

ORDER FOR LOCAL CHURCH COMMISSIONING OF MEMBERS 2019

ACCOMPANIMENT DOCUMENT TO BOOK OF WORSHIP: UNITED CHURCH OF CHRISTI

Introduction

This service is intended to take place within a regular Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word. The candidate may wish to select an appropriate Scripture, which can be placed immediately before the commitments.

Liturgical leadership throughout this service is shared between the pastor, Local Church Moderator, and others in the congregation. The commissioning ceremony begins with remarks about the person(s) being commissioned and the work to which they are being commissioned. This may be done by the pastor or by a representative of the setting to which the person is sent.

The following introductory remarks may be printed in a bulletin or shared aloud as appropriate to introduce the occasion.

In this order the people of God in a Local Church
celebrate diverse ministries to which God calls the baptized.
It is a service of recognition and installation
for those who consent to serve in an elected or appointed office within
the church
(search committee members, officers, teachers, musicians, artists,
group leaders, guides, and the like).
Equally, it is a service of recognition and affirmation
for those who actively engage a variety of ministries in the world
(community service, ministries in the work setting,
caring for others, professional leadership, lay missions, and the like).
It is used when the local church
recognizes and prays for the leadership of members
who are performing holy work for which they are specially equipped.

Pastor and other representatives of the Local Church,
including the member(s) to be commissioned, plan the service.
It is appropriate that the Order for Local Church Commissioning of
Members
be held within a regular service of the church

or at a gathering of the church specifically called for this purpose.
It is especially fitting that parts of this service
consist of original material prepared particularly for the occasion.

LEADER:

To God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
To all generations, forever and ever.

PEOPLE:

Amen.

LEADER:

Local church commissioning of a lay member is the act
whereby a Local Church of the United Church of Christ
recognizes the diverse gifts of its members.

We celebrate the particular ministry
of persons in the life of the congregation
and in various settings in the world that God loves.

We greet all who are gathered this day
in the name of Jesus Christ the head of the church
and the one who calls us to the priesthood of all believers.

LEADER: Now there are varieties of gifts,

PEOPLE: **but the same Spirit gives them;**
and there are varieties of services,
but we serve the same One;
and there are varieties of activities,
but it is the same God who activates
all of them in everyone.

To each is given manifestation of the Spirit for the common good:

Wisdom
Knowledge
Faith
Healing
Miracles

Prophecy
Discernment
Tongues
Interpretation of Tongues
[add gifts celebrated here today]

All these are activated by one and the same Spirit,
**who chooses the gifts given to each
 for the common good.**ⁱⁱ

An introduction may be made to the nature of the service and location to be served.

LEADER:

(A) For ministries in the world

You have heard the nature of the work to which name(s) have been called,

and their readiness to respond to this call.

They are part of you as they belong to this congregation, and you are part of them.

Through commissioning this church goes with them

as they respond to the opportunity to serve as title of role and location.

(B) For ministries in church settings

Name(s) has (have) followed God's call,

in accordance with the faith and order of this church,
 to provide leadership among us.

They have accepted this responsibility

and are before us in witness to their willingness to serve as specific role and type of service.

Scripture

Commitments

LEADER:

Do you believe in your heart that God has called you to serve in location/role?

MEMBER:

I/We do.

LEADER:

Are you willing to take on these new responsibilities in service to the Living Christ?

MEMBER:

I am/We are willing.

LEADER:

Will you seek to witness in word and example to those around you the good news of Jesus,
that there is reconciliation with God,
forgiveness of sins,
and power for peace and justice among those living the love of God?

MEMBER:

I/We will, with the help of God.

LEADER:

Will you maintain participation and communication with members of this Local Church,
that all may be strengthened by the service to which you are committed?

MEMBER:

I/We will, with the help of God.

ALL:

**We have heard your commitment
and we thank God for your generous response to this call to service.
Through the beckoning of the Holy Spirit and the commissioning of
the church,
servants of Christ are both gathered and sent out around the world.
We accept your service in location
and we pledge our support and prayers
that your work may be faithful and effective.
In the name of Christ Jesus,
we commission you to this service.
May God bless you and make you a blessing.**

LEADER:

Let us pray.

PEOPLE:

Eternal God, send your Spirit among us, that we may truly be your church.

LEADER:

Grant sustenance and wisdom to your servants name(s)

That they may embrace the opportunities and responsibilities of
 commissioned ministry
 In Christ's name and for your glory.

PEOPLE:

**Help those commissioned on our behalf
 To be faithful and honorable, diligent and imaginative**

LEADER:

Even in times of difficulty,
 Help them go forth with a real sense of joy and encouragement

PEOPLE:

For your yoke is easy, and your burden is light.

ALL:

Amen.

LEADER:

We have heard the promises of our kindred in Christ.
 We have prayed to uphold and strengthen their resolve for the work
 before them.

(A) For ministries in the world

We affirm our corporate intention to live as the Body of Christ,
 that our hands and feet may do the work of Jesus,
 including through the service of member(s) in the
location.

As a commissioned member(s), we will keep in contact with them,
 and trust they will keep in contact with us.

(B) For ministries in church settings

We celebrate this household of faith,
 and lift up the many tasks needed to provide care and growth
 for all those who worship and study here.

May God prosper this church in the mission placed before it,
 including through the work of member
 commissioned to serve in the role of location.

I now declare member
 a fully commissioned member of this community of faith: name of
local church.

The congregation may show approval and support by means of applause, a hymn, or a shared greeting of Christian love such as the sign of peace. At the conclusion participants may return to their places in the congregation.

A Service of Word and Sacrament or a Service of the Word may continue.

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ⁱ Local Church Ministries, United Church of Christ. *Book of Worship: United Church of Christ*. Cleveland, OH 2012.

ⁱⁱ 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, NRSV