

Book of Public Worship

July 2024

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Ordination and Installation or Induction

Order of Service of Ordination and Installation or Induction of ministers, assistant ministers, associate ministers, professors, those called to special work and missionaries

The content of this service is as defined in the Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, paragraphs 10-14, and 212.

Throughout this order of service,

PP is used for the name of the Presbytery.

CC is used for the name of the Congregation.

NN is used for the name of the minister-elect or spouse.

XX is used for the name of the country to which the minister-elect will go.

The Presbytery having been previously constituted by prayer, the order of service shall include the following:

Opening worship, including praise, prayer and the reading of the Word.

An appropriate sermon, or an address or statement dealing with the principles of the Church, its ministry and government.

The minister-elect takes his/her place before the Presbytery.

The Moderator says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, who, having ascended to the right hand of the Father, has given gifts for building up the Church, which is his body, we are meeting as (a commission of) the Presbytery of *PP* (to ordain *NN* to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and) to *install/induct him/her* to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or – to install *him/her* to the Home Mission and induct *him/her* to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or – to induct *him/her* as *assistant minister/associate minister* in *CC*.

or – to *install/induct him/her* to the position of *Principal/Professor* of [or other post] in this College to which *he/she* has been appointed.

or – to *install/induct him/her* to missionary [or other] service in *XX*.

or – to *install/induct him/her* as a minister in recognised service in *his/her* appointment as

As required by the Law of the Church, the Clerk will now read the Statement of the Standards of the Church, including the Rule of Faith. (Code Chapter I, section III, paragraphs 10–14).

The Clerk reads:

The Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the supreme standard of the Church.

It is the privilege, right and duty of every person to examine the Scriptures, and each individual is bound to submit to their authority. Having formed a definite conviction as to what the will of God is upon any subject, it is each person's duty to accept and obey it. In exercising this God-given right of private judgment, individual Christians are not to set their reason above the Word of God, or to refuse light from any quarter. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they are to use their reason to ascertain the divine will, as revealed in Scripture, and are to refuse to subject conscience to any authority except that of the Word of God. In the words of the Westminster Confession "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship."

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a witness for Christ, has adopted subordinate standards. In these are found what the Church understands the Word of God to teach on certain important points of doctrine and worship. These subordinate standards are a testimony for truth and against error, and serve as a bond of union for members of the Church.

The Confession of Faith (as approved by the Church of Scotland in her Act of 1647), and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, prepared by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, are the subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Accepting these subordinate standards, the Church holds that civil rulers must be obedient to Christ in their own area of authority, yet they ought not to attempt, in any way, to constrain any person's religious beliefs or intrude upon their rights of conscience.

The Church alone has the right to interpret and explain her standards, under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

Thereafter the Moderator shall put to the minister-elect the prescribed questions as follows:

The Moderator addresses the minister-elect:

NN, having heard the statement of the Standards of this Church, including the Rule of Faith, I now require you to answer the following questions. The first two are a public profession of your personal faith and sense of call.

- (i) Do you believe in one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and do you confess the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?

I do.

- (ii) So far as you know your own heart, are the call of God, zeal for His glory, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire for the salvation of men and women through the power of the Holy Spirit, your central motives as you offer yourself for this new sphere of service?

They are.

And now four questions concerning your understanding of the Church of Jesus Christ and this Presbyterian Church in Ireland in particular.

- (iii) Do you believe the Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

I do.

- (iv) Do you promise, in conformity with our Subordinate Standards, to uphold the reformed doctrine, worship, government and discipline of this Church and, by the grace of God, to do so in a spirit of love towards all your brothers and sisters in Christ so as to preserve the peace and unity of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as part of the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ?

I do.

- (v) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland adheres to the fundamental doctrines of the faith, set out in the Supreme and Subordinate Standards of this Church. Do you promise to teach them and defend them to the utmost of your power, against all error?

I do.

- (vi) Do you accept the Presbyterian form of Church government to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and do you promise to yield submission in the Lord to the courts of this Church and to take your due part in the administration of its affairs so long as you remain a minister of this Church?

I do.

Now, two questions on the conduct of your ministry.

- (vii) Do you commit yourself, in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, to live a Godly life; and faithfully, diligently, and graciously to discharge the duties of your ministry, seeking in all things the advancement of the kingdom of God?

I do.

- (viii) Having accepted the call of this Congregation, do you promise, through the grace of God, to be a faithful minister of the gospel among this people; preaching the gospel of the grace of God, administering the Sacraments, nurturing children and young people, visiting and teaching, pastoring all the people, especially those in need, aiding in the government of the Church and discharging all other duties incumbent upon you as a minister of Jesus Christ?

or

Having accepted the call of the Council for Mission in Ireland to this Home Mission charge, do you promise, through the grace of God, to be a faithful minister of the gospel among this people; preaching the gospel of the grace of God, administering the Sacraments, nurturing children and young people, visiting and teaching, pastoring all the people, especially those in need, aiding in the government of the Church and discharging all other duties incumbent upon you as a minister of Jesus Christ?

or

Having accepted the call to become *associate minister/assistant minister* in this Congregation, do you undertake to retain your appointment for a period of not less than 12 months, in support of the minister; and do you promise through the grace of God, to be a faithful minister of the gospel among this people; preaching the gospel of the grace of God, administering the Sacraments, nurturing children and young people, visiting and teaching, pastoring all the people, especially those in need, aiding in the government of the Church and discharging all other duties incumbent upon you as a minister of Jesus Christ?

or

Having accepted the appointment of the General Assembly, do you promise, through God's grace, to be faithful in your ministry in the position in Union Theological College to which you have been appointed and in all the other duties and opportunities falling to you as a minister of Jesus Christ?

or

Having accepted the call of the Council of the General Assembly, do you promise, through God's grace, to be faithful in your ministry in the position to which you have been appointed?

or

Having accepted the call of the Council of the General Assembly, do you promise, through God's grace, as a minister in recognised service to the Church in your appointment as, to be faithful in your ministry, discharging your duties and using your opportunities of witness and of service with all diligence as a minister of Jesus Christ?

I do.

Subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith

The Moderator addresses the minister-elect in these words:

You have confessed your belief that the Word of God, as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. It is under that supreme standard, which alone is final, that this Church holds its subordinate standards. This being understood, are you now prepared to subscribe, in terms of the General Assembly's Formula, "I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code, Chapter 1, paragraphs 12-14, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith."?

I am.

The Formula is signed in the Minute Book of Presbytery.

In cases certified by the Council for Global Mission, where the spouse is to be commissioned with the person being ordained or installed, the following question shall be asked of the spouse:

Do you, NN, commit yourself to be a partner with your *husband/wife* in the missionary service to which *he/she* is being appointed?

I do.

The Congregation stands and the minister-elect kneels.

For services which include ordination those who are to participate in the laying on of hands take their places. The Moderator shall lead in prayer saying the following or similar:

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you call us in your mercy; you sustain us by your power. Through every generation, your wisdom guides your people.

You sent your only Son, Jesus Christ, to be the apostle and high priest of our faith and the shepherd of our souls. By his life, death and resurrection he has declared your love for the whole world, satisfied your justice, and demonstrated his victory over sin, and death. Having ascended into heaven, he has poured out his Spirit, making some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip all for the work of ministry and to build up his body, the Church.

The Moderator and an appropriate number of other members of Presbytery including at least two other ministers lay hands on the minister-elect.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us the Presbytery of *PP* and this your servant *NN*, whom we now, in your name and in obedience to your will, by prayer and the laying on of hands, ordain to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament within the Church Universal; and *install/induct him/her* to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or – install *him/her* to the Home Mission and induct *him/her* to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or – induct *him/her* as *assistant minister/associate minister* in *CC*.

or – *install/induct him/her* to the position of *Principal/Professor* of [or other post] in this College to which *he/she* has been appointed.

or – *install/induct him/her* to missionary [or other] service in *XX*.

or – *install/induct him/her* as a minister in recognised service in his/her appointment as

May *he/she* be faithful in preaching your word, administering the Sacraments and sharing in the government of the Church as *he/she* fulfils the ministry which you have called *him/her* to undertake.

We pray through Christ who lived and died for us, who rose again, and who reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

For all other services, the Moderator shall lead in prayer saying the following or similar:

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you call us in your mercy; you sustain us by your power. Through every generation, your wisdom guides your people.

You sent your only Son, Jesus Christ, to be the apostle and high priest of our faith and the shepherd of our souls. By his life and his teaching he has declared your love for the whole world, by his death he has satisfied your justice; by his resurrection he has demonstrated his victory over sin, and death. Having ascended into heaven, he has poured out his Spirit, making some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip all for the work of ministry and to build up his body, the Church.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us the Presbytery of *PP* and this your servant *NN*, whom we now, in your name and in obedience to your will, by prayer *install/induct* to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or – install to the Home Mission and induct to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or – induct as *assistant minister/associate minister* in *CC*.

or – *install/induct* to the position of *Principal/Professor* of [or other post] in this College to which *he/she* has been appointed.

or – *install/induct* to missionary [or other] service in *XX*.

or – *install/induct* as a minister in recognised service in his/her appointment as

May *he/she* be faithful in preaching your word, administering the Sacraments and sharing in the government of the Church as *he/she* fulfils the ministry which you have called *him/her* to undertake.

We pray through Christ who lived and died for us, who rose again, and who reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

The Aaronic Blessing (said or sung).

The Moderator, addressing the minister-elect, says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, and by authority of this Presbytery, I now declare you *NN* to have been (ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and) *installed/inducted* to this pastoral charge of *CC*.

or – installed to the Home Mission and inducted to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or – installed as *associate minister/assistant minister* in this Congregation.

or – *installed/inducted* to the position of *Principal/Professor* of [or other post] in this College.

or – *installed/inducted* to missionary [or other] service in the field to which you have been called [and in cases so certified by the Council for Global Mission add, “and together with your *wife/husband*”], to be commissioned for this task.

or – *installed/inducted* as a minister in recognised service to the Church in your appointment as

As a sign of this I, as Moderator, on behalf of the Presbytery, extend to you the right hand of fellowship.

When the minister is being installed or inducted into a Congregation, the Moderator says the following or similar:

Members of the Congregation of *CC*, I am going to ask you two questions. These questions invite you to express your fellowship with your new minister and your commitment to work with *him/her* as you serve Christ together.

Do you, the members of this Congregation, in receiving *NN*, whom you have called to be your minister, offer *him/her* your welcome and promise *him/her* your loving encouragement and prayerful support?

We do.

Will you join regularly with *NN* as *he/she* leads worship and preaches the Word; will you share together with *him/her* in mutually enriching fellowship and will you, together with *him/her*, take up your responsibility for Christian mission in the local community and throughout the world?

We will.

The Moderator says:

Having committed yourselves, Presbytery, minister and people, to each other and to living for the glory of God in this place, we join with one voice in prayer:

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
The power and the glory
For ever and ever

Amen.

Charge: the minister appointed by Presbytery preaches a sermon as a charge to the new minister and to the Congregation.

The service and the meeting of Presbytery shall conclude with the Benediction.

Sacramental Materials

(received by the Board of Mission in Ireland, 12th March 2014)

A Brief Introduction to the Sacraments

In General (WCF 27; LC 161–64)

The Shorter Catechism:

Q92: What is a Sacrament?

A92: A Sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

Christ appointed two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and these are the only Sacraments observed by the Reformed Church. The Sacraments are intended to strengthen the faith of believers, and are a mark of their belonging to Christ. (LC 162) They are neither empty signs, nor are they converting ordinances, but are a means of grace for those within the covenant of grace.

Sacraments may only be dispensed by a minister of Word and Sacrament (WCF 27:4).

Normally a Sacrament should only be observed as a part of public worship, which includes the preaching of the word.

Ministers are to ensure that members are well instructed as to the meaning of the Sacraments in order to avoid superstition on one hand and the temptation to treat them as irrelevant on the other.

Admission to and exclusion from the Sacraments is decided by the Kirk Session, not the minister.

Baptism (WCF28; LC 164–67)

The Shorter Catechism:

Q94: What is Baptism?

A94: Baptism is a Sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Baptism is to be administered to believers and to children where at least one parent professes faith. A credible profession is one which, in the judgment of charity, may be believed.

Baptism with water is correctly administered, either by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. The Westminster Confession states: "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person." (28:3)

Since the Sacraments are viewed as part of the worshipper's response to the Word they should be normally observed after the preaching of the Word.

Trinitarian Baptism may be administered only once to an individual.

Christian parents should be encouraged not to neglect the Baptism of their children.

Parents who are not full church members, but are able to make a credible profession of faith for the Baptism of their children should be encouraged to become full church members.

The Lord's Supper (WCF 29 LC168-77)

The Shorter Catechism:

Q96: What is the Lord's Supper?

A96: The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worth receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

Q97: What is required to be the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A97: It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgement to themselves.

Admission to the Lord's Supper is for those who make a credible profession and who have been Baptised.

Candidates for full Church membership are to be instructed by the minister (Code 40:2) admitted to membership by Kirk Session, and confess Christ as Saviour and Lord in the presence of the Congregation.

More frequent observation of the Lord's Supper is encouraged, the frequency being decided by the Kirk Session. The Kirk Session is responsible for recording in the Communicant Roll, the names of those on the Roll who partake of the Lord's Supper.

The Communion Service is conducted by the minister, normally with elders assisting in serving the elements. A period of silence allows members to meditate on the One who is the centre of their faith. (LC174)

Order for The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

While recognising that variations of practice exist within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we believe the order below to represent the most widespread practice in our Church.

Each Congregation will have its own arrangements for the collection of Communion tokens, and of the weekly offering.

Some features may depend on local practice. Optional items are marked by an asterisk*

Call to worship, such as

“One thing I ask of the Lord...that I may dwell in the house of the Lord...” (Psalm 27:4)

“Give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love...exalt him in the assembly of the people.”
(Psalm 107:31,32)

“To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins...to him be glory and power for ever and ever.” (Revelation 1:5,6)

Praise

Prayer (Adoration, Confession, Illumination)

Scripture Reading

Praise

Sermon

Prayer (in response to the Word)

Invitation

* Praise

* Unveiling of Elements

* Recitation of Creed.

Words of Institution (1 Corinthians 11:23–26)

* Praise

Prayer (Thanksgiving).

Manual Actions

According to the holy institution, example and command of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as a memorial of him, we do this.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread (*minister takes bread*), and when he had given thanks he broke it (*the minister breaks the bread*) and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way, he took the cup (*the minister raises the cup*), saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Note: the Manual Actions should be separate from the distribution...i.e. break bread, take cup; distribute bread, distribute wine.

* Lamb of God. (*Congregational response in italic*)

Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us

Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us

Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world,
grant us your peace

Distribution

(Suggested order...congregation, elders, minister)

* The Peace

“The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”

* Exhortation

e.g. “I urge you, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices etc.”
(Romans 12:1)

Prayer of Dismissal

Praise

Benediction.

Additional Prayers for the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Consecration (before Communion)

Almighty God, as we gather around this table we place our focus firmly on Jesus, your only Son, the Saviour of the world.

In his life and teaching, we are shown how to live.

By his death, our sins are forgiven.

Through his resurrection, we have hope.

Because of his ascension, we know his power and presence.

Gracious God, we come as those who are needy, yet we come with thankful hearts. We believe that you are able to save, able to keep, able to provide us with all grace and spiritual nourishment.

Enable us, as we gather around this table, to see Christ Jesus in all his grace and mercy that we may feed on him in our hearts. Send your Holy Spirit, we pray, that in receiving these elements of bread and wine, they may be for us the communion of the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus.

Hear us as we further join in prayer, in the words that Jesus taught his disciples, “Our Father...”

* * * *

Eternal and ever-living God, we give you thanks for the wonder of your love.

You have brought us through the ups and downs of this everyday life to sit together at this table; in spite of our unworthiness you have given us access to your presence; you have given us your Word to guide us; your church to nurture us; this sacrament to sustain us. Creator God, you have made us and you have set eternity in our hearts. Our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you.

Gracious God, we thank you,

- For the patience that bears with us in all our sinning
- For the grace which covers every spot and stain
- For the love which never lets us go.

Loving God, we thank you

- That Jesus Christ who knew no sin was made sin for us
- That he gave his life as a ransom for many, a ransom for us
- That he was obedient to death, even death on a cross

God-with-us, we thank you

- That Christ rose again, giving us the hope of eternal life
- That he reigns from heaven over all creation
- That he is present among his people by his Spirit

In this confidence, we pray that in receiving these elements of bread and wine, they may be for us the communion of the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus. Through his name we pray. Amen

* * * *

Almighty and Eternal God, with all the company of heaven we join to praise your glorious name.

We thank you that you called all things into being by your creative word, and that you have made us in your image and likeness.

We rejoice that you loved the world so much that you sent your Son to earth for our salvation. We remember with gratitude his birth in Bethlehem, all that he did and taught, the friendships he made, the love he showed and the power he had to overcome evil. We thank you that he became like us in everything but sin, and that by his death and resurrection, he has brought life and immortality to light.

We declare with thanksgiving that by him we have received liberty and life, by him we have access to your presence, by him we are adopted into your family, joint heirs with him of all the riches of your grace. We come to this table, not because we are strong, but because we are weak; not because we are worthy of ourselves, but because of the righteousness of Christ extended to us. We come because Christ loved us and gave himself for us.

Send your Holy Spirit, we pray, that in receiving these elements of bread and wine, they may be for us the communion of the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus.

Prayers of Intercession after Communion:

We give you thanks, Lord God, that we have been privileged to sit again at your table.

Thank you for the fellowship of your people in this place and throughout the world. Grant that this fellowship may inspire us with fresh zeal for your cause and a new faithfulness in your service.

We thank you today for the memory of those who once sat around this table, and who are now with you.

We pray for those who cannot be with us today; those who are sick; those coping with long-term pain or disability; those sad at the loss of a loved one; those discouraged because of the world's pressures; those anxious as they contemplate the future. By your Spirit, bring strength, comfort and help, we pray.

Keep us faithful to Christ, putting him first in our lives, following him every day and, in his power, resisting the evil one.

And when the busy-ness of this life is over, our joys here are ended, and our work is done, grant that we may have perfect communion with you in that kingdom where your people, your saints, your redeemed live for evermore.

Through Jesus we pray. Amen.

* * * *

Gracious Father, we rejoice that in days of change, we can stand firm upon the unchanging rock. May the constancy of your love and grace, made clear to us once again around this table, fill our hearts with quiet confidence that we may be able to face whatever days of stress and trial may lie before us.

O Lord Jesus Christ, your love for us took you all the way to Calvary. You held nothing back in your self-giving. You drank to its dregs the cup of suffering. Give us your compassion for others.

Keep us sensitive to the pleas of the hungry and the cries of the oppressed; and may we not forget those who have no voice and who suffer and wait in silence. Teach us to rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Make us prompt and generous in service and in helpfulness.

O Holy Spirit, may the marks of your presence increasingly be seen in us that our lives may be distinguished by love, joy and peace... Help us so to abide in Christ, that we may be sensitive to your guidance and obedient to your leading.

Though we leave this table satisfied by your goodness, yet may there be within us a hunger and thirst for righteousness. May we love you more, serve you better, and run with patience the race that is set before us, until we see you face to face in glory.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

* * * *

O faithful God, unfailing friend of all who turn to you, once again you have spoken to the depths of our being. These elements of bread and wine have reminded us how greatly we are loved and how serious and demanding is the life to which you have called us.

Soon we must move away from this table of refreshment, to face the renewed challenges of life. Remind us that you always go before us, preparing the way, and that nothing can separate us from your love. We recognise that to live for you is to be engaged in battle – against the world, the flesh and the devil. There are enemies to overcome, sacrifices to be made, crosses to be carried. Continue to equip us for this mighty conflict as we put on our heavenly armour and draw strength together from you. By your grace, may we, too, be able to say that we have fought the good fight, finished the course and kept the faith.

We are not only praying for ourselves. We pray for the whole Church of Jesus Christ. Take away all that mars her unity. May your people so live in Christ and he in them, that we may be effective witnesses to his grace.

Guide the leaders of the nations and all who strive for peace and justice. Look with mercy on the powerless and the oppressed, the poor and the homeless. By the strength of your arm, scatter the proud and fill the hungry with good things. May your kingdom come we pray, in us and in the world.

For the greater glory of Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Dismissal

Gracious God, we thank you for this meal by which we are assured that we belong to the fellowship of your faithful people in heaven and on earth.

May the marks of your presence be increasingly seen in us. Help us to abide in Christ, ever sensitive to his guidance and obedient to his leading.

Grant that, strengthened by this fellowship and by the power of your Holy Spirit, we may continue your work in the world, until we come to the glory of the eternal kingdom.

Through Jesus Christ, your Son, Our Lord.

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ...

* * * *

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have taken these holy things.

May the ears which have heard your word be deaf to slander and gossip;

May the tongues which have sung your praise be free from all deceit.

May the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love be always fixed on Jesus.

May the bodies which have been fed at this table be refreshed with the fullness of your life.

Glory to you our God forever and ever.

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Order for Communion at Home or in Hospital

Note: When celebrating Communion in these contexts, a minister should normally be accompanied by at least one member of Kirk Session and invite to participate any present who “love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth”.

Invitation

Jesus said these words:

“Where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them.”

“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We bless you, O Lord, for your love and care for all creation. We praise you for forming us in your image and calling us to be your people. We confess that we have failed in that calling, and thank you that you did not abandon us in our rebellion against your love, but sent your Son to deliver us from the way of sin and death by the obedience of his life, by his suffering on the Cross, and by his resurrection from the dead.

We remember, Lord Jesus, that on the night when you were betrayed you took bread, and when you had given thanks, you broke it and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way you took the cup saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Send your Holy Spirit among us to make us clean, and may the bread which we break be a sharing in your body and may the cup which we take be a sharing in your blood. Make us one body with each other and with you.

Distribution

It is at the invitation of Jesus that we share this bread and wine, and to remember him, who on the night he was betrayed

TOOK BREAD and, when he had blessed and given thanks,

BROKE IT and said, “This is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way when supper was over, He TOOK THE CUP and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do it in remembrance of me.”

Communion

Take, eat, this is the body of Christ broken for you. Do this in remembrance of him.

This cup is the new covenant in his blood. Drink from it.

Prayer of Intercession for Family, Friends, Carers, Church and World Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Psalm 103:17–19

- ¹⁷ But from everlasting to everlasting
the Lord's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's children –
- ¹⁸ with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.
- ¹⁹ The Lord has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.

Our Father...

Blessing

Service for the Baptism of the Children of Believers

The act of Baptism should normally follow the ministry of the Word.

Introduction

The minister says:

Jesus said,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, Baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:18–20)

On the Day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter said,

“Repent and be Baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:38–39)

This Sacrament is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, which God has made with us in Christ. By Baptism we are received into his Church. Christ brings us from death to life so that, having been raised to life in him, we may live as heirs of his kingdom.

The children of Christian parents, though they may not understand these things, are within the covenant and belong to the life of the Church.

Since this child is not yet of an age to speak for *himself/herself his/her* parents and the Congregation must make promises, so that through Christian nurture, in the grace of God, *he/she* may come to profess his own faith and serve Christ in the Church and the world.

Vows

(All standing)

To the parents:

In presenting this child for baptism:

Are you affirming your belief in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

I do.

Are you trusting in Jesus Christ alone, as your Saviour from sin and as Lord of your life?

I am.

Depending on the grace of God:

Are you committed to living as a follower of Jesus Christ, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit?

I am.

Are you willing to provide a Christian home, and bring up your child in the worship and teaching of the Church, so that he/she may come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour?

I am.

[At least one parent must be willing and able to make these promises if their child is to be baptised.]

As a church family, the congregation makes this commitment,

As we receive [Name] into the fellowship of the Church, do you promise with God's help, to be faithful in prayer, spiritual nurture, Christian example and influence, for him/her and his/her family?

We do.

The Baptism

The congregation stands and the minister shall pour or sprinkle water on the child's head and say

[Name] I Baptise you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

The blessing of God, Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be upon you and abide in you forever. Amen.

Declaration

This child is now received, according to Christ's command, into the membership of the Holy universal and apostolic Church, and is engaged to be the Lord's.

The Aaronic Blessing

Prayer

Almighty and eternal God we thank you that in your infinite mercy and goodness you have promised to be not only our God but also the God and Father of our children and you have received this child by Baptism into the life of your Church.

Guard and guide [Name] all *his/her* days. May your love hold *him/her*, your truth guide *him/her*, your joy delight *him/her*. May *he/she* grow strong in body and mind, and come to faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Make *his/her* home a place of safety and security and help his parents to teach *him/her* your truth and lead *him/her* in your way.

We pray for all families in this Congregation. May you be cherished in all our homes, may your presence in our midst transform our lives, and may all our children grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus. In his name we pray, Amen.

Service for the Baptism of Believers

The act of Baptism should normally follow the ministry of the Word.

The minister says:

My dear brothers and sisters, this instruction was given by the Lord Jesus after he had risen from the dead and before he ascended to the Father:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, Baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:18–20)

And so Peter on the day of Pentecost called upon the people, saying,

“Repent and be Baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:38–39)

Some years later, St. Paul, writing to early Christian communities, reminded them of the significance of their Baptism:

“Do you not know that all of us who have been Baptised into Christ Jesus were Baptised into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by Baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6:3–4)

“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 Baptised by one Spirit into one body – whether Jew or Greek, slave or free – and we were all given one Spirit to drink.” (1 Cor. 12:12–13)

The minister addresses the candidate for Baptism:

[Name] you have responded to this gospel call to repent of sin and put your trust in the Lord Jesus, and have expressed the desire to confess your faith in him by Baptism. Be assured that as you truly profess your faith and are baptised into his name, this Sacrament shall be to you the sign and seal of the washing away of your sins, of your ingrafting into Christ, of the new birth by his Spirit, and of your response to God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.

By you coming for Baptism we ask you to answer the following questions:

Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

I do.

Do you trust in Jesus Christ alone, as your Saviour from sin and as Lord of your life?

I do.

Depending on the grace of God:

Do you promise to live as a follower of Jesus Christ, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit?

I do.

Do you commit as a baptised member of the Church, to worship, serve, give and participate fully in its life and witness?

I do.

The congregation makes this commitment:

As we receive [Name] into the fellowship of the Church, do you promise to join with him/her in the life of prayer, worship and service that we, together, offer to God?

We do.

As a church family, the congregation makes this commitment:

As we receive [Name] into the fellowship of the Church, do you promise with God's help, to be faithful in prayer, spiritual nurture, Christian example and influence, for him/her and his/her family?

We do.

[Name] I Baptise you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. May the blessing of God Almighty rest with you and remain with you always.

Aaronic Blessing

According to Christ's command [Name] is received into the membership of the one holy, universal and apostolic Church.

Let us pray:

O Lord strengthen [Name] by your Holy Spirit.
Give him the spirit of Christ-like love; the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,
the spirit of joy in your presence,
both now and forever more.

We have shared in this Sacrament and with great joy have welcomed [Name] into this fellowship. As members of Christ's Body, the Church, we are one with each other. Lord, grant that we may show each other the devotion and honour, the correction and support, the forbearance and submission, the encouragement and love which the Scripture commands. And as each member does their part, may the body be built in love and grow up into him who is the Head, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Illustrative vows intended to enable the admission of those with intellectual disabilities to the sacraments

1. Wording for a range of simpler vows and affirmation for use in receiving those with intellectual disabilities into communicant membership

A person who has intellectual disabilities and who is able to understand and participate in the taking of vows, ought to be welcomed and fully included in any processes for admission to communicant membership. Some examples of a simpler form of words based on vows agreed by the General Assembly are offered below, providing substantial content and a framework from which to enable the crafting of wording most appropriate to the person being welcomed into membership and in affirming their family. In each case the set of questions are intended to give opportunity for affirmation of personal belief and response, as well as commitment to the family of the Church. The three options below are suggested on a variety of capacities to articulate faith and verbally respond.

Option 1

Vows

- The Bible tells us about God. Do you believe what the Bible says about him?
- The Bible tells us about Jesus Christ. Do you believe what the Bible says about him?
- The Bible tells us how a follower of Jesus should live. Do you want to live that way, with God's help?
- The Bible tells us Jesus invites us to be part of his family, the church. Will you join us on Sundays and in the other things we do together?

Words of affirmation

[Name], we affirm God's covenant promises on your behalf and say welcome to God's family of the Church.

[Names of parents, other siblings and/or family members present], we commit ourselves as a church family in this place to walk with you in supporting [Name] in their life of faith and worship from this moment.

Prayer

Option 2

Vows

- *[Name], the Bible tells us about God. Do you believe what the Bible says about him?*
- *[Name], the Bible tells us about Jesus Christ. Is Jesus your friend?*
- *[Name], are you glad that Jesus is with you all the time?*
- *[Name], do you want to be part of God's family, the Church?*

Words of affirmation

[Name], we affirm God's covenant promises on your behalf and say welcome to God's family of the Church.

[Names of parents, other siblings and/or family members present], we commit ourselves as a church family in this place to walk with you in supporting [Name] in their life of faith and worship from this moment.

Prayer

Option 3

Vows

- *[Name], God loves you. Are you glad about that?*
- *[Name], Jesus is your friend. Are you glad about that?*
- *[Name], we want to be your friends in this church. Do you want to be our friend too?*

Words of affirmation

[Name], we affirm God's covenant promises on your behalf and say welcome to God's family of the Church.

[Names of parents, other siblings and/or family members present], we commit ourselves as a church family in this place to walk with you in supporting [Name] in their life of faith and worship from this moment.

Prayer

* * * *

2. Words of introduction and affirmation for receiving a baptised person who is unable to participate in the taking of vows into communicant membership on the basis of an affirmation of the baptismal vows of their parent(s).

A baptised person who has intellectual disabilities and who is unable to understand or participate in the taking of vows, can be welcomed into communicant membership by the kirk session on the basis of an affirmation of the baptismal vows of their parent(s). A form of words based on the baptismal service agreed by the General Assembly are offered below, providing substantial content and a framework from which to enable the crafting of wording most appropriate to the person being welcomed into membership. This includes a congregational affirmation and commitment of support for the new communicant and their family.

Words of introduction

[Name(s) of parent(s)], today you are affirming the vows you made in presenting [Name of communicant] to be received for baptism. In so doing, you are trusting in the steadfast love of God, who faithfully keeps his promises. Today, we celebrate God's love and faithfulness to his promises in receiving [Name of communicant] to be received into communicant membership of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Words of affirmation

[Name], we affirm God's covenant promises on your behalf and say welcome to God's family of the Church.

[Names of parents, other siblings and/or family members present], we commit ourselves as a church family in this place to walk with you in supporting [Name] in their life of faith and worship from this moment.

Prayer

* * * *

3. Words for service for baptism and reception into communicant membership for a person unable to participate in the taking of vows on the basis of an affirmation of the profession of faith of their parent(s).

A person who has intellectual disabilities and who is unable to understand or participate in the taking of vows, and has not been baptised, may be baptised and admitted to communicant membership on the basis of the vows of their believing parent(s). A form of words based on the baptismal service agreed by the General Assembly are offered below, along with words of reception as a communicant member. These provide substantial content and a framework from which to enable the crafting of wording most appropriate to the person being baptised and welcomed into membership. A congregational affirmation and commitment of support for the new communicant and their family are also offered.

Words of introduction

[Name(s) of parent(s)], today you are presenting name of communicant to be received for baptism and to be received into communicant membership of the Church of Jesus Christ. In so doing, you are claiming God's covenant promises on their behalf.

Words for use in baptism

[Name], I baptise you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen
The blessing of God, Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be upon you and abide in you forever.

Words of reception as a communicant member and affirmation

[Name], we affirm God's covenant promises on your behalf and say welcome to God's family of the Church.
[Names of parents, other siblings and/or family members present], we commit ourselves as a church family in this place to walk with you in supporting [Name] in their life of faith and worship from this moment.

Prayer

Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child

Explanation

The possibility of a Service of Thanksgiving (Dedication) for a Child where parents are not able to make Baptismal vows is mentioned in the revised Statement on Baptismal Discipline following the 1973 debate in the Assembly, though the greatest forethought and care is urged. ('Report of Doctrine Committee', *Reports to the General Assembly*, 1974, pp.18, 22.)

Introduction

The minister says:

We welcome to this service A..... and B..... who have come to give thanks to God for the birth of their child N..... to seek God's blessing upon him/her, and to commit themselves to the high task of parenthood.

We share in the parents' thanksgiving. We acknowledge the claim of this child upon the prayers and support of the Church. We welcome him/her as Jesus himself welcomed children. And we affirm that it is the duty of parents and of the Church so to work together that this child may come to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

The Word

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16)

Thanksgiving and Blessing

The minister says:

Let us all stand

Addressing the parents he says:

Do you thank God for the gift of this child?

We do.

Do you promise, in humility and hope, to love and care for your child?

We do.

Addressing the Congregation, the minister says:

Do you undertake to provide, for this child, instruction in the gospel of God's grace, the example of Christian faith and character, and the strong support of the family of God in prayer and love?

We do.

May God grant parents and people the strength to fulfil these promises.

The Aaronic Blessing.

The Lord bless you and keep you

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you

The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Amen

The minister says to the parents:

May this child bring you joy. May health, strength and wisdom be given *him/her*. And in due time may *he/she* come to be Baptised, to make his/her own profession of faith and commit *his/her* life to Christ as *his/her* Saviour and Lord.

The minister then says to the Congregation:

This child is now commended to you, the Congregation, for your prayers and support.

Prayer

O God, the father of all, from whom every family on earth takes its name, we thank you for the gift of this child.

We thank you for the love that prepared for his coming and welcomed him into the world, and for the great hopes for *his/her* future which these parents treasure. Be with them in their home. Keep them faithful to their promises. Guide them in the upbringing of their child and may they find in Jesus the source of all life and love; and may they and their family experience, within our fellowship, the support and strength they need.

We commend this child to your care. Give *him/her* health of body and mind. Bring *him/her* in due time to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In His blessed name we pray. Amen.

Bibliography

This bibliography consists of some items that ministers and others might find useful in the construction of services of worship. It does not contain much relating to the theology of worship or principles of reformed worship. With a couple of exceptions we have limited the list to resources produced since the turn of the millennium. The inclusion of any book in this list does not endorse all that you might find in that book.

Books – liturgical helps

- Brind and Wilkinson, *Creative ideas for Pastoral Liturgy (5 vols)*. London: SCM, 2008-2010.
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- Carter, Kenneth H., *Prayers and Liturgies of Confession and Assurance*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2009. (one of a series.)
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- Malefyt and Vanderwell, *Designing Worship Together*. Herndon, Virginia: Alban Institute, 2005.
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- Vanderwell, Howard A., *The Church of All Ages*. Herndon, Virginia: Alban Institute, 2007.
- Webber, Robert E., *Ancient Future Worship*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.

Websites

This list is simply a selection of a few among very many of very varied quality. The inclusion of any site in this list does not endorse all that you might find on that site.

www.alternativeworship.org

www.anglicansonline.org/resources/liturgical.html#texts

www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/principal-services/holy-communion/epsforonefront.aspx

www.crivoice.org/worship.html

www.christcommunity.org/NewsResources/Blogs/tabid/93/articleType/CategoryView/categoryId/1/Prayer.aspx

www.faihandworship.com/prayers.htm

www.laughingbird.net/LaughingBird/Welcome.html

www.liturgy.co.nz/celebratingeucharist/book.html

www.worship.ca/ (ELCIC Resources and helps/ crafting and praying the prayers)

www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/scottysmith/ (daily prayers)

Special Occasions

Order for a Funeral

*At a Christian Funeral Service, we meet not to praise the dead,
but to remember them, and praise God for the grace shown to them
and for the resurrection hope we have in Christ.*

Scriptural Sentences

The minister may say one or more of the following:

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)

“I am the resurrection and the life,” says the Lord. “Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” (John 11:25, 26)

“We brought nothing into the world and we take nothing out of it. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (1 Timothy 6:7, Job 1:21b)

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is his faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:22,23)

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

The Call to Worship

The minister says:

We meet in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father.
Grace and mercy be with you.

We come here today
to remember N.....;
to give thanks for *his/her* life;
and to comfort and support one another in our grief.

Let us worship God.

Praise

Prayer

The minister leads in prayer, saying:

Heavenly Father, God of consolation,

As we gather in our time of loss, meet us with your compassion and mercy and grace.

Remind us that you are full of goodness, slow to anger and tender towards us, your children.

As we acknowledge that we have failed you in thought and word and deed,
forgive us and assure us of your gentleness and care.

Help us to live each day in the light and the hope of Christ Jesus our Saviour.

Turn our present darkness of despair in death into the hopefulness of the dawn of eternal life.

As we hear your Word, comfort us in our grief and renew our trust in your Son,

believing that all who die in the love of Christ will share in his resurrection,

for he lives and reigns with you, in unity with the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever,

Amen.

Scripture Readings

Selected readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the gospels are given in Appendix 1

[Praise]

The Sermon

Prayer

The minister leads in prayer, saying:

Almighty God, our loving heavenly Father,

we draw near to the throne of grace today in faith and in love.

You have given and you have taken away, blessed be your most holy name.

We bow before you now as needy children before a loving parent,

to seek by the consolation of your Holy Spirit, a calm for our minds and a balm for our souls.

Thank you for the life of N.....

We praise you for all that was good that was accomplished through *him/her* and by her/him.

Thanks for particular qualities in the deceased's life may be here mentioned.

May our memories comfort and inspire us in coming days.

We thank you today that for N..... all pain and frailty of the body are ended,

that death itself is passed and that for all your people

there is eternal life and fullness of joy in your presence.

We remember with gratitude this day all who showed kindness to *him/her* in life.

For her/his family and friends and for all those who visited and cared for *him/her*.

Thanks may be here expressed for medical care services, friends and others.

We pray today for those who will miss N..... most because they knew her/him best.
We pray for *his/her* loving family and commit each one of them to your tender mercy:

The family are here mentioned.

May they know your love and compassionate leading as they face the future.

O Lord Jesus, we praise you that you died for us and rose again that we might be with you forever. Be our salvation now and our rest when the shadows of evening come, when our day is over and our work is done. Then bring us, we pray, into your house where there are many mansions, where there shall be no more death, neither mourning nor crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

O spread thy covering wings around
Till all our wanderings cease
And at our Father's loved abode
Our souls arrive in peace

In the name of the risen Lord Christ, who intercedes for us we pray, using words that he taught, as we say together:

The Congregation joins the minister in saying either one of the following versions of the Lord's Prayer:

Traditional version –

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

Contemporary version –

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we also have forgiven those who sin against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever,
Amen.

Praise

The Benediction

A selection of benedictions is given in Appendix 2.

The Committal

Scripture Readings

Selected readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the gospels are given in Appendix 1.

At the graveside

The minister says:

Trusting in God's mercy,
and we now commit N.....'s body to the ground:
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who died, was buried
and rose again for us,
and is alive and reigns for evermore,

Amen.

or

At the crematorium

The minister says:

Trusting in God's mercy,
and we now commit N.....'s body to be cremated:
ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who died, was buried
and rose again for us,
and is alive and reigns for evermore,

Amen.

Prayer

The minister prays:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father,
You offer us a sure and certain hope
of the resurrection to eternal life,
through faith in Christ your Son.
Draw near to all who feel keenly
the pain of earthly separation today from N.....,
especially N..... and N..... (family members)
Through the tears of their sorrow,
lead them by faith to know that
You will never leave them nor forsake them.

O Lord, teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.
Help us to look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy set before Him,
endured the cross, scorning its shame,
and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Keep us in your love until Christ returns and all your people shall sit at the table of your kingdom.

The Benediction

A selection of benedictions is given in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1:

Scripture Readings for Funeral Occasions

Selected readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the gospels for use in the home, at public worship or at the graveside/crematorium.

From the Old Testament

Passage:

Deuteronomy 33:27

Summary:

The Eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms

Joshua 1:1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Job 14: 1-2, 5

Every being born of a woman is short-lived...

Job 19:25-27

I know that my Redeemer lives

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 11, 14

For everything its season

Isaiah 25:8-9; 26:3-4

The Lord God will destroy death for ever

Isaiah 40:28-31

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary ...

Isaiah 61:1-3

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted...to comfort all who mourn

Lamentations 3:17-18, 21-26

I have been deprived of peace...

The Psalms

8

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic....

16:8-11

I have set the Lord always before me

23

The Lord is my shepherd

27:1-4

...that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life

30

...weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning

39:4-7, 12

Show me, O Lord, my life's end...my hope

42:1-8

As the deer pants for streams of water

43:3-5

Send forth your light...why are you downcast

46

God is our refuge and strength

62:5-8

Find rest...pour out your hearts to him

84:1-4

...my heart...cries out for the living God

90:1-6, 10, 12

Lord you have been our dwelling place throughout all

103:8-18	generations The Lord is compassionate and gracious
116	I love the Lord for he heard my voice
118:14-21, 28-29	The Lord is my strength...open for me the gates of righteousness
121	If I lift up my eyes to the hills
124:8	Our help is in the name...
130	Lord, out of the depths have I called to you
138	I will praise you...fulfil purpose for me
139:1-14, 17-18, 23	O Lord you have searched me...

From the New Testament

Passage:

Acts 10:34-43
Romans 5:5-11
Romans 6:3-9
Romans 8:14-24a
Romans 8:18, 28, 31-39
Romans 14:7-12
1 Corinthians 2:6-10
1 Corinthians 15:19-23
2 Corinthians 1:3-4
2 Corinthians 4:7-18
2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10
Ephesians 2:4-9a
Philippians 3:7-14
1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 18
1 Thessalonians 5:9-11, 23-24
2 Timothy 2:8-13
1 Peter 1:3-9
1 John 3:1-3
Revelation 7:9-17
Revelation 14:13
Revelation 21:1-4; 22:3b-5

Summary:

...God accepts people who fear him
And hope does not disappoint us
Baptised into the death of Christ
...those who are led by the Spirit are the...
I reckon that the sufferings
None of us lives...for himself alone
No eye has seen...
If it is for this life only
Praise be to the God...consolation never fails
...we have this treasure in jars of clay
...we know if the earthly tent is destroyed...
...but because of his great love for us
I count everything loss compared...
We wish you not to remain in ignorance
For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath
Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead
...he has given us a living hope
How great is the love...when he appears
...a great multitude that no one could number
...blessed are the dead...
I saw a new heaven...

From the gospels

Passage:

St. Matthew 5:1-12

St. Matthew 28:20b

St. Mark 16:1-8a

St. Luke 1:78-79

St. Luke 2:29-32

St. Luke 7:11-16

St. John 6:34-40

St. John 11:17-27

St. John 14:1-4, 6, 27

St. John 20:24-29

Summary:

Blessed are those who mourn

I will be with you always

The women at the tomb

In the tender compassion...light

...now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation

Jesus raises a widow's son

All that the Father gives me...

I am the Resurrection and the Life

Let not your heart be troubled...My peace I leave with you

Unless I see the marks...I will not believe

Appendix 2:

Benedictions for Funeral Occasions

**Selected benedictions for use in the home, at public worship
or at the graveside/crematorium.**

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you;
the Lord turn his face towards you
and give you peace.

(Numbers 6:24-26)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

(2 Corinthians 13:14)

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4:7)

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant
brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,
equip you with everything good for doing his will,
and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ,
to whom be glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

(Hebrews 13:20-21)

Then I heard a voice from heaven say,
“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.
They will rest from their labour,
For their deeds will follow them.”

(Revelation 14:13)

Resources for the Funeral of a Child

Where appropriate, the following may be used in conjunction with, or in replacement of the Suggested Funeral Order above.

Words of Introduction

The minister may say:

We meet together to share our love and sympathy
with parents and their family in their loss.

They shared together a very special *xx days/months/years* after the birth of N.....

Our hearts break with theirs in their loss,

and we want them to know that they are loved and cared for at this time.

We meet in this place to remember that God cares for us.

We will pray for God's help and that he might hold us in his eternal love..

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven." (Mark 10:14)

Prayer

The Minister may say a selection of the following:

God of all mercies and of unfailing compassion,
you make everything beautiful and complete in your time,
and love all that you have made.

In your creative love and tenderness, you gave us N.....,
and we were so full of hope for the future.

Comfort us in our sorrow at this time
and console us with the knowledge of your unfailing love.

Lord our God,
you give and you take away.
You blessed us through the gift of N.....,
who is now taken from us
and whose loss we mourn.
Help us, through our tears and pain,
to glimpse your hand at work
to bring blessing out of grief.

God of all mystery, you have set eternity in our hearts,
yet we cannot fathom what you have done
from beginning to end.
Lead us, who grieve at this untimely death,
to a new and deeper faith in your love,
which brought your only Son Jesus
through death into resurrection life.

Father in heaven, Healer of the brokenhearted,
support and strengthen [*parent, siblings, grandparents etc.*]
whose joy has been turned into sorrow.
Comfort them that they may face every new circumstance of life
with courage, patience and hope.
Grant that they may be drawn closer as a family in their shared sorrow,
and as they carry the memory of N.....,
may they know your presence and support as they face the future together
in the knowledge of your love and care.

Unite family, friends and neighbours,
as they seek to care for and comfort [*Names*]
Give them strength to face the days to come
in the faith and hope of eternal life of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We thank you, God our Father,
that you care for all who suffer at this time:
We also remember today other families whose hearts are broken.
We pray that you would work through all those
who seek to bring healing and comfort:
doctors, nurses and chaplains.
We give thanks for the work of [*... Hospital*], doctors and nurses.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

At the Graveside

The minister may say:

The Lord will feed his flock like a shepherd,
He will carry his lambs in his arms.
The Lord carries them close to his heart,
He gently leads those who have young. (Isaiah 40:11)

A voice from heaven said:
God now dwells with his people.
He himself will be with them
and will be their God.
He will wipe every tear from their eyes,
There will be no more death or mourning,
or crying or pain,
for he has made all things new. (Revelation 21:3,4)

The Committal

The minister may pray at the graveside:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you have given us a sure and certain hope of
the resurrection to eternal life;
we here commit the body of N..... to the ground:
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

We do this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who gathered the little children in his arms
and said, "Let the children come to me,
for to such belongs the kingdom of God."
This Lord Jesus who died, and was buried, and rose again for us,
shall change our mortal body
that it may be like his glorious body.
Thanks be to you, O God, who gives us the victory
through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

The minister may pray at the crematorium:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you have given us a sure and certain hope of
the resurrection to eternal life;
we here commit the body of N..... to be cremated:
ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

We do this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who gathered the little children in his arms
and said, "Let the children come to me,
for to such belongs the kingdom of God."
This Lord Jesus who died, and was buried, and rose again for us,
shall change our mortal body
that it may be like his glorious body.
Thanks be to you, O God, who gives us the victory
through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

Appendix 3:

Scripture Readings for the Funeral of a Child

In addition to Appendix 1, below are selected readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the gospels for use in the home, at public worship or at the graveside/crematorium.

From the Old Testament

Passage:

2 Samuel 12:15-23

2 Kings 4:8-37

Isaiah 40:11-14, 27-31

Isaiah 66:12-13

Zechariah 8: 4-8

Summary:

The story of the death of David's son

The story of the Shunammite's son

He tends his flock like a shepherd

As a mother comforts her child

...boys and girls playing there

Psalms

103:13-17

As a father has compassion on his children

139:13-18

For you created my inmost being...

From the gospel

Passage:

St. Mark 10:13-16

Summary:

People were bringing little children...

St. Matthew 18:1-5, 10-14

...it is not your heavenly Father's will that one of these little ones should be lost

Resources for a Funeral in Distressing Circumstances

Where appropriate, the following may be used in conjunction with, or in replacement of the Suggested Funeral Order above.

Pastoral Prayers:

The minister may pray the following at funeral after suicide:

Loving God, we can hardly believe this has happened.
We struggle to make sense of the ending of this life.

Yet as we remember and give thanks for all that N..... has meant to us,
and we cannot understand the thoughts and feelings *he/she* endured.
We bring to you our own troubled feelings over this death.
[Forgive us for any hurt we may have caused N.....
and help us to forgive any hurt *he/she* has caused us.]

We bring to you, our heavenly Father,
our sorrow, our sense of loss, our grief
and our helplessness.

Give us strength in our sorrow,
your presence in the absence we feel,
your rest, that we may rise again to new life
and your hope that in death we are not divided.
Give us grace to be able to release N..... into your care and keeping.

The minister may then continue with the prayer at the bottom of page 2, where it says:

O Lord Jesus, we praise you...

The minister may pray the following at a funeral after a violent death or road accident:

God of all life, we stumble along at this time,
bearing the pain of an empty space where N..... once was,
a space nothing can fill and we want nothing to fill it,
because no-one can take *his/her* place.

When trouble comes, you seem to be far away,
yet you are at our side.
It is to you we turn.
In life and death it is you alone whom we can trust
and yours alone is the love on which we rely.

Heavenly Father, you hold us with arms of compassion and love,
you know how we feel at this time.
We find it hard to accept/forgive the deed that has brought us
to this place of pain and mourning,
but you call us to accept the invitation to lean upon your arms, through Jesus Christ.

The minister may then continue with the prayer at the bottom of page 2, where it says:

O Lord Jesus, we praise you...

Appendix 4:

Scripture Readings for a Funeral in Distressing Circumstances

In addition to Appendix 1, below are selected readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the gospels for use in the home, at public worship or at the graveside/crematorium.

From the Old Testament

Passage:

Lamentations 3

Isaiah 35:10

Summary:

The Lord's love is surely not exhausted...

... gladness and joy will come upon God's people....

Psalms

22

My God, my God why have you forsaken me....

46

God is our refuge and strength....

From the New Testament

Passage:

1 Peter 5:7

Hebrews 13:5

Summary:

God cares for you, so cast all anxiety on him

God has said, "I will never leave you or desert you."

From the gospel

Passage:

Matthew 11:28

John 5:24

Summary:

Jesus said, "come to me all who are weary and whose load is heavy and I will give you rest."

Jesus says, "in truth I tell you whoever hears my word and believes."

An Order for the Funeral of a Minister

Upon the death of a minister, *if the family so wish*, the Presbytery of which the minister was a member may hold an appropriate Funeral or Thanksgiving Service, conducted by the Moderator of Presbytery.

A limited number of colleagues may be invited to participate by leading prayers, reading the Scriptures, paying tribute or preaching the sermon. The Moderator of the General Assembly may also take part.

Scriptural Sentences

In addition to the sentences given for a Funeral Service on page xx, the Moderator of Presbytery may say one or more of the following:

“Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding,
Obeying the voice of his word!
Bless the Lord, all his hosts,
His ministers who do his will!
Bless the Lord, all his works,
In all places of his dominion.
Bless the Lord, O my soul!” (Psalm 103:20-22)

God commended Abel by accepting his gifts,
“And through his faith, though he died,
he still speaks.” (Hebrews 11:4)

“I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith.
Henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,
which the Lord, the righteous judge, will reward to me on that Day,
and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”
(2 Timothy 4:7, 8)

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.
You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.
Enter into the joy of your master.’” (Matthew 25:26)

Thereafter, the Order shall broadly be the same as that for any funeral, namely:

The Call to Worship

Praise

Prayer

Scripture Readings

Selected readings from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the gospels are given in Appendix 1.

[Tribute/s]

Short tribute/s may be here made by a colleague.

[Praise]

The Sermon

Prayers

The following may be added:

Eternal Father, you hold all souls in life;
we thank you for your goodness to your servant, N.....
For all that you enabled *him/her* to be, to do and to say,
we give you thanks and praise.

We thank you for her/his example,
for faith, hope and love,
at all times of joy and sorrow in life.
For *his/her* courage, charity and constancy,
in the ministry of your Church,
we praise you.

Lord of the Church, we pray for your flock who have been blessed by N..... as their pastor.
Help them to thank you every time they remember *him/her*.
You alone are the Good Shepherd, who truly knows and cares for the flock,
continue to nourish them through Word and Sacrament,
that they might bear much fruit for you,
now and for years to come,
for your glory's sake, Amen.

Praise

The Benediction

A selection of benedictions is given in Appendix 2.

Suggested Order For Marriage

Marriage is a covenant of love and loyalty between a man and a woman, instituted by God and acknowledged by the laws of civil society. Marriage is not unique to the Church of Christ, but a Christian ought to marry a fellow Christian. This order allows for the necessary legal differences between ceremonies in Northern Ireland and those in the Republic of Ireland. In the case of the latter, the exact wording below must be followed. In both jurisdictions a Record of Marriage Book should be kept and completed at an appropriate part of the service.

The Call to Worship

The minister says:

“Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever.” (Psalm 118:1)

God is love; and those who dwell in love are dwelling in God and God in them.” (1 John 4:16)

Jesus said, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Dwell in my love. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:9,12)

In the presence of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
we have come together to witness the marriage of N....., and N.....

May all know that they are welcome here.

We come to pray for God’s favour, guidance and presence to be with N..... and
N.....

We come to share their joy and to celebrate their love.

Marriage is a gift of God and reflects the love between Christ and his Church.
In the lifelong union of marriage we can know the joy of God, who made us in the image of
God, male and female.

Both marriage and singleness are a way of life blessed by God,
to enrich society and to bring God glory.

Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty which all should uphold and honour.

It is the Christian basis for family life.

No-one should enter it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of
almighty God.

In marriage God calls wife and husband to live faithfully together, to love each other with
respect, tenderness and delight.

The commitment, companionship and comfort of marriage enable the full expression of
physical love between husband and wife.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee and through his
Spirit he is with us now, to enrich our love and to give us his peace and joy.

*In all circumstances, and in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the minister shall
say:*

Since the beginning of creation God, in his gracious purpose, provided marriage as the

accepted way in which a man and a woman may come together as husband and wife. This is the only basis on which marriage can take place within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

In Northern Ireland the minister shall say:

A marriage schedule has been issued and all legal requirements are in place for this ceremony to proceed.

In the Republic of Ireland the minister shall say:

The Marriage Provisions of Civil Registration Act (2004) requires that a declaration of no impediment be made by the couple in the presence of each other, the registered solemniser and the witnesses.

To the Groom:

Have you read and understood the list of civil impediments to marriage?

I have.

Do you solemnly declare that you believe there is no impediment of kindred or affinity or other lawful hindrance to your proposed marriage with N.....?

I do.

To the Bride:

Have you read and understood the list of civil impediments to marriage?

I have.

Do you solemnly declare that you believe there is no impediment of kindred or affinity or other lawful hindrance to your proposed marriage with N.....?

I do.

The minister may then ask:

Who gives N..... to be married to N.....?

Praise

Prayer

The minister prays:

Our Father, how great is the love you have lavished on us that we should be called your children.

You have shown us what love is in Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour, who laid down his life for us.

You know us better than we know ourselves – you know the joys of life, for they have come from you and you know the regrets of life,

for they have brought sorrow to you as to us.

Help us learn from all past mistakes,
and grant us an awareness of your peace and grace for the future.

Help us now to know your gracious presence
and especially make yourself real to N..... and N.....
as they make their vows before you.

Thank you for your guidance in bringing them to this day.

As they now enter the marriage covenant,
continue to enrich them with your grace,
through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

The Vows

The minister, after asking the Congregation to stand, shall say to the Bride and Groom:

As a seal to the vows you are about to make, will you please hold hands.

The vows may be made, either as a Question (1), or as a Statement (2).

(1) As a Question, the minister says to the Groom:

In the presence of God and before this Congregation,
do you N..... take N..... to be your wife?

Do you promise to love her, comfort her,
honour and protect her, and,
forsaking all others,
to be faithful to her,
as long as you both shall live?

I do.

The minister says to the Bride:

In the presence of God and before this Congregation,
do you N..... take N..... to be your husband?

Do you promise to love him, comfort him,
honour and protect him, and,
forsaking all others,
to be faithful to him,
as long as you both shall live?

I do.

(2) As a Statement, the Groom says:

I, N....., take you, N.....,

to be my wife,
I promise to love you, comfort you,
honour and protect you, and,
forsaking all others,
be faithful to you
as long as we both shall live.

The Bride shall then say:

I, N....., take you, N.....,
to be my husband,
I promise to love you, comfort you,
honour and protect you, and,
forsaking all others,
be faithful to you
as long as we both shall live.

The Giving of Rings

The minister says to the Bride and Groom:

As a token of the commitments into which you have entered,
This ring (these rings) is (are) given and received.
By this sign you take each other
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
for as long as you live.

The Proclamation of Marriage

The minister says to the Congregation:

In the presence of God and before this Congregation,
N..... and N..... have given their consent
and made their vows to each other.
They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands
and by the giving (and receiving) of ring(s).
I therefore proclaim them to be husband and wife,
in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Those whom God has joined, let no-one separate.

The Blessing of Marriage

The minister may say the Aaronic Blessing, or it may be sung:

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

The Presentation of The Scriptures

The minister may say:

N..... and N....., in this Bible is Wisdom and Good News
this is the living Word of God.

On behalf of the Congregation of N.....,
we give you this Bible, with the prayer that its message
will form the foundation of your lives together.

(Praise)

Scripture Readings

One or more of the following or any other suitable passages of Scripture may be read:

The Old Testament –

Genesis 2:15, 18-25
Song of Songs 8:6, 7
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 67
Psalm 127
Psalm 128

The New Testament –

Romans 12:1,2,9-13
1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 13
Ephesians 3:14-21
Ephesians 5:1, 2, 21-33
Colossians 3:12-17
1 Peter 3:1-12
1 John 3:18-24
1 John 4:7-13
Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

The Gospel –

St. Matthew 5:3-10
St. Matthew 5:13-16

St. Matthew 7:21, 24-27
St. Mark 10:6-9
St. John 2:1-11
St. John 15:1-12

The Sermon

Prayers

The minister leads in prayer, saying:

Father God, from whom your whole family in heaven
and on earth derives its name,
we the family and friends of N..... and N..... come before you
with thanksgiving and joy for this day.
As a company of your people, we support and uphold them
in their marriage now and in the years to come.

Loving God, may N..... and N..... seek first your kingdom and its righteousness
and may all other good things be added to them.
Make them swift to praise each other and always to see each other
through eyes of love and forgiveness.
May they not take each other for granted,
but make every effort to preserve their love
as a precious, living gift.

Give them sufficient tears to keep them tender,
sufficient hurts to keep them sympathetic,
sufficient failure to help them know their hands are held by yours,
sufficient wisdom to know when to seek help from others,
and sufficient success to realise that they walk with the living Lord.
Bless them this day and make them a blessing.
Make their home a place of peace and welcome,
to friend, family and stranger.

And when life is done, and the sun is setting,
may they be found then as now,
side by side, still thanking you for each other.

Everlasting God, we also remember on this joyous occasion
those who were close to us,
whom you have called to be with you.
We thank you for their lives,
may their influence and our memories
be a source of strength and joy.

These prayers we ask, in the name of the One who taught us to pray saying:

The Congregation joins the minister in saying either one of the following versions of the Lord's Prayer:

Traditional version –

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

Contemporary version –

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we also have forgiven those who sin against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever,
Amen.

Praise

The Benediction

Suggested Order for the Blessing of a Marriage

Marriage is a covenant of love and loyalty between a man and a woman, instituted by God and

acknowledged by the laws of civil society. The following service is for the blessing of a marriage that has taken place previously.

The Call to Worship

The minister says:

“Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever.” (Psalm 118:1)

“God is love; and those who dwell in love are dwelling in God and God in them.” (1 John 4:16)

Jesus said: “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Dwell in my love. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:9,12)

In the presence of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
we have come together
to bless the marriage of N..... and N.....
May all know that they are welcome here.
We come to pray for God’s favour, guidance and presence to be with N..... and
N.....
We come to share their joy
and to celebrate their love.

Marriage is a gift of God and reflects Christ’s love for the Church.
In the life-long union of marriage
we can know the joy of God,
who made us in the image of God, male and female.

Both marriage and singleness are a way of life blessed by God,
to enrich society and to bring God glory.
Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty
which all should uphold and honour.
It is the Christian basis for family life.
No-one should enter it lightly or selfishly
but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God.
In marriage God calls,
wife and husband
to live faithfully together,
to love each other with respect,
tenderness and delight.
The commitment, companionship and comfort of marriage
enable the full expression
of physical love between husband and wife.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself
a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee
and through his Spirit he is with us now,
to bless N..... and N..... and to give us his peace and joy.

Praise

Prayer

The minister prays:

Our Father, how great is the love you have lavished on us
that we should be called your children.

You have shown us what love is in Jesus Christ,
your Son, our Saviour,
who laid down his life for us.

You know us better than we know ourselves – you know the joys of life,
for they have come from you and you know the regrets of life,
for they have brought sorrow to you as to us.

Help us to learn from all past mistakes,
and grant us an awareness of your peace and grace for the future.

Help us now to know your gracious presence
and especially make yourself real to N..... and N.....
as they make their vows before you.

Thank you for your guidance in bringing them to this day.

As we now celebrate their marriage,
continue to enrich them with your grace,
through Christ our Lord,

Amen.

The Vows

The minister, after asking the Congregation to stand, shall say to the couple:

As a seal to the vows you are about to make, will you please hold hands.

*The vows may be made, **either** as a Question (1), or as a Statement (2).*

(1) As a Question, the minister says to the husband:

In the presence of God and before this Congregation,
do you N..... acknowledge N..... to be your wife,
do you promise to love and comfort her,
honour and protect her, and,
forsaking all others,
to be faithful to her,
as long as you both shall live?

I do.

The minister says to the wife:

In the presence of God and before this Congregation,
do you N..... acknowledge N..... to be your husband,

do you promise to love and comfort him,
honour and protect him, and,
forsaking all others,
to be faithful to him,
as long as you both shall live?

I do.

(2) *As a Statement, the husband says:*

As your husband, I promise to love you, comfort you,
honour and protect you, and,
forsaking all others,
be faithful to you
as long as we both shall live.

His wife shall then say:

As your wife, I promise to love you, comfort you,
honour and protect you, and,
forsaking all others,
be faithful to you
as long as we both shall live.

The Sign of The Wedding Ring(s)

The minister says to the couple:

As a token of the commitments you entered on the occasion of your marriage,
you gave (and received) a ring (rings).
By that sign you take each other
to have and to hold
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
for as long as you live.

The Blessing of Marriage

The minister may say the Aaronic Blessing, or it may be sung:

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

The Presentation of The Scriptures

The minister may say:

N..... and N....., in this Bible is Wisdom and Good News,
this is the living Word of God.

On behalf of the Congregation of N.....,
we give you this Bible, with the prayer that its message
will form the foundation of your lives together.

[Praise]

Scripture Readings

One or more of the following or any other suitable passages of Scripture may be read:

The Old Testament –

Genesis 2:15, 18-25
Song of Songs 8:6, 7
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 67
Psalm 127
Psalm 128

The New Testament –

Romans 12:1, 2, 9-13
1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 13
Ephesians 3:14-21
Ephesians 5:1, 2, 21-33
Colossians 3:12-17
1 Peter 3:1-12
1 John 3:18-24
1 John 4:7-13
Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

The Gospel –

St. Matthew 5:3-10
St. Matthew 5:13-16
St. Matthew 7:21, 24-27
St. Mark 10:6-9
St. John 2:1-11
St. John 15:1-12

The Sermon

Prayers

The minister leads in prayer, saying:

Father God, from whom your whole family in heaven
and on earth derives its name,

we the family and friends of N..... and N..... come before you
with thanksgiving and joy for this day.

As a company of your people, we support and uphold them
in their marriage now and in the years to come.

Loving God, may N..... and N..... seek first your kingdom and its righteousness
and may all other good things be added to them.

Make them swift to praise each other and always to see each other
through eyes of love and forgiveness.

May they not take each other for granted,
but make every effort to preserve their love
as a precious, living gift.

Give them sufficient tears to keep them tender,
sufficient hurts to keep them sympathetic,
sufficient failure to help them know their hands are held by yours,
sufficient wisdom to know when to seek help from others,
and sufficient success to realise that they walk with the living Lord.

Bless them this day and make them a blessing.

Make their home a place of peace and welcome,
to friend, family and stranger.

And when life is done, and the sun is setting,
may they be found then as now,
side by side, still thanking you for each other.

Everlasting God, we also remember on this joyous occasion
those who were close to us,
whom you have called to be with you.

We thank you for their lives,
may their influence and our memories
be a source of strength and joy.

These prayers we ask, in the name of the One who taught us to pray, saying:

The Congregation joins the minister in saying either one of the following versions of the Lord's Prayer:

Traditional version –

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, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever,

Amen.

Contemporary version –

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we also have forgiven those who sin against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever,
Amen.

Praise

The Benediction



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