

A MANUAL  
FOR WORSHIP  
AND SERVICE



# A MANUAL FOR WORSHIP AND SERVICE

Prepared for  
Canadian Baptist Churches

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Baptist  
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# A MANUAL FOR WORSHIP AND SERVICE

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## Foreword to the 1998 Edition

This edition of *A Manual For Worship and Service* is a republication and revision of the 1984 edition. There are two main reasons for this new version: the 1984 edition has been out of print for more than two years; and there has also been a growing need expressed to update and revise the material it contains. The two previous editions (1976, 1984) were published by All-Canada Baptist Publications of the Canadian Baptist Federation. This edition is published by Canadian Baptist Ministries, the organization resulting from the merger of the Canadian Baptist Federation and Canadian Baptist International Ministries.

The most obvious difference between this edition and its predecessors is in the format. The new loose-leaf format will make the manual much more useable. It will stay open on a pulpit or lectern, and users will be able to add their own materials in the appropriate places.

As a result of the new format, we have sought to avoid the insertion of other published material in the text, leaving that to individuals and churches, according to their style. Some sections have been shortened through this policy. At the same time, new sections have been added, notably, Celebrating Communion in a Private Setting, and The Ministry of Healing. There has also been some rearranging of the material into five main parts rather than the previous four. We decided not to include the sections, Membership Procedures and Calling of a Pastor, in Part V since each Convention and Union has its own well-established procedures.

The team that worked on this edition came from various parts of the country and we acknowledge them

with thanks. They were: Carol Anne Janzen, Edward Powell, Linda Watson-Burgess, Joyce Bellous, Cam Yates, Barbara Mutch, Richard Root, William Chapman, and Stanley Hibbins. Harold Eastman and Linda Watson-Burgess made some structural and stylistic suggestions, and Gail Michener did the typing of the original manuscript and the revisions. For design and production work we are indebted to Wes Laing.

This manual is presented in the hope that it will provide resources for worship and service to the present and future pastors and worship leaders in our federation of churches. Gone are the days of a standard worship style. This diversity is found not only in the English and French speaking churches, but also among the many different language and cultural groups that now make up our Canadian Baptist Family. A single worship resource could not begin to reflect that diversity.

The format of this manual is intended to encourage local and individual creativity, and to provide a tool for the ongoing collection of resources for the worship and service of our Lord Jesus Christ in the context of his body for his honour and glory.

Robert G. Wilkins  
*Canada Representative*  
*Canadian Baptist Ministries*

## Acknowledgements

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**Part I**

**RESOURCES FOR  
SPECIAL OCCASIONS  
IN PERSONAL  
AND FAMILY LIFE**



## **The Celebration of Birth/Adoption**

The birth/adoption of a child is an occasion of joy and hope, both for the parents and families and for the faith community. It is also a time when parents and families may be uniquely open to ministry. The purpose of a celebration of birth/adoption is to help parents of a new baby to acknowledge and express gratitude to God for this gift of new life, and to experience the joyful support of the church family.

It is important that parents understand that no ceremony, of itself, has the power to change the character of a child, or to alter his/her relationship with God. At the same time, parents who commit their lives to Christ can, with the support of the church and with the power of the Holy Spirit, positively influence their child's spiritual development.

The following suggestions may be offered by a pastor in giving spiritual guidance to parents for themselves and their children:

- Pray for your child's salvation and spiritual growth.
- Read or tell them age-appropriate Bible stories from a young age.
- Establish regular family devotions.
- Attend worship and church school as a family.
- Integrate faith with everyday life.
- Model Christ-like behaviour.

### **Church Acknowledgment**

The church may acknowledge a birth or adoption as follows:

- A flower placed upon the pulpit, or other prominent place, during worship.
- A notice of announcement and congratulation in the church bulletin or newsletter.
- A personal gift as a special welcome from the church.
- A “Welcome to God’s World” letter to the child.

A home visit may be a powerful moment for outreach and may be an opportune time to provide information about ministries available to young families with babies and toddlers, such as the Nursery, Baby Band, Moms and Tots programs, and so on.

A colourful brochure featuring your church’s pre-school and parent ministries can become a strong outreach tool for such events.

### **A Home Service of Thanksgiving**

A service of thanksgiving in the home is an appropriate way to celebrate the arrival of a new child. The pastor, in response to a request from the family, will make an appointment to conduct such a service at a time convenient to the family, and will encourage the presence of extended family and friends. A home service would be designed to include other siblings, to acknowledge the importance of each member of the family and friendship circle, and to draw attention to God’s sovereign care for every child. A flower or gift may be presented on behalf of the church family at this time.

During the ceremony, a few brief and simple com-



ments may be made, emphasizing the privilege given to the family through the gift of this child. It will be an occasion to emphasize that all the potential that God gave to humans is present in this child, who has been entrusted to us so that we might encourage him or her to develop that potential uniquely. Because of the importance of this task, God has provided parents with resources, insight, wisdom and support through the Holy Spirit, through the Bible and through the Church.

Encourage the parents to put their faith and trust in God, and not to rely solely on their own discernment. As God has come to us in the person of Jesus Christ, so God is present with us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Additional scripture resources: *1 Samuel 1:19-20; Psalms 8, 100, 113; Proverbs 23:25; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 19:13-15; John 16:21* (if there are no young children present).

### **An Order for a Home Service of Thanksgiving for a New Baby**

#### ***Opening Remarks***

God has indeed blessed this family and home with the precious gift of a child—a [son/daughter] to \_\_\_\_\_ [parents' names] and a [brother/sister] to \_\_\_\_\_ [sibling's name(s)]. We pause now to worship God, offering our joy and thanksgiving for the safe delivery of this new little one. Let us all join together to praise God, who has given life to each of us.

#### ***Prayer***

God our creator, we praise you. We thank you for the gift of life you have given to each one of us, but especially we thank you just now for \_\_\_\_\_ who has

[been born/come] into this family. Thank you, too, for the joy and expectation that has come to us with [his/her] arrival, just as it came to us with \_\_\_\_\_ [names of other siblings]. Your love and goodness overwhelm us; thank you, our God, for sharing life with us, and for giving us to each other. In Jesus' name. Amen.

***Alternate Prayer for an Adopted Child:***

Merciful God, father and mother to all your children, we thank you that in you we all find welcome, shelter and nurture. We thank you for this child, \_\_\_\_\_, who has come to bless this family, and for the love of \_\_\_\_\_ [names of all family members] which has welcomed [him/her] into this home. Give them the joy of caring for \_\_\_\_\_, and through [him/her], remind us that we all become your sons and daughters by adoption. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Scripture Reading***

***Remarks***

***Prayer***

Dear Lord God, you sent your own Son into this world as the child of Mary and Joseph. We thank you for the life of this child, \_\_\_\_\_, entrusted to our care. Bless these parents as they commit themselves to nurturing \_\_\_\_\_, with your guidance, so that [he/she] will come to know you through your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to remember that we are all your children, and that we share with you in the important task of parenthood. We ask all this in the name of your Son, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **The Presentation of Children and the Dedication of Parents**

In the attempt to maintain Christian integrity, this ceremony is most appropriate for parents who have made some commitment to the Church, preferably to the local church. As such, this ceremony has a place in the context of regular Sunday worship, preferably early on in the service, so other young children may observe and/or participate. It is well to remember that particular sensitivity will need to be exercised with respect to blended and single-parent families.

There may be occasions when parents desire to present their child/children in a church with which they have not had, or will not have, a continuing relationship. In such a case, it may be appropriate to identify close family and friends present as those who will respond to a modified form of the Commitment by the Congregation.

### **An Order of Service for Presentation of Children and Dedication of Parents**

#### ***Introductory Remarks to the Congregation***

At this point in our worship of God, we give particular attention to God's gift of children. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the parent[s] of \_\_\_\_\_, wish to present [him/her/them] to God in the presence of his people, to dedicate [himself/herself/themselves] to [his/her/their] Christian nurture and to ask you for your support in this great privilege and responsibility.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is the Lord of our lives, and by his lordship he calls us to gather together as the church. He is the Head of the church, and we

wish to raise our children to follow him.

When a child is born, we are full of hope. We pray that these will be blessed, and that as parents and family, we will do all that is right for our child's nurture. But we know that life in this broken world has its share of sorrow as well as joy, sickness as well as health, poverty as well as riches. The society we live in will demand much from [this/these] [child/children] and from you as parents. To overcome the evil in this world, the scriptures instruct us to: rely on our faith in Jesus Christ, have a growing knowledge of his Word, and seek to obey his Word with all of our being.

### ***Scripture Reading***

Hear now what the Word of God says about children:

- “Children are a gift from God.”

*Psalm 127:3*

- “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.”

*Deuteronomy 6:5-7*

- “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” *Matthew 18:5*. “Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs.’ And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.”

*Mark 10:14 & 16*

### ***Commitments by the Parents***

*Pastor:* You have brought your [child/children] to be

blessed today. Will you commit yourselves to raising [him/her/them] in the faith by making these promises:

Do you recognize and solemnly declare your dependence upon the Almighty God for the wisdom, help and blessing you will need to guide and nurture your [child/children]?

*Parents:* We do.

*Pastor:* Do you commit yourselves to instruct your [child/children] in the teachings of Jesus Christ, to read the Word of God regularly, and to pray both with and for your [child/children]?

*Parents:* We do.

*Pastor:* Do you intend to raise up your [child/children] in the church family, with the prayer that, in due time, your [child/children] may receive Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and Lord?

*Parents:* We do.

***Commitments by the Congregation***

[This parent/These parents] are relying upon us, as God's people, to support and help [him/her/them] to raise up [this child/these children] in the faith.

This means [here you may wish to insert some examples of children's ministries in your church] volunteering when appropriate in the nursery; teaching in the Sunday School; supporting our children's programs and youth groups; welcoming and treating children and young people as valued members of our church family; being patient with them as they grow and learn; and above all, praying for our children and youth, individually and as a group. If you will make these commitments, will you stand and pray with me?

***Prayer (In Unison)***

Loving Father, we your people pray for [this parent/ these parents] and [this child/these children]. Guide [him/her/them] in the ways of truth; sustain [him/her/ them] in times of difficulty, and bless [him/her/them] with the joys of life in Christ. We commit ourselves to the Christian nurture of all the children you have entrusted to our care. We offer you ourselves, our time and our gifts in this ministry. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Please be seated.

***Blessing for Each Child***

\_\_\_\_\_ [name of child], may the Lord bless you and keep you all the days of your life. Amen.

## **Resources for New Christians**

Conversion, baptism, experience of the Holy Spirit, church membership and serving Christ are all essential to the life of the new believer.

There are a number of critical issues that need to be resolved. Often the first will be uncertainty on the part of the new Christian about what has actually happened. It is important to ground assurance on what Christ has done. Verses like John 6:47 and Romans 8:29-31 are crucial.

The urgent task is integration of the new Christian into the body of believers. He or she must be helped to form a new circle of friends, values, priorities and habits. Support will be needed. The simplest and most significant support is a friendly, warm Christian who will invite the person into their home and stay close as he or she matures in the faith. It is important that the new Christian be disciplined by being taught to pray, to study the Bible, to understand spiritual gifts and to cope with the problems of the Christian life. Where possible, it would be beneficial to provide him or her with a personal study Bible and with an invitation to be part of a Bible study or small group program. Such a group may be the best forum in which to provide human intimacy, ongoing support, and a positive introduction to the scriptures and Christian values.

Normally, the new Christian will be encouraged to attend a class for baptism and church membership. Such a class would cover matters to do with Christian faith, Baptist principles, and the privileges and responsibilities of church membership, and would include an introduction to tithing, discovering gifts, the church

covenant, and the Canadian Baptist family, its ministries, and affiliates.

A new Christian is a key person in winning others for Christ. Thus the encouragement and training in this area will be important.

### **Recommended Baptist Resources for Membership Classes**

The following publications are recommended for orientation of new believers to membership in a Baptist church:

- Bartol, John W. *Life In Christ; A New Relationship. Studies for Membership Classes or Small Groups* Saint John, N.B.:Evangelism Commission, UBCAP, 1997.
- Johnson, Gordon G. *My Church; A Manual of Baptist Faith and Action* Evanston: Harvest Publications, 1973.
- Jones, William H. *What Canadian Baptists Believe* Niagara Falls: JBTS Publishing House, 1980.
- Simpson, George E. *Basic Baptist Beliefs* Church Leadership Unlimited, 1991.
- Warren, Gordon C. *Basic Baptist Beliefs* Baptist Federation of Canada, 1968.



## **The Baptism of Believers**

Believers baptism is mutually undertaken by the body of believers and the individual believer. The believer openly declares repentance from sin and personal faith in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Baptism should be administered in the presence of the congregation, and given a central focus in the worship service. When conducted with the proper balance of reverence, dignity, simplicity and personal warmth, the beauty and symbolism of baptism by immersion can and should effect a powerful witness. There is no excuse for careless or indifferent administration of this ordinance.

### **The Initiative for Baptism**

The request for baptism should be the natural outcome when a new believer is exposed to the teachings of the New Testament on the Christian life.

The pastor and church which take seriously the Great Commission will provide continuing opportunities to challenge people to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and to obey his ordinances. The ordinance of believer's baptism should be stressed as the appropriate response of the new believer to Christ's commands.

### **The Interview of Candidates**

It is to the church that Christ assigned the task of administering the ordinance of baptism. We ought, therefore, to take great care in our approach to it, so that the experience of obeying Christ in this mode

becomes an occasion of great joy and celebration for the candidate.

The preferred process should include:

- a period of instruction with the pastor or qualified instructor
- an interview with two or more deacons who will report back to the board of deacons or the church
- a personal testimony to the congregation before or at baptism.

### **Practical Instruction of Candidates**

To enable the fullest spiritual participation of the candidate in his or her own baptism, several matters need to be considered.

To help the candidate realize and appreciate that baptism has as one of its purposes the public witness of personal faith in Christ, the candidate should be encouraged to invite relatives and friends to observe the baptism. The church may offer to send invitations on behalf of the candidate to individuals of the candidate's choice, to mark this significant occasion.

At least one, preferably two, deacons should be assigned to help the candidate during the baptism. Careful attention should be given to acquaint the candidates with all of the details of the baptismal procedure, such as the baptismal robes, appropriate garments, towels, hair drying equipment, etc. Helpers (who could be the assigned deacons) should be present to help in the changing rooms.

Prior to the actual baptism, the pastor should walk through the entire process, including a demonstration of the act of baptism, so that the candidates are thoroughly acquainted with it.

### **Baptismal Technique**

The pastor should master a technique of baptism so as to make the actual baptism a beautiful act of worship for all in attendance. Most importantly, the candidate should feel secure and confident. Each pastor should develop a personal technique which is most comfortable and dignified.

The following is a recommended procedure:

- The pastor enters the baptistry and faces the congregation, usually as a hymn or chorus is being sung, or music played.
- The pastor addresses the congregation, with appropriate scripture passages, an explanation of the ordinance and prayer (see suggestions in the following “The Baptismal Address”).
- The candidate enters and stands in front of the pastor. The candidate may be introduced and give a personal testimony at this time.
- The pastor then addresses the candidate and/or questions the candidate regarding his or her faith.

After proper positioning, the pastor proceeds to pronounce the baptismal formula and conduct the immersion.

The candidate stands with feet reasonably close together and one foot slightly ahead of the other. The knees should be slightly bent so that the candidate can lean backwards, gradually casting his or her weight on the buoyancy of the water and the pastor’s hand which is positioned at the base of the candidate’s neck. The candidate grips his or her own right wrist with the left hand and grips the pastor’s left wrist with the right hand, thus affording the candidate stability. The ten-

dency of most candidates is to hold quite firmly with rigid arms, thus affording the pastor a leverage to gently submerge the candidate. Bending the knees, the candidate is able to lean back as the pastor takes the weight of the person being baptized upon the right hand. Care should be exercised to create the least commotion and splashing of water.

A verse of a hymn or chorus of the candidate's own choosing may be sung immediately after the immersion, as the newly baptized believer leaves the baptistry.

### **The Baptismal Address**

Though believer's baptism is a repeated occurrence in the life of a congregation, it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the believer. As well, non-believers, friends and family of the new Christian may be present, any of whom may never have witnessed this ordinance. For these reasons, this act should be interpreted on each occasion, with attention to the message of the gospel which is symbolized by this act.

Some appropriate selections from scripture are suggested in the order that follows. Additional scripture resources: *Matthew 28:16-20; John 14:21-23; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:35-38, Romans 6:5-11*

The following are statements that may be used to communicate the biblical significance of baptism.

#### *Baptism is:*

- an ordinance (or commandment) of Jesus Christ, established and given to his people (or to the Church) to be obeyed by those who have come to salvation by faith.

*Baptism for the believer is:*

- an act of obedience,
- the following of Jesus' example,
- a public confession/testimony,
- a vow of commitment to Jesus Christ,
- a pledge and sign of belonging to Christ and his Church, and;
- an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual experience.

*Baptism is a symbol of:*

- the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ,
- the death to sin and resurrection to a new life of the believer,
- the cleansing of regeneration,
- the gospel that saves,
- the changes already accomplished in the life, and;
- the resurrection of the dead of all believers.

It is the responsibility and privilege of the believing community to administer the ordinance to those who, having repented of their sins and having received Jesus Christ as their Saviour, present themselves for baptism.

### **After the Baptism**

The baptism may be followed by the Lord's Supper where the candidates would receive the first communion and be welcomed into church membership. After the worship service, a reception in honour of the candidates may be held.

Since this is the most important commitment that a person will make in their lifetime, every effort should be made to acknowledge it, for the sake of the individuals and of the church body. An appropriate gift, such as a Bible, a devotional book, etc. may be given to mark the occasion.

Upon reception into church membership, the new member should also be presented with a copy of the church covenant, a church history (if available), the church bylaws or constitution, and materials on the ministries of the church. Some churches compile these materials into an attractive “New Members Packet.” (This same packet may be presented to new members who have joined the church through letters of transfer.)

### **An Order of Service for the Baptism of Believers**

#### ***Baptismal Hymn***

#### ***Scripture Reading***

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’”

*Matthew 3:13-17*

“Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, you must be born from above. The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’”

*John 3:5-8*

“What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

*Romans 6:1-4*

### ***Address to the Congregation***

#### ***Prayer***

God of Grace and Mercy, we give you our humble and heartfelt thanks for our Saviour Jesus Christ, who died for sins, was buried and was raised on the third day. We ask you to accept [this/these], your [child/children], as [he/she/they] come[s] to you in baptism. We pray that [he/she/they] may be united by faith with Christ in his Church, and receive forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, as you have promised. May [he/she/they] walk with Christ throughout life. Keep [him/her/them] strong in faith, in hope and in love. Pour out on [him/her/them] the rich gifts of your grace, that

[he/she/they] may serve you in the building up of your Church. Protect [him/her/them] in all the trials and temptations of this life, and, at the end, give the precious gift of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Address to Candidates***

[If giving a verbal testimony:]

\_\_\_\_\_, you have already shared your faith with deacons of this church, and on their recommendation, we are glad to baptize you. However, so that your faith and intention are clear to all here, would you share briefly your experience of Jesus Christ?

[If not giving verbal testimony:]

\_\_\_\_\_, will you answer the following questions?

*Pastor:* Have you confessed your repentance toward God, and your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?

*Candidate:* I have.

*Pastor:* Will you sincerely try, depending on the guidance of the Word and the Spirit of God, to follow Christ and to serve him in the fellowship and mission of his church?

*Candidate:* I will.

***The Baptismal Statement***

\_\_\_\_\_, upon your profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I now baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

[After the baptism, the pastor may say:]

And there is still room. What prevents you from being baptized?



## **The Christian Wedding**

The pastor will be asked to perform weddings of people with a wide range of spiritual convictions and experience; inevitably, this will include non-Christians. To prevent possible confusion or dissension, it is advisable for the pastor to determine with the deacon's board a policy for the weddings of people from outside the congregation; this should cover pastoral participation as well as the use of church facilities.

It is important that the wedding ceremony represents the spiritual realities and convictions of the couple being married. To conduct a "Christian wedding" for people who are not believers compromises the integrity of the Church and places the couple in an inconsistent position. The pastor should be careful to explore this area with the couple, remembering also that this stage in a couple's life offers a ministry opportunity, both to believers and non-believers.

No matter how routine weddings may become to a pastor, each one should be a personal and joyful celebration of a spiritual reality in the lives of the participants. The warmth and interest of the pastor is one of the vital keys to a meaningful wedding ceremony and to the continuing involvement of the newly-married couple with the church.

### **Marriage Regulations**

Since marriage is a provincial responsibility and regulations may differ somewhat, the pastor should be careful to observe the respective legal regulations. This applies to Publication of Banns, licenses, waiting period, medical tests and the like.

### **The Wedding Service**

The lighting of family candles makes an appropriate beginning for the wedding. After the parents, or their representatives, of the bride and groom have been seated, the mothers or both sets of parents may come forward and light two candles that have been placed on either side of the central unity candle placed on the communion table.

The Processional then begins, the congregation stands, and the bridal party assembles at the front of the church, as prearranged. All remain standing until the end of the Call to Worship or Invocation Prayer.

It is recommended that the order of the bride's and groom's names be alternated throughout the ceremony, so that one does not constantly take precedence over the other.

After the first hymn is an appropriate time for the pastor to state the policy regarding permissible photography or video-taping, or other concerns. Alternatively, this may be done at the very beginning of the service, or simply stated in the bulletin or wedding program.

A Scripture Reading is appropriate at any of several points in the service.

Appropriate scripture resources: *Genesis 1:27-28a; Genesis 2:23-24; Song of Solomon 2:10-13, 8:6-7; Matthew 19:4-6; John 15:9,12; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Ephesians 3:14-19; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 John 4:7-12.*

The Pastoral Counsel to the Wedding Guests may take the form of a brief address on the nature of marriage in society, and on the responsibilities of those around the couple to support, encourage and pray for them. The Pastoral Counsel to the Couple may include counsel to the couple regarding the importance of God

in their union, and personal encouragement to remain true to the vows they are making this day.

If family candles have been lit, the couple may proceed to the communion table following the Declaration of Marriage and the Prayer for the Couple. There each may take their family's candle, lit at the beginning of the service, and together light the central candle, returning the two side candles to their respective holders.

Depending upon convenience and the choice of the couple, the Signing of the Register may take place in the sanctuary or in an adjacent room. Special music is appropriate while the signing takes place.

### **Alternate Wedding Ceremonies**

At times, the pastor will receive a request to conduct a simple wedding ceremony in a chapel, home or other location; it may be a second marriage for one or both partners, a wedding for immediate family only, or a civil ceremony. The wedding may take a variety of forms and the resources offered below should prove helpful in structuring the appropriate ceremony for each specific situation.

In all cases, care should be taken to design a ceremony that is personal, dignified and mindful of the sacredness of the occasion.

### **An Order of Service for a Christian Wedding**

#### ***Musical Prelude***

#### ***Lighting of the Family Candles***

#### ***The Processional***

***Call to Worship***

Our help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.

***Opening Remarks to Guests***

A wedding is the occasion when a man and a woman publicly declare their love and commitment to one another in the presence of God. By its nature it is both a solemn and a happy event. For those of us gathered here, it will be a sharing in an important and love-filled moment in the lives of two people we know, love and appreciate. For \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, this ceremony will reflect what they believe to be God's will for their lives.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are pleased and honoured that you have come to share this important and sacred time with them, and pray that God's blessing will be upon us all.

As we are gathered together in this place of worship to witness the public exchange of vows of commitment between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, let us now turn to the One who is the Author of all life, and the source of redeeming love in Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the living God.

***Invocation Prayer***

God of Grace and Mercy, we thank you for the gift of life, for family and friends, and for the love shared by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. As we have come together today in the name of Jesus Christ, we would ask for the presence of your Holy Spirit in this wedding ceremony, and in the lives of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ as they begin their life together. We would

pray also that we will be found faithful in our continuing support of this new family unit. Our loving God, we commit to you the very sacred moments that follow, and pray for your blessing on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, today and in the years to come, as they seek to serve you. Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

***Hymn (Optional)***

***The Pledge***

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you have already made public your intention to be married. No one has shown any just cause why you may not be lawfully married, nor have you yourselves declared any impediment. So that your faith and integrity of purpose may be evident, would you respond to these questions:

[The questions are directed separately to, and answered separately by, the bride and groom.]

*Pastor:* \_\_\_\_\_, do you pledge to live with \_\_\_\_\_ in a manner consistent with God's design for marriage? Do you purpose to love [him/her], honour [him/her], and be faithful to [him/her] in times of need and blessing? Do you pledge, with God's help and to the best of your ability, to establish honest, open and loving communication between yourself and \_\_\_\_\_? Do you promise to remain faithful to \_\_\_\_\_ as long as you both shall live?

*Bride/Groom:* I do.

***Alternative traditional form:***

*Pastor:* \_\_\_\_\_, will you have this [man/woman] to

be your [husband/wife]; to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love [him/her], comfort [him/her], honour and keep [him/her], in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, be faithful to [him/her] as long as you both shall live?

*Bride/Groom:* I will.

***Question of the Congregation (Optional)***

*Pastor:* Will all of you witnessing these promises, do all in your power to uphold and support these two persons in their marriage?

*People:* We will.

*Pastor:* Since you have publicly stated your willingness to be partners in God's plan for your marriage, hear now what God's Word has to say concerning marriage and love.

***Scripture Reading***

***Pastoral Counsel to Wedding Guests***

***Parents' Vows (Optional)***

Will the parents please stand?

[Each set of parents is addressed separately.]

*Pastor:* \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you gave \_\_\_\_\_ life and love. [He/she] has now chosen to marry \_\_\_\_\_. Will you give your blessing to [his/her] marriage, accept \_\_\_\_\_ as your [daughter/son], and welcome [him/her] into your family? Will

you pledge to sustain them in their marriage by your prayers and love?

*Parents:* We will.

*Pastor:* Please be seated.

***The Marriage Vows***

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you are about to enter a sacred covenant of love and commitment with each other. As you pledge your vows to each other under God, will you join your right hands.

[The groom, then the bride repeat the vows to each other.]

\_\_\_\_\_, I take you now to be my [husband/wife]. I promise to love you, to trust you, and to cherish you. I will love you when we are apart as well as when we are together, in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad times. I pledge myself to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.

***Alternate Vow:***

\_\_\_\_\_, with joy I make this vow to be your [husband/wife]. I promise to love and to cherish you, no matter what life may hold for us, to laugh with you in joy, to grieve with you in sorrow, to grow with you in love, and to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live.

***Alternate Vow (Traditional):***

I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my [husband/wife], 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, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

***The Exchange of Rings***

Wedding rings are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual truths. Being one unbroken circle, they symbolize unending love, and as they are worn, they symbolize to others your union in marriage. May they be a constant reminder of this sacred moment when you pledged yourselves to each other.

[As each places a ring on their partner's finger, they repeat the following words.]

*Bride/Groom:* \_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of my unending love in sealing this vow.

***Declaration of Marriage***

Now that you, \_\_\_\_\_, and you, \_\_\_\_\_, have exchanged marriage vows in the presence of God, and in this company, and have sealed those vows by the joining of hands and the exchange of rings, I declare you to be husband and wife, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together let no one separate. Amen.

***Prayer for the Couple***

God of love and faithfulness, as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have just committed themselves to this sacred and joyful obligation, we are very conscious of their needs for your grace and help, as they travel through life together. We pray that their love will be enriched by your love and that their way will be guided



by your wisdom. Grant to them patience to handle their differences, forgiveness to cover their misunderstandings, courage to face the difficulties of life, and inner peace to comfort them in times of distress. Grant them continuing joy in each other, and a deepening love which reaches out to those around them. Above all, may their lives and their home be filled with the Holy Spirit. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

***Lighting of the Candle of Unity***

***The Benediction***

May the Lord bless and protect you; May the Lord look with kindness upon you; May he be gracious to you, and give you his peace.

***Signing of the Register***

***Presentation of the Bride and Groom***

It is my privilege and pleasure to present to you \_\_\_\_\_  
[the designation by which the couple will be known as a married couple].



**Part II**

**RESOURCES FOR  
PASTORAL CARE  
AND VISITATION**



## **Care-giving and Visitation**

The ministry of care is part of the calling of the whole church. The following guidelines are no substitute for training in counselling and training in crisis-response, but they provide guidance for the ongoing ministry of care in most church settings. The aim of a ministry of care is to mourn with those who mourn, rejoice with those who rejoice and bear one another's burdens in love.

### **General Visitation Principles**

- The first goal of the ministry of care is to communicate the love of Christ.
- Each person offered care is assumed to be worthy of respect and each situation is unique.
- A visit from a Christian care-giver includes, but should go beyond, being social.
- Some visits may involve very little talk. Just being with an individual or family in a time of transition, illness, death or other crisis can make a difference.
- In itself, listening is ministry. Listening helps the person to express feelings, clarify thoughts and break out of isolation.
- Out of respect for personal boundaries, permission should be sought before issues are pursued deeply, or suggestions are made. This includes asking permission before offering prayer.
- Confidentiality should be carefully guarded. But confidentiality is not to be confused with secrecy or anonymity. Keeping a confidence still allows us to

- consult with professionals and to observe the law.
- Care-givers, including pastors, should have a trusted and experienced advisor whom they can consult, and with whom they can reflect on difficulties and concerns.
  - When in doubt, consult.
  - Prayer offered as a part of a visit should be an extension of care, catching up the feelings and needs that have been expressed, providing a context of hope and faith, and marking the one who is praying as a fellow pilgrim.

### **Specialized Forms of Visitation**

*Bereavement visitation* is the special purview of the church. As representatives of the faith community, we have a unique right of access to grieving families and individuals, long after the work of the funeral director, for instance, is finished. Plan home visits at the one-month and one-year mark (at least). Make contact on significant anniversaries during the first year, and balance practical help with listening and enabling. Be prepared to caution against significant lifestyle or locale changes in the first twelve months and validate feelings throughout. Be informed about support groups, especially for special cases such as death of a child, or death from suicide or AIDS or acts of violence. Be aware that grief is a process and there is no right way to grieve.

*Newcomer visitation* is part of the ministry of hospitality of the church and should be friendly, warm and non-threatening. Always make an appointment in advance. Be prompt. Provide introductions. Inquire about current circumstances and past church experience. Be prepared

to listen. Plan to be brief, as a rule. Provide a brochure or hand-out detailing church programs, if possible. Conclude with an offer to lead in prayer.

*Hospital or nursing home visitation* may primarily be a ministry of presence that offers assurance of the continuing care and concern of the church to someone who is temporarily in crisis or is shut-in. Cooperate with institutional personnel and regulations. Sit (or even kneel) so that you are on eye level with the person you are visiting. Inquire about their situation, offer to lead in prayer, and depending on the circumstance, keep the visit reasonably brief so as to not tire the patient.

*Visitation with those in conflict with church leadership.* Conflict and disagreement, while regrettable, are perennial features of group life and require an appropriate response. It should be noted that although some problems cannot be fixed and some situations will not be resolved, people in conflict need to be heard and treated with respect and compassion. As a general rule, visit with a partner. Clearly identify the reason for your visit, listen and take notes. Repeat back what you hear for confirmation or correction. Provide any pertinent information that may clarify the issues. Offer to convey concerns to appropriate groups or individuals on behalf of the person you are visiting. Conclude with an offer to lead in prayer, if given permission, and then follow through on any promises made.

Where character assassination or abusive treatment is encountered during the visit, name this and leave if it continues.

When action is eventually taken, consistent with the concerns expressed by those in conflict, be sure to advise them of the action, even if they have left the

congregation to worship elsewhere. Do not act, or even suggest that you will take action, without careful consideration.

### **Danger Signs in Visitation**

In the course of both routine visitation and crisis responses, care-givers may see evidence, or hear reports, of serious individual and/or family problems. The following list is not exhaustive but may provide a starting point for response. Typically, a care-giver may need to pursue one or more of the following actions:

- Consult
- Refer
- Report
- Encourage
- Provide

The assumption here is that no care-giver will be expert in all areas of addressing needs. A readiness to consult and refer to expert colleagues, denominational officials, legal advisors, professional counsellors, medical personnel and trauma specialists will strengthen ministry.

*Domestic violence:* When children may be victims of domestic abuse, report immediately to the local office of Child and Family Services. This is the law. When spouse abuse or elder abuse may be occurring, consult an immediate supervisor, refer victims to community agencies (provide brochures about the agencies, if possible), encourage removal from the scene of violence and provide ongoing emotional and spiritual support. Do not confront the abuser directly, since this may rebound onto the victim or victims.



*Sexual abuse:* When children may be victims of sexual abuse, report immediately to the local office of Child and Family Services. This is the law. Encourage adult victims to make a report to appropriate civil or employment authorities in cases of rape, assault and harassment, and/or refer to community resources (sexual harassment officers, rape crisis centres, hospitals and women's shelters). Provide ongoing care and support. If the alleged offender is a member of the clergy, consult denominational officials immediately. If the alleged offender and the alleged victim are in the same congregation, each needs to receive separate provision for care and support. If the abuse is in the distant past, encourage the victim to seek therapy and refer her or him to appropriate agencies.

*Drug and alcohol abuse:* Substance abuse is a chronic disability that will compromise most attempts at pastoral or other interventions until it has been addressed directly. Encourage the individual to make contact with community agencies, especially Alcoholics Anonymous and other Twelve Step support groups, since they have the best success, and/or refer to counsellors who specialize in these issues. Provide ongoing support and care. Remember: This problem usually encompasses those closest to the substance abuser and they too will need care.

*Psychiatric episodes:* The following behaviours alone or in combination may indicate that an individual has entered a phase of psychiatric crisis or that a mental health consumer has gone off needed medication: excessive paranoia, atypical activity levels, delusions, hallucinations, threats of suicide, changes in the ability to care for oneself, withdrawal or acts of violence. Consult a health care professional or immediate super-

visor, family members and/or community experts. Report to police if it seems the individual may be a danger to self or others and encourage a trip to the doctor (may offer to accompany).

### **Serving Communion During a Visit**

For suggestions regarding the conduct of communion in the context of visitation, see “An Order for the Celebration of Communion in a Private Setting” at the end of Part III, Resources for Services of Worship.

## **The Ministry of Healing**

The New Testament instructs us that in times of trouble, where doubt, fear and grief collide, believers are to rally for prayer, in order to seek God's guidance, to offer encouragement and to act as a witness. In particular, James 5 specifies that those who are leaders in the church may be called upon to exercise the Ministry of Healing, traditionally involving the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and prayer. This action, as with other acts of grace, is to be expressive of the Body of Christ manifest in the believing community.

The purpose of the ministry of healing is to minister grace to those who are distressed because of physical suffering, including those closest to the actual sufferer. Although concrete touch is employed and prayers are offered for physical healing, it is primarily spiritual healing and strengthening that is sought, something which may be evidenced in any or all of those who participate. Preparation will certainly include prayer, and in some cases fasting, for those who will assemble, along with a short explanation concerning the physical condition of the sufferer and the general format and goals of the time together.

The place and time and duration should be chosen with a thought to the comfort and ease of the sufferer and his/her family. It is assumed that a group of three or more will assemble for this service, each of whom will be prepared to participate in the laying on of hands and prayer, although only one will do the actual anointing. (Olive oil may be used for this purpose.)

The following order is based on historical Christian practices and not meant to limit ministry.

## **An Order for a Service of Healing**

### ***Welcome, Introductions and Instructions***

#### ***Opening Statement***

Sisters and Brothers in Christ, we are gathered here as representatives of the Body of Christ, to make tangible both God's presence in this moment and our own love and concern for \_\_\_\_\_ [name/this family.] We are here because we feel we have been led to pray for healing, for strengthening and for peace, on every level of living, including physical, emotional and spiritual. We are here to cooperate with God's own purposes, purposes we know to be directed by love and a desire to save. We acknowledge that the outcome of this time together is in God's hands and by trusting God in this moment, by gathering in faithfulness and love as we have been taught, we have already achieved what is ours to control. We are, all of us, dependent upon God for the life in our physical bodies and for the Life Eternal that we are called to know. Acknowledging this ultimate reliance, let us pray together.

#### ***Opening Prayer***

God of Life and Hope, we humbly bow before you now as we undertake together to be channels of your healing love in this place, and particularly in the life of this our [sister/brother], \_\_\_\_\_ [name/this family]. We seek assurance of your grace and care, as we plead for soul-health and bodily strengthening. We ask for your blessing on what we do here and grant that we might have eyes to see you at work among us and within us, in this hour. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### ***Scripture Readings***

Jesus said, “Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

*Matthew 11:28-29*

The Apostle Paul wrote, “I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses all knowledge, so that you may be filled with the fullness of God.”

*Ephesians 3:16-19*

And James gave this instruction to the church, “Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.”

*James 5:13-14*

### ***The Laying on of Hands***

[To be sustained throughout the anointing and prayer.]

### ***Anointing With Oil***

In keeping with the practice of our forbears in the faith, we will use this oil to mark the forehead and the palms with the sign of the cross...

[While anointing the forehead]

May God the Father and Creator wrap you round in grace and blessing, breathing into you the breath of life eternal. Amen.

[While anointing the right palm]

May God the Son and Redeemer, who lived and died and rose again, grant you peace in your inner being. Amen.

[While anointing the left palm]

May God the Holy Spirit and Sustainer strengthen you and keep you, and bring you into the brightness of Christ's rising, according to God's mercy and grace. Amen.

***Spontaneous Prayers for Healing  
from those Assembled***

***Closing Prayer***

Divine Presence of Peace, we are your children and we know it. We confess our reliance upon you and declare our full-hearted trust in the power and efficacy of your love. Be with us now as we close this time together with the words our Lord taught us when we pray to say: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from

evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

***Passing of the Peace***

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

*Response:* And with your spirit.

## **The Burial of the Dead**

Pastoral response at the time of a death will include, but in most cases go beyond, the planning of a funeral or memorial service. The pastor's task will be to provide comfort and reassurance as a representative of Christ and of the believing community, to assist the bereaved in their grieving and to facilitate procedural matters, where possible.

### **Funeral Arrangements**

It is fitting for the pastor to offer to accompany the family on their visit to the funeral director in order to provide a familiar presence, to help interpret information and to represent the family's interests, particularly if the funeral home personnel are not attentive to their wishes. Where funeral home visitation is included in the plans, the pastor may attend with the family.

Depending on local custom, and the involvement of the deceased or the bereaved with the congregation, the service may be held at the church. In that event, the pastor should oversee arrangements for facility use, musicians, caretakers, office staff, sound operators, and/or caterers, as well as provisions for service bulletins, volunteer pall bearers, ushers or other special requirements. Delegate responsibility whenever possible.

### **Pastoral Care in Service Planning**

The pastor will want to identify one visit with primary family members and friends to collect information and requests for the service. This meeting should be an opportunity to meet pastoral needs as well as



procedural ones and deserves attention and care.

At this meeting, the pastor invites suggestions for the service, for example: hymns, songs, music, scripture and other readings, decorative elements and food. It helps to provide the bereaved with an outline of a typical service as well as information about fees and conditions.

Once these details have been attended to, the pastor continues ministering to the bereaved by initiating a conversation about the deceased and his/her influence on those present. The pastor should take careful notes to use in writing the eulogy and other parts of the service. The pastoral priority is to allow feelings to be voiced and memories recounted in the company of those most closely affected. When negative recollections are offered they should be received with care and respect.

### **Putting It All Together**

The purpose of the funeral/memorial service, from a pastoral point of view, is to offer a ministry to the bereaved and to provide a formal closure to the initial phase of grieving. Therefore, the service must be sensitively personalized and should also place the experience of grief in the context of Christian hope and comfort.

The purpose of the eulogy is to assist the process of grieving by providing a summary of the life and influence of the deceased, validating the sense of loss and providing closure. If the deceased was a person of faith, the eulogy may provide a witness to the gospel through a testimony to his/her commitment. As a rule, notes taken during the family visit will provide recurring themes around which the eulogy may be constructed,

incorporating select and appropriate anecdotes into the narrative.

If the death occurred as a result of violence, or involved a young person, the pastor will need to acknowledge feelings of shock and anger in the service. If the suicide of a mental health consumer is the focus of the funeral, explanation about the nature and effects of mental illness should be provided. Where positive material about the deceased is slight, there will have to be careful handling to provide helpful perspective. When it is possible to do so with integrity, it is important to assure the bereaved of their important place in the life of the deceased, and/or of their faithful care of the deceased, and/or of the degree to which their grief is shared in the community.

Scripture readings and musical selections, prayers and transition pieces should be chosen for their potential to offer spiritual comfort to the bereaved. It is therefore most appropriate to make selections that contain promises of comfort and assurances of God's presence and love.

Additional scripture resources: *Psalms 23; 27:1,4-9; 91; 103:1-14; 121; or 139:1-12; Job 19:21,23-27; Isaiah 25:6-10; Lamentations 3:17-26; John 11:21-26; 14:1;-6,18-19,27; Romans 8:35, 37-39; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Matthew 5:3-10; 11:25-30; John 6:35-40; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 John 4:7-18a; Revelations 21:1-7.*

### **Circumstances of Death**

In recognition of the fact that the circumstances of the death should be reflected with sensitivity in the service, three sets of statements and prayers are provided here as

guides for the creation of a personal ceremony in three different contexts:

*Option 1:* In the case of the death of a Christian believer of senior years

*Option 2:* In the case of an untimely or violent death

*Option 3:* In the case of the death of someone of uncertain faith or about whom little is known

### **An Order for a Funeral or Memorial Service**

#### ***Prelude***

#### ***Entrance of the Chief Mourners and Clergy***

#### ***Opening Statement***

##### *Option 1:*

Dear Friends, we are gathered today to remember and to celebrate the life of \_\_\_\_\_. Tears have a place here because our lives are poorer for [his/her] loss. On the other hand, our sorrow is not unrelieved, for we know that because of \_\_\_\_\_ we have much to celebrate and remember with gratitude. Even though we are still reeling from the finality of [his/her] passing, we know that [he/she] has now found victory over death in [his/her] Saviour, Jesus Christ. We have to be clear that our tears are for our own loss, not [his/hers], for [he/she] is in a place where tears and death and sorrow will never touch [him/her] again. The same God through whom \_\_\_\_\_ has victory over death is present and available to us in our need today. Let us turn then to God for comfort, strength and guidance. Let us pray...

##### *Option 2:*

It is my privilege today to welcome you to this service of

remembrance and farewell for \_\_\_\_\_. We gather today with some confidence that \_\_\_\_\_ is at this moment safe in the hands of God, forever free from questions and alarms. The same cannot be said for us and that is part of why we are here today. We are here because we need to be with others who care, to say collectively that \_\_\_\_\_ mattered, that grief is real and that we will not let this family stand alone. Still, many of us are confused and numbed by what has happened. Some of us are frightened as we confront the fragility and uncertainty of life. And there are those of us who are just plain angry, angry at God most of all, perhaps, for letting this happen. And so we have come, carrying confusion and rage and sorrow and a desire to be faithful; and we have come to the right place. We have come to a place where we can be with others who share our grief and to a place where we may seek God, even with all our questions. Let us seek this God now in prayer. Let us pray...

*Option 3:*

Every now and then, as we make our way through this life, there are moments when we are given a chance to pause and to reflect upon what life means, on who we are and how we mean to live our lives. This is one such moment. Death provides us with opportunities to do an inventory of our lives, to let go of that which no longer has a claim upon our devotion and to lay hold of that which we determine to treasure. We are here today to pay tribute to the life and memory of \_\_\_\_\_. If we are willing, it can also be a time to reflect upon our values, our habits and our commitments. Death is a great mystery, even as life itself is a mystery. We will ponder these mysteries together in this hour. Let us pray...

***Opening Prayer***

*Option 1:*

God, our Creator and Source of All Life, we bow before you today in need of your sustaining grace and love. As we gather here today we know that we ache inside. We are burdened with questions and longings. We carry regrets for things undone or unsaid. We carry an awareness of our own fragile mortality. Still, we thank you for the mystery of your presence among us today, as we gather with gratitude for the privilege of knowing \_\_\_\_\_, and for the impact [he/she] has had upon us. Draw close to us, we pray, and grant us assurance of your compassion and companionship, even in the face of death. We bring to you the mix of feelings and questions and memories that stir inside us, and ask for your blessing and peace. Amen.

*Option 2:*

God of All Compassion, we come to you today, full of questions and full of sorrow, full of confusion and full of anger, too. We need you to meet us as we are today, in our grief and in our need. We acknowledge that we only know in part and that, when it comes to things like this, we are at best looking through a darkened mirror. We know only too well today the limits of our own power and wisdom. Still, we are looking to you for comfort and peace, for a beginning point for making sense out of something senseless, for a place to stand when the foundations of our lives have been shaken. Be with us in this time together and begin to work your healing in our lives. Amen.

*Option 3:*

God of Mystery and Hope, we come before you today,

carrying all the diverse needs and longings, joys and sorrows that fill our hearts. We pray that in this time together we might truly honour \_\_\_\_\_'s memory and your presence among us. God, we come to you with many unanswered questions today, seeking peace, bowing before the mysteries that surround us. Meet us here, we pray. Heal and comfort, strengthen and soothe us. Deal with us in whatever ambivalence or anxiety we find ourselves in this moment, and grant your blessing upon us, in the name of and for the sake of Christ. Amen.

### ***Welcome and Instructions***

### ***Hymn/Song***

### ***Scripture Readings***

It is a common experience at times like this to feel at a loss for words. We long for meaningful ways to express what we hope and believe. At just such times, we may discover that the words of others who have gone before us, especially words that have stood the test of time, may focus our minds and give voice to what we cannot quite say ourselves. Listen then, with me, to hear the Word of Life, as we find it in a selection of Bible readings today...

### ***Special Music and/or Special Reading***

### ***Eulogy***

### ***Instrumental Musical Interlude***

### ***Prayer***

#### *Option 1:*

Divine Presence, Author of Life, Giver of All Good

Things, we offer you thanks today for the life and memory of \_\_\_\_\_. We give thanks that [his/her] life touched ours and for the difference that has made for us. We thank you for [his/her] \_\_\_\_\_ [some personal strengths]. We thank you, too for the assurance that [he/she] is now safe with you in perfect health and peace and fullness of joy. Our God, even as we thank you for the joy of knowing [him/her], we ask you to reach out and touch those of us who feel [his/her] loss most keenly. Touch us with your peace, we pray. Answer our weakness with your strength, our despair with your hope, our grief with your comfort. Hear our prayers and meet our needs we pray, with confidence in Christ. Amen.

*Option 2:*

Life-giving, Hope-Stirring God, you know us through and through. You know that we simply cannot make sense of this death, or understand why it had to be this way. You know that we want to push away the terror and find a hand-hold as we climb through our pain. Thank you God that you are big enough to absorb our questions and our anger, to hold us in our feelings of helplessness. Be to us strength and grace and hope, for we need your touch. We do thank you for \_\_\_\_\_'s life, for the joy [he/she] brought into the world. We thank you that [he/she] is safe with you now. We also pray special blessings today upon those who were closest to \_\_\_\_\_. Be near to them. Give them the strength and grace to take one day at a time. In all things allow that they might deal gently with each other and be carried tenderly into recovery and new hope. And now, we beseech you, have mercy upon us, for we need your presence and your peace. Amen.

*Option 3:*

God of Life and Meaning, we thank you today for the gift of life, and for all that makes it sweet and worth the living. We thank you for the beauties of the world around us, and for the friends and family who enrich us day-to-day. Help us to live each day as if it really mattered, and to seek and find your face in the world around us and in each other. We commit \_\_\_\_\_ to you at this time, knowing that this funeral today is part of a long process of learning to cope with the reality of [his/her] death. We release [him/her] to you with gratitude, asking that you will help us as we attempt to continue on in our lives without [her/him]. Whether we live or die, we know we are in your hands, and we will rest there, confident in your mercy and grace. Amen.

***Hymn/Song***

***Benediction***

*Option 1:*

May Christ's grace attend you, may God's love surround you, and may the Holy Spirit keep you, now and forever more. Amen.

*Option 2:*

May God bless you and keep you; may God grant light to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; may God be revealed to you in mercy, and give you peace. Amen.

*Option 3:*

May God the Creator and Healer, who has loved us and given us a resource of eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and be gracious to you in all that you do. Amen.



***Exit of Casket and Pall Bearers, and/or Chief Mourners and Clergy***

**An Order for a Committal Service**

***Scripture Reading***

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last and the living one. I was dead and see, I am alive forever and ever.”

*John 11:25 and Revelation 1:17b-18b*

The Psalmist wrote, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

*Psalm 23:4,6*

***Opening Remarks***

Our task here, in this brief time of committal, is a very simple one. We will first observe a moment of silence, in which you may choose to pray silently or to just have a moment for your own thoughts. Then I will say the words of committal. Finally, I will close with a prayer and words of blessing. Let us begin, then, with a time of silence.

***Silent Reflection***

***Words of Committal***

***Option 1:***

In full confidence that a gracious God has already

received the soul of \_\_\_\_\_, we now tenderly commit [his/her] [body/ashes] to the ground. We commend [his/her] spirit into God's keeping. Into the earth, which God created, we commit [his/her] [body/ashes], earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. In doing this we are not as those without hope, for we know and believe that God has given the gift of Eternal Life and that this Life is kept safe for us in Christ. Trusting, therefore, that \_\_\_\_\_ is safe in God's care, let us pray...

*Option 2:*

And now, in confidence and hope, we say our final goodbyes to \_\_\_\_\_, committing [his/her] remains to the earth, and [his/her] soul to God. May [his/her] spirit find peace, as the earth takes back her own, according to God's own wisdom. Let us pray...

***Committal Prayer***

Gracious God, whether we live or die, we know that we are in your care. Here then, we commit to your unfailing love the soul of one we have known and cherished. We thank you now for the gift of memory and for all that is positive and life-affirming that will live on in us from this day. We thank you also for the strengthening we receive here in this moment from each other. May all those who mourn today know your comfort, strength, courage and guidance in the days to come, we pray, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

***Benediction***

And now may God who is Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, mightily bless each one of you and give you peace. Amen.

**An Order for an Extended Graveside Service**  
Funeral and Committal Together

***Opening Statement***

We are gathered here today to honour the life and memory of \_\_\_\_\_ and with reverence and dignity we commit [his/her] [body/ashes] to the earth and [his/her] spirit to God. In this brief service we observe all that is fitting to convey our regard for \_\_\_\_\_. Today we say goodbye to one who has made a significant contribution to our lives. We will hallow this time in [his/her] memory and in the name of Christ our Saviour. Let us pray...

***Prayer***

Gracious God, Author of Life, Heart of All Wisdom, we are grateful to be in this place together to honour the life of one who has meant so much to us. Draw near to each of us we pray and grant to us what we need for this day. Grant us comfort and peace, strength and courage, joyful memories, a sense of the caring community that surrounds us and an extravagant measure of your love. We thank you that we can know that \_\_\_\_\_ is in your care and we thank you that you have blessed us through [him/her] in life. Continue with us in blessing in this time of observance and remembrance, we pray, for the sake of Christ, our hope and our comfort. Amen.

***Scripture Reading***

As we encounter the reality of death and of life, we know that we are in the presence of a great mystery. This mystery has astounded people down through the ages. Part of the inheritance we have from the scriptures is a testimony both to this mystery and to the Christ, the one who is the Mystery Who Saves. Hear then, words

from the Bible, words that speak into our experience:

“Jesus said, ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’”

*John 14:1-7*

The Apostle Paul wrote these words, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

*Romans 8:35,37-39*

***Brief Tribute to a Life***

***Moment of Silence***

***Words of Committal***

We are gathered to say farewell and in this moment, we lay to rest the remains of \_\_\_\_\_ with gratitude and respect. Into the earth, which God created, we lovingly commit [his/her] [body/ashes], trusting that [his/her] spirit is already safe in God's keeping. This is earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. We do this with grateful hearts for the rich blessing it has been to have been touched by [his/her] life, and with trust in the eternal promises of God. Let us pray...

***Prayer***

O God, our Creator, Healer and Friend, whether we live or whether we die, we know that we are always in your care. We thank you for \_\_\_\_\_, for the privilege of sharing life with [him/her], and for the knowledge that [he/she] is with you, and that [he/she] is at peace. It is hard to say our goodbyes today. It is hard because [his/her] loss is real and we know we already miss [him/her]. Surround us, we pray, with your gentle care, grant us your peace in our grief, and help us to comfort one another, for we ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

***Benediction***

And now may the God of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and keep you, and guide you in the ways of peace. Amen.



**Part III**

**RESOURCES  
FOR SERVICES  
OF WORSHIP**





## **Calls to Worship**

The call to worship is an invitation to participate in worship. It is founded upon the conviction that, in the act of worship, God and God's people meet. It should be brief, often simply taking the form of a scripture text.

A special service or a particular time of the church year may suggest a call to worship that reflects the occasion. Suggestions for such are also included in this section. In addition, here are some further resources for Calls to Worship and the Church Year:

Brandt, Leslie *Psalms Now!*

Nelson, Gertrud Mueller *To Dance with God* New York: Paulist Press, 1986

Peterson, Eugene *The Message: Psalms* NavPress

Sparkman, G. Temp *Writing Your Own Worship Materials* Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1980

### **Calls to Worship for Any Service**

The following calls to worship from scripture are appropriate for use in any service at any time of the year.

#### ***For use by a leader***

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”

*Deuteronomy 6:4-5*

“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.”

*1 Chronicles 16:34*

“I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord! O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.”

*Psalm 122:1; 34:3*

“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night.”

*Psalm 92:1-2*

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name.”

*Psalm 100:1-4*

“Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.”

*Psalm 111:1-2*

“This is the day which the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

*Psalm 118:24*

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our maker.”

*Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 95:6*

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is my resting place? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word.’”

*Isaiah 66:1-2*

“Come, let us return to the Lord, let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

*Hosea 6:1a,3*

“Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you.”

*Matthew 7:7*

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

*Matthew 11:28-30*

***For use as responsive calls to worship***

Many texts from the scriptures also lend themselves to a responsive call to worship between the worship leader and the congregation. The following selections may be used in this way, or simply read by the leader only.

*Leader:* The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it.

*Response:* The world and those who live in it;

*Leader:* For he has founded it on the seas,

*Response:* And established it on the rivers.

*Psalm 24:1,2*

*Leader:* Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?

*Response:* Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully.

*Leader:* They will receive blessing from the Lord

*Response:* And vindication from the God of their salvation.

*Psalm 24:3-5*

*Leader:* Trust in the Lord, and do good;

*Response:* So you will live in the land, and enjoy security.

*Leader:* Take delight in the Lord,

*Response:* And he will give you the desires of your heart.

*Leader:* Commit your way to the Lord;

*Response:* Trust in him, and he will act.

*Leader:* Be still before the Lord,

*Response:* And wait patiently for him.

*Psalm 37:3-5,7*

*Leader:* God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble.

*Response:* Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

*Leader:* The Lord of Hosts is with us;

*Response:* The God of Jacob is our Refuge.

*Psalm 46:1-3,7*

*Leader:* O come, let us worship and bow down,

*Response:* Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

*Leader:* For he is our God,

*Response:* And we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

*Psalm 95:6,7*

*Leader:* O sing to the Lord a new song;

*Response:* Sing to the Lord all the earth!

*Leader:* Sing to the Lord, bless his name;

*Response:* Tell of his salvation from day to day.

*Leader:* Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

*Response:* For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.

*Psalm 96:1,4*

*Leader:* Bless the Lord, O my soul;

*Response:* And all that is within me, bless his holy name!

*Leader:* Bless the Lord, O my soul,

*Response:* And do not forget all his benefits.

*Leader:* Bless the Lord, all his hosts,

*Response:* Bless the Lord, O my soul!

*Psalm 103:1,2,21,22*

*Leader:* O Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;

*Response:* For his steadfast love endures for ever!

*Leader:* Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, those he redeemed from trouble.

*Response:* Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, For his wonderful works to humankind!

*Leader:* Let them extol him in the congregation of the people,

*Response:* And praise him in the assembly of the elders.

*Leader:* Let those who are wise give heed to these things;

*Response:* And consider the steadfast love of the Lord.

*Psalm 107:1,2,31,32,43*

*Leader:* Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,

*Response:* They shall mount up with wings like eagles,

*Leader:* They shall run and not be weary,

*Response:* They shall walk and not faint.

*Isaiah 40:31*

*Leader:* Seek the Lord while he may be found,

*Response:* Call upon him while he is near;

*Leader:* Let the wicked forsake their way,

*Response:* And the unrighteous their thoughts;

*Leader:* Let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

*Isaiah 55:6,7*

*Leader:* The hour is coming, and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth,

*Response:* For the Father seeks such as these to worship him;

*Leader:* God is spirit,

*Response:* And those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

*John 4:23,24*

Additional scripture resources: *Psalm 84:1,24; Psalm 95:1-3; Psalm 105:1-4; Psalm 118:1,4,29; Psalm 121:1,2,4,5,7,8; Psalm 136:1-3,26; Psalm 146:1,2,10; Psalm 148:1-3,12,13*

### **Calls to Worship on the Nature of Worship**

These responsive calls to worship, based on scriptural themes, lead the congregation into a consideration of the nature of worship.

*Leader:* Worship is the divine calling the human to come to the waters and drink. We hear the call and come to receive the water of life.

*First Reader:* As a thirsty land crying out for rain;

*Second Reader:* As a sheep lost in the wilderness pleading for rescue by the good shepherd;

*First Reader:* As the same sheep nestled in the arms of its rescuer;

*Second Reader:* As a hungry heart seeking for love;

*Leader:* We hear the voice of our Father. O come, let us worship and bow down.

*Leader:* Worship is the submission of our nature to God.

*Response:* It is the quickening of conscience by his holiness,

*Leader:* The nourishment of mind with his truth,

*Response:* The purifying of imagination by his beauty,

*Leader:* The opening of the heart to his love,

*Response:* The surrender of the will to his purpose,

*Leader:* O come, open your souls to the influence of God's Spirit!

*Leader:* We come here to worship,

*First Reader:* As a prodigal returning to the father,

*Second Reader:* As a soul standing in awe before the mystery of the universe,

*First Reader:* As a poet enthralled by the beauty of a sunrise,

*Second Reader:* As a person listening through a tornado  
for the still small voice,

*First Reader:* As a drop of water in quest of the ocean,

*Second Reader:* As time flowing into Eternity,

*First Reader:* As a worker pausing to listen to a strain of  
music,

*Second Reader:* As a child climbing into the lap of its  
father,

*Leader:* O, come let us worship.

### **Musical Calls to Worship**

Music can also be used to call the congregation together in worship. See the section on Musical Aids to Worship, pages 576 to 610 in *The Canadian Baptist Hymnal*. Copyright 1973, Baptist Federation of Canada.

### **Calls to Worship for Special Themes**

Special themes and times in the rhythm of church life suggest the use of calls to worship that enhance the focus of the service.

#### ***The Lord's Supper***

“Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

*Matthew 11:28,29*

“‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be



hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

*Matthew 5:6; John 6:35*

“Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.”

*Revelation 3:20*

“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”

*Isaiah 55:6,7*

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

*Hebrews 4:15,16*

### ***Missions***

“All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.”

*Psalms 22:27,28*

“The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.”

*Habakkuk 2:20*

“Be still, and know that I am God; I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”

*Psalm 46:10*

“The God who made the world and everything in it...made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us.”

*Acts 17:24,26,27*

“Sing to the Lord, all the earth; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all peoples. For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods.”

*1 Chronicles 16:23-25*

### **Calls to Worship that Celebrate the Church Year**

Centuries ago, the Christian church was given the richly-textured gift of the church year. This gift has nearly been forgotten in some communities of faith, and for this reason, a brief word of introduction is offered.

The celebrations of the church year are personal and corporate disciplines intended to bring rhythm and order to the believers' experience. Anticipation, celebration, repentance and reflection are all included within the cycle, each within its own season, so that we learn both to suffer legitimately and live joyously and that in the right proportions. (Nelson, 1986). The patterns we need for learning to live with God as well as with the

entire range of human emotion and experience are to be found within the seasons of the church year.

With these thoughts in mind, the following suggestions are offered for calling congregations to worship at special times during the church year.

### *Advent*

Advent is the beginning of the church year, and in this season we are invited to wait. Along with all of nature waiting for the return of the sun, we wait for the birth of the Word-made-flesh. We are invited to resist impatience and transform waiting into an art form of anticipation and joyful expectation.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.”

*Isaiah 9:2*

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and his name is Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his Kingdom.”

*Isaiah 9:6-7*

“But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is of old, from ancient days, and he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord and he shall be the one of peace.”

*Micah 5:2,4,5*

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.”

*Isaiah 7:14*

### ***Christmas***

During Christmas, the long awaited season, we celebrate God coming to dwell with us in our humanity. We celebrate the ordinary and everyday, which will never be either again because God has entered the world and transformed the boundaries between sacred and earthly. If God can be found in a barn, is there anywhere that God might not be?

“I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people; to you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

*Luke 2:10,11*

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!”

*Luke 2:13,14*

“Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.”

*Luke 2:15*

“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.”

*Isaiah 60:1,3*

***Lent***

During Lent, we are offered the opportunity to engage in the difficult parts of the process of becoming whole. Choosing to focus on that which we need to give up in order to become whole allows us to explore ways of reforming the patterns of our lives. The traditional Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and giving to the poor are offered as a means by which to reunite the spiritual and the material dimensions of our lives.

“When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

*Matthew 6:3,4*

“Whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

*Matthew 6:6*

“When you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

*Matthew 6:17,18*

“Thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the spirit of the contrite.’”

*Isaiah 57:15*

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”

*James 4:8,10*

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.”

*Psalm 51:10*

“I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

*Ezekiel 11:19,20*

### ***Palm Sunday***

Palm Sunday introduces a deep paradox: that the same ones who cried “Hosanna!” crucified Christ within a few days. On this day we are confronted with the fickleness of our own hearts.

“Tell the daughter of Zion, look, your King is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

*Matthew 21:5*

“The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!’”

*Matthew 21:9*

“Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O

ancient doors! That the king of glory may come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of Glory.”

*Psalm 24:9,10*

### ***Maundy Thursday***

On Maundy Thursday, we remember the example of service which Jesus gave us as he washed the disciples feet. The term Maundy comes from the word for the new commandment which Christ gave that night, to love one another as Christ loved, in just as basic a way of service. Believers gather around the table on this night and share the Lord’s Supper.

“If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.”

*John 13:14,15*

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

*John 13:34,35*

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

*Matthew 5:6; John 6:35*

### ***Good Friday and Easter***

During Easter, we move from the quiet introspection of

Good Friday to the best news of all that we have been waiting to hear: he is not here, he has risen!

“He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.”

*Isaiah 53:5*

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

*John 3:16*

### ***Pentecost***

On Pentecost, fifty days after Easter, we celebrate “The roaring entry of the Spirit,” (Nelson, 1986). God comes to his people, not in human form, as at Christmas, to be God-with-us, but as Spirit to be God-within-us. We welcome the gifts, enthusiasm, courage and life which the Spirit brings.

“Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.”

*Joel 2:28,29*

“And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ...All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.”

*Acts 2:2,4*



“By contrast, the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

*Galatians 5:22*

“Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit. ... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

*1 Corinthians 12:4,7*

### ***Thanksgiving Day***

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”

*Psalms 100:1,2,4,5*

“O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.”

*Psalms 95:1-3*

“Let all the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere him.”

*Psalms 67:5-7*

## **The Confession of Sin and the Assurance of Pardon**

Confession of sin and the assurance of pardon represent a significant expression of the personal and communal nature of worship. Worship leaders assist congregations in meaningful and vulnerable expressions of repentance leading to spiritual freedom.

Leaders should take care to avoid superficial expressions and strive to reflect the nature and circumstance of the particular worshipping community. Preparation may be aided by a mood of quiet and solitude prior to a responsive or unison reading.

The confession and assurance should consist of a call, a verbal expression, and an assurance of pardon. The call prepares and draws attention to the discipline of confession and repentance, the “verbal” expression. The leader concludes this expression of worship with an assurance of pardon offered in Jesus’ name. Prior to pronouncing the assurance, the leader may clarify for the congregation that confession and repentance reflects not only a “turning away” from sin but also a “turning toward” God’s leading. The assurance should be an audible statement sharing the hope in forgiveness.

### **Calls to Repentance From Scripture**

“No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.”

*Proverbs 28:13*

“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, the

unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

*Isaiah 55:6,7*

“Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: ‘Return, faithless Israel, says the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, says the Lord. I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your guilt, that you have rebelled against the Lord your God, and scattered your favors among strangers under every green tree, and have not obeyed my voice, says the Lord.’”

*Jeremiah 3:12,13*

“Repent and turn from all your transgressions, otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!”

*Ezekiel 18:30b,31*

“Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”

*Acts 3:19,20a*

“If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

*1 John 1:9*

### **Responsive Confessions**

*Leader:* “Let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Let us confess our sins to God and ask forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Saviour. O God, Creator of the Universe, Lord of all life, who has set us in families, given to each of us an appointed task, and made us citizens here on earth, we confess that in our homes we have not always lived together in unity and love, we have oft times been discourteous and inconsiderate, unloving and unforgiving, and we have not shared fully in the tasks and duties or in the joys and recreations of the family.

*Response:* Forgive us, O Lord.

*Leader:* We confess that at work, we have not always worked hard and well, we have sometimes withheld the help and service or the praise and reward due to others, and we have not done all our work with a pure and right intention of pleasing you.

*Response:* Forgive us, O Lord.

*Leader:* We confess that as citizens we have not shared fully and responsibly in the affairs of neighbourhood and nations, we have been too preoccupied with our rights and advantages and too little concerned with the needs and welfare of others, and we have lacked the zeal and courage to advocate and strive for justice, freedom and peace.

*Response:* Forgive us, O Lord. As we have forgiven those who have wronged us, forgive us the wrong we have done and the good we have left undone; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Leader:* “Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Let us confess our sins to God and ask for forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto you that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against you by thought, word, and deed. Therefore, we flee for refuge to your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring your grace, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Response:* O Most Merciful God, who has given your only begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us, and for his sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by your Holy Spirit, increase in us true knowledge of you and your will, and true obedience to your word, that by your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Leader:* “If we claim to be sinless, we are self-deceived and strangers to the truth. If we confess our sins, he is just, and may be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every kind of wrong.”

*Response:* Be gracious to us, O God, in your true love; in the fullness of your mercy blot our misdeeds. Wash away all our guilt and cleanse us from our sins. For well we know our misdeeds, and our sins confront us all the day long. Turn away from our sins and blot out all our guilt. “Create in us a clean heart, O God, and give us a new and steadfast spirit; do not drive us from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from us; revive in us the joy of your deliverance and grant us a willing spirit.” Amen.

*1 John 1:9; and Psalm 51 adapted NEB*

*Leader:* Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the laws and the prophets.” With a consciousness of that which God expects of us, and an awareness of our failure, let us come to him and confess our sin, seeking his forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

*Response:* God of love, God of holiness, and God of mercy, we acknowledge and confess that we have sinned against you, in the things we have thought, in the things we have said, and in the things we have done. We confess that we have not loved you with all our heart and soul, with all our mind and strength; nor have we loved our neighbours as much as ourselves. We ask that you would not withhold your love from us, and that through Jesus Christ you would be merciful unto us and forgive us our sins. By the power of your Holy Spirit help us to love more fully, so that love for you and others may be foremost in our hearts and that we may lovingly follow you, in the steps of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Leader:* In the parable of the Prodigal Son, it is recorded of him that when he came to himself he said, “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you.’” If we are as conscious of ourselves as we ought to be, let us also come to God, confess our sins and seek his forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

*Response:* Heavenly Father, we have a consciousness in our minds that we have sinned against heaven and before you. We have chosen to walk in darkness rather than light, we have taken upon ourselves the name of

Jesus Christ but have not always walked in his way. Self love and self indulgence have characterized our priority. Therefore, we pray that you would have mercy upon us, in the name of Jesus Christ forgive us our sins, cleanse us of our guilt, by your word and your Holy Spirit renew our consciences, enable us to live and love according to your purposes, and help us to offer forgiveness to others. Hear us in the name of Jesus Christ and for your glory. Amen.

Additional scripture resources: *Psalms such as 32:1-7 and 51:1-17*

### **General Prayers of Confession**

Most Holy and merciful Father; we acknowledge and confess in your presence, our sinful nature, prone to evil and slothful in good, and all our shortcomings and offences against you. You alone know how often we have sinned, in wandering from your ways, in wasting your gifts, in forgetting your love. O Lord, have pity upon us. We are ashamed and sorry for all the ways in which we have caused your displeasure. Teach us to hate our errors, cleanse us from our secret faults, and forgive our sins, for the sake of your dear Son, our Saviour. Most Holy and loving Father, send your purifying grace into our hearts, we ask of you, that we may henceforth live in your light and walk in your ways, according to the commandments of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, please forgive our sins and set us free from them:

- We confess to the sin of pride: We have been sure of our own goodness and importance and have looked

down on others. Help us appreciate the true worth of other people.

- We confess to the sin of envy: We have been displeased when others have been more successful or sought after than we have been. Help us to be glad when others prosper.
- We confess to the sin of anger: We have lost our temper and nursed grievances. Help us to be patient and understanding of every one.
- We confess to the sin of self-indulgence: We have had enough and to spare, yet have neglected the needs of others. Help us to deny ourselves so that others may not be in want.
- We confess to the sin of unchastity: In one way or another, we have used sex wrongly. Help us to create and uphold right relations between men and women, inside marriage and outside it.
- We confess to the sin of anxiety: We have worried about many things. Help us to trust you and see us through.
- We confess to the sin of laziness: We have been lukewarm Christians. Make us eager to do your will. Amen.

O God, you so freely pardon all who repent and turn unto you, now fulfill in every contrite heart your promise of redeeming grace. Forgive all our sins and negligence, cleanse us from guilt and keep us walking in the way of holiness and fruitfulness, that we may love and serve you all the days of our lives. Through Jesus Christ our Saviour, Amen.



God of righteousness and justice, you have established the way of life in which we should walk, and it is against you that we have sinned. You alone have power to pardon. You have offered to us forgiveness through Jesus Christ, your Son. Be pleased, therefore, once more to forgive our sin and to remove our guilt. In turn, grant unto us the wisdom to know your will, the willingness to walk in its way, and the power to achieve your purposes, through Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Lord God of heaven and earth, be attentive to hear the prayers of your servants. If you were to record only our iniquities, O Lord, not one of us could dare to enter Your presence. But you have offered to us, through Jesus Christ, your Son, forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life. We confess that we have known your expectations of us, but we are not always willing to fulfill them. We acknowledge as well, that indifference and lethargy have taken root in our hearts. Lord God forgive us. Establish us again in the way of life, truth and fruitfulness; to the glory of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Lord. Amen.

### **Assurances of Pardon**

Our God has said, "I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins." Let us therefore, be assured of our forgiveness upon the trustworthiness of God's word.

*Isaiah 43:25*

To the children of faith, God has said, "I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like a mist: return to me, for I have redeemed you." Let us

accept the acts of God on our behalf and return unto fullness of fellowship with him.

*Isaiah 44:22*

The promise of God to his people is that he will bring health and healing, prosperity and security. Most significant of all is his promise, "I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me."

*Jeremiah 33:8*

As you have come to God in repentance and confession, may you experience the fulfilment of God's promises, in these moments, and in the days to come.

"Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you."

*Acts 13:38*

"But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

*Romans 5:8,10,11*

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death." May your hearts and your minds rest in the promise and assurance of freedom from condemnation through Jesus Christ.

*Romans 8:1,2*

“The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

*1 Timothy 1:15*

“If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Our faith and our hope is in Jesus Christ. Rest assured that in him your sins are forgiven.

*1 John 1:9*

Additional scripture resources: *Psalm 103:8-12*; *2 Corinthians 5:9,21*; *2 Thessalonians 2:16,17*; *1 Timothy 1:15*; *1 John 1:7*.

## **Other Resources, Readings and Prayers for Worship**

### **Offertory Sentences and Prayers**

The offering is an expression of stewardship and worship. Through the act of offering, we express heartfelt gratitude for God's goodness and blessing, while acknowledging our willingness and joy in sharing responsibility toward the dynamic work of the Reign of God. The act of offering is both an illustration of the wisdom of generosity and a discipline of the spiritual life.

#### ***Biblical calls to giving***

“O people of all nations of the earth, ascribe great strength and glory to his name! Yes, ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name! Bring an offering and come before him.”

*1 Chronicles 16:28,29 TLB*

“Those who possessed precious stones gave them to the treasury of the house of the Lord. The people rejoiced at this willing response, because in the loyalty of their hearts they have given willingly to the Lord.”

*1 Chronicles 29:8,9 NEB*

“The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who dwell therein.”

*Psalms 24:1 NEB*

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.”

*Psalms 103:1,2 KJV*

“How can I repay the Lord for all his gifts to me? I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.”

*Psalms 116:12,14 NEB*

“Honour the Lord with your wealth as the first charge on all your earnings.”

*Proverbs 3:9 NEB*

“On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

*Matthew 2:11*

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

*Matthew 6:19-21*

“For what will it profit them, to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?”

*Mark 8:36*

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

*Acts 20:35*

“Stewards are expected to show themselves trustworthy.”

*1 Corinthians 4:2 NEB*

“And now about the collection in aid of God’s people.

Every Sunday each of you is to put aside and keep by him a sum in proportion to his gains.”

*1 Corinthians 16:1,2 NEB*

“The troubles they have been through have tried them hard, yet in all this they have been so exuberantly happy that from the depths of their poverty they have shown themselves lavishly open-handed. Going to the limit of their resources, as I can testify, and even beyond that limit, they begged us most insistently, and on their own initiative, to be allowed to share in this generous service to their fellow Christians. And their giving surpassed our expectations, for they gave their very selves, offering them in the first instance to the Lord, but also, under God, to us.”

*2 Corinthians 8:2-5 NEB*

“You know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.”

*2 Corinthians 8:9*

“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.”

*2 Corinthians 9:7-8*

“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which will produce

thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.”

*2 Corinthians 9:10-12*

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

*Hebrews 13:16*

“Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

*James 1:17*

“How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”

*1 John 3:17-18*

### ***Offertory Prayers***

Our generous God, by this act of worship we are discovering that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Graciously receive these offerings we bring, and grant to us an increased discovery of the blessedness of giving, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, we affirm you as the divine owner of all things. We acknowledge with appreciation the sacred trust you have placed in our care. We present unto you now the fruits of our labours and the blessings of your providence. Accept us with our gifts, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Receive these our offerings which are given for the building up of your church, and the extension of your kingdom. We offer them to you with gratitude in our hearts and in the spirit of love and worship through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Every good gift comes from you, our Father. Out of your abundance we have experienced spiritual and material blessings beyond measure. Out of that same abundance we offer back to you these expressions of our gratitude. Receive them in the name of Jesus Christ, and use them to bring him glory. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, though you were rich, yet for our sakes you became poor, so that through your poverty we might become rich. Accept these offerings, we pray, as an expression of our gratitude for all you have done, and as an attempt on our part to follow your loving example. Amen.

Our Father, the example of the Corinthian Christians was that they first gave of themselves, and then of their substance. It is with a deep desire to do the same, that we present ourselves, and these our gifts, in the name of Jesus Christ. Receive our worship, and extend your kingdom we pray. Amen.

Great Giver of Life, you who spared not your own Son, but delivered him up for us all, and who, with him has freely given us all things; receive these offerings which we bring and dedicate to you. Enable us daily to follow your self-giving example and thereby find our deepest joy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Spirit of God, as you bear witness to the presentation of these our offerings, we pray that you would take these material gifts and make them sacred offerings unto the Living God. In addition, we pray that you would enter into, and take possession of our own lives, that we might give them, and live them as daily offerings unto Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Invitations to Prayer**

Invitations to prayer may be offered either by scriptural reading or by a brief reflective image related to the direction or focus of the prayer. Images that draw people into an attitude of prayer help to prepare participants both for speaking and listening. Worship leaders assume the responsibility of inviting others to a place of safety and acceptance, permitting the grace of vulnerability in God's presence.

“Seek the Lord your God, and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

*Deuteronomy 4:29*

“Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice! Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually.”

*1 Chronicles 16:10,11*

“Trust always in God, my people, pour out your hearts before him; God is our shelter.”

*Psalms 62:8 NEB*

“Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.”

*Isaiah 55:6*

“If you invoke me and pray to me, I will listen to you; When you seek me, you shall find me; if you search with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord.”

*Jeremiah 29:12,13 NEB*

“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.”

*Matthew 7:7,8*

“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

*John 15:7*

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

*Philippians 4:6,7*

Additional scripture resources: *Matthew 21:22; Matthew 26:41; Luke 18:1; John 14:12-14; John 16:24, Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 10:19,22; James 4:8,10; James 5:13, 1 John 5:14.*

### **The Pastoral Prayer**

The true intent of the pastoral prayer ought to be the voicing of the needs of the people. The one who prays pastorally will seek to present to God such needs as forgiveness, cleansing, comfort, guidance, help, healing, hope, faith, courage and strength. Previous planning and thought ought to be undertaken, with specific sensitivity to the people represented before God.

The pastoral prayer need not be and should not be long. One need only to recognize the difficulty of sustained attention in private prayer to appreciate the difficulty of attention in the mind of the worshipper. Simple words and simple sentence structure is most effective.

As well as the pastoral prayer speaking for the people, it models the discipline of prayer. Care should always be taken in expressing a variety of formats and styles, respecting the range of personality and temperament of the participants. A leader should never assume that everyone speaks and images their relationship with God in the same way. Expression of emotion, use of images, physical gestures and periods of silence are all appropriate means of communication. Praying a scripture passage may also enhance the prayer experience of the congregation.

### **Prayers for Illumination before Reading or Preaching the Word**

Let the words of our mouths and meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer, Amen.

Eternal God, we understand that the purpose of your word is to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. As we hear it read and proclaimed, give us grace to perceive your truth, willingness to walk in its light, and the power of your Holy Spirit to seek its fulfillment to the glory of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Your word, O Lord, is perfect, restoring the soul; your word is certain, making the simple person wise; your truths cause our hearts to rejoice, and our eyes to be enlightened. May that very purpose be fulfilled in these moments of devotion to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of life, even as the rain and the snow come down from heaven to water the earth, and cause it to bring forth seed to the sower and bread to the hungry, so cause your word to accomplish its purposes in our lives, bringing spiritual prosperity, fruitfulness, and eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Good Lord, may the truth of your word, the power of your spirit, and the full assurance of your love, minister to us in this hour. Amen.

### **Prayers of Commission**

These prayers may often substitute for, or be used just preceding the prayer of benediction. The commission is understood as a brief spiritual address, or charge, and should therefore be directed to the congregation as they stand facing the pastor just prior to leaving the worship service. A brief word may be offered as a “charge” to the

congregation, connecting the worship theme or sermon focus with the act of going out. The commissioning assists the worshippers in understanding both calling and joy in presenting Christ to the world through the act of living devotion.

“You are ambassadors for Christ, God makes his appeal through you. Go into all the world on behalf of Christ and challenge its people to be reconciled to God.”

*2 Corinthians 5:20 adapted*

As you leave this place of worship to enter again the responsibilities of life, “live at peace among yourselves, admonish the careless, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, and be patient with all. Be always joyful; pray continually and give thanks whatever happens; for this is what God in Christ wills for you.

*1 Thessalonians 5:14,16-18 adapted NEB*

Go into your world, in the love of God and in the power of the Holy spirit and seek to fulfil your high calling as followers of Jesus Christ. “Go into your world and make disciples of those around you, assist them to declare their faith in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that Christ has commanded; and he will be with you always, to the close of the age.”

*Matthew 28:19,20 adapted*

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

*Matthew 5:16*

“Be alert; stand firm in the faith; be valiant and strong. Let all you do be done in love.”

*1 Corinthians 16:13,14 NEB*

“Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

*Joshua 1:9*

“The spirit that God gave us is one to inspire strength, love and self-discipline. Don’t ever be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, give of yourself and love the world for Christ’s sake.”

*2 Timothy 1:7,8 adapted NEB*

Go into the world as God’s distinctive people. Love in all sincerity, serve the Lord with unflagging energy; stand firm in time of trouble, persist in prayer and practice hospitality. Contribute to the needs of God’s people, offer blessings upon those who persecute you and care as much about each other as you do about yourselves. And may God’s spirit grant you the power to fulfil this commission to the glory of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Take the Light of the world to those who walk in darkness, take the Bread of life to those who experience a famine of the world, and take the Water of life, even Jesus Christ, to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. And may your efforts be blessed with the love, power and grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

“By God’s mercy, I implore you as rational creatures, to offer your very selves to God: dedicated and acceptably fitted out. After all, that is the reasonable way to worship

him with your mind and your heart. Don't adjust yourselves to fit the pattern of this present world, but let your mind be remade and your whole nature transformed so that you may be cut to fit the pattern of God's good, acceptable and perfect will. And may the grace of Jesus Christ himself, through the power of the Holy Spirit enable you to fulfil this commission to the glory of God." Amen.

*Romans 12:1,2 adapted NEB*

### **Prayers of Benediction**

"May the Lord bless and protect you; may the Lord's face radiate with joy because of you; may he be gracious to you, show you his favour, and give you his peace."

*Numbers 6:24-26 TLB*

"May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never forsake us. May he give us the desire to do his will in everything, and to obey all the commandments and instructions he has given our ancestors. May people all over the earth know that the Lord is God, and that there is no other God at all."

*1 Kings 8:58,60 adapted*

"And now I commend you to God and to his gracious word, which has power to build you up and give you your heritage among all who are dedicated to him."

*Acts 20:32 NEB*

"May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

*Romans 15:5,6*

“And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace by your faith in him, until, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you overflow with hope.”

*Romans 15:13 NEB*

“May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you all of his blessings, and great peace of heart and mind.”

*1 Corinthians 1:3 TLB*

“Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.”

*1 Corinthians 16:13,14,23*

“May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ mightily bless each one of you, and give you peace.”

*2 Corinthians 1:2 TLB*

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

*2 Corinthians 13:13*

“May peace and blessing be yours from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

*1 Galatians 1:3 TLB*

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

*Ephesians 3:20,21*



“May the peace of God, which is beyond our utmost understanding, keep guard over your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.”

*Philippians 4:7 adapted NEB*

“May God supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

*Philippians 4:19 adapted*

“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father who has loved us and given us everlasting comfort and hope which we don’t deserve, comfort your hearts with all comfort, and help you in every good thing you say and do.”

*2 Thessalonians 2:16,17 TLB*

“May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in all ways.”

*2 Thessalonians 3:16 NEB*

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

*2 Thessalonians 3:18*

“To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.” Amen

*1 Timothy 1:17*

“And now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, equip you with all you need for doing his will; May he who became the great Shepherd of the sheep by an everlasting agreement between God and you, signed with his blood, produce in you through the power of Christ all that is pleasing to him. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

*Hebrews 13:20,21 adapted TLB*

“May the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, restore, establish, and strengthen you.”

*1 Peter 5:10 adapted*

“Now to the one who can keep you from falling and set you in the presence of his glory, jubilant and above reproach, to the only God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, might and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all time, now and for evermore. Amen.”

*Jude 24,25 NEB*

May the Lord bless and watch over you, may the Lord be pleased with you, and in turn allow you to share in his pleasure, may the Lord be your friend and the source of your well being. Amen.

May Christ’s grace attend you, may God’s love surround you, and may the Holy Spirit keep you. Amen.

Additional scripture resources: *Psalm 72:18,19; Psalm 129:8; Romans 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:11,14; Galatians 6:18, Ephesians 6:23,24; Philippians 4:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:23,28; 2 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 4:22; 1 Peter 5:14; 2 Peter 3:17,18; Revelation 1:5,6; Revelation 22:21.*

## **Affirmations of Faith**

### **The Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The Holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of Sin; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting. Amen.

### **The Nicene Creed**

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made human, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the

living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the Life of the world to come. Amen.

### **An Affirmation from the Pastoral Epistles**

We believe in one God, the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, who no one has ever seen or can see, who gives life to all things, who is the Saviour of all. We believe in Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and humankind, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, who is to judge the living and the dead.

He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. We believe in the Holy spirit who dwells within us, who God poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that we might be justified by his grace, and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

To the King of Ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Affirmations Made by Jesus Christ  
about His Own Person and Works**

From the Gospel of John

- I am the Bread of Life; whoever eats of this bread will live forever.
- I am the Light of the World: whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.
- I am the Door of the Sheep: If anyone enters by me, he will be saved.
- I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
- I am the Resurrection and the Life: those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.
- I am the True Vine: You are the branches: those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me, you can do nothing.
- I am the Way, and the Truth and the Life: No one comes to the Father except through me.

**An Affirmation of Jesus' Resurrection**

“Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the Scriptures; he was buried; he was raised to life on the third day, according to the Scriptures; he appeared to Cephas, and afterwards to the Twelve. Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at once. Then he appeared to James, and afterwards to all the apostles. Last of all, he appeared even to me.”

*Adapted from 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 NEB*

### **An Affirmation of Resurrection Faith**

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

Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

*1 Corinthians 15:51-58*

### **An Affirmation of God's Love**

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. What then are we say to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things pre-

sent, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Adapted from Romans 8:28-39*

### **A Church Covenant**

Having been led by the Spirit to profess our faith in Jesus Christ, and having been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now solemnly and joyfully affirm our covenant with God and with each other.

We pledge to serve Christ in the fellowship of this church. We shall endeavour to love one another, to remember one another in prayer, to share each other's joys, and to sustain each other in times of distress. We intend to be a community of faith, where those without Christ may find him, and where all who come may find welcome. We shall strive to be responsible community members, through faithful attendance, unselfish use of our gifts and generous giving.

We shall seek to be a community of character, obedient to Christ in our daily living. Within our homes, in our work, and while at leisure, we shall pursue attitudes and actions which will reflect God's spirit working through us. Believing that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, we will live in such a way that honours the Spirit.

Drawn together in a fellowship of faith with all who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, we will pray and work for a spirit of unity among all Christians.

Believing that our call to be a church is a call to

witness in the world, we dedicate ourselves anew as servants of the Lord of all life. We pledge ourselves to the practice of justice and kindness and a daily walk with God. As we promise our support to the work of our missionaries throughout the world, we commit ourselves to the mission to which God calls us all.

Acknowledging our humanity and depending wholly upon the grace of Jesus Christ, we commit our lives to God in all his fullness; the Holy Spirit, who is our Teacher and guide, the Son, Jesus Christ, who is redeeming us as a people, and the Father who is Maker of Heaven and Earth. Amen.



## **The Communion Service**

Most congregations have an established policy or tradition regarding the frequency and conduct of the Communion Service. The pastor should be sensitive to familiar practice, but at the same time ought to explore a variety of ways of keeping the celebration of the Lord's Supper fresh and meaningful.

The pastor and deacons (or other appropriately designated people) should carefully work out a plan for the preparation and serving of the elements. This plan should be interpreted clearly to the servers, so that the service may proceed smoothly and without awkwardness.

The Lord's Supper may serve not only as a celebration by believers, but also as a witness of faith to non-believers. The pastor should clearly and graciously make this distinction in extending an invitation to the Lord's Table for both those who participate and those who observe.

The service should be conducted quietly, naturally and with dignity; the pastor should model a relaxed and reverent attitude. It is a service of communion, of remembrance, of personal faith and of proclamation. To aid the worshippers' meditations on the mysteries of this ordinance, given to us by Christ, silence, quiet music or appropriate readings may accompany the serving of the elements.

### **The Order of Service**

The order below is structured to follow immediately after the sermon in a service of public worship. If it is used alone as a separate service, it should be introduced by an appropriate Call to Worship and Invocation.

Immediately after the sermon, the pastor may extend the invitation to the Lord's Supper with an explanation of the church's policy as to who is invited/permitted to partake of the elements. This should be phrased with graciousness and sensitivity.

During the singing of the Communion Hymn, the pastor and deacons take their places at the table, and any desired or necessary change of position of choir or members of the congregation is quietly made. When the deacons have taken their places, two of them remove the covering cloth or plate covers.

This is an appropriate moment for the pastor and/or deacons to extend the right hand of fellowship to new members, and welcome them into the church.

The pastor then calls and invites the congregation to the Lord's Supper. (Wording is suggested in the order that follows.) At this point, one of the deacons (who has been contacted in advance) may be asked to offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the Supper, incorporating thanks for both the bread and the cup and the spiritual realities that they symbolize. This one prayer may take the place of the two separate prayers for the bread and the cup.

The pastor then says the Words of Institution for the Bread and breaks it. If separate Prayers of Thanksgiving for Bread and Cup are being offered, the Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Bread is offered here.

The pastor then gives the bread to the deacons to

distribute to the people. After all have been served, they eat together when the pastor invites everyone to do so.

After a moment of silence, the same sequence is repeated for the Cup.

An appropriate Communion Hymn, followed by a Benediction, ends the service.

### **The Communion Offering**

In some churches it is customary to receive a communion offering, generally for benevolent uses within the church or community, or for world relief (such as The Sharing Way). This offering may be received either before or after the Lord's Supper. If it is received after communion, it may be appropriate for a couple of deacons to stand at the exit to the sanctuary and receive the offering as people leave. The use of communion offering envelopes may encourage people to support this ministry more generously.

### **An Order for the Celebration of Communion**

#### ***Explanation of Church Policy***

#### ***A Communion Hymn***

#### ***The Reception of New Members***

#### ***The Communion Offering (Optional)***

It is a custom at Communion to receive an offering for those of our [fellowship/community/world] who may be in need. Let us honour the scriptures, as we [bear one another's burdens/love our neighbour as ourselves].

### ***The Call to the Supper***

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who have love and concern for your neighbours, who intend to lead a new life, following the commandment of God by walking in holy ways: draw near with reverence, faith and thanksgiving and take the Supper of the Lord to your comfort.

Come to this sacred table, not because you must, but because you may: come to testify not that you are righteous, but that you sincerely love our Lord Jesus Christ and desire to be his true disciples. Come, not because you have any claim on heaven's rewards, but because in your frailty and sin you stand in constant need of heaven's mercy and help; not to express an opinion, but to seek a Presence and to pray for a Spirit.

And now that the Supper of the Lord is spread before you, lift your minds and hearts above all selfish fears and care. Let this bread and wine be to you the witness and signs of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Before the throne of the heavenly Father and the cross of the Redeemer make your humble confession of sin, dedicate your lives to Christian obedience and service, and pray for strength to know and do the holy will of God.

### ***Invitation***

We have come together today, in obedience to our Lord's command, to share the Lord's Supper. To its blessing and fellowship, all disciples of the Lord Jesus, who have confessed him before people and wish to serve him, may come. This is not our table, but the Table of our Lord.

*Alternate:* We invite all who love the Lord Jesus, who have repented of sin and who have decided to follow Christ in newness of life to come to this Table. It is the Table of the Lord.

***Prayer of Thanksgiving (Optional)***

***The Words of Institution for the Bread***

[While breaking the bread:]

“The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.’”

*1 Corinthians 11: 23,24*

***The Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Bread***

Let us also give thanks. Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ will offer thanksgiving for the bread.

***The Serving of the Bread***

[When all have been served:]

Let us eat this bread in remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice for us.

***Silence***

***The Words of Institution for the Cup***

“In the same way, he took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

*1 Corinthians 11: 25,26*

***The Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Cup***

Let us again give thanks. Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ will offer thanksgiving for the cup.

***The Serving of the Cup***

[When all have been served:]

Jesus said, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be thankful.

***Silence***

***A Communion Hymn***

[To introduce the hymn:]

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out.

***The Benediction***

And so, into God's gracious keeping we would commit each other. May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and give us peace; in our going out, and in our coming in; in our lying down and in our rising up; in our labour and in our leisure; in our laughter and in our tears; until we come to stand before him in that day in which there is no sunset and no dawn; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Alternate Benediction:***

Go out into the world living for Jesus. Where there is darkness, take his light. Where there is despair, take his love. Where there is death, take his life. And know this, the Lord is with you as you live for him. Amen.

### **Celebrating Communion in a Private Setting**

As part of the ministry of care, from time-to-time it may be appropriate to celebrate communion, or the Lord's Supper, with one who is unable to attend public worship. Because the celebration of communion is intended to be expressive of the Body of Christ, it is desirable to have one or two representatives of the congregation present to participate, in addition to the care-giver. The procedure should be undertaken with sensitivity to physical and other limitations of the patient or shut-in and to the regulations governing visitation in an institutional setting. Travelling communion sets are available in most Christian supply houses.

#### **An Order for the Celebration of Communion in a Private Setting**

##### *Preparing the Elements and Instruction*

##### *Welcome and Opening Statement*

Sisters and brothers in Christ, be welcome in the presence of the Spirit of God. We have gathered together in this intimate way to observe the ordinance of Communion, in fellowship with one another and in obedience to Christ's command. Although we are small in number, we have everything here that we need, including assurance of Christ's own presence, for as he said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." We are the children of God and we are joined together here on holy ground. Let us therefore draw near with trust and thanksgiving, and

partake of Bread and Cup together, for the nourishment of our souls. Let us pray...

***Prayer***

Most Merciful God, we bow before you in our hearts, conscious of our dependence upon you and of our confidence in your grace. Forgive us our sins, we pray, cleanse us and make us new, for the sake of Christ. Grant that in this time together we might discover afresh how precious is the hope to which we have been called. Grant also that we might delight in your will and walk in your ways, now and always. Amen.

***Words of Institution***

We remember that, "The Lord Jesus Christ on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus. Let us give thanks for the Bread and the Cup.

***Prayer of Thanksgiving***

***Distribution and Partaking of the Bread***

[As the bread is distributed:]

The Body of Christ, broken for you.

***Distribution and Partaking of the Cup***

[As the cup is distributed:]

The Blood of Christ, shed for you



***Statement of Praise and Adoration***

Glory be to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory be to God, in the church and in Christ Jesus, from generation to generation, and forever more. Glory be to God.  
Amen

***Passing of the Peace***

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

*Response:* And with your spirit.



**Part IV**

**RESOURCES FOR  
SPECIAL OCCASIONS  
IN CHURCH LIFE**



## **The Reception of New Members**

New members are most commonly received at the time of the Communion Service, but may appropriately be received at any worship service. The ceremony for the reception of new members is the public extension of welcome and the rights of fellowship to those who have been received into membership by action of the church.

Several appropriate Scripture Readings are suggested in the order that follows.

Additional scripture resources: *Psalms 116:12-14; Matthew 10:32; John 13:34, 35; Acts 2:42; Romans 12:9-13; Galatians 6:2,6,9,10; Ephesians 5:25-27.*

It can be very meaningful for the pastor or chair of deacons to offer to each new member a symbol of welcome at the end of the service. This may be a warm embrace, a handshake, a membership certificate, a flower—or any other symbol of greeting and welcome.

The pastor or deacons chair may also add some personal word of counsel or encouragement as part of the ceremony.

### **An Order for the Acceptance of New Members**

#### ***Scripture Reading***

“For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith.”

*Romans 12:4-6*

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. There is no law against such things. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.”

*Galatians 5:22, 23, 25*

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

*Ephesians 4:1-6*

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

*Hebrews 10:23-25*

### ***Introduction of New Members***

[If on a Communion Sunday:]

This is the day we rejoice in the unity of Christ as his family around the table. Thus it is appropriate to welcome into our fellowship the following persons:

***Brief introduction of each new member.***

### ***Address to New Members***

Our friends in the Christian faith, this church is a

family of believers in Jesus Christ, bound together by a common experience of the work of God in their lives. We have witnessed the evidence of this work in you, making you one with us in a common faith and loyalty. Now, we rejoice to welcome you into this family of God, and we invite you to participate fully in our worship and mission.

In the life of this church we commit to pray for, support, encourage and help one another, so that we may all grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As a member of this church, you will be part of a larger fellowship of Baptist churches in Canada, a fellowship that goes out in widening circles of association until it reaches the Baptist World Alliance. As Christians you are members of the wider Church of Christ in the world. We pray that the Spirit of God will make you increasingly aware of the dignity, the privilege and the responsibilities of membership in both this fellowship of believers and in the universal Church of Jesus Christ.

*Alternate Address:*

We are pleased and blessed by your expressed desire to unite with us in the fellowship of this church. Because of your faith you are already one with the redeemed people of God.

By joining with this church you identify with its mission and commit yourself to playing a part in its ministry. We urge you to develop your spiritual gifts, select appropriate areas of service, maintain your involvement in worship and study and help provide for the needs of our congregation. We ask you to encourage our leaders, and by your own devotional life and example to bring growth and enrichment to our lives together.

***Address to Congregation***

As we receive these people into our fellowship we are entering into a joyous covenant with them. May they always find this church a community of spiritual enrichment, encouragement, and refuge. May they find us always prepared to receive them as part of the family, willing to celebrate their joys and open to share with them the deepest needs of life.

As a sign of your willingness to commit yourself to them, would you please stand and join in a prayer of dedication.

***Prayer of Dedication***

Eternal God, Our Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for these people whom you have added to our fellowship today. We thank you for the faith in your Son Jesus Christ which binds us together. We thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit who has brought us together in unity this day.

We pray that you would enable us to be faithful members of your church, committed to worship and ministry, spiritual growth and mission together. May we all use our gifts for the welfare of the other, and the well-being of the church. In the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

***Presentation of the Symbol of Fellowship***

In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of this church, I welcome you into membership. May God bless and enrich you as you share in the life and ministry of this church.



## **The Dedication and Commissioning of Leaders and Teachers**

Responsibility and leadership are both a Christian duty and a holy calling. It is important for us to recognize that each individual has specific gifts, a unique personality and blend of talents and that the local church has need for the expression of those gifts.

The purpose of a service of dedication and commissioning is threefold:

- To present publicly a particular set of tasks and responsibilities and to introduce those persons who have been elected or appointed to use their gifts in the fulfillment of those responsibilities;
- To give leaders the opportunity of publicly affirming their intention to commit themselves and their resources to undertaking their task;
- To provide an opportunity for the church to commission these leaders to their specific areas of mission and ministry.

### **A Dedication and Commissioning Service**

The service begins with the presentation of the leaders and an indication of the position to which they are called. The individuals come to the front of the sanctuary.

The Scripture reading should reflect the task for which the people are being set aside:

Appropriate scripture resources:

- For general use: *Matthew 9:35-38; 20:26-28; 28:1-20; Romans 12:1,2,6,11-13; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27; 13; Ephesians 4:1-13; 1 Peter 5:2-4*

- For church leaders: *Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7*
- For teachers: *Mark 1:21,22; 2 Timothy 2:15*
- For musicians: *Psalms 96:1-10; 98:4-6; Colossians 3:16-17*
- For youth workers: *Proverbs 3:5-6; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Timothy 4:11-16*
- For outreach workers: *Matthew 28:18, 20; Acts 13:1-3; Romans 10:14-15*
- For congregational care teams: *1 Corinthians 16:15-18; Acts 16:6-9; 1 Peter 4:8-11; 1 John 4:7-12*
- For community leaders: *2 Timothy 1:8-12; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Micah 6:8*

## **An Order of Service for the Dedication and Commissioning of Leaders and Teachers**

### ***Introduction and Presentation of Leaders***

#### ***Scripture Reading***

#### ***Commissioning of Leaders***

In all ages God has called men and women of faith to step out and assume positions of special responsibility in the church and in the world. \_\_\_\_\_ [task or tasks] is one of those responsibilities. It is as great a task as any we can offer.

To you I extend the words of Christ himself, who said, “You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should endure.” Similarly, I issue to you the charge of the Apostle Paul: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who

has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

You have the privilege of sharing in God’s work. It is important that you be conscious of the tools at your disposal, the resources of wisdom and power which God provides and the church community which offers its support. I remind you of the importance of scripture and prayer. These are the key to your Christian life and to the task you now undertake. Never forget that the ministry in which you share is vital and the lives it will touch are precious in the sight of God.

With the assurance of God’s presence and the support of this faith community, I commission you to the task of \_\_\_\_\_.

The words Paul used in commissioning Timothy, I now use in commissioning you: “Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, give it all you’ve got, be resolute, and love without stopping.” *1 Corinthians 16:13-14, The Message*

### ***Laying On of Hands (Optional)***

#### ***Responsive Statement of Intent by Leaders***

*Pastor:* Do you now accept your task as a sacred and solemn trust from the Lord Jesus Christ, and do you promise to fulfill your responsibilities and ministries to the best of your ability?

*Leaders:* [I/We] do, with the Lord’s help.

*Pastor:* Will you seek to be a faithful example of new life in Jesus Christ, and to make the witness of his church more effective in the world?

*Leaders:* [I/We] will, with the Lord's help.

***Congregational Response***

Pastor [turning to the congregation]: Do you, the members of the congregation, acknowledge and receive these leaders, and promise to enter with them into the spirit of the vows they have just made to God? Do you promise to encourage them, support them, labour with them and pray for them, with God as your helper? If so, will you stand with them for a prayer of dedication.

***Prayer of Dedication***

Our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, we approach you as a people whom you have called, gifted and commissioned. You have invited us to share in the task of reaching the world with the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. We thank you that you have chosen to do so by bringing us together into one body, the Church.

We thank you especially for [this person/these people] who [has/have] answered the call to specific service in the life and ministry of our congregation. We present ourselves, and [them/him/her] to you in a renewed commitment of our lives and our abilities. May the wisdom of your Word, the power of your Spirit, and your unending love fill us, that we might know your will and be empowered to do it to the glory of Jesus Christ and his Church. Amen.

[The Lord's Prayer may be said here.]

## **The Commissioning of a Pastor**

There is considerable variation in local custom when a minister is called and commissioned. In some instances, a representative from the particular Area or Association will be responsible for initiating and planning the service; in other cases, the local church itself is responsible for making such plans.

The service should be arranged and conducted as soon as possible following the arrival of the new pastor. The commissioning of a pastor should not only be an event in the life of the church, but also in the life of the community, and the Area or Association. Appropriate notices and invitations should be circulated in sufficient time to provide adequate information and enough time for response.

The date and time for the service will be dictated largely by local custom and the availability of the participants. In most cases, a reception will be planned to follow the service.

### **The Commissioning Service**

The balance of the service should be shaped according to local custom, but should include as a minimum, readings from the scriptures, the introduction of the new pastor, an exchange of commitments, an act of commissioning, a commissioning prayer, and a blessing given by the newly commissioned pastor.

Additional scripture resources: *Isaiah 6:1-8; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 5:1-11; 12:35-48; John 10:1-18; Romans 10:6-17; 12; 2 Corinthians 4; 5:11-21; Ephesians 4:1-16; 2 Timothy 5:1-8; 1 Peter 5:1-11.*

After the Scripture reading, the person introducing the pastor, usually a member of the congregation, will normally present a narrative of the events leading up to the call and the acceptance of the new pastor. The life of the pastor (and family, if appropriate) should also be highlighted briefly.

A variety of practices prevail in the exchange of commitments between pastor and congregation and the affirmation of the integrity of their purpose. Two options are presented in the order below.

A third option is the dialogue sermon. In this case, the pastor and representatives from the Church engage in a faith and practice dialogue concerning the convictions of the pastor and the particular areas of ministry and need in the congregation. A well-planned dialogue will enable both pastor and congregation to clearly understand the commitments which are being made to one another.

The Prayer of Commissioning following the Act of Commissioning is usually led by a representative of the Association or a pastor, while the blessing that ends the service is usually pronounced by the newly-commissioned pastor.

### **An Order of Service for the Commissioning of a Pastor**

#### ***Scripture Reading***

#### ***Introduction of the New Pastor***

#### ***Exchange of Commitments***

#### ***Option 1: Formal Question and Answer Period***

*Moderator:* \_\_\_\_\_, so that your faith and integrity of purpose may be apparent to all, will you now answer the following questions:

Are you persuaded that you are truly called to this particular ministry, according to the will of Christ and the custom of this church?

*Pastor:* I am.

*Moderator:* Are you motivated for ministry by a deep desire to walk with God, a love for Jesus Christ, and a passionate concern for the lost and hurting people of God's creation?

*Pastor:* I am.

*Moderator:* Are you committed to the mission goals of \_\_\_\_\_ Church and are you prepared to give your support to the ministries in which it is engaged?

*Pastor:* I am.

*Moderator:* Will you be faithful in caring for this congregation, in proclaiming the word of God, in discipling Christ's people, and in reaching out to the larger community?

*Pastor:* I will, with God's help.

*Moderator:* Will you pledge to live a life that models the kind of personal morality, spiritual vitality and gracious joy that will contribute to the building up of the body of Christ?

*Pastor:* I will, with Christ as my strength and guide.

*Option 2: Pastor/Congregation Dialogue*

*Moderator:* We are met together in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Head of the Church, to commission the Reverend \_\_\_\_\_ into the ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

[Pastor stands.]

*Moderator:* \_\_\_\_\_, it is our belief that the calling into the Christian ministry and to particular service within it is both of God and the Church. It is inward leading and outward calling answering to each other. Are you persuaded that you are truly called to this particular ministry, to seek to fulfill the purposes of God among the people of \_\_\_\_\_ Church?

*Pastor:* I am so persuaded.

*Moderator:* People of \_\_\_\_\_ Church, are you persuaded that \_\_\_\_\_ is the person whom God has brought at this time and into this place to be a pastor among you and a leader in your ministry? Will you please indicate your positive response by standing.

[People stand.]

Because you, \_\_\_\_\_, and you, the people of this church, are the ones who are giving yourselves to shared ministry in this church and community, we invite you to respond to each other.

*People:* We believe that you, \_\_\_\_\_, are the person intended by God to be a pastor among us and a leader



in our ministry. It is in this belief that we have called you to our fellowship, and it is in this belief that we now affirm our invitation to you.

*Pastor:* I believe that you, the congregation of \_\_\_\_\_ Church are the people among whom I am intended by God to live, to serve as pastor and to share with in ministry. It is in this belief that I have accepted the call to your fellowship, and it is in this belief that I now affirm my acceptance of your invitation.

*People:* We ask you, \_\_\_\_\_, will you minister to us using the gifts God has entrusted to you? Will you give of yourself, by the strength and grace of Jesus Christ our Lord? Will you be sensitive to the needs and possibilities of all of our people, young and old, singly or in families, those new to our church and those long affiliated with it? Will you help us to grow toward Christian maturity, through your preaching and teaching, your example and counsel? Will you encourage us to love and serve one another? Will you help us to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ to the people of our community and our world? Will you enable us to be an effective part of the \_\_\_\_\_ [Association/Area] of Baptist Churches and the Baptist \_\_\_\_\_ [Convention/Union] of \_\_\_\_\_?

*Pastor:* To all of these questions, I affirm: With Christ as my helper, I will try to do all of these things. Now I ask for a pledge of your encouragement and support.

Do you understand yourselves to be sharing Christ's ministry with me in the fellowship of this church? Will you be sensitive to my needs (and the needs of my family) and seek to minister to me as well as with me? Will

you assure me of your confidence, your encouragement, your patience and your prayers? And, finally, will you commit yourselves to the tasks which will give shape and energy to our ministry in this place?

*People:* To all of these questions, we affirm: With Christ's help, we will try to do all of these things.

We accept you, \_\_\_\_\_, as a person of Christian commitment and God-given skills. We accept you as a Pastor among us and a leader in our ministry.

*Pastor:* I accept you, the people of this church, as people of Christian commitment and God-given skills. I accept you as the people God has called me to serve and as coworkers in our ministry together.

*Moderator:* We who are here as friends and neighbours of this congregation have witnessed the promises you have made to each other. As an expression of our support, to declare our joy and confidence in your coming together, and to commit ourselves to you in the ministry we share, we rise to stand with you.

[All stand.]

### ***Act of Commissioning***

*Moderator:* \_\_\_\_\_, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ [Association/Area] of Baptist Churches, and with the authority given to me by this congregation, I declare you to be the pastor of this church. "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." Amen.

Since no one person, or group of people, is sufficient for the commitments made today, let us call upon God in prayer.

***The Commissioning Prayer***

[All remain standing.]

***Blessing***

## **The Ordination of a Minister**

For information regarding steps to ordination and procedures for the ordination examination, please contact the Convention/Union office.

In both Old and New Testament times, some leaders were set apart as being distinctive among the people of God. It is consistent with biblical practice for a local church to recognize that God has given gifts to his people, and to affirm those individuals called to specific areas of ministry within the local congregation. Ordination then becomes a recognition of what God has already done in the life of an individual in choosing him or her for pastoral ministry.

In keeping with the recommended procedures for ordination examination as held by Conventions/Unions, the local church should proceed with the Ordination Service when a report from the examining council is received.

### **The Ordination Service**

An Ordination Service requires, as a minimum, the following elements: an introductory statement and the report of the examining council; an address by the moderator to the candidate; inquiries of the candidate and the congregation; the laying on of hands, an ordination prayer, and the presentation of a certificate of ordination.

The local congregation should feel free to structure the rest of the service according to their custom.

Appropriate scripture resources: *Numbers 11:16, 17, 24-30; Joshua 1:1-9; 1 Samuel 3:4-10; Isaiah 6:1-8;*

*Jeremiah 1:4-10; Ezekiel 2:5; Matthew 4:18-22; 28:16-20; Luke 10:20-24; 2 Corinthians 4:1-10; 5:11-21; 6:1-10; Galatians 1:15,16; Ephesians 3:7-12; 4:1-16; Colossians 1:24-29; 4:1-16; 6:1-21; 2 Timothy 1:6-13; 2:1-25; 3:1-17; 4:1-8; 1 Peter 5:1-11.*

For the *Laying On of Hands*, it is customary for the candidate to kneel, and for the moderator and the other appointed representatives to lay their right hands upon him or her, while the prayer of ordination is offered.

Following the *Presentation of the Certificate of Ordination*, words of personal support and blessing may be offered.

### **An Order for a Service of Ordination**

#### ***Introductory Statement and Report of Examining Council***

*Moderator:* We are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the request of this church, and as representatives of the Churches of the \_\_\_\_\_ [Association/Area] of \_\_\_\_\_ [Convention/ Union], in order to appoint \_\_\_\_\_ to the work of the Christian ministry. \_\_\_\_\_ is being ordained to \_\_\_\_\_ [the particular field of ministry for which the candidate is being set aside].

\_\_\_\_\_ has presented [himself/herself] to an Ordination Examining Council that was duly called and properly constituted. The examining Council heard the candidate's statement of Christian experience, call to ministry, views on Christian doctrine and [his/her] relationship to our [Convention/Union]. After examination and prayer, the council has affirmed [his/her] call of God to \_\_\_\_\_ [field of] ministry.

We invite you to join with us in this Service of Ordination.

***Scripture Reading***

***Moderator's Address to Candidate***

\_\_\_\_\_, we have gladly heard of the grace of God in your life, and of the desire of this church to set you apart for the ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ [field]. We ask you to consider once more the source of your calling, so that with sincerity of purpose, integrity and holiness of life, and humble dependence upon God, you may fulfill that calling, remembering that our Lord Jesus Christ said: If any want to be my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Hear also what the Apostle Paul said: In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. Always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

Hear also the counsel of the Apostle Peter: Tend the flock of God that is your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock.

***Inquiry of Candidate***

*Moderator:* Do you affirm your determination to give your life to the ministry of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the principles of ministry as set forth in the Word of God?

*Candidate:* I will endeavour to do so, with the Lord as my helper.

***Inquiry of Congregation***

*Moderator:* Do you, the people of this church, acknowledge and affirm the gifts and abilities of \_\_\_\_\_ to fulfill \_\_\_\_\_ [the specified ministry] in this congregation?

Are you prepared to appoint, or set apart, \_\_\_\_\_ to that ministry? Do you covenant to work together with [him/her], giving [him/her] all the support needed for [his/her] ministry in the Lord? Will you signify your affirmation by standing?

[Congregation stands.]

The setting apart of \_\_\_\_\_ for the ministry will take place by the laying-on of hands and a prayer of ordination. Would those invited to participate please step forward for the laying-on of hands.

***Laying On of Hands and Ordination Prayer***

***Presentation of Certificate of Ordination***

*Moderator:* In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, on behalf of this congregation of believers, by the authority of the examination council, and on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ [Convention/Union], it is my privilege to welcome you into the Christian ministry and present you with this certificate of ordination.

***Words of Support and Blessing (Optional)***

## **The Dedication of Material Resources**

Significant events in the physical growth of a congregation may from time to time be the focus of celebration. These usually find one of two foci. The first centres around buildings—either construction, renovation, adaptation or addition. The second concerns furnishings and elements associated primarily with worship. This may involve such things as a stained glass window, a pulpit, a communion table or set, choir garments, musical resources, Bibles, etc.

### **The Dedication of Physical Space**

In the dedication of facilities for the gathered church, the focus is on the faith, dedication and labour of the people who have committed themselves and their resources to following God and erecting or renovating a building as a centre for ministry.

The service is not a dedication of walls, floor or roof. It is a dedication of these for the mission that will be carried on within them. The facilities dedication service must raise up an awareness of mission and focus on the future, not just the past. Care should be taken to engender more than just a sense of completion and the end of a journey. The dedication of facilities marks the beginning of a new phase in the church's life and mission.

Any celebration of facilities should take place as part of the congregation's customary pattern of worship. The congregation's worship leader should select scriptures, music and anthems focused on the specifics of the occasion.



***Ground breaking:***

The words of dedication in a ground-breaking ceremony should be appropriate for the community worshipping together. The following elements and themes may be included:

- Expressions of thanksgiving to God for calling together the church community, raising up a vision to build, and providing resources to begin the work.
- Celebration of God's presence in the gathered people. It is the Spirit's presence in people that makes a church holy, not a particular plot of ground.
- Recognition of the church's mission and the role the new building will eventually play—not just as a sanctuary of retreat, but as a centre of the church's outreach.
- Dedication of the ground, the missionary vision and the people to God.

Appropriate scripture resources: *Genesis 28:10-22; 1 Chronicles 22:11-16; 19; 2 Chronicles 2:1-9; Psalms 24; 29; 84; Isaiah 12; Matthew 7:24-27; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.*

***Laying of the cornerstone***

Like the ground-breaking ceremony, this may be a special service or it may follow a regular worship service.

Though the actual setting of the cornerstone may be a formality, later to be properly executed by the construction crew, it is advisable that the actual location for the cornerstone, and the stone itself be authentic. In some cases a time capsule with pertinent information about the church and the community can be inserted.

The cornerstone-laying ceremony should be planned for and treated as a very significant event in the life of a congregation.

Appropriate scripture resources: *Psalms 84; 118:22-*

2; *Ezra* 3:10-11; *Isaiah* 28:16; *Matthew* 7:24-27; *Ephesians* 4:11-16; *1 Corinthians* 3:10-17; *1 Peter* 2:4-6, 9-10 (*Responsive*)

See the suggested “Dedication Statement for the Laying of a Cornerstone” below.

### ***The dedication of a church building***

One of the most significant events in the life of any congregation is the dedication of a new church building. It is desirable, if circumstances and weather permit, prior to the service of dedication, that the congregation stand at the entrance to the church building. Upon a pre-arranged signal, the doors may be opened and then the service may proceed as the congregation moves from the entrance of the church into the sanctuary.

Appropriate scripture resources: *1 Kings* 8; *1 Chronicles* 29:10-13; 15-19; *2 Chronicles* 6:1, 2, 4, 14, 17-20, 29-41; *Psalms* 27:4, 5; 84; 100:1-5; 122:1-9; *Haggai* 2:1-9; *1 Corinthians* 3:9-23; *Ephesians* 2:13-22; *1 Peter* 2:4-10.

See the suggested “Order of Service for the Dedication of a New Building” below.

### ***The burning of a mortgage***

A church may celebrate the discharge of a mortgage by burning the document.

Appropriate scripture resources: *Psalms of thanksgiving*; *Luke* 14:28-30; *2 Thessalonians* 3:6-13; *1 Timothy* 6:17-19.

See the suggested “Prayer of Thanksgiving for a Mortgage Burning” below.

### ***The dedication of furnishings and equipment***

Furnishings and equipment are frequently dedicated

during a morning worship service. The Act of Dedication is a celebration of God's goodness to us in providing materials for our worship, mission or ministry. As such we are engaged in two tasks simultaneously. The first is an act of gratitude focused on God and on the people who shared generously in the provision of the item. The second is a pledge of faithfulness and commitment in using the materials for the purpose for which they are given.

Commonly, churches dedicate pulpits, communion tables and sets, musical instruments, choir vestments, stained glass windows and other resources used in worship and ministry.

Each church should be free to develop services to fit their worship style. The Resources for the Dedication of Furnishings and Equipment below can be adapted for a variety of uses. If the gift is a memorial, suitable mention of the fact may be made during the act of dedication.

Appropriate scripture resources: *Acts 2:43-47; Acts 4:32-37; 2 Corinthians 8:2-5.*

### **A Dedication Statement for the Laying of a Cornerstone**

In the faith of Jesus Christ, we place the cornerstone in this foundation. May the building erected on this site become a place for the worship of God. We lay this stone with the conviction that within these walls prayers will be offered, the gospel will be preached, Jesus' ordinances will be administered, his praises sung, and his people equipped for ministry in the world. May the Creator God bless our work of obedience in establishing this place of worship for him.

**An Order of Service for  
the Dedication of a New Building**

***The Call to Worship***

“Fling wide the gates, open the doors!  
That the King of Glory may come in!”

We open the doors of this church as a house of prayer and worship, a place for training and discipleship, and a centre for mission and ministry. May its doors be wide enough to receive all who need the love and care of God. May its doors shut out all envy, pride and hate. May God’s people cross this threshold and be nurtured in the Christian life, then cross back again to love and serve the world. May the doors of this house be the gateway to God’s kingdom.

***Scripture Reading***

***Presentation of the Building***

*Leader:* We are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed the work of our hands and enabled the raising of this building as a place of worship. I invite the Chair of the Building Committee to come and present this new building to the congregation.

*Chair:* On behalf of the Building Committee, the architect, the contractor, and all who have participated in the erection of this building, I now present the keys as a symbol of this entire structure, so that we may proceed to dedicate it to our Lord.

*Leader:* Since God has blessed his people with the resources and the vision necessary for the building of this place, let us now dedicate it to his honour.

***Words of Dedication***

*Leader:* Having been enabled by God's grace and power to complete the construction of this place of worship, let us dedicate it to God's purposes, aware that we are in the presence of the Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[People stand.]

*Leader:* To the glory of God our Father, from whom comes every good and perfect gift; to the honour of Jesus Christ our Lord, from whom comes our salvation: to the praise of the Holy Spirit, from whom proceeds light and life,

*People:* We dedicate this building.

*Leader:* In grateful acknowledgment of all who love and serve this church; and in remembrance of those who have loved and served it in the past,

*People:* We dedicate this building.

*Leader:* In grateful recognition of the wisdom and art, the skill and science, which has given this building its forms of beauty and usefulness:

*People:* We dedicate this building.

*Leader:* As a sanctuary for worship, a place of ministry and centre for mission

*People:* We dedicate this building.

*Leader:* In joyful celebration we commit ourselves to follow Christ, to be sensitive to the moving of his Spirit and to be obedient disciples, serving Almighty God so that his kingdom may come on earth:

*People:* To that end, we dedicate this building to God.

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving  
for a Mortgage Burning**

Almighty God, you constantly uphold your people with care and support. We have experienced that care in the life of our church. We are a blessed people, and you have enabled us to give in support of this ministry. We thank you for the rich heritage of this church: for its people and its resources. We celebrate with you the completion of a dream that began many years ago when this mortgage was first incurred. Now we commit to you our greater vision for the healing and salvation of this community. May the added resources we now enjoy be used to that end. Amen.

**Prayers and Readings for the Dedication of  
Furnishings and Equipment**

***Words of Presentation***

This \_\_\_\_\_ is being presented to our church by [donor/donors] as a token of love and loyalty to Christ and his Church. In acknowledgment of God's mercy in Christ, which this gift symbolizes, and in thankfulness for the generosity of Christ's people, this gift is now joyfully presented to this church.

***Words of Acceptance***

This gift, so graciously and thoughtfully given, is accepted with gratitude on behalf of our church. It is our prayer that, through its use, many will be inspired to deeper devotion to our Lord and greater service in his kingdom.

***Prayer of Dedication***

Eternal and Almighty God, we thank you for the privilege of presenting this \_\_\_\_\_ to you. We pray that you will accept the sacrifice and the service of those who have provided this \_\_\_\_\_ to enhance our worship life. Accept the work of our hands and the worship of our hearts. As we receive this \_\_\_\_\_ may it be a sign of our covenant relationship with you and draw us deeper into your presence in worship. Amen.





**Part V**

**PROCEDURAL  
RESOURCES**



## **Rules of Order for the Conduct of Meetings**

In case no other rules are adopted at the commencement of deliberations, the parliamentary rules of order commonly used in deliberative bodies are those which ought to govern churches and other religious societies in their congregational meetings. For a complete presentation of parliamentary procedures, see *Rules of Order* by Bourinot © 1963 by McClelland and Stewart Ltd.

The following rules of order are provided as a guide to generally accepted procedures.

### **Motions**

- All business shall be presented by a motion, made by a member and seconded by another, and presented in writing by the mover, if so required.
- No discussion can properly be had until the motion is made, seconded, and stated by the chair, or presiding officer.
- A motion cannot be withdrawn after it has been discussed, except by the unanimous consent of the body.
- A motion having been discussed, it must be put to a vote, unless withdrawn, laid on the table, referred or postponed.
- A motion lost cannot be renewed at the same meeting, except by unanimous consent.
- A motion should contain but one distinct proposition. If it contains more, it may be divided at the request of any member.

- Not more than one question can properly be before the meeting at the same time.
- A second motion cannot be allowed to interrupt one already under debate. The only exceptions are subsidiary motions to amend, to substitute, to commit, to postpone, to lay on the table, or to adjourn.
- The subsidiary motions cannot be interrupted by any other motion, nor can any other motion be applied to them, except to amend by specifying time, place, or purpose. Subsidiary motions may not interrupt or supersede each other.
- A motion to adjourn is always in order except when a member has the floor, or when a question is being taken.

### *Amendments*

- Amendments may be made to resolutions in three ways: by omitting, by adding, or by substituting words or sentences.
- An amendment to an amendment may be made, but is seldom necessary and should be avoided. There cannot be an amendment to the amendment to the amendment.
- No amendment should be made which essentially changes the meaning or design of the original motion; but a substitute may be offered which may change entirely the meaning of the resolution under debate.
- The amendment to the amendment (if any) must first be discussed and acted on, then the amendment, and lastly the original motion or the original motion as amended.

### ***Speaking***

- Any member desiring to speak on a question should rise and address the chair or presiding officer, confine remarks to the question, and avoid personalities and all unkind and disrespectful language.
- A speaker using improper language, introducing improper subjects, or otherwise out of order, should be called to order by the chair, and must either conform to the rules of debate governing the body or be seated.
- A member while speaking may allow others to ask questions or to make explanations; but if the floor is yielded to another, it cannot be reclaimed.
- A member is not permitted to speak more than once until all have spoken who desire to speak, nor more than twice on any question without the permission of the chair, or of the meeting.

### ***Voting***

- A question is put to vote by the chair, having first distinctly restated it. First, the affirmative, then the negative, is called. Whether the motion is carried or lost is then distinctly announced.
- Voting may be done by calling for the “ayes” and “nays,” by holding up the hand, by standing to be counted, or by ballot.
- If the vote as announced by the chair is doubted it is called again, usually by standing to be counted.
- All members should vote unless excused for reason, or unless under discipline, in which case they should take no part in the business.
- The chair or presiding officer does not usually vote,

but in case of a tie vote, casts the deciding vote.

- When the vote is to be taken by ballot, the chair appoints tellers to distribute, collect and count the ballots.

### ***Appeal***

The chair or presiding officer announces the result of all votes, and decides all questions as to rules of procedure and order of debate. Any member, however, who is dissatisfied with the decisions of the chair may appeal them to the body. The chair then puts the question: "Shall the decision of the chair be sustained?" The vote of the body, whether negative or affirmative, is final. The right to appeal should not be resorted to in matters of slight importance.

### ***Previous Questions***

- The previous question shall be in the following words. "That this question be now put." The previous question is not debatable and must be voted on at once unless a motion to adjourn be made.
- The previous question, until it is decided, shall preclude all amendments to the main question. If the previous question be resolved in the affirmative, the original question is to be put forthwith, without any amendment or debate.
- No amendment can be proposed to a motion for the previous question nor can the previous question be proposed when an amendment is under consideration. A motion for adjournment can be made to a motion for the previous question.
- If the motion for the previous question is lost, the presiding officer cannot put any question

on the main motion, and it is dropped.

*Note:* The previous question is used to effect one of two objects:

- To prevent a decision on a question under consideration, in which case the members who propose and second it vote against the motion: and
- To prevent any amendment, and force a direct vote on the question, in which case the members who propose and second it vote for the motion.

#### ***To Lay on the Table***

- Sometimes consideration of a question is deferred by a motion to lay it on the table, in which case it may be taken from the table for discussion at any time by order of the body; or it may be laid on the table until a specified time, to be taken from the table when that time arrives. If a question is merely laid on the table, it is usually considered disposed of.
- A motion to lay on the table must apply to a resolution or other papers. An abstract subject cannot be disposed of in this way.

#### ***Not Debatable***

Motions for the previous question, indefinite postponement, to commit, to lay on the table and to adjourn, are not debatable.

However, when these motions are modified by some conditions of time, place, or purpose, they become debatable, but only in respect to the time, place or purpose which brings them within the province of debate.

### ***To Reconsider***

A motion to reconsider a motion previously disposed of must be made and seconded by persons who voted with the majority when the motion was disposed of. If the motion to reconsider a motion or resolution is carried, then the original motion stands just where it did before being considered, and may be discussed, adopted or rejected.

A vote to reconsider must be taken at the session at which the question or motion reconsidered was disposed of, and should be when there are as many members present as at first.

### ***Point of Order***

Any member who believes that a speaker is out of order, or that discussion is proceeding improperly, may at any time rise to a point of order. The point of order or objection must be distinctly and briefly stated, and then ruled on by the presiding officer.

### ***Rule Suspended***

A rule of order may be suspended for the time being by the unanimous vote of the body.

### ***Adjournment***

A simple motion to adjourn is always in order except when a member is speaking, or when taking a vote. It takes precedence of all other motions and is not debatable. A body may adjourn to a specified time, but if no time is mentioned the fixed or usual time of meeting is understood. If there is no fixed or usual time of meeting, then an adjournment without date is equivalent to a dissolution.



## **Ministerial Ethics**

The statements of ethical relationships which appear below were adapted from the Minister's Council of the American Baptist Convention, U.S.A. They are submitted in this resource book not because they have been authoritatively adopted by Canadian Baptist pastors, but as a legitimate and informative presentation of what one responsible body believes ought to be the ethics that prevail within the pastor-people relationship of the local church.

### **Church-to-Pastor Ethics**

Acknowledging our basic loyalty to God through Christ, we pledge the following:

- We will follow approved procedures when seeking a pastor, and we will conduct all negotiations with integrity, courtesy and orderly procedure.
- We will recognize our responsibility of providing our pastor with adequate compensation, including expense funds, pension provision, suitable housing, and all possible encouragement to engage in continuing education opportunities.
- We will provide our pastor with the necessary facilities for work and respect time for study.
- We will recognize our pastor's need for physical and spiritual renewal by providing an adequate vacation period, as well as opportunities to attend helpful conferences.
- We will respect the time and talents of the pastor's family and require no more rigid standard of conduct for them than we set for ourselves.

- We will recognize the freedom of the pulpit, acknowledging our pastor's right to speak the truth of God as it is understood.
- We will seek to support the present pastor, without comparison to previous leadership.
- We will call upon our pastor for weddings, funerals and other pastoral services, and only under unusual circumstances, request our pastor to invite other ministers to share in such services.
- We will recognize the call, ordination and educational preparation of our pastor, providing support through prayer and encouragement as we are led in our task, and as our pastor participates in other enterprises of the Kingdom as part of the ministry of this church.
- We will observe these principles in relation to other members of our church staff consistent with their responsibilities.

### **Pastor-to-Church Ethics**

Striving to be a good Minister of Jesus Christ,

- I will constantly seek to maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours for prayer and devotion, endeavouring to maintain wholesome family relationships, regularly engaging in educational experiences for professional growth and development and renewing myself through recreation and vacation.
- I will seek to safeguard the good name of the ministry; speak the truth in love, live honestly and avoid embarrassing debts.

- I will hold as sacred all confidences shared with me.
- I will exercise positive leadership, recognizing at all times the democratic process in administering our church program.
- I will seek to minister, rather than to be ministered unto, placing service above salary and personal recognition; and the unity and welfare of the church above my own personal welfare.
- I will exercise the freedom of the pulpit responsibly and respect the freedom of the pew.
- I will seek to regard all persons with equal love and concern, and undertake to minister impartially to the needs of all.
- I will exercise confidence in those elected to share leadership responsibility with me, and will assist in the training of such leaders.
- I will remain open to constructive criticism and be receptive to suggestions intended to strengthen our common ministry.
- I will seek to lead the church to accept its full responsibility for community and world service.
- I will seek to build the church without discrediting other churches, soliciting members therefrom, or casting reflection on other ministers.
- I will not knowingly compete with another pastor for a call to a pastorate.
- I will, with my resignation, sever my pastoral relations with my former parishioners, and will not make pastoral contact in the field of my successors without their knowledge and consent.
- I will not use my influence to alienate the church,

or any portion thereof from its denominational loyalty and support. If my convictions change from those commonly held by our denomination, I will be honourable enough to withdraw.

