**

**Introduction**

**Presentation**

**Covenant**

**Laying on of Hands**

**Prayer**

**Declaration**

**Greeting of Christian Love**

***A hymn may be sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue, omitting the affirmation of faith.***

*Following the sermon, all who are able may stand and unite in an affirmation of faith and a hymn. After the hymn, all may be seated except the leaders and those whose particular ministry is being affirmed. These people may take their places before the congregation during the singing of the hymn.*

*The greeting may be used at the opening of the service rather than at the opening of this order.*

---

## GREETING

---

*A leader may greet the people, and they may respond in these or similar words.*

LEADER

**Grace, mercy, and peace to you from Jesus Christ,  
the head of the church in heaven and on earth.**

PEOPLE

To God be glory in the church  
and in Christ Jesus to all generations,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.<sup>18</sup>

---

## INTRODUCTION

---

*A leader may explain the purpose of the service in these or similar words and may lead the people in the responsive reading of scripture.*

LEADER

**Affirmation of ministry is the act  
whereby a local church  
of the United Church of Christ  
recognizes the diverse gifts of its members  
and celebrates the particular ministry  
of each person in the life of the church  
or in various settings in the life of the world.**

**There are different kinds of spiritual gifts,  
but the same Spirit gives them.**

PEOPLE

There are different ways of serving,  
but the same God is served.

LEADER

**There are different abilities to perform service,  
but the same God gives ability to each of us  
for our particular service.**

PEOPLE

The Spirit's presence is shown in some way  
in each person for the good of all.

LEADER

**Christ is like a single body,  
which has many parts.**

PEOPLE

It is still one body  
even though it is made up of different parts.

LEADER

**If one part of the body suffers,  
all the other parts suffer with it;  
if one part is praised,  
all the other parts share its happiness.**

PEOPLE

All of us are Christ's body,  
and each one is a part of it.<sup>19</sup>

---

## PRESENTATION

---

*The pastor or another representative of the local church  
may name the offices or the settings of ministry and the  
people to be recognized in the following or a similar  
manner. Use one or both, depending upon the ministries.*

**A** *for ministries within the church*

LEADER

**These people have been called by God,  
in accordance with the faith and order of this church,  
to serve among us.  
They have accepted their call  
and are before us in witness to their willingness to serve.**

▣ *for ministries outside the church*

LEADER

**These people have been called by God  
to serve in various ministries in God's world.  
They have accepted their call  
and desire to witness to that call  
in the presence of this congregation.**

*The names of the people and their respective offices or  
ministries may be read.*

---

COVENANT

---

*The pastor or another representative of the local church  
may lead the people whose ministries are being affirmed  
and the congregation in promises of mutual support.*

LEADER

*addressing the people being affirmed*

**Sisters and brothers in Christ,  
it is an honor to be entrusted  
with responsibility for particular service  
in the ministry of the church,  
whether gathered or scattered.**

*The duties of each person may be outlined briefly.*

LEADER

**Having prayerfully considered  
the duties and responsibilities of your ministry,  
are you prepared to serve with the help of God  
in Christ's name  
and for the glory of God?**

INDIVIDUALS

I am.

LEADER

**Do you promise  
to exercise your ministry diligently and faithfully,  
showing forth the love of Christ?**

INDIVIDUALS

I do, relying on God's grace.

LEADER

*addressing the congregation*

**Members of this household of faith,  
you have heard the promises  
of our brothers and sisters in Christ  
who have answered God's call to service.  
Let us affirm our intention  
to live in covenant with them.  
Will those who are able  
rise and witness to the commitment  
we now make?**

*All who are able stand.*

PEOPLE

**We gather in celebration of the joy  
that is ours to be partners with you  
in the service of Jesus Christ.  
We promise to love you,  
honor your leadership,  
and assist you  
that together we may be a faithful church  
of Jesus Christ.**

*The congregation may be seated.*

*If it is not the tradition of the local church to ordain elders  
or deacons or if there is no one present to be so ordained,  
the service continues with the prayer on the next page.*

---

## LAYING ON OF HANDS

---

PASTOR

**The laying on of hands is the symbolic act  
whereby the church in every age  
recognizes God's call to ministry  
in the lives of faithful women and men  
and asks the Holy Spirit  
to confer upon them the gifts of ministry.  
We lay hands upon you, \_\_\_\_\_,  
for the position of *deacon/elder*.**

name(s)

*The candidates who are able may kneel. The pastor and other representatives of the local church may place hands upon the head of each candidate in silence. After hands have been laid upon all, the pastor may say these or similar words.*

PASTOR

**May the Holy Spirit strengthen you  
for the ministry of *deacon/elder* in Christ's church  
and equip you with everything good to do God's will.  
Receive authority to execute the office of *deacon/elder*  
in the name of Christ.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

*The newly ordained may stand.*

---

## PRAYER

---

*This prayer, or one prepared specifically for the occasion,  
may be offered by the pastor or another representative.*

LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**Eternal God,  
you have called these people  
to serve you in this household of faith and in the world,  
which you have entrusted to our care and keeping.  
Send your Holy Spirit on them  
that they may serve among us  
with honor and faithfulness.  
Help them to be diligent in their duties  
that your church may prosper  
in the mission you place before it.  
May their example prove worthy  
for all of us to follow,  
as we are united in Christ's ministry,  
to the glory of your name.**

PEOPLE

**Amen.**

---

## DECLARATION

---

*The pastor or another representative of the local church may declare that the act of installation or recognition has occurred. Individual positions may be named.*

LEADER

**In the name of Jesus Christ,  
and on behalf of the people of \_\_\_\_\_  
of the United Church of Christ,  
I rejoice to announce:**

local church

**[A] *for all together*  
You are installed  
in your respective  
positions.**

**[B] *for individual  
positions*  
You are  
installed as**

\_\_\_\_\_  
position

**[C] *for individual  
ministries*  
You are  
recognized and  
affirmed in your  
ministry in**

\_\_\_\_\_  
setting

---

## GREETING OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

---

*The congregation may show approval and support by applause, a hymn, or other means. Representatives of the local church may greet those installed or recognized, using these or other words. At the conclusion the participants may return to their places in the congregation.*

LEADER

**In accordance with the faith and order of this church,  
I extend to you the hand of Christian love.**

PEOPLE

**Thanks be to God.**

*At the conclusion of this order, a hymn may be sung. A service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

# **Order for Reception of a Local Church into the United Church of Christ**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

In this order the United Church of Christ celebrates the covenant made between the churches of an association and a local church seeking admission to an association. In planning the service, set the time so that people from the member churches of the association and other guests may participate. A service of reception held on a Sunday morning will prohibit the enrichment afforded by this participation.

Representatives appointed from the local church and the association plan the service of reception. Lay and ordained people may share in the leadership of the service.

The order for reception may be incorporated within a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word. It is recommended that it be held in the place of worship of the local church requesting the service.

It is especially fitting that original material be prepared particularly for the occasion. Provision is made in this order for the local church and the association to describe their history, ministry, and mission.

---

OUTLINE

---

***This order may be incorporated into a Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word following the sermon. A hymn may precede the Order for Reception of a Local Church into the United Church of Christ.***

**Greeting  
Introduction  
Covenant  
Prayer  
Declaration**

***A hymn may be sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.***

*The greeting may be used at the opening of the service rather than at the opening of this order.*

*The moderator or another representative of the association may greet the people, and they may respond in these or similar words.*

of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference  
conference  
of the United Church of Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ we greet you,  
our sisters and brothers in faith.

**Hear these words from the apostle Paul:  
Our brothers and sisters,  
we must thank God at all times for you.  
It is right for us to do so,  
because your faith is growing so much  
and the love each of you has for the others  
is becoming greater.**

That is why we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God.<sup>20</sup>

*All may be seated except the representative(s) of the association and the representative(s) of the local church, who may continue the dialogue in this or a similar manner.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the congregation***We are here to enter a covenant.****The people of God known as \_\_\_\_\_  
and the churches of God gathered** local church  
**in the \_\_\_\_\_ Association** association**rejoice to affirm that by the grace of God  
we intend to be the church together.**

LOCAL CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE

**We, the people of God in \_\_\_\_\_,** local church*Here may follow a summary of the faith of the local church based on its covenant or other documents or using words similar to the following.***believe in God, the Eternal One,  
accept Jesus as the Christ,  
and look to the Holy Spirit  
to create and renew the church.****We are organized for Christian worship,  
for the nurture of the Christian community of faith,  
and for the mission of Christian witness,  
in accordance with the word of God  
as we receive it in the scriptures.****This is the story of our pilgrimage of faith.***Several members may recount significant parts of the history, ministry, and mission of the local church.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**We, the \_\_\_\_\_ Association share your faith.** association**This is the story of our pilgrimage.***Representative(s) of the association may recount significant parts of the history, ministry, and mission of the association, including the relationship of the association to the conference and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.*

---

## COVENANT

---

*The act of covenanting may take diverse forms. The following may be adapted for use in particular situations.*

LOCAL CHURCH REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the local church members*

Sisters and brothers in \_\_\_\_\_,  
local church

let us affirm our intention to live in covenant  
with the churches of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association.  
association

Will those who are able  
rise and witness to the commitment we now make?

*The members who are able stand for the remainder of the covenant.*

LOCAL CHURCH MEMBERS

We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours  
to share the love of Christ with you.

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

*addressing the association members*

Members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association,  
association

let us affirm our intention to live in covenant  
with \_\_\_\_\_.  
local church

Will those who are able  
rise and witness to the commitment we now make?

*Association members who are able stand.*

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours  
to share the love of Christ with you.

We promise you:

We will be concerned for your welfare;  
we will be co-workers with you in your mission;  
we will turn to you for assistance  
in the work Christ calls us to do together.

*An association covenant, a special covenant written for this occasion, the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ, one of the ancient creeds, or another*

*unison declaration of common faith may be said by all. Affirmations of faith are in the Resource Section, beginning on page 509.*

---

## PRAYER

---

*All who are able may stand and join hands. This or a similar prayer may be offered.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**Let us pray.**

ALL

**Holy God,  
who in Jesus Christ has made a new and eternal covenant  
with all who turn to you in faith,  
witness the covenant we make today.  
Confirm this relationship.  
Bless our intentions, hopes, and commitments  
with the fruit of holiness.  
Light our way  
with the lamp of your word  
and the fire of your Holy Spirit.  
Move us on the journey of faith  
and enable us to walk with all your people  
toward the day of justice and peace in all the earth;  
through Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

---

## DECLARATION

---

*All who are able may stand.*

ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

**In the name of Jesus Christ,  
and on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association  
of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference  
of the United Church of Christ,**

**I declare that \_\_\_\_\_ is a member in good standing  
of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association.**  
local church  
association

ALL

**Thanks be to God.**

*All present may show their approval and support by applause, a hymn, or some other means. The association representative(s) may make a gesture of Christian love, such as a handshake with appropriate words, to the representative(s) of the local church.*

*At the conclusion of this order, a hymn may be sung. A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word continues, omitting the affirmation of faith.*

# Music

The music in this book was composed for the United Church of Christ by Alice Jordan and by Ronald A. Nelson.

Complete musical arrangements, beginning on this page, are followed by melody lines, beginning on page 467. When page references to music are given in the services, they refer to the complete musical arrangements.

The words of the texts are adapted by the Office for Church Life and Leadership. The words of the "Invitation" are adapted by permission from *Services of the Church*, #2. Copyright © 1969 United Church Press. The words of the "Song of Simeon" are the English translation prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts.

## Prayer for Mercy (Trisagion)

Ronald A. Nelson

Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and might - y One,

Ho - ly Im-mor-tal One, Have mer-cy up-on us.

## Prayer for Mercy (Kyrie)

Ronald A. Nelson

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

The first system of the musical score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a vocal melody in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are 'Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.' The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a final half note on 'us.' followed by a whole rest.

Christ, have mer - cy up - on us.

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are 'Christ, have mer - cy up - on us.' The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand.

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

The third system concludes the piece. The lyrics are 'Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.' The music ends with a double bar line. The piano accompaniment features a more active eighth-note pattern in the right hand in the final measures.

## Gloria

Ronald A. Nelson

Glo-ry to God the Cre - a - tor, and to the Christ,

The first system of the musical score for 'Gloria' by Ronald A. Nelson. It features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The lyrics are 'Glo-ry to God the Cre - a - tor, and to the Christ,'.

and to the Ho - ly Spir - it: as it was

The second system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'and to the Ho - ly Spir - it: as it was'. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support.

in the be-gin-ning, is now, and will be for ev - er.

The third system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'in the be-gin-ning, is now, and will be for ev - er.'.

A - men. A - - men.

The fourth system of the musical score, concluding the piece. The vocal line ends with the lyrics 'A - men. A - - men.' followed by a double bar line. The piano accompaniment also concludes with a double bar line.

## Doxology

Ronald A. Nelson

Praise God from whom all—bless—ings flow; Praise

Christ, all crea—tures here be—low; Praise Ho—ly Spir—it,—

Com—fort—er; One God, Tri—une, whom we—a—dore.

A—men. A—men.\_\_\_\_\_

## Invitation

Ronald A. Nelson

This is the joy - ful feast of the

The first system of musical notation for the song 'Invitation'. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics 'This is the joy - ful feast of the' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment is in treble and bass clefs with the same key signature and time signature.

peo - ple of God. Men and wom - en, youth and chil - dren,

The second system of musical notation continues the song. The vocal line and piano accompaniment are in the same key and time signature. The lyrics 'peo - ple of God. Men and wom - en, youth and chil - dren,' are written below the vocal line.

come from the east\_ and the west, from the north\_ and the

The third system of musical notation continues the song. The vocal line and piano accompaniment are in the same key and time signature. The lyrics 'come from the east\_ and the west, from the north\_ and the' are written below the vocal line.

south, and gath - er a - bout Christ's ta - ble.

The fourth system of musical notation concludes the song. The vocal line and piano accompaniment are in the same key and time signature. The lyrics 'south, and gath - er a - bout Christ's ta - ble.' are written below the vocal line. The system ends with a double bar line.

## Holy, Holy, Holy (Sanctus)

Ronald A. Nelson

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly God of love and—

The first system of the musical score for 'Holy, Holy, Holy (Sanctus)'. It features a vocal line in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. The vocal melody begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note B4, quarter notes A4 and G4, and finally a half note F#4. The lyrics 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly God of love and—' are written below the notes. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with chords and a left hand with a simple bass line.

maj - es-ty, the whole u-ni-verse speaks of your glo - ry,

The second system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with a half note E4, quarter notes D4 and C4, a half rest, and then a half note B3. The lyrics 'maj - es-ty, the whole u-ni-verse speaks of your glo - ry,' are written below. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line.

O God Most High. Bless - ed— is the—

The third system of the musical score. The vocal line has a half rest, followed by a half note G4, quarter notes A4 and B4, a half note C5, a half rest, and then a half note B4. The lyrics 'O God Most High. Bless - ed— is the—' are written below. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line.

one who comes in the name— of our— God! Ho -

The fourth system of the musical score. The vocal line begins with a half note G4, quarter notes A4 and B4, a half note C5, a half rest, and then a half note B4. The lyrics 'one who comes in the name— of our— God! Ho -' are written below. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and a bass line.

san - na! Ho - san - na in the high - est!

This musical score is for a vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal line is on a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are 'san - na! Ho - san - na in the high - est!'.

## Memorial Acclamation I

Ronald A. Nelson

Christ's death, O God, we pro-claim. Christ's

This musical score is for a vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The key signature is C major, and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal line is on a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a grand staff. The lyrics are 'Christ's death, O God, we pro-claim. Christ's'.

res-ur-rec-tion we de - clare. Christ's com - ing we a -

This musical score is for a vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The key signature is C major, and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal line is on a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a grand staff. The lyrics are 'res-ur-rec-tion we de - clare. Christ's com - ing we a -'.

wait. Glo-ry be to you, O God.

This musical score is for a vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal line is on a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a grand staff. The lyrics are 'wait. Glo-ry be to you, O God.'.

## Memorial Acclamation II

Ronald A. Nelson

Christ's death, O God, we pro-claim. Christ's

The first system of the musical score is in G major (one sharp) and common time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G, a quarter note A, a quarter note B, a quarter note C, a half note D, and a whole note E. The piano accompaniment starts with a half note G in the right hand and a half note G in the left hand, followed by a half note A, a half note B, a half note C, a half note D, and a half note E. The system concludes with a whole note E in the vocal line and a whole note E in the piano accompaniment.

res-ur-rec-tion we de-clare. Christ's com - ing we a -

The second system continues the melody. The vocal line has a half note F, a quarter note G, a quarter note A, a quarter note B, a half note C, a half note D, and a whole note E. The piano accompaniment has a half note G, a half note A, a half note B, a half note C, a half note D, and a half note E. The system concludes with a whole note E in the vocal line and a whole note E in the piano accompaniment.

wait. \_\_\_\_\_ Glo-ry be to you, O God.

The third system concludes the piece. The vocal line has a half note F, a quarter note G, a quarter note A, a quarter note B, a half note C, a half note D, and a whole note E. The piano accompaniment has a half note G, a half note A, a half note B, a half note C, a half note D, and a half note E. The system concludes with a whole note E in the vocal line and a whole note E in the piano accompaniment.

## Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)

Ronald A. Nelson

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on

This system features a vocal melody in the treble clef and piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D-flat minor), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are 'Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on'. The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand.

us. Je - sus, bear - er of our sins:

This system continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'us. Je - sus, bear - er of our sins:'. The piano accompaniment features a long, flowing line in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

have mer - cy on us. Je - sus, re -

This system continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'have mer - cy on us. Je - sus, re -'. The piano accompaniment includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand.

deem - er of the world: give us your peace.

This system concludes the piece. The key signature changes to two sharps (D major or F# minor), and the time signature remains common time (C). The lyrics are 'deem - er of the world: give us your peace.'. The piano accompaniment features a final chord in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

## Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)

Ronald A. Nelson

Ho - ly One, now let your ser-vant go in—

The first system of the musical score for 'Song of Simeon'. It features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are 'Ho - ly One, now let your ser-vant go in—'.

peace; your word has been ful - filled: my own

The second system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'peace; your word has been ful - filled: my own'. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support.

eyes have seen the sal-va - tion which you have pre-pared in the

The third system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'eyes have seen the sal-va - tion which you have pre-pared in the'. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and moving lines.

sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: a — light to re-veal you to the

The fourth system of the musical score. The vocal line concludes with the lyrics 'sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: a — light to re-veal you to the'. The piano accompaniment provides a final harmonic setting.

na-tions and the glo-ry of your peo-ple Is-ra-el.

This musical score is for a vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The piano accompaniment is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 'na-tions and the glo-ry of your peo-ple Is-ra-el.'

## Prayer for Mercy (Trisagion)

Alice Jordan

Ho-ly God, Ho-ly and might-y,

This musical score is for a vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The piano accompaniment is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 'Ho-ly God, Ho-ly and might-y,'

Ho-ly Im-mor-tal One, Have mer-cy up-on us.

This musical score is for a vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The piano accompaniment is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 'Ho-ly Im-mor-tal One, Have mer-cy up-on us.'

## Gloria

Alice Jordan

Glo - ry to God the Cre -

a - tor, and to the Christ, and to the Ho - ly

Spir - it: as it was in the be - gin - ning, is

now, and will be for ev - er. A - men.

## Doxology

Alice Jordan

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow;

The first system of the musical score for the Doxology. It features a vocal melody line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics "Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow;" are written below the vocal line.

Praise Christ, all crea - tures here be - low;

The second system of the musical score. The vocal melody continues with the lyrics "Praise Christ, all crea - tures here be - low;". The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support.

Praise Ho - ly Spir - it, the Com - fort-er; One God, Tri -

The third system of the musical score. The vocal melody continues with the lyrics "Praise Ho - ly Spir - it, the Com - fort-er; One God, Tri -". The piano accompaniment continues.

une, whom we a - dore. A - men.

The final system of the musical score. The vocal melody concludes with the lyrics "une, whom we a - dore. A - men." The piano accompaniment ends with a final chord.

## Invitation

Alice Jordan

This is the joy - ful feast of the peo-ple of

God. Men and wom - en, youth and chil - dren,

come from the east and the west, from the north and the

south, and - gath - er a-bout Christ's ta - ble.

## Holy, Holy, Holy (Sanctus)

Alice Jordan

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly God of love\_ and

The first system of the musical score for 'Holy, Holy, Holy (Sanctus)' by Alice Jordan. It features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics 'Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly God of love\_ and' are written below the vocal line.

maj - es-ty, the whole u - ni-verse speaks of your glo - ry, O

The second system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'maj - es-ty, the whole u - ni-verse speaks of your glo - ry, O'. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support.

God Most High. Bless-ed is the one who comes in the

The third system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'God Most High. Bless-ed is the one who comes in the'. The piano accompaniment continues.

name of our God! Ho-san - na in\_ the high - est!

The fourth and final system of the musical score. The vocal line concludes with the lyrics 'name of our God! Ho-san - na in\_ the high - est!'. The piano accompaniment ends with a final chord.

## Memorial Acclamation

Alice Jordan

Christ's death, O God, we pro-

The first system of the musical score is in 4/2 time, key of B-flat major. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note G, a half note A, a half note B-flat, and a half note C. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with a whole rest followed by a half note G, a half note A, and a half note B-flat, and a left hand with a whole note B-flat. The system concludes with a double bar line.

claim. Christ's res - ur - rec - tion we de - clare. Christ's

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal line starts with a half note G, a half note A, a half note B-flat, a half note C, a half note D, and a half note E. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with a half note G, a half note A, and a half note B-flat, and a left hand with a whole note B-flat. The system concludes with a double bar line.

com-ing we a - wait. — Glo - ry be to you, O God.

The third system concludes the musical score. The vocal line begins with a half note G, a half note A, a half note B-flat, a half note C, a half note D, and a half note E. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with a half note G, a half note A, and a half note B-flat, and a left hand with a whole note B-flat. The system concludes with a double bar line.

## Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)

Alice Jordan

Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.

Je - sus, re-deem-er of the world: give us your peace.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It is in 4/4 time and the key of B-flat major (two flats). The score is divided into three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.', 'Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.', and 'Je - sus, re-deem-er of the world: give us your peace.' The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

## Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)

Alice Jordan

Ho - ly One, now

The first system of the musical score for 'Song of Simeon' is in 4/4 time. It features a vocal melody in the treble clef and piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note 'Ho', a quarter note 'ly', and a half note 'One, now'. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

let your ser-vant go in peace; your word has been ful-filled: my own

The second system continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has a more active melody with eighth and quarter notes. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

eyes have seen the sal-va - tion which you have pre-pared in the

The third system of the score shows the vocal line continuing with a melodic line. The piano accompaniment features a prominent bass line with a low register and sustained notes.

sight of ev-'ry peo-ple: a light to re-veal you to the

The fourth system concludes the piece. It includes a key signature change to two sharps (D major) and a time signature change to 2/4. The vocal line ends with a half note, and the piano accompaniment features a final chordal cadence.

na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

This musical score consists of a vocal melody line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are 'na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.' The piano accompaniment is written in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with the same key signature and time signature. It features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

## Prayer for Mercy (Trisagion)

Ronald A. Nelson

Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and might - y One,  
Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.

This musical score is for the 'Prayer for Mercy (Trisagion)'. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are 'Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and might - y One, Ho - ly Im - mor - tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.' The melody is simple and reverent, with long notes and rests.

## Prayer for Mercy (Kyrie)

Ronald A. Nelson

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.  
Christ, have mer - cy up - on us.  
Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

This musical score is for the 'Prayer for Mercy (Kyrie)'. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are 'Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.' The melody is simple and reverent, with long notes and rests.

## Gloria

Ronald A. Nelson

Glo-ry to God the Cre-a - tor, and to the Christ,  
and to the Ho - ly Spir - it: as it was  
in the be-gin-ning, is now, and will be for ev - er.  
A - men. A - - men.

## Doxology

Ronald A. Nelson

Praise God from whom all\_ bless - ings flow; Praise  
Christ, all crea-tures\_ here be - low; Praise Ho - ly Spir - it,  
Com - fort-er; One God, Tri - une, whom we\_ a - dore.  
A - - men. A - - men.

## Invitation

Ronald A. Nelson

This is the joy - ful feast of the  
 peo - ple of God. Men and wom - en, youth and chil - dren,  
 come from the east\_ and the west, from the north\_ and the  
 south, and gath - er a - bout Christ's ta - ble.

## Holy, Holy, Holy (Sanctus)

Ronald A. Nelson

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly God of love and\_  
 maj - es-ty, the whole u-ni-verse speaks of your glo - ry,  
 O God Most High. Bless - ed\_ is the\_  
 one who comes in the name\_ of our\_ God! Ho -  
 san - na! Ho - san - na in the high - est!

## Memorial Acclamation I

Ronald A. Nelson



Christ's death, O God, we pro-claim. Christ's



res-ur-rec-tion we de - clare. Christ's com - ing we a -



wait. \_\_\_\_\_ Glo - ry be to you, O God.

## Memorial Acclamation II

Ronald A. Nelson



Christ's death, O God, we pro-claim. Christ's



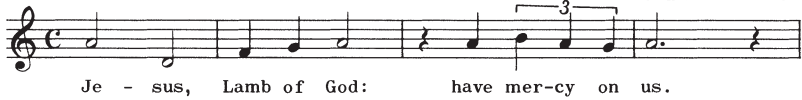
res-ur-rec-tion we de - clare. Christ's com - ing we a -



wait. \_\_\_\_\_ Glo - ry be to you, O God.

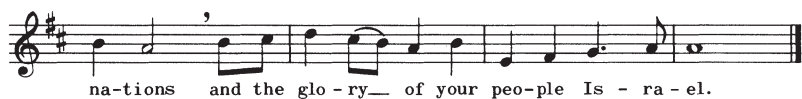
## Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)

Ronald A. Nelson



## Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)

Ronald A. Nelson



## Prayer for Mercy (Trisagion)

Alice Jordan

Ho - ly God, Ho - ly and might - y,

Ho - ly Im-mor-tal One, Have mer - cy up - on us.

## Gloria

Alice Jordan

Glo - ry to God the Cre -

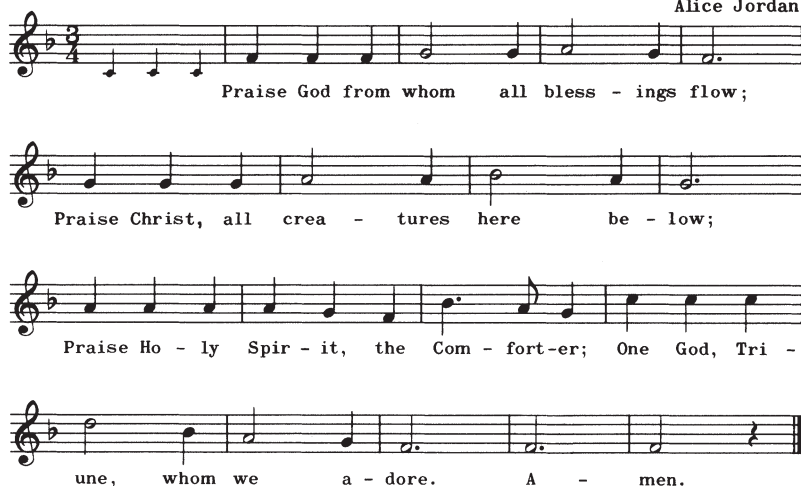
a - tor, and to the Christ, and to the Ho - ly

Spir - it: as it was in the be-gin - ning, is

now, and will be for ev - er. A - men.

## Doxology

Alice Jordan



Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow;

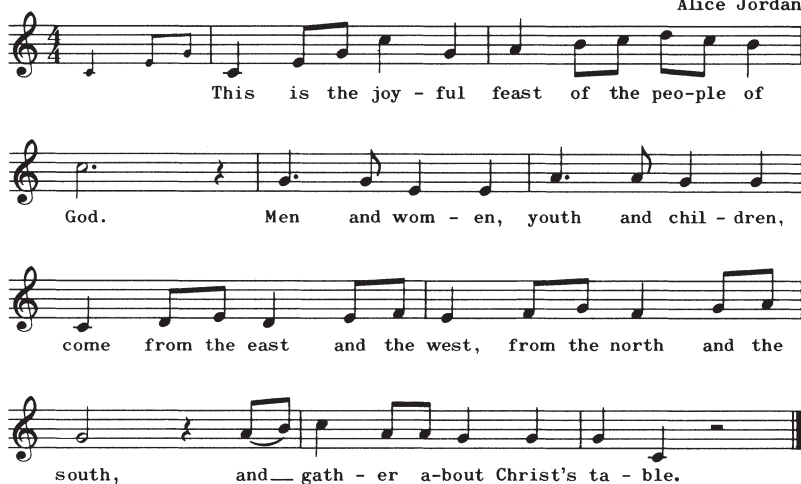
Praise Christ, all crea - tures here be - low;

Praise Ho - ly Spir - it, the Com - fort-er; One God, Tri -

une, whom we a - dore. A - men.

## Invitation

Alice Jordan



This is the joy - ful feast of the peo-ple of

God. Men and wom - en, youth and chil - dren,

come from the east and the west, from the north and the

south, and — gath - er a-bout Christ's ta - ble.

## Holy, Holy, Holy (Sanctus)

Alice Jordan

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly God of love and  
maj - es - ty, the whole u - ni - verse speaks of your glo - ry, O  
God Most High. Bless - ed is the one who comes in the  
name of our God! Ho - san - na in the high - est!

## Memorial Acclamation

Alice Jordan

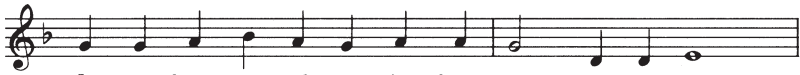
Christ's death, O God, we pro -  
claim. Christ's res - ur - rec - tion we de - clare. Christ's  
com - ing we a - wait. Glo - ry be to you, O God.

## Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)

Alice Jordan



Je - sus, Lamb of God: have mer - cy on us.



Je - sus, bear - er of our sins: have mer - cy on us.



Je - sus, re-deem-er of the world: give us your peace.

## Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)

Alice Jordan



Ho - ly One, now



let your ser-vant go in peace; your word has been ful-filled: my own



eyes have seen the sal-va - tion which you have pre-pared in the



sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the



na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo-ple Is - ra-el.

# Resources for the Church Year

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## ADVENT

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### GREETING

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In the desert of life,  
prepare a pathway for God.  
In the wilderness,  
make a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
and the glory of God shall be revealed among us.<sup>1</sup>

---

### CALL TO WORSHIP

---

LEADER

**How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those  
who bring good news,  
who proclaim peace,  
who bring good tidings,  
who proclaim salvation,  
who say to Zion:**

PEOPLE

Your God reigns!<sup>2</sup>

LEADER

**God comes in the power of love and justice;  
therefore let us wait with eagerness  
and worship with joy.**

PEOPLE

God comes to judge the world with righteousness,  
the people with truth.

ALL

**Let the heavens be glad;  
let the earth rejoice;  
let the sea roar and all that fills it.<sup>3</sup>  
Shout for joy,  
all the earth!**

---

SENTENCES

---

Behold, I send my messenger before your face,  
who shall prepare your way before you.<sup>4</sup>

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INVOCATION

---

Creating and sustaining God,  
in your presence there is life.  
Living water springs up,  
and deserts blossom where you pass.  
Seeking the life that comes from you,  
we have gathered before you.  
Our hearts are ready, O God,  
our hearts are ready.  
Delight us with your presence,  
and prepare us for your service in the world;  
through the grace of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

---

CONFESSION

---

CALL TO CONFESSION

John the Baptist called people to repentance,  
to prepare them  
for the coming of God's reign.  
Let us, too, repent,  
that we may be ready  
for God who comes to us.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God,  
we confess that it is not easy  
to wait for you.  
Our world worships the power  
that acts quickly through force;  
how difficult it is for us  
to wait for the power of your rule  
which comes slowly through love.  
We admit,

that while claiming to desire  
your reign of peace and justice,  
we take part in the ways of war, hatred, and injustice.  
We leave little room for you to act in our lives.  
We turn now to you  
in repentance and openness to your Spirit.  
Forgive us,  
and show us how to clear a path for you.  
Come to us in your Christ,  
and reveal your reign on earth.  
Amen.

#### ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God says:

Remember these things, O Israel,  
for you are my servant;  
you will not be forgotten by me.  
I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud,  
and your sins like mist;  
return to me,  
for I have redeemed you.<sup>5</sup>  
I say to you  
in the name of Jesus the Christ,  
our sins are forgiven.

---

#### PREFACE

---

Because, O God,  
you faithfully come to redeem your people,  
we give you thanks and praise.

---

#### GENERAL PRAYER

---

In all our restless activity and all our attempts  
to predict, control, and secure our lives,  
we thirst for water;  
our spirits yearn for you.  
Without your aid,  
our best efforts fall short  
of bringing the life for which we long.

We do not know how to create  
just and loving relationships and societies;  
we need your help.  
Come to us in Christ,  
and show us the way to true life.  
Empower us by your Spirit  
that we may take part in your labor  
to bring new life on earth.  
Come quickly, Christ Jesus,  
bright Morning Star of the world,  
and shine on us with your light.  
Amen.

---

BENEDICTION

---

You shall go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
and all the mountains and hills shall break into singing  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.<sup>6</sup>  
God reigns!  
Go in peace.

---

CHRISTMAS

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GREETING

---

Have no fear.  
Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy  
which shall be for all people.  
God has visited us;  
day has dawned upon us.  
For unto us a child is born this day,  
who is Christ the Lord.<sup>7</sup>

---

SENTENCES

---

Let us go to Bethlehem  
and see this thing that has happened,  
which God has made known to us.<sup>8</sup>

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CALL TO WORSHIP

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LEADER

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth  
peace and goodwill toward all.<sup>9</sup>**

PEOPLE

For out of God's own being,  
Jesus has come to bring love and light to all people.

LEADER

**Jesus is our Emmanuel—God With Us—  
come to gather our tears and laughter,  
our work and play into God's love.**

ALL

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth  
peace and goodwill toward all.<sup>10</sup>**

---

INVOCATION

---

We come before you in awe, O God,  
freshly aware of your glory and your love  
embodied in the midst of this world.

Here amid dirt and straw,  
amid noise of cattle and labor of birth,  
we perceive your work.

We dare to believe that it is you, God,  
coming to be among us in Jesus,  
and so we praise you with songs of joy.

Glory be to you, O God,  
now and for ever.

Amen.

---

CONFESSION

---

CALL TO CONFESSION

God loves this world  
of flesh and blood, stone and tree,  
sheep and oxen, star and field.

God loves the world so much  
that God comes to us in Jesus.  
Yet we are careless with God's creation.  
Let us confess our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

How amazing is your love, great God!  
You are not distant from us  
in some faraway heaven;  
you have come close to us in a child born of simple parents  
and cradled in a borrowed bed of straw.  
We confess we abuse this created world.  
When we stand by while the earth is despoiled  
and its destruction threatened,  
God, forgive.  
When we inflict physical or emotional pain  
on those with whom we share our lives,  
God, forgive.  
When we abuse or neglect our own bodies,  
God, forgive.  
By your great love, God,  
draw us into new ways of living.  
Teach us to cherish and nurture life in this fragile world,  
in the manner of Jesus the Christ,  
whose birth we celebrate today.  
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the good news:  
In compassion,  
God forgives us,  
enabling us to turn from the ways of violence and death;  
God shows us how to choose and cherish life.  
I say to you in the name of Jesus:  
Our sins are forgiven.  
Rejoice and sing!

---

PREFACE

---

We rejoice in the good news  
of the birth of Jesus;

with the angels, the shepherds,  
and the faithful of every nation,  
we glorify your holy name.

---

GENERAL PRAYER

---

Loving God,  
we thank you  
that you have come into our lives  
and that you act with saving power  
to make all things new.  
We thank you for pouring out your life  
into the human form of Jesus  
and for the continual rebirth of Christ  
in the human heart.  
Touched by your Word made flesh,  
we would embody, incarnate, and signify your love  
on this earth.  
May the joy of Christmas never end,  
but continue through the ages  
until at last your reign of justice and peace  
is fully established on this earth.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Word.  
Amen.

---

BENEDICTION

---

LEADER

**Glory to God in the highest!**

PEOPLE

Jesus is born!

God has come to us and shared our common lot,  
and so we rejoice!

LEADER

**Go forth rejoicing in the love of God,  
the peace of Christ,  
and the power of the Holy Spirit.**

PEOPLE

Amen.

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## CHRISTMASTIDE

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### GREETING

---

In many ways the Holy One has spoken of old,  
but now God has been made known in Christ,  
the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn of all creation.

Let us sing a new song to the God who loves us  
and who receives us as children and heirs with Christ.

---

### CALL TO WORSHIP

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LEADER

**People of God,  
sing and rejoice!  
God has come to us in Jesus the Christ,  
to reconcile and make new.**

PEOPLE

God has entered our existence of joy and sorrow,  
taking on human likeness in Jesus, born of Mary.

LEADER

**Therefore, we rejoice,  
praising God and singing:**

ALL

**Glory be to God in the highest,  
on earth peace to those who will the good.<sup>11</sup>  
Christ is born. Alleluia!**

---

### SENTENCES

---

The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims God's handiwork.<sup>12</sup>

---

### INVOCATION

---

Our faces are sometimes lined with worry, O God;  
our days are full of stress and struggle.  
Yet we come today

grateful that in the midst  
of this crowded and troubled world,  
your child was born, lived, and died,  
full of grace and truth.  
Surprise us with your presence;  
renew our sense of wonder;  
and give us peace and courage  
to live as your people in the world.  
May you be glorified in us,  
as in Jesus Christ,  
in whose name we pray.  
Amen.

---

CONFESSION

---

CALL TO CONFESSION

We live as if Christ had never been born.  
We abuse the privileges  
that are ours as children of God.  
Let us confess our sin before God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, you have come to us in Jesus,  
your true child,  
in whom you give us power to be your children.  
Yet, O God,  
we confess that we turn from your love,  
fearing the comfort and challenge of being your children.  
We are your own,  
yet we refuse you,  
clinging to the security of familiar ways  
rather than accepting the new life you offer.  
We tolerate hatred, violence, and injustice  
in the world you loved so well  
that you sent the child Jesus,  
begotten from your own being.  
We trust not in ourselves,  
but in your great compassion.  
Forgive us,

and renew a right spirit within us  
that we may live as your children  
and once again praise you;  
through the grace of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the good news, children of God:  
In Jesus Christ,  
God forgives and frees you.  
Live by the Spirit.

---

PREFACE

---

Because you came to us in a baby,  
a sign we can understand,  
O God, we glorify you.  
For your great love by which you call us children,  
we praise you.  
With people of every time who have testified to your love,  
we sing.

---

GENERAL PRAYER

---

Blessed are you, O God,  
for you have visited and redeemed your people,  
coming to us in Jesus,  
delivering us from all enemies,  
remembering your holy covenant,  
the oath you swore to our ancestors in the faith.  
You have come to set us free  
that we may serve you without fear  
all the days of our lives.  
In Christ you have given us knowledge of salvation  
and forgiveness of sin.  
You have come to us to give light  
to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet in the way of peace.  
Therefore we praise you  
with psalms and hymns and carols

and with thankfulness in our hearts  
for your gift of yourself in Jesus.  
Through your Spirit, may we put on compassion,  
kindness, humility, and patience  
to understand and forgive one another.  
Bind us together in the perfect harmony of love.  
May the peace of Christ rule in our hearts  
that we may be instruments of your peace on earth.  
We offer all words and deeds and prayers in Jesus' name.  
Amen.<sup>13</sup>

---

BENEDICTION

---

Depart in peace,  
for you have seen God's salvation,  
a light for the nations.  
May the love of God guide you,  
the word of Christ dwell in you richly,  
and the gift of the Spirit give you power,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

---

EPIPHANY

---

---

GREETING

---

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,  
full of grace and truth,<sup>14</sup>  
the life and light of humanity.  
Great is God's love for us.  
Alleluia!

---

CALL TO WORSHIP

---

LEADER

**Jesus said:**

**I am the light of the world.**

**Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,  
but have the light of life.<sup>15</sup>**

PEOPLE

We have seen the light of Christ  
like a star shining in the sky;  
and like the Magi,  
we have come to worship.

ALL

**Glory be to God,  
and to Jesus Christ,  
the Word of Light,  
in whom God is made known  
in the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

---

SENTENCES

---

Alleluia.

We have seen the star in the East  
and have come to worship the Ruler of the Jews.<sup>16</sup>

---

INVOCATION

---

We thank you, God,  
that you have spoken to people of faith  
at many times and in various ways,  
and that in Jesus, your living Word,  
you have revealed yourself among us.  
We come longing once more to know your presence  
and to hear your word.  
We come eager to follow Jesus.  
We rejoice that you are with us always  
when we gather in Christ's name.  
Amen.

---

CONFESSION

---

CALL TO CONFESSION

God has come to us in Christ,  
but we often live as if it made no difference.  
Let us confess our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Loving God,  
you have come to us in Jesus;  
yet we confess that we often refuse to receive you.  
We live in the world  
as if we did not know you.  
Showing your love for all peoples,  
you guided sages from distant lands  
to worship Jesus, your child.  
Although we know of this love,  
we limit our love with safe boundaries,  
building walls rather than bridges,  
denying our connection with all those you love.  
Forgive us, God,  
and give us new hearts to love and serve you.  
Write your Word within us.  
Make yourself known to us as we live today.  
For we pray in the name of Jesus the Christ,  
in whom you most fully have revealed yourself.  
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Be of good courage,  
for God sent the Word into the world not to judge  
but to save.  
I say to you in the name of Jesus Christ:  
Your sin is forgiven.  
Through the power of the Spirit,  
let us live as children of God.  
Amen.

---

PREFACE

---

Because, O God,  
you have manifested yourself in Jesus the Christ,  
begotten from the heart of your love,  
Word of Truth,  
Light of Light,  
we give you thanks and praise.

---

GENERAL PRAYER

---

Ⓐ

We give you thanks, O God,  
for those who believed Jesus  
to be your Promised One.

We thank you for Mary,  
who praised your name  
because you chose her  
as mother of the Christ.

We thank you for sages  
who were led from the East  
by signs in the sky to greet  
the holy birth.

We give you thanks for John,  
who bore witness to Jesus.

Most of all,  
we give thanks that  
when Jesus was baptized,  
you showed your  
affirmation of Jesus as your  
beloved child and servant.

Through the word  
of many witnesses,  
we too name Jesus  
as our Christ and Savior,  
our Light and Life.  
Shine in our hearts through  
the light of Christ  
that we may be signs  
of your presence on earth,  
making peace  
and doing justice.  
May your people be a light  
to the nations,  
through Jesus,  
your faithful servant.  
Amen.

Ⓑ

LEADER

**As sages from the East  
offered you their best,**

PEOPLE

So may we honor you,  
O Christ,  
with our highest visions  
and finest energies.

LEADER

**As you turned the water  
to wine at Cana,**

PEOPLE

So come to your church now,  
and teach us to change  
human tears to joyful song.

LEADER

**As you were baptized  
to fulfill all righteousness,**

PEOPLE

So may your church  
humbly do your will.

LEADER

**As you gave light to those  
who followed you on earth,**

PEOPLE

So be our light  
as we follow you on city  
streets or country roads.

ALL

**Be revealed among us  
in power, in word, in  
sacrament, and in places  
where we live and work.  
Glory be to you, O Christ,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

---

BENEDICTION

---

You are the light of the world.  
Let your light so shine  
that others may see the good things you do  
and glorify God.<sup>17</sup>  
God is with us now and always.  
Go in peace.

---

LENT

---

---

GREETING

---

Let us keep our eyes on Jesus,  
the pioneer and perfecter of our faith,  
who for the joy that was waiting  
endured the cross,  
despising the shame,  
and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.<sup>18</sup>

---

CALL TO WORSHIP

---

LEADER

**We have gathered in the presence of God our creator,  
who sets before us the ways of life and death.**

PEOPLE

We have gathered in the presence of Jesus the Christ,  
who calls us to accept the cost of discipleship  
that we may know its joy.

LEADER

**We have gathered in the presence of the Spirit,  
who sustains us in trial and rejoicing.**

ALL

**In our living and in our dying,  
we belong to God.  
In the shadow of God's wings,  
we sing for joy.  
Let us worship God.**

---

SENTENCES

---

Jesus says:

If you would come after me,  
deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me.<sup>19</sup>

---

INVOCATION

---

We gather to worship, O God,  
under the shadow of the cross,  
sign of human shame and divine wisdom.  
Like Jesus, we would follow faithfully in your way;  
like Jesus, we would live to you and die to you.  
We are your people;  
we belong to you.  
We offer you our worship and our lives.  
May your name be glorified in your church  
as we are open to your presence today;  
through Jesus the Christ.  
Amen.

---

CONFESSION

---

CALL TO CONFESSION

In every time, prophets and apostles have come  
to call the people of God  
to repentance and newness of life.  
We too are called to admit our sin  
and to commit ourselves anew to follow in God's way.  
Let us pray.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We confess, gracious God,  
that we are not worthy of your love for us.  
You lead us out of the land of slavery;  
yet when the journey is hard,  
we long to return to the comfort of our chains.  
You speak to us through your prophets,  
telling us how our rebellion hurts and angers you;  
yet we harden our hearts and close our ears.

You come to us in Jesus,  
revealing your love for all people  
and suffering pain for us;  
still we do not turn  
in love and obedience to you.

We do that which we ought not to do,  
and we leave undone those things we ought to do.  
There is no health in us.  
Sinful and rebellious as we are,  
we cannot trust in ourselves  
and the things that we do;  
we can trust only in your grace.

Speak the word, O God,  
and we shall be made free.  
Forgive us,  
receive us,  
and give us courage to serve you  
with renewed hearts and wills;  
through the grace of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Do not fear.  
I say to you  
in the name of Jesus Christ:  
Your sins are forgiven.  
Your faith has made you free.  
Anyone who is in Christ Jesus is a new creation;  
the old has passed away.  
Behold, the new has come.<sup>20</sup>  
Thanks be to God!

---

PREFACE

---

Because you have come to us in Jesus Christ,  
enduring the cross  
so that we might know eternal life,  
it is right  
that we should give you thanks and praise.

---

**GENERAL PRAYER**

---

Faithful God,  
we praise you that you love us  
and that you have come to us in Jesus  
to reconcile the world to yourself.  
We thank you that Jesus walked the path of obedience  
all the way to the cross  
and that you raised Jesus up  
to draw us to yourself.  
Jesus handed himself over to death,  
knowing that unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground  
and dies,  
it will not bear fruit.

Teach us,  
like Jesus,  
to hand ourselves over in love for you,  
for one another,  
and for all people.

As we who have been baptized into Jesus Christ enter  
into the life of the world,  
may we die with Christ  
that we may also rise with Christ.

May we take part in your work  
of suffering and redeeming love,  
lifting up the oppressed,  
binding the brokenhearted,  
challenging the powerful,  
drawing all into a community of love.

We lift up our prayers for the world  
still so full of suffering,  
still so shadowed by crosses,  
knowing you have loved your creation from the beginning.

We join our hearts with yours  
in love for the world,  
and we offer ourselves to you;  
through Jesus Christ,  
in whose name we pray.

Amen.

---

BENEDICTION

---

Seeing that we are surrounded  
by so great a cloud of witnesses,  
the faithful of all times  
who have given themselves to God's loving will,  
let us run with patience the path God sets before us,  
encouraged by the love of God,  
renewed by the grace of Christ,  
and empowered by the presence of the Spirit,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

---

EASTER

---

---

GREETING

---

Christ has been raised from the dead.  
"O death, where is your victory?  
O grave, where is your sting?"  
Thanks be to God,  
who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>21</sup>

---

CALL TO WORSHIP

---

LEADER

**Praise God, who brings life out of death  
and hope out of despair.**

PEOPLE

Praise God, who has raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

LEADER

**Praise God,  
who gathers up the fragments left by human destruction  
and creates new possibilities.**

PEOPLE

Christ has risen!

LEADER

**Christ has risen indeed!**

---

SENTENCES

---

LEADER

**Sing to God!**

PEOPLE

For God has done excellent things!

LEADER

**Sing, O heaven;  
and be joyful, O earth!**

PEOPLE

For God has comforted the people!

LEADER

**Thanks be to God!**

PEOPLE

For God has given us the victory!<sup>22</sup>

---

INVOCATION

---

We rejoice, mighty God,  
that you have raised Jesus Christ from the dead.  
We praise you and glorify your name.  
New life blossoms where dead hopes were buried.  
Today the world is made new.  
Be known among us in resurrection power;  
through Jesus, our crucified and risen Savior.  
Amen.

---

CONFESSION

---

CALL TO CONFESSION

Easter morning takes us by surprise,  
awakening us to the doubt and despair  
that have been rooted in our lives.  
Let us now confess to God.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

If, at times, we deny you:  
God forgive.  
If, at times, when the risks of discipleship are high,  
we are nowhere to be found:

God forgive.

If, at times,

we wash our hands of responsibility:

God forgive.

If, at times,

we cast our lot with powerful oppressors

and seek to buy freedom with silver:

God forgive.

If, at times,

fear keeps us from witnessing to your truth,

or prejudice keeps us from believing it:

God forgive.

In the bright light of Easter morning,

our sin is exposed,

but your grace is revealed.

Tender God,

we are bold to come before you

and ask you to forgive us.

Help us to leave behind our foolish doubt

so that with joy we may witness to your awesome deeds

in Jesus the Risen One.

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the good news:

In raising Jesus from the dead,

God has brought life and immortality to light.

And hear the good news:

By God's great mercy,

we have been born anew to a living hope

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

from the dead.<sup>23</sup>

In the name of Jesus,

I say to you:

Our sins are forgiven.

All things are made new.

Doubt no more;

Christ is with us always.

Alleluia!

Amen.

---

PREFACE

---

Because you have done the completely unexpected deed,  
because you have raised Jesus to eternal life,  
because you grant us the presence  
of the risen Christ among us,  
because you offer eternal life to those who trust in you,  
we praise and magnify your name.

---

GENERAL PRAYER

---

God of ceaseless new beginnings,  
we rejoice that through your powerful love  
Jesus Christ has risen from the dead.  
In the resurrection you have shown that neither trouble  
nor persecution, hardship nor poverty,  
danger nor death can separate us from your love.  
Free us to trust in you  
that we may live in the confidence of your children.  
In the resurrection you were victorious  
over sin, violence, and oppression.  
Free us to risk ourselves in the struggle for justice and peace  
that we may be your partners  
in restoring all creation to your will.  
In the resurrection you have opened the gates of eternal life.  
Free us from the fear of death  
that we may serve you with courage.  
In the resurrection you bring new possibilities  
out of hopeless situations.  
Free us from all despair  
that we may bring your hope to those who have lost heart.  
Through the presence of Jesus Christ among us,  
draw us into a community of freedom, hope, and love.  
Work your new creation among us  
that we may serve you without fear.  
God Most Holy, God Most Loving, God Most Knowing,  
we praise your name for ever;  
through Jesus our risen Christ and Savior.  
Amen.

---

BENEDICTION

---

Rejoice, people of God!  
Christ is risen from the dead!  
Go in peace to love and serve God.  
Christ is with you always,  
even to the end of the age!  
Amen.

---

EASTERTIDE

---

---

GREETING

---

Jesus said:  
I am the vine, you are the branches.  
Whoever abides in me, and I in that person,  
will bear much fruit;  
for apart from me you can do nothing.  
This is my commandment,  
that you love one another, as I have loved you.<sup>24</sup>

---

CALL TO WORSHIP

---

LEADER

**We are gathered in the presence of the risen Christ,  
who remains with us for ever.**

PEOPLE

When we abide in the love of Christ,  
love, joy, and peace grow.

LEADER

**We are rooted in Christ's love  
that we may bear these fruits  
together with all God's people.**

ALL

**With the faithful of every race, tribe, people, and nation  
we sing:**

**Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, and might  
be to God for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**<sup>25</sup>

---

SENTENCES

---

LEADER

**Jesus commanded: Love one another.**

PEOPLE

We come to worship the God who is love  
that we may learn to love one another.

LEADER

**Jesus said: No longer do I call you servants;  
now I call you my friends.**

PEOPLE

We come to worship the God  
whose friends we are through Christ.

LEADER

**Let us sing praise to God  
and live in love and friendship toward the human family;  
through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.<sup>26</sup>**

---

INVOCATION

---

Holy God, the earth is full of your glory,  
and so we worship you.  
Our hearts are on fire with the awareness  
that Christ is with us,  
and so we thank you.  
Our fears have been calmed  
in the bright light of the Resurrection Day,  
and so we praise you.  
Do not leave us, we pray.  
Let us abide for ever in the assurance of your love;  
through the grace of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

---

CONFESSION

---

CALL TO CONFESSION

With all the signs of new life in Christ around us,  
we still cling to our old ways.  
Let us confess our sin to God and to one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

When we do not accept as our sisters and brothers in Christ  
those who are different from us,  
forgive us, O God.

When we oppose you by opposing those  
who disrupt our routines and challenge our assumptions,  
forgive us, O God.

When we willfully disobey you and lose faith in your future,  
forgive us, O God.

God, in your mercy,  
restore us to newness of life.

Bind together your church universal  
through the coming of your Holy Spirit.

Empower us to witness with courage  
to the presence of Jesus Christ among us.

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Take heart:

God's Spirit empowers us to move from the ways of death  
to the ways of new life.

Our sins are forgiven.

Let us forgive one another  
and give ourselves to one another  
in the joyful community of the risen Christ.

Amen.

---

PREFACE

---

Because you have raised Jesus from the dead  
and because you have raised us up  
to be a community of faith through Christ,  
we praise you with joy.

---

GENERAL PRAYER

---

We praise you, O God,  
that by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ,  
you have delivered us from the power of death,  
making us alive to serve you.

Free us from pride of self  
that we may live in community with one another  
and with all your people.  
Free us from fear of the principalities and powers  
of this world  
that we may live and speak with courage,  
guided by your Spirit.  
Keep us rooted and grounded in your love,  
and fill us with the power of your Spirit.  
Be glorified in our life together;  
through Jesus our risen Savior.  
Amen.

---

**BENEDICTION**

---

You are a chosen people,  
a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation,  
God's own people.  
Go into the world in peace,  
declaring the praises of God  
who has called you out of darkness  
into wonderful light.<sup>27</sup>  
May the God of hope  
fill you with all joy and peace in believing  
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
you may abound in hope;<sup>28</sup>  
through the grace of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

---

**PENTECOST**

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---

**GREETING**

---

In the last days, says God,  
I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.  
Your sons and daughters shall prophesy.  
Your young people shall see visions,

and your old people shall dream dreams.<sup>29</sup>  
People of God,  
we have been baptized into one Spirit  
and one body through Jesus Christ.  
Let us worship God with joy.

---

CALL TO WORSHIP

---

LEADER

**The Spirit descends like a dove,  
bringing peace to unite the world  
in a just and caring community.**

PEOPLE

The Spirit comes like a breath,  
bringing life to renew the people of God.

LEADER

**The Spirit spreads like fire,  
bringing energy for witnessing to the love of God.**

ALL

**Spirit of the living God,  
come to us and transform our lives by your power.**

---

SENTENCES

---

You shall receive power  
when the Holy Spirit comes upon you;  
and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem  
and in all Judea and Samaria,  
and to the end of the earth.<sup>30</sup>

---

INVOCATION

---

We thank you, compassionate God,  
that you sent your Spirit  
to encourage those whom Jesus left behind  
that they might not be alone.  
Through the comfort of your presence,  
you empowered them to witness to your love.

Today we also seek the encouragement of your presence.  
Do not leave us alone, O God,  
but send your Spirit to us  
that we may worship and serve you with joy;  
through Jesus our crucified and risen Savior.  
Amen.

---

CONFESSION

---

CALL TO CONFESSION

Jesus said:

You shall receive power  
when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,<sup>31</sup>  
but we fear the Spirit's power.  
Let us confess our slowness  
to embrace the new life of the Spirit.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We admit to you, God of our life,  
that our celebration of the coming of your Spirit  
is often an empty ritual.  
Through the Spirit you offer us life,  
but we cling to the ways of death.  
Through the Spirit you offer us freedom,  
but we cling to our chains.  
Through the Spirit you offer us unity,  
but we continue building walls  
between ourselves and others.  
Through the Spirit you offer us power,  
but we shrink away in fear and doubt.  
Forgive us, O God,  
that we refuse the gifts you offer.  
Allow us to touch the risen Christ  
that our doubt may be overcome.  
Let us sing and dance with joy,  
truly celebrating your presence.  
Let us move with courage into the world  
with the word of your love.  
We pray in the powerful name of Jesus.  
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

People of God, leap up, dance!  
The Spirit is here in healing power.  
Your sins are forgiven.  
Rise up in the new life of the Spirit.

---

PREFACE

---

Baptized by your Spirit into one body,  
we testify to your faithfulness toward those  
of every time, nation, people, and language,  
and we give you thanks.

---

GENERAL PRAYER

---

Eternal Spirit of the universe,  
we thank you that you do not leave us alone  
but place your word within us and in the midst  
of our life together.  
You are no statue made of silver or gold,  
but a living reality on the face of the earth.  
Give us courage and commitment  
to let your winds blow through us  
and to let your life be revealed among us.  
Empowered by your Spirit,  
may we care for the needs of all people,  
break bread together with joy,  
and praise you day by day.  
Grant us your peace;  
through Jesus who lives among us.  
Amen.

---

BENEDICTION

---

And now to the one who by the power at work within us  
is able to do far more than we ask or imagine:  
be glory in the church  
and in Jesus Christ to all generations.<sup>32</sup>  
Go in the Spirit of the living God!  
Amen.

---

SUNDAYS AFTER PENTECOST

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GREETING

---

The body is a unit,  
though it is made up of many parts;  
and though all its parts are many,  
they form one body.  
So it is with Christ.  
For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—  
whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—  
and given one Spirit to drink.<sup>33</sup>  
Let us worship God in Spirit and in truth.

---

CALL TO WORSHIP

---

LEADER

**How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O God of hosts!**

PEOPLE

My soul longs, yea, faints for your courts;  
my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

LEADER

**Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may lay her young, at your altars,  
O God of hosts, my ruler and God.**

ALL

**Blessed are those who dwell in your house,  
ever singing your praise.  
Blessed are those whose strength is in you.<sup>34</sup>**

---

SENTENCES

---

Thanks be to God,  
who in Christ always leads us in triumph,  
and through us spreads the fragrance  
of the knowledge of God everywhere.<sup>35</sup>

---

INVOCATION

---

We thank you, living God,  
that in Jesus Christ  
you have built a house not made with hands,  
a people among whom you live.  
We thank you that you have called us  
and that we belong to you.  
We come now,  
longing to know the touch of your Spirit  
that we may be encouraged to serve you in the world.  
Come to us that we may recognize you  
and sing your praise;  
through the grace of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

---

CONFESSION

---

CALL TO CONFESSION

Let us confess our sin,  
trusting in God's grace.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We have promised to live as your people, God.  
Yet, we confess that we fail you and one another.  
We do not honor one another as we should.  
As the body of Christ,  
we are often disjointed and clumsy.  
We do not work together as one to your glory.  
We refuse your cry for help  
in the voices of the poor and hungry.  
We have not been faithful  
to the trust you have placed in us.  
Merciful God,  
receive us as we are, and forgive us.  
Encourage us with your love  
that we may commit ourselves anew to live  
as those who belong to you;  
through the grace of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the good news:

In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus,  
we learn that God's love has no bounds.

In Christ we are forgiven  
and are empowered to begin anew.

Thanks be to God!

---

PREFACE

---

You have called us into your church, O God,  
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,  
to serve you in serving the entire human family,  
to proclaim the gospel to all the world  
and resist the powers of evil,  
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at Christ's table,  
to join in Christ's passion and victory.<sup>36</sup>

In gratitude we accept your call,  
praise your holy name,  
and testify to your loving deeds.

---

GENERAL PRAYER

---

We give you thanks, eternal God,  
for those who have run the race of faith before us  
and now surround us like a cloud of witnesses.  
We thank you for those  
who pass the word of your love to each new generation.  
We thank you for martyrs and saints  
who give themselves in love for you  
and in the pursuit of peace and justice on earth.  
We give you thanks, infinite God,  
for the church around the world.  
We thank you that we count  
as our brothers and sisters in Christ,  
people of all races, tongues, and nations.  
From the villages of India to the mountains of Peru,  
from the cities of Russia to the plains of Canada,  
your name is praised.

We thank you for those who witness faithfully to you  
in the midst of political or economic oppression.  
May all your people, wherever they are, be one.

We give you thanks, living God,  
that here and now you give us parts to play  
in the great drama of your love.  
Speak through us and move through us  
that the story of your mighty deeds will be known  
in our time and place.  
With faithful people of all ages,  
may we be Christ's body on earth,  
for it is in the name of Christ Jesus that we pray.  
Amen.

---

BENEDICTION

---

May God's face shine upon us;  
may Christ's peace rule among us;  
may the Spirit's fire burn within us,  
as we scatter into the world  
until we meet again.  
Amen.

# Affirmations of Faith

---

## APOSTLES' CREED

---

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

Amen.<sup>37</sup>

---

## COLOSSIANS 1:15-20 (ADAPTED)

---

Christ is the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn of all creation;  
for in Christ all things were created, in heaven and on earth,  
visible and invisible,  
whether thrones or dominions  
or principalities or authorities—  
all things were created through Christ and for Christ.  
Christ is before all things,  
and in Christ all things hold together.  
Christ is the head of the body, the church;

Christ is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,  
that in everything Christ might be preeminent.  
For in Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,  
and through Christ all things are reconciled to God,  
whether on earth or in heaven,  
making peace by the blood of Christ's cross.

---

NICENE CREED

---

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].  
With the Father and the Son  
he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.<sup>38</sup>

---

SALEM CHURCH COVENANT

---

We covenant with the Lord and one with an other  
and doe bynd our selves in the presence of God,  
to walke together in all his waies, according as he is pleased  
to reveale himself unto us in his blessed word of truth.<sup>39</sup>

---

“FAITH” FROM THE KANSAS CITY STATEMENT

---

We believe in God the Father,  
infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love,  
and in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord and Savior,  
who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again  
and liveth evermore,  
and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ  
and revealeth them to us,  
renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men.

We are united in striving to know the will of God  
as taught in the holy scriptures,  
and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord,  
made known or to be made known to us.

We hold it to be the mission of the church of Christ  
to proclaim the gospel to all mankind,  
exalting the worship of the one true God,  
and laboring for the progress of knowledge,  
the promotion of justice, the reign of peace,  
and the realization of human brotherhood.

Depending, as did our fathers, upon the continued guidance  
of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth,  
we work and pray for the transformation of the world  
into the kingdom of God,  
and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness,  
and the life everlasting.<sup>40</sup>

---

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STATEMENT OF FAITH

---

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify:

He calls the worlds into being,  
creates man in his own image  
and sets before him the ways of life and death.

He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord,  
he has come to us  
and shared our common lot,  
conquering sin and death  
and reconciling the world to himself.

He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit,  
creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,  
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages,  
tongues, and races.

He calls us into his church  
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,  
to be his servants in the service of men,  
to proclaim the gospel to all the world  
and resist the powers of evil,  
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,  
to join him in his passion and victory.

He promises to all who trust him  
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,  
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,  
his presence in trial and rejoicing,  
and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him.  
Amen.<sup>41</sup>

---

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STATEMENT OF FAITH  
ADAPTED BY ROBERT V. MOSS

---

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother, and to whose deeds we testify:

God calls the worlds into being,  
creates humankind in the divine image,  
and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord,

God has come to us  
and shared our common lot,  
conquering sin and death  
and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit,  
creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,  
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages,  
tongues, and races.

God calls us into the church  
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,  
to be servants in the service of the whole  
human family,  
to proclaim the gospel to all the world  
and resist the powers of evil,  
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,  
to join him in his passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel  
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,  
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,  
the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing,  
and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.  
Amen.<sup>42</sup>

---

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STATEMENT OF FAITH  
IN THE FORM OF A DOXOLOGY

---

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit,  
God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God,  
and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being,  
create persons in your own image,  
and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness  
and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will  
declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and  
risen Savior,

you have come to us  
and shared our common lot,  
conquering sin and death  
and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit,  
creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,  
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages,  
tongues, and races.

You call us into your church  
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,  
to be your servants in the service of others,  
to proclaim the gospel to all the world  
and resist the powers of evil,  
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,  
to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you  
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,  
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,  
your presence in trial and rejoicing,  
and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.  
Amen.<sup>43</sup>

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DECLARACION DE FE DE LA  
IGLESIA UNIDA DE CRISTO

---

Creemos en Dios, el Espíritu Eterno, Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo y nuestro Creador; de sus obras testificamos:

Dios llama los mundos para que existan, creó al ser humano a su imagen y semejanza, y puso ante la humanidad los caminos de la vida y la muerte.

Busca en su santo amor salvar a todas las personas de su desorientación y pecado.

Dios juzga al ser humano y a las naciones por medio de su justa voluntad declarada a través de los profetas y los apóstoles.

En Jesucristo, el hombre de Nazaret, nuestro Señor crucificado y resucitado, Dios ha venido y ha compartido nuestra suerte, venció el pecado y la muerte y reconcilió al mundo para sí mismo.

Dios nos concedió el Espíritu Santo, que crea y renueva la iglesia de Jesucristo, y une en un pacto de fidelidad a personas de todas las edades, idiomas y razas.

Dios nos llama como iglesia para que aceptemos el costo y la alegría del discipulado, para que seamos sus servidores al servicio del ser humano, para proclamar el evangelio a todo el mundo y resistir los poderes del maligno, para compartir el bautismo de Cristo, comer en su mesa, y unirnos a Jesús en su pasión y victoria.

Dios promete a toda persona que confía en Jesús el perdón de los pecados y la plenitud de su gracia, valor en la lucha por la justicia y la paz, su presencia en las tristezas y en las alegrías, y vida eterna en su reino que no tiene fin.

Bendición y honor, gloria y poder sean dados a Dios.

Amén

©Traducción 2000:

*Rev. José Abraham De Jesús y Ms. Dámaris Vélez*

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STATEMENT OF MISSION

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As people of the United Church of Christ, affirming our Statement of Faith, we seek within the Church Universal to participate in God's mission and to follow the way of the crucified and risen Christ.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called and commit ourselves:

To praise God, confess our sin, and joyfully accept God's forgiveness;

To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our suffering world;

To embody God's Love for all people;

To hear and give voice to creation's cry for justice and peace;

To name and confront the powers of evil within and among us;

To repent our silence and complicity with the forces of chaos and death;

To preach and teach with the power of the living Word;

To join oppressed and troubled people in the struggle for liberation;

To work for justice, healing, and wholeness of life;

To embrace the unity of Christ's church;

To discern and celebrate the present and coming reign of God.

---

PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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Christ is the only head of the church.

Christian is a sufficient name for the church.

The Holy Bible is a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Christian character is the only requirement for membership.

The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience are rights and privileges for all.

Union of all Christ's followers is sought.<sup>44</sup>

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FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE DESIGN FOR  
THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

---

We confess that Jesus is the Christ,  
the Son of the living God,  
and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.

In Christ's name and by his grace  
we accept our mission of witness  
and service to all people.

We rejoice in God,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
and in the covenant of love  
which binds us to God and one another.

Through baptism into Christ  
we enter into newness of life  
and are made one with the whole people of God.

In the communion of the Holy Spirit  
we are joined together in discipleship  
and in obedience to Christ.

At the table of the Lord  
we celebrate with thanksgiving  
the saving acts and presence of Christ.

Within the universal church  
we receive the gift of ministry  
and the light of scripture.

In the bonds of Christian faith  
we yield ourselves to God  
that we may serve the one whose kingdom has no end.

Blessing, glory, and honor be to God for ever.

Amen.<sup>45</sup>

## General Resources

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### PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

---

**[A]**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>46</sup>

**[B]**

Our Father,  
who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

☐

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.

---

## COMMANDMENTS

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☐

### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

God spoke these words, saying,  
I am the Holy One your God.  
You shall have no other gods before me.  
You shall not make for yourself a graven image.  
You shall not take the name of God in vain.  
Remember the Sabbath day; keep it holy.  
Honor your father and your mother.  
You shall not kill.  
You shall not commit adultery.  
You shall not steal.  
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.  
You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's.<sup>47</sup>

☐

### THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

You shall love God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your mind.  
This is the great and first commandment.  
And the second is like it:  
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.<sup>48</sup>

---

## WORDS OF COMFORT FROM SCRIPTURE

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**[A]**

I know that my Redeemer lives,  
and at last will stand upon the earth;  
and after my body has wasted away,  
then without my flesh I shall see God,  
whom I shall see for myself,  
and my eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger.

*Job 19:25-27, adapted*

**[B]**

Holy One,  
you are my shepherd,  
I shall not want;  
you make me lie down  
in green pastures.  
You lead me  
beside still waters;  
you restore my soul.  
You lead me  
in paths of righteousness  
for your name's sake.  
Even though I walk through  
the valley of the shadow  
of death, 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 your house for ever.

*Psalm 23, adapted*

**[C]**

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 paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through  
the valley of the shadow  
of death, 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 for ever.

*Psalm 23, adapted*



LEADER

**A reading from the Psalms:**

**Hear, O Holy One, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!**

PEOPLE

You have said:

“Seek my face.”

My heart says to you,

“Your face, dear God, do I seek.”

LEADER

**Hide not your face from me.**

**Turn not your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.**

PEOPLE

Cast me not off,

forsake me not,

O God of my salvation!

LEADER

**Even if my father and my mother forsake me,  
you will take me up.**

PEOPLE

Teach me your way, O God;

and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

LEADER

**Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they breathe out violence.**

PEOPLE

I believe that I shall see the goodness of God  
in the land of the living!

LEADER

**I wait for you.**

**Strengthen me,  
and give courage to my heart.**

PEOPLE

Yes, God, I wait for you.

*Psalm 27:7-14, adapted*

**E**

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear  
though the earth should change,  
though the mountains shake  
in the heart of the sea;  
though its waters roar and foam,  
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

“Be still, and know that I am God.  
I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth!”  
The God of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

*Psalms 46:1-3, 10-11*

**E**

LEADER

**If I lift up my eyes to the hills,  
where shall I find help?**

PEOPLE

My help will come from the Holy One,  
who made heaven and earth.

LEADER

**Would God let your foot stumble?  
Would God, your guardian, sleep?**

PEOPLE

The Holy One, the guardian of Israel,  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

LEADER

**The Holy One will keep you from all evil,  
will guard your life.**

PEOPLE

The Holy One will guard your going  
and your coming,  
from this time forth and for evermore.

*Psalms 121:1-4, 7-8, adapted*



LEADER

**Out of the depths I call to you.  
O God, hear my voice!**

PEOPLE

Let your ears be attentive to my voice!

LEADER

**If you should mark our sins,  
O God,  
who could stand?**

PEOPLE

But there is forgiveness with you,  
so that you may be revered.

LEADER

**I wait for the Holy One.  
My soul waits, and in God's word I hope.**

PEOPLE

My soul waits for the Holy One,  
more than the watcher waits for the morning.

LEADER

**O Israel,  
depend on the Holy One,  
for with God there is steadfast love,  
with God there is plenteous redemption.**

PEOPLE

God will redeem Israel from all sins.

*Psalms 130, adapted*



The Spirit of the Holy One is upon me,  
because the Holy One has anointed me  
to bring good news to the afflicted;  
God has sent me  
to heal the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;  
to proclaim the year of God's favor,  
and the day of our God's vengeance;  
to comfort all who mourn;

to grant to those who mourn in Zion  
a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit;  
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the Holy One,  
that God may be glorified.

*Isaiah 61:1-3, adapted*

□

And when they came to the place which is called The Skull,  
there they crucified Jesus, and the criminals,  
one on the right and one on the left.  
One of the criminals who were hanged railed at Jesus,  
saying, "Are you not the Christ?  
Save yourself and us!"  
But the other rebuked him, saying,  
"Do you not fear God,  
since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?  
And we indeed justly,  
for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds;  
but this man has done nothing wrong."  
And he said, "Jesus, remember me  
when you come in your reigning power."  
And Jesus said to him,  
"Truly, I say to you,  
today you will be with me in Paradise."

*Luke 23:33, 39-43, adapted*

□

Let not your hearts be troubled;  
believe in God,  
believe also in me.  
In my Father's house are many rooms;  
if it were not so,  
would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?  
And when I go and prepare a place for you,  
I will come again and take you to myself,  
that where I am you may be also.  
I will not leave you desolate;

I will come to you.  
Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more,  
but you will see me;  
because I live, you will live also.  
These things I have spoken to you,  
while I am still with you.  
But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit,  
whom the Father will send in my name,  
will teach you all things,  
and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.  
Peace I leave with you;  
not as the world gives do I give to you.  
Let not your hearts be troubled,  
neither let them be afraid.  
*adapted selections from John 14*

☐

Now, since our message is that Christ  
has been raised from death,  
how can some of you say  
that the dead will not be raised to life?  
If that is true,  
it means that Christ was not raised;  
and if Christ has not been raised from death,  
then we have nothing to preach  
and you have nothing to believe.  
More than that,  
we are found to be lying about God  
because we said God raised Christ from death—  
but if it is true that the dead are not raised to life,  
then God did not raise Christ.  
For if the dead are not raised,  
neither has Christ been raised.  
And if Christ has not been raised,  
then your faith is a delusion  
and you are still lost in your sins.  
It would also mean  
that the believers in Christ who have died are lost.  
If our hope in Christ is good  
for this life only and no more,

then we deserve more pity than anyone else in all the world.  
But the truth is that Christ has been raised from death,  
as the guarantee  
that those who sleep in death will also be raised.

*1 Corinthians 15:12-20, Good News Bible, adapted*

□

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,  
to show that the transcendent power belongs to God  
and not to us.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed;  
perplexed, but not driven to despair;  
persecuted, but not forsaken;  
struck down, but not destroyed;  
always carrying in the body the death of Jesus,  
so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested  
in our bodies.

For while we live  
we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake,  
so that the life of Jesus may be manifested  
in our mortal flesh.

So we do not lose heart.

Though our outer nature is wasting away,  
our inner nature is being renewed every day.

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.

Here indeed we groan,  
and long to put on our heavenly dwelling,  
so that by putting it on we may not be found naked.

For while we are still in this tent,  
we sigh with anxiety;  
not that we would be unclothed,  
but that we would be further clothed,  
so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

The one who has prepared us for this very thing is God,  
who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

*2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 16; 5:1-5, adapted*

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OPENING WORDS

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**A**

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.<sup>49</sup>

**B**

This is the day which God has made.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.  
Come, let us worship and bow down;  
let us kneel before God, our Maker.<sup>50</sup>

**C**

God is spirit,  
and those who worship God must worship  
in spirit and in truth.<sup>51</sup>

**D**

Serve God with gladness!  
Come before God's presence with singing!  
Enter God's gates with thanksgiving,  
and God's courts with praise!  
Give thanks to God, and bless God's name!  
For the Holy One is good;  
God's steadfast love endures for ever,  
and God's faithfulness to all generations.<sup>52</sup>

**E**

LEADER

**Blessed be the name of our God  
from this time forth and for evermore!**

PEOPLE

From the rising of the sun to its setting,  
the name of God is to be praised!

LEADER

**It is good to give thanks to God,  
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;**

ALL

**To declare your steadfast love in the morning  
and your faithfulness by night.<sup>53</sup>**

**F**

LEFT

These are the things that you shall do:  
Speak the truth of one another,  
render in your gates judgments  
that are true and make for peace.

RIGHT

Let justice roll down like waters  
and righteousness like an everflowing stream.

LEFT

Learn to do good;  
seek justice, correct oppression;  
defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.

ALL

**Thus says the God of all,  
“Keep justice, and do righteousness,  
for soon my salvation will come,  
and my deliverance be revealed.”<sup>54</sup>**

**G**

LEFT

And you shall proclaim liberty  
throughout the land  
to all its inhabitants;  
it shall be a jubilee for you.

RIGHT

You did what was right in my eyes  
by proclaiming liberty,  
each to one’s neighbor,  
and you made a covenant before me  
in the house which is called by my name.

LEFT

God is spirit,  
and where the spirit of God is,  
there is freedom.

ALL

**For freedom Christ has set us free;  
stand fast therefore,  
and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.<sup>55</sup>**



People of God,  
look about and see the faces of those  
we know and love—  
neighbors and friends,  
sisters and brothers—  
a community of kindred hearts.

People of God,  
look about and see the faces  
of those we hardly know—  
strangers, sojourners, forgotten friends,  
the ones who need an outstretched hand.

People of God,  
look about and see all the images of God assembled here.  
In me, in you, in each of us,  
God's spirit shines for all to see.

People of God, come.  
Let us worship together.<sup>56</sup>



LEADER

**We are summoned here  
by our holy God,  
who calls us each by name  
and gathers us together  
in the unity of Jesus Christ.**

PEOPLE

From classroom and kitchen and carpool,  
we are called into God's presence.  
Young and old and middle-aged,  
individuals and families,  
softspoken and outspoken,  
we hear our names being called to join in worship.

LEADER

**This house of worship is a place  
to pursue God's vision for all people:  
unity and joy and faith  
expressed through different gifts.  
Let us worship together!<sup>57</sup>**

**[J]**

LEADER

**Be still, and know that God is.**

PEOPLE

God was, also, in the beginning.

LEADER

**And when all human striving has ceased,  
God will still be.**

PEOPLE

From everlasting to everlasting,  
God is God and alone is worthy to be worshiped.

LEADER

**Let us sing praise to our God.**<sup>58</sup>

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### PREPARATORY PRAYERS

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**[A]**

O almighty God,  
from whom every good prayer comes,  
and who pours out on all who desire it  
the spirit of grace and supplication,  
deliver us, when we draw nigh to you,  
from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind,  
that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections  
we may worship you in spirit and in truth;  
through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.<sup>59</sup>

**[B]**

Almighty God,  
who has given us grace at this time with one accord  
to make our common supplications unto you,  
and does promise that where two or three are gathered  
together in your name,  
you will grant their requests,  
fulfill now the desires and petitions of your servants,  
as may be most expedient for them,  
granting us in this world knowledge of your truth,  
and in the world to come, life everlasting.  
Amen.<sup>60</sup>

☐

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid,  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.<sup>61</sup>

☐

Many of us are bored or apathetic, O God.  
We have no expectation other than getting through the day.  
Surprise us with the good news  
that our lives can be renewed.  
Open us to your amazing love  
that keeps knocking at the door of our hearts  
through Christ our Savior.  
Amen.<sup>62</sup>

☐

Eternal God, we come to you with hungry hearts,  
waiting to be filled:  
waiting to be filled with a sense of your presence;  
waiting to be filled with the touch of your spirit;  
waiting to be filled with new energy for service.  
Come to us, we pray.  
Be with us.  
Touch us.  
Empower us as your people that we might worship you here  
and act in the world for Jesus' sake.  
Amen.<sup>63</sup>

☐

O Holy Spirit, Breath of God, blow in our lives this day.  
Clear out the cobwebs of closed minds and outworn ideas.  
Fill us with the freshness of your living love.  
Cleanse and renew us that we might go from this place  
ready to be your people in the world.  
We ask this in the name of the one who came  
to reconcile the world to you, even Jesus Christ.  
Amen.<sup>64</sup>

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## CONFESSIONS AND ASSURANCES

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### CONFESSIONS

Ⓐ

Almighty and most merciful God,  
we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.  
We have followed too much  
the devices and desires of our own hearts.  
We have offended against your holy laws.  
We have left undone those things  
which we ought to have done,  
and we have done those things  
which we ought not to have done.  
Have mercy upon us.  
Spare those, O God, who confess their faults.  
Restore those who are penitent,  
according to the promises declared  
to all persons in Christ Jesus.  
And grant, O most merciful God, for Jesus' sake,  
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,  
to the glory of your holy name.  
Amen.<sup>65</sup>

Ⓑ

Gracious God,  
you have promised to receive us when we come to you.  
We confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed.  
We have disobeyed your law.  
We have not loved you or our neighbors as we should.  
Forgive us, O God,  
and grant that we may live and serve you in newness of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
Amen.<sup>66</sup>

Ⓒ

Almighty God,  
maker of all things, judge of all people,  
we acknowledge and confess our manifold sins,  
which we from time to time have committed,  
by thought, word, and deed,

against your Divine Majesty.  
We do earnestly repent  
and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings.  
The remembrance of them is grievous to us.  
Have mercy upon us,  
have mercy upon us, most merciful God;  
for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
forgive us all our sins;  
and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please you  
in newness of life,  
to the honor and glory of your name;  
through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.<sup>67</sup>



Almighty God, Spirit of purity and grace,  
whose salvation is never far from the contrite heart,  
hear our confession of sin and have mercy upon us.  
For our many refusals of your call;  
for all our forgotten vows;  
for the excuses we have fashioned  
to hide from ourselves our unfaithful lives;  
for our readiness to blame others;  
for our selfish luxuries  
amid the oppression and sorrows of life;  
for the pleadings of your spirit  
to which we have not harkened,  
have mercy upon us.  
Amen.<sup>68</sup>



Almighty God,  
too often we forget your promise.  
We live in ways that bring glory only to ourselves.  
We bask in the false assumption  
that we are in control of our lives.  
Sometimes we want to tamper with the lives  
of those around us for our own ends.  
Help us to love our neighbors as ourselves  
and to serve you more faithfully each day.  
Amen.<sup>69</sup>

☐

Almighty and most merciful God,  
God our Creator, Redeemer, and Keeper,  
we have been created in your image,  
but we have spoiled the perfectness of your model.  
Being invisible in the eyes of the oppressor,  
we have forgotten that we are highly visible in your eyes.  
In failing to help our loved ones,  
we have sinned against you.  
Acknowledging our shortcomings and brokenness,  
we confess our wretched nature,  
come to you for forgiveness,  
and give your name the praise.  
Amen.<sup>70</sup>

☐

Gracious God,  
we confess what seems always with us:  
broken things within us that seem never to mend,  
empty places within us that seem always to ache,  
things like buds within us that seem never to flower.  
O God of love and grace,  
help us accept ourselves;  
lead us to do those good and true things  
that are not compromised by anything within us.  
As much as can be,  
mend us, fill us, make us bloom.  
For all these things, we will give you the glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
Amen.<sup>71</sup>

☐

Because we have seen pain without being moved,  
because we forget your love with solemn pride,  
because we pass by happy before poverty and sadness,  
Lord have mercy,  
Lord have mercy,  
have mercy on us.

For speaking of love without loving our sister or brother,  
for speaking of faith without living your word,

because we live without seeing our personal evil, our sin,  
Christ have mercy,  
Christ have mercy,  
have mercy on us.

For our tranquility in our affluent life,  
for our great falseness in preaching about poverty,  
for wanting to make excuses for injustice and misery,  
Lord have mercy,  
Lord have mercy,  
have mercy on us.  
Amen.<sup>72</sup>

ASSURANCES



LEADER

**We confess our sins  
so that we can be set free from the bondage of the past.**

**Therefore, I announce to you  
in the name of Christ Jesus  
that you are henceforth set free:**

**set free from all the enslaving bonds of your past;  
set free to live powerfully in every present moment;  
set free to love God,  
          to love your neighbor, and  
          to work with brothers and sisters  
          in building a peaceful world.**

**Jesus said:  
I have come that you might have life,  
and have it more abundantly.  
Praise God!**

PEOPLE

**God's name be praised!**<sup>73</sup>



**In spite of our tendency to pull apart,  
in spite of our tenacity to our old ways,  
our loving God continues to call us back together again,  
showing us the true nature of forgiveness.  
God does not keep score of our wrongs,**

or measure how far we have wandered.  
God welcomes us,  
like a mother scooping up her lost children,  
like a father embracing his prodigal offspring.  
As we are welcomed home,  
we are encouraged to learn from that forgiveness,  
to offer it to ourselves and to others again and again  
as God offers it to us in Jesus Christ,  
our hope and our home.<sup>74</sup>

☐

How we love to hang on to the past!  
We get all tied up  
remembering, keeping count, bearing grudges.  
God doesn't.  
Your past is accepted.  
Let it go.  
Live in the freedom God hands to you afresh each day.  
Thanks be to God.<sup>75</sup>

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## PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

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Ⓐ

O God, giver of all good,  
who continually pours your benefits upon us,  
age after age the living wait upon you  
and find that of your faithfulness there is no end  
and that your care is unfailing.  
We praise you that the mystery of our life  
is a mystery of infinite goodness.  
We praise you for the order and constancy of nature;  
for the beauty and bounty of the earth;  
for day and night, summer and winter,  
seedtime and harvest;  
for the varied gifts of loveliness and use  
which every season brings.  
We give you thanks for all the comfort and joy of life,  
for our homes, for our friends, and  
for all the love and sympathy and goodwill of all people.  
Amen.<sup>76</sup>



O God,  
we are made glad by the good news of your love  
for us and for all.  
We thank you for creating us  
and giving us all that is necessary for life.  
We thank you for your action in Christ  
by which our lives are measured,  
found wanting, and renewed.  
Help us to remember your gifts  
that we may praise you with lives of joy and service;  
through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.<sup>77</sup>



God, we offer you thanks and praise  
for all the surprising graces which come to us,  
for those that sustain our lives and those that change them:  
for food, familiar diets, and startling new aromas and tastes;  
for homes, places of steady surroundings,  
and settings for redemptive love;  
for friendships, old friends who are willingly open  
in their affection and their correction,  
and new friends who remind us  
that your spirited presence still dwells within us and others;  
for tasks to perform,  
routine actions which we do well  
and which give order to our days  
and tasks at which we have failed  
which restore a needed humility to us;  
for Jesus Christ,  
and for all Christ has done and will do for us  
in our life as a congregation of Christ's people.  
In Christ's name we pray.  
Amen.<sup>78</sup>

☐ *post-communion*

Grant, O God,  
that the ears which have heard the voice of your song  
may be closed to the voice of clamor and dispute;

that the eyes which have seen your great love  
may also behold your blessed hope;  
that the tongues which have sung your praise  
may speak the truth;  
that the feet which have walked your courts  
may walk in the region of light;  
and that the bodies which have tasted your living body  
may be restored in newness of life.  
Glory be to you, O God!<sup>79</sup>

☒ *post-communion*

Almighty God, heavenly Father,  
we praise you and extol you,  
for you have again amply given us  
of the blessed benefits of your sacraments.  
You have satisfied us  
with the food and drink of eternal life,  
and you have again assigned us  
the signs and seals of your mercy.  
Having been fulfilled with the benefits of your altar,  
behold,  
we offer ourselves, our bodies and souls,  
as a holy, as a precious offering,  
that all of us who have just united with Jesus Christ  
and through Christ with one another  
may grow daily in faith,  
may rejoice in hope,  
and may enrich ourselves in familial love.  
May praise, glory, honor, and thanksgiving  
descend upon your holy name now and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>80</sup>

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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☒

O God, the refuge of the poor,  
and the hope of the humble,  
the salvation of the needy;  
hear us as we pray for those who are worn by illness,  
for all who are wronged or oppressed,

and for the weary and heavy-laden,  
that they may be strengthened by your grace  
and healed by your consolations.

Let the dayspring from on high  
visit those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
to guide their feet into the way of peace;  
through Jesus Christ.

Amen.<sup>81</sup>



O God, Eternal Spirit,  
you have called us into relationship  
to fulfill a mission  
whose meaning we yet dimly see.  
Grant to the United Church of Christ  
a secure sense of our identity  
as people of rich human lineage,  
as children of the promise,  
as nobodies unless you claim us as your own.  
And make us impatient with any identity  
that does not propel us into the struggle  
for justice, liberation, and peace.  
Distribute among us gifts of faith and prayer,  
of prophecy and discernment,  
of love and hope  
that we may never cease doing your will;  
in Jesus' name.

Amen.<sup>82</sup>



Almighty God,  
the fountain of all wisdom,  
enlighten by your Holy Spirit  
those who teach and those who learn,  
that, rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth,  
they may worship you and serve you  
from generation to generation;  
through Jesus Christ.

Amen.<sup>83</sup>



LEADER

**Let us pray.**

**Let us pray for those who weep  
and for those who cause their weeping;**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer, O God.

LEADER

**For those who are without food, clothes,  
and a place of shelter;**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer, O God.

LEADER

**For those who live without hope and meaning;**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer, O God.

LEADER

**For those who live as the objects of the whims of others;**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer, O God.

LEADER

**For those who are fooling themselves;**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer, O God.

LEADER

**For those who live with wars and rumors of wars;**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer, O God.

LEADER

**For those who distort the good news of the gospel;**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer, O God.

LEADER

**For those who make gods of things and of themselves;**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer, O God.

**Amen.**<sup>84</sup>

☐ *one who is sick*

Loving and merciful God,  
grant the assurance that you are here now.  
Give the gift of quiet and rest;  
pour forth the renewal of strength;  
give the refreshment of sleep and relief from suffering.  
Comfort those who wait,  
that when this is all past,  
we may praise your glorious name;  
through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.<sup>85</sup>

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## GENERAL PRAYERS

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☐

O God of love,  
we are wayfarers in the world,  
prone to erratic changes of course,  
to losing sight of our goals,  
to becoming so discouraged by the journey  
that we will hitch a ride on anything that comes along.  
Help us on our way, O God.  
If we change our course,  
let it be not in self-interest,  
but in order to share the love of Christ  
with another sojourner.  
If we lose sight of our goals,  
let our quest bring us as your curious people  
to honest searching of our faith.  
If we become weary and discouraged  
and forget you are with us,  
let it lead to recognition of our need for you.  
As we travel in a world  
that sometimes seems a trackless, hostile wilderness,  
we ask that your Spirit sustain, encourage,  
and enable us to go on.  
In the name of Jesus Christ,  
who walked before us.  
Amen.<sup>86</sup>



O great and kind Spirit,  
you have always been, and before you nothing has been.  
There is no one to pray to but you.  
The star nations all over the heavens are yours,  
and yours are the grasses of the earth.  
You are older than all need,  
older than all pain and prayer.

O great and kind Spirit,  
all over the world the faces of living ones are alike.  
With tenderness have they come out of the earth  
from which you give us food.  
Look on your children.  
With children in their arms, they face the wind  
and walk the red road to the day of quiet.  
O great and kind Spirit, fill us with light.  
Give us strength to understand and eyes to see deeply.  
Teach us to walk on soft earth as relatives to all that live.  
Help us! Without you, we are nothing.  
Amen.<sup>87</sup>

☐ *the hungry*

O Lord Jesus Christ,  
help us always to remember that it is you whom we behold  
in the weakened bodies and haunting faces  
of the hungry of the world.  
Grant that we may not turn away  
but rather that we may receive your blessing  
as a minister to the least of your brothers and sisters.  
Amen.<sup>88</sup>

☐ *words*

God, Gracious Word beyond words,  
let the Word we hear be in the words we choose,  
the words we use,  
and join in chorus the words  
of those whose song and speech  
tumble walls of sterile silence and meaningless noise;  
in the name of Christ.  
Amen.<sup>89</sup>

☐ *healing*

God of All,  
you have so fashioned the world  
that it possesses the potential to repair its imperfections.

And, O Eternal One,  
you have fashioned humankind by endowing us,  
as your partners,  
with the creative ability to help the repairing.

You gave us the insight to transform the simple herb  
into a healing balm for the body.

May we, as your servants,  
realize our responsibility to transform  
the herb of human caring  
into a healing balm for the aching soul.

Like ourselves, many are in need.

We know the inner yearning for fulfillment, for purpose,  
for meaning in our lives.

May we ever come to know  
that as we help others to feel fulfilled,  
so shall we.

And then,  
may we recognize the strength, the will, the dedication,  
and the commitment to do that for which we were created:  
to serve you by realizing your reign in our midst.  
Amen.<sup>90</sup>

☐ *the poor*

They sleep in doorways;  
they sleep at home.  
They wear ragged clothes and carry shopping bags;  
they look like us.

They use poor grammar and smell;  
they have good educations and are well-groomed.

All-knowing God, show us the poor—  
not just the ones who have been pushed aside  
in the wake of competition,  
but the ones who are losing self-confidence,  
the ones who are victims of the system they helped to build,  
the ones whose jobs no longer exist.

Show us that there also is a poverty of the heart  
when saving is more important than sharing.  
Help us to find security  
in sharing all our resources  
so that through our total effort  
we will have answered your call to be a friend in need.  
Amen.<sup>91</sup>

☒ *mystery and hope*

Be with us through all the unknown days lying before us:  
days when the black of night settles early in the west,  
days when the strong white of winter comes from the north,  
days when we look for the red of sunrise in the east,  
days when the yellow noonday lingers in the south.

Touch us that we may trust you and be strong,  
so that we grow in union with all our sisters and brothers,  
so that we may see more deeply into ourselves.

We seek a vision from you,  
a vision of your mystery,  
a vision of ourselves and the love you have for us.  
May we answer you honest and true, generous and brave.

Help us understand that for those who are faithful to you  
life is not ended but only changed.

Help us join together with all you have created to say:  
Great and powerful is our God.

God fills all heaven and earth with beauty.

We have deep hope because God has promised  
everlasting life to God's faithful people.

In Christ's name we pray.

Amen.<sup>92</sup>

☒ *times of conflict*

O God, you have bound us together in a common life.

Help us,

in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth,  
to confront one another without hatred or bitterness,  
and to work together with mutual patience and respect.

Amen.<sup>93</sup>

▣ *providers*

In the midst of our plenty, O God,  
recall our debt to those who garner our food for us . . .  
those who pluck pineapples in the blaze of noon,  
those who buck the seas in search of fish,  
those who tend sheep and cattle through all the tantrums  
of weather,  
those who plow, and sow, and cultivate,  
and then wait in hope.  
Teach us that we live  
because others must fish and farm and shepherd.  
Amen.<sup>94</sup>

▣ *national holiday*

God of the nations,  
guide our people by your Spirit  
to go forward in justice and freedom.  
Give us what outward prosperity may be your will,  
but above all things give us faith in you  
that our nation may give glory to your name  
and blessings to all peoples;  
through Jesus Christ.  
Amen.<sup>95</sup>

▣ *tragedy*

God of compassion,  
you watch the ways of all of us  
and weave out of terrible happenings  
wonders of goodness and grace.  
Surround those who have been shaken by tragedy  
with a sense of your present love,  
and hold them in faith.  
Though they are lost in grief,  
may they find you and be comforted;  
through Jesus Christ,  
who was dead,  
but lives,  
and rules this world with you.  
Amen.<sup>96</sup>

**▣** *success or disaster*

Great God, help us to have such faith that neither success nor disaster shall turn us aside from the love of you.

In our success, help us to know that what we achieve we can lose.

In our disaster, help us to know that tomorrow is a new day.

In success or disaster, assure us that your requirements are a clean conscience, a loving spirit, and a forgiving heart.

Amen.<sup>97</sup>

**▣** *facing death*

God, in the struggle of my life, be merciful to me and take me unto yourself.

When I am unable to speak in my pain, and my face expresses my torment, please come to my help.

When I am unable to hear anymore, and the beating of my heart ceases, let the Holy Spirit prepare me to receive your Word.

When death closes my eyelids, let the beams of eternal light shine before me.

I believe in you, the only hope of my soul and the leading torch on the way to salvation.

Do not permit my faith to fail when all my strength is exhausted and comes to nothing.

You are the gate to salvation; in you do I hope; your life was proof of it.

Call me when it pleases you.

In my life and in my death I belong to you.

Come, my Christ, as soon as possible.

Amen.<sup>98</sup>

**▣** *natural disaster*

God of earthquake, wind, and fire: tame natural forces that defy control or shock us by their fury.

Keep us from calling a disaster your justice;  
and help us,  
in good times or in calamity,  
to trust your mercy, which never ends,  
and your power,  
which in Jesus Christ stilled storms,  
raised the dead,  
and put down demonic powers.  
Amen.<sup>99</sup>



Almighty and most gracious God,  
whose very nature is to be present in good times and in bad;  
in warm days and in cold;  
in wind, rain, and sunny life;  
in laughter and in pain;  
in joy and in despair;  
in work and in play;  
and in all those things that are a joy of life,  
open our hearts and our minds to the realities of the present  
here and now.

Turn back, O God, the outer layers of our selves,  
and look beneath the surface to our hidden inner depths.  
Many of us hide behind polite dreams and wooden responses—  
not daring to admit to others or even to ourselves  
that we are vulnerable.

Yet we turn to you, trusting,  
knowing that you will handle us carefully and tenderly.

Turn back the outer layers of apparent courage,  
and find our fears.

Address them in us.

Acknowledge them,

even as you cause us to acknowledge them before you.

Do it not so much to rid us of them,  
though we would like to be rid of them  
and free from fears for ever.

How wonderful it would be  
to stand in the presence of your perfect love  
that casts out fear.

Turn back the outer layers of apparent confidence,  
and find our worries and our anxieties.

Address them in us.

Acknowledge our uncertainties,  
even as we acknowledge them before you.

Do it not so much to rid us of these fears and anxieties,  
though we would like to walk along some waterway  
and watch our worries and anxieties drown  
in the backwash behind us.

How wonderful it would be  
to stand in the presence of your perfect love  
that calms fears, storms, and worries.  
Still our plea would be more modest:  
to know that you are present with us  
and that we are not alone  
in our struggle with worry.

Turn back the outer layers of apparent certainty,  
and find our doubts.

Address them in us.

Help us to acknowledge doubts without shame.

Do it not to rid us of our doubts,  
for we would not want to forfeit the growth  
that comes from ourselves and our doubts,  
even while we seek your purest presence.  
So, O God, our plea is more modest:  
to make our doubts building blocks  
to a finer and firmer faith,  
and to know that you accompany us in our journey.

We ask not that you make the hard moments of life easier,  
except that our burdens are  
eased by the assurance of your companionship,  
heightened by the knowledge of your loving care,  
strengthened by hope,  
and shaped by love,  
even as was the one in whose name we pray,  
Jesus Christ,  
our Lord and Savior.  
Amen.<sup>100</sup>

▣ *litany of memory and potential*

LEADER

**Behold: the ripples of fire  
buried deep in the dark, rich ground.**

PEOPLE

We are here.  
We bring our memories and legacy.  
We bring our bamboo and rice.  
We bring our taro and palm.  
We bring our earth and ocean.

LEADER

**Behold: the first shoots that burst out  
from the ground and reach toward the sun.**

PEOPLE

We are here.  
We bring our struggles and hopes.  
We bring our shovels and picks  
to this land of opportunity.  
We bring our irons and ditches  
to this land of promise.  
We bring our broken hands and weeping hearts  
to this land of milk and honey.

LEADER

**Behold: the golden flower that blooms with all the beauty  
and the power and fragrance of almighty God!**

PEOPLE

We are not yet here,  
but we are coming.  
Help us, O God,  
to open our minds,  
to open our hearts,  
to open our spirits  
to the bright, new potential you have given us  
in each moment of life.

LEADER

**We thank you, O God.**

PEOPLE

We thank you, O God.<sup>101</sup>

☐ *peace*

LEADER

**Eternal God, who brought forth all worlds  
from the womb of your being  
and nurtured creation to splendor  
in the cradle of your care:**

PEOPLE

We praise you for your loving-kindness  
toward all you have made  
and for a universe still expanding beyond the stars.

LEADER

**We rejoice that you have raised us from dust  
and breathed living breath into our frames,  
that we may love and serve you in perfect freedom.**

PEOPLE

We lift before you a world burdened  
with the power to incinerate itself  
and to return to you the breathless dust  
of a silenced earth.

LEADER

**God, in your mercy,  
show us the way of justice and peace,  
lest in the defense of what cannot be defended,  
we offer death a winnerless victory.**

PEOPLE

Speak to all peoples,  
but speak especially to us,  
that our nation may not lift up sword against any nation,  
neither provoke war  
by a readiness that invites war.

LEADER

**God, in your gentleness,  
wean us from the enemy within ourselves,  
that we may have grace and courage to prepare for peace  
with more diligence  
than any who labor to prepare for war.**

PEOPLE

Forgive us for not doing anything,  
because we cannot do everything,

and for not taking first steps,  
because we cannot see the last step  
on the journey that peace requires.

LEADER

**God, in your faithfulness,  
do not turn away from us  
when we place our trust in megatons of destruction  
rather than in you.**

PEOPLE

From the lips of Jesus Christ,  
let us hear again the call,  
“Blessed are those who work for peace;  
they shall be called the children of God.”

LEADER

**Come, Holy Spirit,  
let your tongues of fire stir us  
to a Pentecost of peace,  
lest the tongues of the technicians of war vaporize us  
in a holocaust of hate.**

PEOPLE

Hear our prayer, O God,  
for the sake of the world you pronounced good  
at the dawn of creation,  
and for the world you loved enough  
to send us Jesus Christ,  
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.<sup>102</sup>

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## OFFERTORY SENTENCES AND PRAYERS

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Ⓐ

The psalmist said:  
Behold, God is my helper;  
God is the upholder of my life.  
With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you;  
I will give thanks to your name, O God,  
for it is good.  
For you have delivered me from every trouble.<sup>103</sup>

**B**

Let your light so shine before people,  
that they may see your good works  
and give glory to God who is in heaven.<sup>104</sup>

**C**

All people shall give as they are able,  
according to the blessings  
which God has given them.

**D**

Remember the words of Jesus:  
It is more blessed to give than to receive.<sup>105</sup>

**E**

What an abundance of gifts we have to offer:  
musical talent, the melody of laughter,  
the use of our hands in cooking and repairs,  
the use of our minds in problem solving,  
curiosity, compassion,  
patience, urgency,  
spiritual reservoirs, financial resources,  
obedience and courage to act.

All these gifts,  
and others which bear our personal marks,  
are symbolized in our offering  
for the work of the church.

Let us commit ourselves in service  
as we worship God with our offerings.<sup>106</sup>

**F**

Accept these offerings now placed on your altar,  
O God, the giver of every good and perfect gift.  
Grant that they may be symbols of our love  
and of ourselves now offered more fully to you.  
Use these gifts and us, we pray,  
to the end that your realm may come  
and your will be done on earth,  
even as it is done in heaven;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
Amen.<sup>107</sup>



All good gifts around us come from you,  
O God.  
You have given us life and new life in Christ.  
As you have given us gifts,  
so we offer our gifts  
that we may be gifts to one another,  
even as Jesus so taught and lived.  
Amen.<sup>108</sup>



O God, most merciful and gracious,  
of whose bounty we have all received,  
accept, we pray, this offering of your people.  
Remember in your love those who have brought it  
and those for whom it is given;  
and so follow it with your blessing  
that it may promote peace and goodwill among all people  
and advance the realm of our Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.<sup>109</sup>



God,  
we present these offerings  
that they may be used  
to extend your liberating reign.  
With them,  
we offer our varied ministries in the days ahead  
that each of us may be part of your answer  
to the cries of the world.  
Amen.<sup>110</sup>



LEADER

**What we have we bring:**

PEOPLE

Our good intentions, our unknown motives,

LEADER

**Our uncertainties about life,  
our grasp of truth,**

PEOPLE

Our time,  
our uneasiness with what is.

LEADER

**We offer this in the midst of what remains unspoken**

PEOPLE

And affirm that it is received.

LEADER

**Amen.**

PEOPLE

Amen.<sup>111</sup>

---

## COMMISSIONINGS AND BENEDICTIONS

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**A**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds  
in the knowledge and love of God  
and of Jesus Christ  
and the blessing of God Almighty remain with you always.  
Amen.<sup>112</sup>

**B**

Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling,  
and to present you faultless  
before the presence of God's glory with exceeding joy;  
to the only wise God our Savior,  
be glory and majesty, dominion and power,  
both now and for ever.  
Amen.<sup>113</sup>

**C**

The grace of God,  
deeper than our imagination;  
the strength of Christ,  
stronger than our need;  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,  
richer than our togetherness;  
guide and sustain us today  
and in all our tomorrows.  
Amen.<sup>114</sup>

Ⓓ

O Christ, our only Savior,  
so dwell within us  
that we may go forth  
with the light of hope in our eyes  
and the fire of inspiration on our lips,  
your word on our tongues,  
and your love in our hearts.  
Amen.<sup>115</sup>

Ⓔ

And now unto the one who is able to keep us from falling  
and lift us from the dark valley of despair  
to the bright mountain of hope,  
from the midnight of desperation  
to the daybreak of joy:  
to God be power and authority,  
for ever and ever.<sup>116</sup>  
Amen.

Ⓕ

LEADER

**We have worshiped God together;**

PEOPLE

Now we go our separate ways.

LEADER

**May the spirit which has blessed us here**

PEOPLE

Be your spirit in each day that comes!

Amen.<sup>117</sup>

Ⓖ

May the great Ruler of all high places,  
God of many names,  
touch you with a wind that keeps you strong,  
for all the days to come.  
Amen.<sup>118</sup>

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# Notes

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All adaptations in this book are by the United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership.

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## INTRODUCTION

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1. Luke 10:27; see also Deuteronomy 6:4-5.
2. H. Strathmann, "Leitourgeo and Leitourgia in the New Testament," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), 4:226-228.
3. Amos 5:21-24, Matthew 25:31-46, Romans 12.
4. Luke 10:27-37; see also Leviticus 19:18.
5. J.D. Crichton, "A Theology of Worship," in *The Study of Liturgy*, ed. Cheslyn Jones et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 7ff. For worship as the recapitulation of salvation history, see J.J. von Allmen, *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 32.
6. R.T. Beckwith, "The Jewish Background to Christian Worship," in *Study of Liturgy*, ed. Jones et al., 41ff. See also John C. Shetler et al., *Handbook on Worship* (Committee on Worship, Division of Church and Ministry, Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ, 1981), 3-5.
7. Lucien Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy*, trans. M.J. O'Connell (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1967), 3-19. See also Ilion T. Jones, *A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 37-52.
8. Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy*, 26, and Beckwith, "Jewish Background," 43.
9. Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1954), 336-337.
10. Acts 15.
11. Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy*, 73ff., 123ff. See also Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., and George E. Bricker, eds., *Catholic and Reformed: Selected Writings of John Williamson Nevin* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978), 327.
12. Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 5, 103ff.
13. Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy*, 123-127.
14. Marion J. Hatchett, *Commentary on the American Prayer Book* (Minneapolis: Seabury Press, 1980), 3.
15. Hatchett, *Commentary*, 5, and D.H. Tripp, "Protestantism and the Eucharist," in *Study of Liturgy*, Jones, 257-259.
16. Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr., "The History of the Liturgical Renewal," in *The Liturgical Renewal of the Church*, ed. Theodore Otto Wedel et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 21ff.
17. Karl Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God According to the Teaching of the Reformation*, 211ff., cited in A. Allan McArthur, *The Christian Year and the Lectionary* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1958), 21-22.
18. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), paragraph 12, p. 12.
19. Quoted and discussed in Paul Whitman Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 47ff.
20. Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., "Liturgy and Ecumenism," in *Ecumenical Trends* 10 (May 1981): 68.
21. *The Lord's Day Service* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1964), 5.
22. *A Book of Worship for Free Churches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), v.
23. *Book of Worship* (Evangelical and Reformed Church) (St. Louis: Eden Publishing

House, 1947), 3-4. Copyright renewed by United Church Press.

24. Hebrews 13:8, adapted.

25. For example, see the discussion of the womb of God in Jurgen Moltmann, "The Motherly Father: Is Trinitarian Patripassianism Replacing Theological Patriarchalism?" *Concilium* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 143: 51-56. See also Phyllis Trible, "The Nature of God," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume, ed. Keith Grim et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 368-369.

26. *Inclusive Language Guidelines for Use and Study in the United Church of Christ* (New York: United Church of Christ, 1980), 1-2.

27. It is especially important that words like *blind*, *black*, *poor*, and others not be used judgmentally. Likewise, optional directions concerning standing, sitting, kneeling, or movement should take into account the physical limitations of leaders and members of the congregation. Where fermented wine is used for Holy Communion, grape juice should be available for alcoholic individuals and others who wish to abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages.

28. Geoffrey Wainwright, "Recent Eucharistic Revision," in *Study of Liturgy*, Jones, 287.

29. "Eucharist with Children: Report of the Bad Segeberg Consultation," in *And Do Not Hinder Them*, ed. Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz, Faith and Order Paper No. 109 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), 14-15.

30. Karl Heinrich Bierritz, "The Lord's Supper as Sacrament of Fellowship," in Muller-Fahrenholz, *And Do Not Hinder Them*, 41.

31. Bierritz, "Supper as Sacrament," 45.

32. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, commentary on paragraph 19, p. 15.

33. William H. Willimon, *The Service of God* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 185.

34. John 12:32, *King James Version*, adapted.

35. Hatchett, *Commentary*, 4.

36. J. Edgar Park, *The Miracle of Preaching* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1936), 113, quoted in Kenneth G. Phifer, *A Protestant Case for Liturgical Renewal* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 107.

37. Hugh T. Kerr, ed., *A Compend of the Institutes of the Christian Religion by John Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), 177-178, quoted in Phifer, *Protestant Case*, 74.

38. Henry Martyn Dexter, *A Handbook of Congregationalism* (Boston: Congregational Publishing House, 1880), 88.

39. Stanley Samuel Harakas, *Living the Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing Co., 1974), 7.

40. Walter M. Abbot, ed., *Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 144.

41. Abbot, *Documents of Vatican II*, 144.

42. Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western*

*Church* (New York: Meridian, 1961), 194.

43. The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Hymnal Corp. and Seabury Press, 1977), 9.

44. 1 Peter 2:9.

45. Joseph Gelineau, "Music and Singing in the Liturgy," in *Study of Liturgy*, Jones, 440.

46. Philip H. Pfatteicher and Carlos R. Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy—Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 79.

47. Abbot, *Documents of Vatican II*, 171.

48. Pfatteicher and Messerli, *Manual on Liturgy*, 81.

49. Exodus 15:19-21 and 2 Samuel 6:12-15.

50. See Constance Fisher and Doug Adams, *Dancing with Early Christians* (Austin, Texas: Sharing Co., 1983); Doug Adams, *Congregational Dancing in Christian Worship*, rev. ed. (Austin, Texas: Sharing Co., 1984); and Margaret Taylor and Doug Adams, *Hymns in Action for Everyone 9 to 90 Dancing Today* (Austin, Texas: Sharing Co., 1985).

51. United Church of Christ laywoman Margaret Taylor pioneered in this area with her early works now reprinted, *Look Up and Live: Dance as Prayer and Meditation*, ed. Doug Adams (Austin, Texas: Sharing Co., 1980), and *A Time to Dance: Symbolic Movement in Worship*, ed. Doug Adams (Austin, Texas: Sharing Co., 1980).

52. See Marian B. MacLeod, *Dancing Through Pentecost: Dance Language from Pentecost to Thanksgiving*, ed. Doug Adams (Austin, Texas: Sharing Co., 1981), and Dane Packard, *The Church Becoming Christ's Body: The Small Church's Manual of Dances for Holy Seasons*, ed. Doug Adams (Austin, Texas: Sharing Co., 1981). Movement can be used creatively to celebrate the gifts of groups of different ages, cultural backgrounds, and degrees of physical mobility.

53. Joseph Gelineau, *The Liturgy Today and Tomorrow*, trans. Diana Livingstone (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1979), 121.

54. Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 305-335.

55. Philip Carrington, *The Primitive Church Calendar, a Study in the Making of the Marcan Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 1:16.

56. A. Allan McArthur, *The Christian Year and Lectionary Reform* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1958), 38.

57. See Horace T. Allen, Jr., "Introduction," in *Common Lectionary: The Lectionary Proposed by the Consultation on Common Texts* (New York: Church Hymnal Corp., 1983), 10.

58. McArthur, *Christian Year and Lectionary*, 11.

59. McArthur, *Christian Year and Lectionary*, 11. See also Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 329.

60. Peter Cobb, "Calendar," in *Study of Liturgy*, Jones, 415.

61. McArthur, *Christian Year and Lectionary*, 76.
62. Cobb, "Calendar," 418.
63. A. Allan McArthur, *The Evolution of the Christian Year* (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1953), 42.
64. McArthur, *Evolution of the Christian Year*, 53.
65. John Wilkinson, trans., *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 1981), 25:12.
66. McArthur, *Evolution of Christian Year*, 66-67.
67. Cobb, "Calendar," 413.
68. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 29.
69. Edward T. Horn, III, *The Christian Year* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 112.
70. Cobb, "Calendar," 407.
71. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 37:6.
72. Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 349.
73. McArthur, *Evolution of Christian Year*, 79.
74. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 41.
75. Cobb, "Calendar," 411.
76. See the discussion concerning ordinary time in Allen, "Introduction," 11, 22, and in the same volume, "Comparative List of Titles for Sundays and Special Days," 51-53.
77. Wilkinson, *Egeria*, 22:2.
78. McArthur, *Christian Year and Lectionary*, 51.
79. G.G. Willis, *St. Augustine's Lectionary* (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), 9.
80. Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 364.
81. McArthur, *Christian Year and Lectionary*, 27.
82. See *Common Lectionary: The Lectionary Proposed by the Consultation on Common Texts* (New York: Church Hymnal Corp., 1983). This lectionary is provisional until testing has been completed in 1989.
83. Abbot, *Documents of Vatican II*, paragraph 51, p. 155.

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## SERVICES OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

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1. Ephesians 2:19.
2. Matthew 18:20.
3. 2 Corinthians 13:14, adapted.
4. Psalm 124:8, adapted.
5. 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, adapted.
6. John 1:1.
7. Romans 5:5.
8. Based on Luke 4:18-19.
9. 1 John 1:8-9, adapted.
10. Adapted and reprinted from *Lutheran Book of Worship*, copyright © 1978, *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Used by permission of Augsburg Publishing House.
11. *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: A New Text*. Copyright © 1984 Consultation on Church Union. Used by permission.
12. Adapted by permission from *Services of the Church*, #1. Copyright © 1966 and 1969 United Church Press.
13. Based on 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.
14. Beginning with "For in the night of betrayal" adapted from *An Order of Worship for the Proclamation of the Word of God and the Celebration of the Lord's Supper*. Copyright © 1968 Executive Committee, Consultation on Church Union (COCU). Used by permission. COCU has prepared a new text, rather than adapting this text. See *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: A New Text*.
15. International Consultation on English Texts.
16. Both texts are from the International Consultation on English Texts.
17. *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: A New Text*. Copyright © 1984 Consultation on Church Union. Used by permission.
18. International Consultation on English Texts, adapted.
19. Adapted by permission from *Services of the Church* #1. Copyright © 1966 and 1969 United Church Press.
20. Hebrews 13:20-21, adapted.
21. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982).
22. 2 Corinthians 13:14, adapted.
23. 1 John 4:7-8, *Good News Bible*.
24. Micah 6:6, 8, adapted.
25. Matthew 18:20.
26. 1 John 1:8-9, adapted.
27. Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12, adapted.
28. Romans 5:1-2, adapted.
29. Matthew 5:23-24, *Good News Bible*, adapted.
30. Romans 12:1, *Good News Bible*, adapted.
31. International Consultation on English Texts.
32. John 6:35, adapted.
33. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, adapted.
34. Matthew 26:26-28, adapted.
35. Revelation 1:17-18.
36. The words said in giving the bread and wine in option B are used by permission from *Services of Word and Sacrament*, II. Copyright © 1966 United Church Press.
37. Adapted by permission from *Services of Word and Sacrament*, II. Copyright © 1966 United Church Press.
38. Based on Numbers 6:24-26.
39. International Consultation on English Texts, adapted.
40. Isaiah 55:2-3, *Good News Bible*.
41. John 6:35, adapted.
42. Luke 19:5-6, 9, *Good News Bible*, adapted.
43. Matthew 18:20, adapted.

44. This is an adaptation of a traditional invitation. One version can be found in *The Minister's Service Book for Pulpit and Parish Use*, ed. and comp. James Dalton Morrison (New York: Harper and Bros., 1937), 113-114.

45. Matthew 8:8, adapted.

46. John 8:10,11, adapted.

47. 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, adapted.

48. International Consultation on English Texts.

49. The words said in giving the bread and wine are used by permission from *Services of Word and Sacrament* II. Copyright © 1966 United Church Press.

50. Matthew 5:14-16, adapted.

51. Adapted by permission from *Services of the Church* #1. Copyright © 1966 and 1969 United Church Press.

52. Numbers 6:24-26, adapted.

53. John 14:27.

54. John 6:35, adapted.

55. Matthew 18:20, *Good News Bible*, adapted.

56. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, adapted.

57. International Consultation on English Texts.

58. The words said in giving the bread and

wine are used by permission from *Services of Word and Sacrament*, II. Copyright © 1966 United Church Press.

59. Numbers 6:24-26, adapted.

60. Adapted and reprinted from *Lutheran Book of Worship*, copyright © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Used by permission of Augsburg Publishing House.

61. International Consultation on English Texts.

62. Source unknown, quoted in *Jesus Christ—The Life of the World* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1983).

63. Adapted by permission from *Services of the Church* #1. Copyright © 1966 and 1969 United Church Press.

64. 2 Corinthians 13:14, adapted.

65. 2 Corinthians 13:14, adapted.

66. Matthew 18:20.

67. International Consultation on English Texts.

68. Mary Ann Neeval in *Bread for the Journey: Resources for Worship*, ed. Ruth C. Duck. Copyright © 1981 The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

69. John 1:1.

70. International Consultation on English Texts.

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## SERVICES OF BAPTISM AND AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

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1. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982).

2. Ephesians 4:4-6, adapted.

3. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27.

4. Mark 10:13-16, adapted.

5. Matthew 3:13-17, *Good News Bible*, adapted.

6. Matthew 28:19, adapted.

7. John 3:3, 5, adapted.

8. Romans 6:3-4, adapted.

9. Adapted by permission from *Services of the Church* #3. Copyright 1969 United Church Press.

10. Adapted by permission from *Services of the Church* #3. Copyright 1969 United Church Press.

11. John 15:5, 7, 10, 11, adapted.

12. Romans 10:8-10, *Good News Bible*, adapted.

13. Ephesians 2:19-22, adapted.

14. Adapted from *Book of Common Worship*, Church of South India. Copyright 1963 Oxford

University Press. Used by permission.

15. Adapted by permission from *Services of the Church* #3. Copyright 1969 United Church Press.

16. Adapted from *The Episcopal Church, The Book of Common Prayer* (Boston: Seabury Press, 1979).

17. Adapted by permission from *Uniting Church Worship Services: Baptism and Related Services*. Copyright 1981 The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly Commission on Liturgy.

18. John 15:5, 7, 10, 11, adapted.

19. Romans 10:8-10, *Good News Bible*, adapted.

20. Ephesians 2:19-22, adapted.

21. Adapted by permission from *Services of the Church* #3. Copyright 1969 United Church Press.

22. Adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.

23. Adapted by permission from *Uniting Church Worship Services: Baptism and Related Services*. Copyright 1981 The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly Commission on Liturgy.

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## SERVICES OF A CHURCH'S LIFE

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1. Luke 2:10, adapted.

2. Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1954), 356.

3. Hebrews 12:2, adapted.

4. Based on Luke 4:18-19.

5. This is an adaptation of a traditional invita-

tion. One version can be found in *The Minister's Service Book for Pulpit and Parish Use*, ed. and comp. James Dalton Morrison (New York: Harpers & Bros., 1937), 113-114.

6. Psalm 100: 1, 2, 5, adapted.

7. Psalm 51: 10, 11, 7, adapted.

8. 1 John 1:8-9, adapted.
9. Psalm 51:1-3, adapted from The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* (Boston: Seabury Press, 1979).
10. Romans 5: 6, 8, adapted.
11. Hebrews 10: 19, 21-22, *Good News Bible*, adapted.
12. John 13:1, 2, 4-17, *Good News Bible*, adapted.
13. John 8:12, adapted.
14. Based on Psalm 139:11-12.
15. 1 John 1:5, 7; adapted.
16. Based on John 1:1-4, 14, 10, 12; 3:19.
17. This service is adapted and reprinted from *Lutheran Book of Worship*, copyright © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship. Used by permission of Augsburg Publishing House.
18. John 1:1, 4-5, adapted.
19. 1 Corinthians 12: 12-13, 27, adapted.
20. Matthew 5:23-24, *Good News Bible*, adapted.
21. Order from Consultation on Church Union, Research Park, 151 Wall Street, Princeton, N.J. 08540.
22. Genesis 22: 17.
23. Isaiah 11: 6.
24. Matthew 12: 48-50, adapted.
25. Psalm 51:1-3, adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
26. Psalm 51:1-3, adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
27. Adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
28. 1 Timothy 1:15, adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
29. 1 John 1:9, adapted.
30. Psalm 32:5, adapted.
31. Adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
32. 2 Corinthians 13:14, adapted.
33. Psalm 103:1-5, adapted.
34. Luke 11:9-10, adapted.
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36. Exodus 20:1-17, adapted.
37. Mark 12:29-31, adapted.
38. Matthew 5:3-12, adapted.
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40. Psalm 32:3-5, adapted.
41. 1 John 1:8-9, adapted.
42. Hebrews 4:14, 16, adapted.
43. Adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
44. Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12, adapted.
45. Romans 5:6, 8, adapted.
46. Matthew 11:28-30, *Good News Bible*.
47. John 8:10, 11, adapted.
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50. John 14:27.
51. Matthew 18:20.
52. Psalm 46:1-3, *Good News Bible*.
53. Hebrews 4:16, adapted.
54. Romans 5:8, adapted.
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56. Galatians 6:2.
57. Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12, adapted.
58. Romans 5:8, adapted.
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63. Adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
64. Numbers 6:24-26, adapted.
65. 2 Corinthians 13:14, adapted.
66. Luke 10:9. Scripture taken from *Holy Bible: New International Version*. Copyright © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.
67. Mark 11:24.
68. Romans 12:2, *Good News Bible*.
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70. Luke 11, 9-10, adapted.
71. Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12, adapted.
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78. Adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
79. Adapted by permission from *Pastor's Manual*, Church of the Brethren. Copyright 1978 The Brethren Press.
80. Adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
81. Adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
82. Numbers 6:24-26, adapted.

## SERVICES OF MARRIAGE

1. 2 Corinthians 13:14, adapted.
2. Based on 1 John 4:7.
3. Based on an unpublished prayer by Ann Asper Wilson.
4. Based on Matthew 19:6.
5. Based on Matthew 19:6.
6. Adapted from *The Worshipbook—Services*. Copyright © 1970 The Westminster Press. Adapted by permission.
7. This prayer, except for the blessing of the children, is adapted from The Episcopal

- Church *The Book of Common Prayer* (Boston: Seabury Press, 1979).
8. International Consultation on English Texts.
  9. From *Orders for Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer*, The New Century Hymnal, Copyright ©1994 The Pilgrim Press
  10. Based on Gospel and Epistle accounts.
  11. Philippians 4:7, adapted.
  12. Numbers 6:24-26, adapted.

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1. Adapted from *The Worshipbook—Services*. Copyright MCMLXX The Westminster Press. Adapted by permission.
2. Matthew 25:23, adapted.
3. International Consultation on English Texts.
4. Matthew 25:40, adapted.
5. Adapted from "In Time of Death" (p. 128) in *Prayers for Daily Use* by Samuel H. Miller. Copyright © 1957 by Samuel H. Miller. Reprinted by permission of Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc.
6. Adapted from The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* (Boston: Seabury Press, 1979).
7. *Book of Common Prayer*.
8. Numbers 6:24-26, adapted.
9. Psalm 145:18-19, adapted.
10. John 11:25-26, adapted.
11. Revelation 1:17-18
12. Isaiah 41:10, adapted.
13. Romans, 6:3-4, *Good News Bible*, adapted.
14. Romans 6:5, adapted.
15. Revelation 14:13, adapted.
16. 2 Corinthians 13:14, adapted.
17. Romans 14:8-9, adapted.

18. Psalm 116:4, 8, 12-13, adapted and reprinted from *Lutheran Book of Worship*, copyright © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*. Used by permission of Augsburg Publishing House.
19. Romans 8:1, 28, 38-39, adapted.
20. International Consultation on English Texts.
21. *Book of Common Prayer*.
22. International Consultation on English Texts, adapted.
23. Hebrews 13:20-21, adapted.
24. Numbers 6:24-26, adapted.
25. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, adapted.
26. 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55, 57, adapted.
27. John 16:22, adapted.
28. Revelation 22:12, 13, adapted.
29. International Consultation on English Texts.
30. Adapted by permission from *Services of the Church* #5. Copyright © 1969 United Church Press.
31. Adapted from *Book of Common Prayer*.
32. Adapted from a prayer by John Henry Cardinal Newman quoted in *Services of the Church* #5.
33. Romans 15:13.
34. Philippians 4:7, adapted.

## SERVICES OF RECOGNITION AND AUTHORIZATION

1. 2 Timothy 2:1-2, 15, *Good News Bible*, adapted.
2. *Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ*, rev. ed., 1984, Preamble and Article V, paragraph 20.
3. Revelation 1:4, 5, adapted.
4. Ephesians 3:20-21, adapted.
5. *Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ*, rev. ed., 1984, Preamble and Article V, paragraphs 2, 17, and 19.

6. Isaiah 6:8, adapted.
7. Isaiah 52:7-8, *Good News Bible*, adapted.
8. Isaiah 61:1, adapted.
9. Romans 10:14, 17, adapted.
10. Matthew 4:19, adapted.
11. Matthew 20:25-27, adapted.
12. Ephesians 4:11-12, adapted.
13. Hebrews 12:1-2, adapted.
14. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18, *Good News Bible*.
15. 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-7, *Good News Bible*,

adapted.

16. *Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ*, rev. ed., 1984, Preamble and Article V, paragraphs 17 and 24.

17. 1 Thessalonians 5:15-18, *Good News Bible*, adapted.

18. Ephesians 3:21, adapted.

19. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 12, 26-27, *Good News Bible*, adapted.

20. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4, *Good News Bible*, adapted.

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## RESOURCES

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1. Isaiah 40:3-5, adapted.
2. Isaiah 52:7, adapted.
3. Psalm 96:11.
4. Matthew 11:10, adapted.
5. Isaiah 44:21-22, adapted.
6. Isaiah 55:12, adapted.
7. Luke 2:10-11, adapted.
8. Luke 2:15, adapted.
9. Luke 2:14, adapted.
10. Luke 2:14, adapted.
11. Luke 2:14, adapted.
12. Psalm 19:1, adapted.
13. Based on Luke 1:68-79 and Colossians 3:12-17.

14. John 1:14, adapted.

15. John 8:12, adapted.

16. Matthew 2:2, adapted.

17. Matthew 5:14, 16, adapted.

18. Hebrews 12:2, adapted.

19. Mark 8:34, adapted.

20. 2 Corinthians 5:17, adapted.

21. 1 Corinthians 15:20, 55, 57, adapted.

22. Adapted by permission from *A Book of Worship for Free Churches*. Copyright © 1948 Board of Home Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches; copyright renewed 1976 by United Church Press.

23. 1 Peter 1:3, adapted.

24. John 15:5, 12, adapted.

25. Revelation 7:12, adapted.

26. Ruth C. Duck in *Bread for the Journey: Resources for Worship*, ed. Ruth C. Duck. Copyright © 1981 The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

27. 1 Peter 2:9, adapted.
28. Romans 15:13.
29. Acts 2:17, adapted.
30. Acts 1:8, adapted.
31. Acts 1:8.
32. Ephesians 3:20-21, adapted.
33. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, adapted.
34. Psalm 84:1-5, adapted.
35. 2 Corinthians 2:14, adapted.
36. Based on the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ.
37. International Consultation on English Texts.
38. International Consultation on English Texts, adapted. The only change is the omission of the word *men* in line 13, a commonly accepted

practice in the ecumenical church.

39. This covenant of the first Non-Separatist congregationally organized Puritan Church in America (1629) disclaimed any superior ecclesiastical power and took for granted Calvinist belief.

40. The historical reorganization of Congregationalism effected at the 1913 National Council structured a more coherent and efficient relationship between the churches and their affiliated missionary societies. The statement of faith adopted there lifted up freedom of conscience, autonomy of the local church, relationships with other communions in matters of common Christian concern, and church unity in three sections: "Faith" (included here), "Polity," and "The Wider Fellowship."

41. Approved by the Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ, 1959.

42. Revised 1976, by Robert V. Moss, Jr., President of the United Church of Christ, 1969-1976.

43. Approved by the Executive Council in 1981 for use in connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Church of Christ.

44. The first five principles were generally held early in the history of the various branches of the Christian Church that later became the United Church of Christ. Even documents of the twentieth century sometimes show only five principles. Very early, however, especially in the West and South, the sixth principle of union was affirmed but given various interpretations from cooperation to merger.

45. Adopted by the General Assembly, Kansas City, Mo., 1968. The first line of the preamble, omitted here, reads "As members of the Christian Church."

46. International Consultation on English Texts.

47. Exodus 20:1-17, paraphrase.

48. Matthew 22:37-39, adapted.

49. Psalm 46:1.

50. Psalms 118:24, 95:6, adapted.

51. John 4:24, adapted.

52. Psalm 100:2, 4-5, adapted.

53. Psalms 113:2-3, 92:1-2, adapted.

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58. William C. Smith, Jr., in *Worship: Inclusive Language Resources*. Copyright 1977 United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership.

59. William Bright, nineteenth-century church historian and hymn writer, adapted.

60. John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, 4th century, adapted.

61. Gregorian Sacramentary, 7th century, adapted.

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78. Used by permission of the author, Donald M. Proctor.

79. From the Liturgy of Malabar quoted in *Services of the Church* #1.

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115. G.C. Binyon, *Prayers for the City of God* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1927).

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